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Times Record News

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Haynes Strader, chief development officer for Skybox Datacenters, at the Feb. 18 announcement that the Dallas-based company would build a data center here. LYNN WALKER/WICHITA FALLS TIMES RECORD NEWS

Exec: Data center to bring jobs, investment

Lynn Walker
Wichita Falls Times Record News
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

Wichita County commissioners on Tuesday heard Haynes Strader, chief development officer for Skybox Datacenters, promise great things for the city and county when his company builds a data center here.

The Dallas-based company announced on Feb. 18 it would build a facility on 225 acres in the city's business park.

The session before commissioners was just informational, county Judge Jim Johnson said. The county is not involved in the deal.

Strader told commissioners and a packed courtroom the data center would employ between 1,500 and 3,100 people during construction and would use as many local subcontractors as possible.

"Whether it's grading, fencing, HVAC, electrical engineering, our preference is always local," he said. "These are great jobs."

See CENTER, Page 2A

Council approves spending after heated exchanges

Lynn Walker
Wichita Falls Times Record News
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

Plans to spend millions of dollars on several projects brought emotional responses at a meeting of the Wichita Falls City Council on Tuesday.

One councilor said he considered walking out.

The four projects would be paid for through $11 million in reserve funds, up to $26.9 million in certificates of obligation and $1.4 million per year from the city's Sales Tax Corp., according to Chief Financial Officer Stephen Calvert.

Calvert said the total debt paid over 40 years on the projects will be approximately $40.79 million.

A portion would come from property taxes, but he said a property tax increase would not be required. Calvert also said he hopes some of the funding will come from donations.

The projects are:

- Renovation of the former Kirby Middle School into a new police headquarters.
- Renovation of Fire Station No. 4 at 5514 Castle Drive.
- Renovation of the artificial falls at the Wichita River.
- Completion of the Circle Trail hike and bike trail in the vicinity of Lake Wichita.

John Richoux, a Burkburnett resident, asked why the funding was through certificates of obligation, which do not require voter approval, rather than standard bond issues that go before voters.

Calvert said the certificates of obligation allow the city to move forward quickly on projects that would otherwise take "quite a bit of time to do."

See COUNCIL, Page 5A

ELECTIONS 2026 WICHITA COUNTY JUDGE

Candidates reveal campaign war chests

Lynn Walker
Wichita Falls Times Record News
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

Wichita County judge hopeful Rick Hatcher is leading in campaign spending with just days to go before the Republican Primary runoff election on May 26.

Early voting for the primary runoff election began Monday and continues through Friday.

A campaign finance report filed with the Wichita County Elections Office on Monday showed Hatcher had total political expenditures of about $49,258 and had $58,500 in outstanding loans.

The report showed Hatcher had taken in $2,050 in total political contributions, all from small individual donors.

His campaign had $13,262 in the bank.

Hatcher's largest campaign expenditure was about $10,966 to Hoegger Communications.

See JUDGE, Page 5A

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