

Posted for Publication by Stan Ridgeway

Time really flies when you are having fun, is an old adage that really describes how fast time has gone since my January 12th swearing in ceremony.

Working fulltime after a twelve year “try” at retirement has been an adjustment but one I have really enjoyed. I have been keeping track of the number of hours in the office and to my surprise the number of hours worked far exceeds the 40-hours per week considered a full-time job even taking into account time off.

The city staff and I have just completed our recommended budget for Fiscal Year 16/17 which starts October 1st. In an effort to be more transparent we opened up the budget process by creating line items for programs rather than bundling functions and categories together into combined departmental and program budgets. As an example, the new Parks & Grounds budget and the new Facilities budget were previously expenditures included in a very broad Parks and Recreation budget. The two budgets are now in separate departments and making these expenditures more transparent to the public. As the budget is referred to as the Mayor’s budget it was myself who presented the budget to the Council for all departments.

Here are some of the changes I discussed with the Council:

- City vehicles are now in departmental budgets with a replacement fund (depreciation schedule) established to replace vehicles after the expected life cycle of the vehicle. This allows the city to budget and save each year for future replacement rather than having to fund vehicles in one fiscal year.
- Our plan is to request quotes/bids for city services and supplies and over the next two years, we expect to re-bid all of the city’s major contracts.
- Enterprise fund departments, like water, will be charged for their portion of city expenses such as, facilities and support services. Currently, these expenses have been covered under the general fund paid by all tax payers rather than the individuals receiving services from the enterprise fund departments.

As we move forward we will continue to focus on efficiency, cost management, and providing needed services to our citizens and companies doing business with the City of Eagle.

At the August 16th, we had a Special City Council Public Hearing to review and approve the FY 16/17 budget there was testimony given in support and in opposition to the budget as presented. Citizen testimony was heard and the vote to approve the budget as presented was one of our few split decisions as a council. Council members Kunz and Preston voted against the budget stating that they did not support the 3% taxes increase, while Council members Bastian and Soelberg voted in favor of the budget and I cast the tie breaker in support of the budget.

I understand the budget can be somewhat confusing. Although we increased property tax by 3% the levy rate is lower than last year. Therefore, a home valued at \$350,000 will actually see their tax go down by \$1.03 a month. The levy rate is calculated based on an Idaho State Statute. In addition, we had an increase in revenue from building permits, plan reviews, land use planning

fees with an average of approximately 24%, please keep in mind that these are fees the city charges and not taxes.

As many of you know, the City Council also serves as the Eagle Urban Renewal Agency (URA) Board. Just a few weeks ago the URA approved their FY2016-17 budget with a 4 to 1 vote that equates to 130% budget increase, including a 3% tax increase, and a 60% increase in expenses. I was the opposing vote. My vote in opposition was not because of the work being done, but because I feel that the budget document did not follow budget guidelines from the State of Idaho and the document lacks transparency with only three broad expense line categories. It is hard to serve two separate entities that are comprised of the same representative board and have such varied approaches to public transparency and governmental budgeting practices. The Idaho Legislature agreed and due to changes in the URA legislation that took effect this year the URA Board will be reformatted and appointed to ensure that the City Council and the URA Board are not comprised of the same members.

During the next few weeks the city will be busy with the Eagle Saturday Market, the Thursday Night Market, and an Eagle High School Homecoming event on September 15th which is funded in part by the City Council.

Our Community Enhancement Coordinator Jenessa has done a wonderful job reviving the Saturday Market. She has work with an advisory group made up of market vendors to bring back many of the items to the market that Eagle residents had enjoyed. The attendance and number of sales/transactions have risen weekly.

Eagle is HOME!

Are roads in Eagle like a funnel or a colander? What do these kitchen implements have to do with Roads? As the city planning staff continues to work with the comprehensive plan steering committee on the city's comprehensive plan they invite citizens and business to come talk about transportation, circulation, and connectivity on August 30th at Eagle City Hall from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. Wondering what our youngest citizens think about Eagle? Come to city hall during August to see the "Kid City" art work and designs from Eagle Fun Days. If you want more information about the Eagle is HOME Project contact Nichoel in the Planning Department or visit www.cityofeagle.org/EagleisHOME.