

City's Income Tax Ballot Proposal

Citizens are being asked to vote on May 4 to temporarily raise the City Income Tax rate. The tax increase would be effective for five years, returning to the current City Income Tax rate on July 1, 2015. The ballot proposal would increase the City Income Tax rate from 1.3% to 1.5% for residents and from 0.65% to 0.75% for non-residents and provide approximately \$7 million in new revenues.

The City Commission amended the City Code to require restoring ten Community Police Officers and recalling fifteen Fire Fighters to create a fire squad to respond to all structure fires if citizens approve the ballot proposal. A successful ballot proposal would stabilize funding for police and fire services, permitting the City to transform its operations to lower costs, consolidate services, and realign expenditures with revenues.

If the ballot proposal fails, filling the \$7 million gap would likely result in closing the City's parks, closing a fire station, and laying off approximately 80 employees, including Police Officers and Fire Fighters.

Additionally, on the May 4 ballot, the City is seeking to amend the City Charter to eliminate the definition of a workday as being eight hours. This would give the City greater flexibility in assigning its workforce to lower costs while remaining fair to employees.

The City has a long road ahead to transform itself to better serve citizens. The City can no longer continue to operate as it has in the past. The City needs to innovate, become self-reliant, understand what citizens truly value, and become financially sustainable. The City must continue to increase transparency, engage citizens, improve customer service, and seek new partnerships and consolidations. The City is asking everyone to remember to vote on May 4.