



New Castle Crier

The official newsletter of New Castle City

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New Castle, Delaware

August 2008

City Council Adopts 2008-09 Budget

At a regular New Castle City Council meeting held on July 8, Council members approved a Resolution adopting a balanced City Budget for the 2008-09 fiscal year, totaling \$5,395,099, and setting the tax rate at \$1.15 per 100 of assessed value. Council members emphasized the importance of avoiding a tax rate increase, and setting the new rate equal to the rate from fiscal year 2007-08.

The Resolution was the final action to put the budget in place, after City Council members, the City Treasurer and staff met numerous times over the course of more than a month putting the budget together.

The City must get its budget done in this time frame, in order for tax bills to be issued near beginning of the fiscal year on July 1 (bills are normally mailed by mid-July). These budget workshops and special meetings are advertised and open to the public.

The majority of the work on the budget falls to Finance Director Marian Delaney. Ms. Delaney first provides Department Heads and others with worksheets showing current year budget information, year-to-date actual expenditures, along with the actual three-year average of expenditures for each line item.

Requests for the new budget year are plugged in as the process progresses. Once all the requests are in, the budget is then reviewed line-by-line by City

Council members, who may make changes. Those changes are updated by Ms. Delaney and new

continued on back page

Rhythm on the River

Wharf Dance

Saturday, September 6
7-11 pm
Rain Date Sept 13

Ticket \$15

Advance sales @ Lauren Lynch Antiques 2nd & Delaware Sts. 328-5576
Must be 21 or older to attend

Cash Bar, Food for Purchase, DJ

Complimentary Fireworks from Pennsville

Sponsored by the City of New Castle



PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT THE EXPANSION OF THE NEW CASTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

New Castle - The First Capital City!

City Budget adopted with no tax rate increase

continued from front page

printouts are provided to Council members at each meeting, reflecting the current data.

In putting the budget together, the City faced many fiscal challenges, which most people will not find surprising. Just like other governments, businesses, families and individuals, the City is struggling financially with rising costs for fuel, everyday operating supplies, labor and benefits.

The majority of the City's employees are represented by two unions - one for sworn police personnel (FOP) and the other for remaining full-time employees outside of management (AFSCME). The annual increase, effective July 1, for the AFSCME employees is 3.25 percent. The City remains in contract negotiations with the FOP union, and therefore the wage increases for this group of employees remains unknown.

Outside of wages, premium costs for benefits are rising between about 4 and 6 percent, depending on the level plan provided to the employee.

Persons with budget questions are encouraged to call the City Administrator at 322-9812, or send an e-mail message to: CathrynThomas@NewCastleCity.org.

The City increased its fuel budget more than 30 percent for the new budget year. This matches and is in addition to the increase in last year's budget for all the line items related to fuel.

On the positive side, the City received assistance from the Trustees of the New Castle Common in purchasing one new police vehicle and continuing to make payments on a new garbage truck purchased last year, among other smaller-

ticket items which were approved for funding by the Trustees. Significant financial aid towards the City's overall general fund is also provided by the Municipal Services Commission. The City is grateful for the help of these community partners, with the happy result for New Castle property owners that City taxes are lower due to their generous contributions.

The City also entered into an agreement to participate in a Statewide Pool to purchase workers' compensation insurance by joining the DeLea Founders Insurance Trust (DFIT), originated through efforts of Mr. George Wright, Executive Director of the Delaware League of Local Governments. This new alternative for purchasing workers' compensation insurance has provided some short-term benefits and savings to the City, and long-term is expected to increase in its advantages locally and throughout the State.

Buy Green Energy

The Municipal Services Commission is once again offering customers the

opportunity to make sure that a piece of the energy they purchase comes from a renewable energy source. We currently have 30 people in the

City who pay on average a premium of 63 cents per month as an additional charge on their bill to be assured they are helping the environment. Please stop at the MSC office at 216 Chestnut Street and sign up. The amount of subscriptions are limited so make a difference now. Subscriptions are for a one year commitment.

Code Enforcement Corner

The City of New Castle Board of Health strives to keep properties in conformance with adopted rules and codes. To report any problems or file a complaint, call Code Enforcement Officer John Lloyd at 221-6507. The entire City Code and Complaint Forms are also available on the City Web site at www.NewCastleCity.org.

From the City Code

Section 140-15A:

It shall be unlawful to park, store or permit to be parked or

stored, other than fully enclosed in a building, any motor vehicle or off-highway vehicle, that is incapable of being moved under its own power (inoperable), or that does not have current registration *plates attached* to the vehicle.

Section 140-16:

All land or improved premises within the City, shall be maintained as though such property were being used or occupied.

Important Reminders

City Council Meeting

Town Hall

August 12 ● 7 p.m.

Garden Festivus/Pear Cook-Off

Read House & Gardens

Aug. 9 ● 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Recycling Pickup

★ Wed., Sept. 3 ★

(Not Tues., Sept. 2)