

Resident opinion sought on spending

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The additional millage would be broken down to three-tenths of a mill to pay for a new police building estimated at \$2.5 million, as well as a quarter-mill to pay the bonded debt requirement on the Caddell Drain for which the city already is obligated.

The remaining seven-tenths mill would be used for drainage improvements and other unspecified projects.

FUTURE BOND issues for other drainage improvements would be presented to voters when council members believed the projects would be needed, Savage said.

"This would include the complete financing of the police building in 15 years and 15 years of financing of the Caddell Drain," Savage said in a report to the council.

"This would not be a full implementation of the CIP (capital improvements plan) as presented by the planning commission."

"It is felt that this alternative does provide a politically viable amount (1.25 mills) over an acceptable period of time," Savage continued.

Under the staff's recommended plan, a homeowner with a home assessed at \$50,000 would pay an additional \$50 a year in taxes. But that total would change as the homeowner's assessment changed.

Currently, the council levies 7.8155

mills (including .4064 mill for debt retirement). According to the city charter, the council has the authority to levy up to 10 mills.

LAST YEAR, when council members under public pressure, defeated a proposed 1.25 mill tax increase, they automatically excluded a proposed one-mill levy for projects listed in the 1983 capital improvement program. Council members maintained the previous year's 7.8155 mill tax rate.

The council, in turn, decided to finance capital improvements for fiscal 1983-84 out of the then existing \$1.5 million improvement fund.

But now city administrators are telling council members that with only approximately \$187,000 left in the capital improvement fund, money for projects, such as the police building, Caddell Drain and other drainage projects, will have to come from somewhere else. And that is through levying tax millage.

"Needless to say only with new revenues can we plan for the timely construction and acquisition of needed capital improvements without drastic reductions in existing levels of city services," Savage said in his report.

Although the council discussed the staff's recommended plan, they seemed apprehensive about moving ahead without public input and taking the chance of repeating last year's sagging attempt to raise money for capital projects.

But the council has the option of putting the question of levying additional millage for capital improvements on the ballot in either the August primary election or the November presidential election.

WHILE COUNCIL members appeared to lean in favor of taking the improvement program, or only certain projects such as the police building, to the public for a vote, they expressed the need for caution in how to approach the public.

"I feel this capital improvement plan is so vital . . . I don't want us to take

any approach that may sabotage it,"

Dodder said.

But Savage cautioned council members from placing just an advisory question before voters because it doesn't allow the city to do anything that it already legally can do.

An advisory question would be nullified if the proposed Voters Choice Amendment receives voter approval, Savage said.

The amendment would include a rollback of the millage rate to the 1981 level. If the city required more revenue (beyond the 1981 level of 8.5 mills) a vote of the people would be required, Savage said.

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