

CITY REDUCES STAFF TO IMPLEMENT FY 15 OPERATING BUDGET

Members of the Media: Below please find a press release from Lewiston City Administrator Ed Barrett regarding **staff reductions to implement the FY 15 municipal operating budget.** Dottie

**PRESS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEWISTON: Over the past two months, the Lewiston City Council has been engaged in reviewing the City Administrator's FY 15 proposed budget. That budget called for a 66 cent increase in the City-side property tax rate. An initially proposed 74 cent increase on the school property tax was subsequently reduced to 15 cents and has been approved by the voters.

The City Council subsequently reduced the proposed budget by over \$1.1 million, lowering the City-side property tax rate increase to 12 cents. This included a wide range of actions involving a reduction in spending in all categories and eliminating a number of vacant positions including: a solid waste worker at Public Works, a customer service position in Finance, a library technician, and 2.5 police officer positions.

On May 20, 2014, the City Council adopted a final budget that eliminated the remaining 12 cent City-side property tax increase but which required an additional reduction of \$225,000 in employee salaries. This required that occupied positions be eliminated and employees be laid off to balance the budget.

To meet this requirement, the City Administrator has implemented the following changes:

- Building maintenance personnel are currently assigned to the City's parking garages, the Armory in the Recreation Department, and City Hall where they are also responsible for other City buildings. All maintenance personnel will be consolidated into a single unit reporting to Public Works and allowing for greater flexibility in assignments. This will eliminate 3 filled and 1 recently vacated maintenance position.

- The Recreation Department will become a division of the Public Works Department and the position of Recreation Director will be eliminated. Given prior changes, including the transfer of parks maintenance to Public Works and the closure of the Multi-Purpose Center, Recreation can no longer justify departmental status with both a Director and Deputy Director.

According to City Administrator Ed Barrett: *“Eliminating positions and laying off individuals who have worked hard for the City and its residents is never easy but sometimes necessary as we struggle with reductions in state support programs, slow economic growth, and concern over the city’s property tax burden. We hope that these organizational changes will have minimal impact on the services and programs we offer to the community.”*

For further information, contact: Ed Barrett, City Administrator, at 207-513-3121 ext. 3200.