

To: City Council  
From: Matt Muckler, City Administrator  
Date: January 8, 2016  
Weekly Council Update

**Legislative Session to Open January 11th:** The Iowa League of Cities provided the following update to elected officials earlier today:

The 2016 Iowa Legislative Session begins Monday, January 11. As the second session of the 86th Iowa General Assembly, the political makeup of the governing bodies remains the same: Republicans control the Iowa House and Governor's office while Democrats remain the majority in the Iowa Senate. Both sides will have to work together and make compromises as they make their way through what looks to be a difficult session. A tight state budget, school funding and water quality are expected to be some of the more contentious issues legislators will face.

Each year the Legislature puts out a [Session Timetable](#) that can be used as a reference for when the funnels take place, what rules apply when, and when the 100th calendar day of session is. This year the 100th day of session is April 19. After the 100th calendar day per diem expenses for legislators cease, thus incentivizing an end to the Legislative Session. In addition, this year is an election year, so legislators will want to get back to their districts to begin campaigning. However, with a long list of contentious issues there is no guarantee that the Session will come to a close before summer.

During the interim the Iowa League of Cities [2016 Legislative Priorities](#) were set by the League's Legislative Policy Committee and approved by the general membership. Major priorities include advocating for the continuation of the property tax backfill, Home Rule decision making, and protecting the flexibility and effectiveness of Tax Increment Finance (TIF). The League will provide this Legislative Link newsletter each Friday throughout the session to keep you up-to-date on key Legislative issues impacting cities.

**FY17 Health Insurance Rates:** The City of West Branch was contacted this week by our account manager at Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa. The City's grandfathered plan is expected to increase 3.15%. Single dental coverage is increasing from \$25.26 to \$27.18 per month and family dental coverage is increasing from \$86.01 to \$92.55 per month.

**FY17 Property Tax Projections:** City Administrator Matt Muckler and Finance Officer Gordon Edgar prepared revenue estimates for property tax dollars this week. If the City Council keeps the property tax levy at \$12.59/thousand of assessed value, the City will receive \$1,630,694 vs. \$1,559,987 last year, an increase of \$70,707.

**Christmas Tree Curbside Pick-Up Continues:** Public Works staff continue to pick up Christmas trees that are placed at the curb with plastic, ornamentation and stands removed. Friday, January 22, 2016 will be the last day for Christmas tree pick-up. Residents are encouraged to contact the City Office at (319) 643-5888 with any questions they may have.

**Park RFQ Update:** The Park & Recreation Commission met yesterday evening and narrowed the field of consultants from seven to five. The five firms selected for interviews on January 14<sup>th</sup> are Bolton & Menk, Inc., Fehr Graham, French-Reneker-Associates, Inc., HBK Engineering, and IIW, P.C. The Park & Rec Commission will meet again on Thursday January 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. to select three finalists. Those three firms will appear before the City Council at a Work Session on Tuesday January 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

**2016 Pet Tags Now Available:** All cats and dogs over four months of age residing within the city limits must be registered annually with the City of West Branch. Tags for 2016 are now available at City Office located at 110 North Poplar Street. Current rabies vaccination papers are required at the time of registration. The fee for registering pets is \$5.00 per animal. A \$5.00 late penalty fee will be applied if an animal is registered after Jan. 31, 2016. Reminder post cards will be mailed to all current pet owners in January. Additional reminders have been placed on the December utility bills, the City website and West Branch Times. The [Annual Pet Registration Form](#) is also available on the City website.

**Upcoming City Meetings & Events:** Please see the Calendar of Events on the City Website at <http://westbranchiowa.org/home> for a complete list of all upcoming events. There are several Council, Board and Commission Meetings and other events currently scheduled:

- Tuesday, January 12th at 6:30 p.m. Animal Control Commission Meeting
- Wednesday, January 13th at 6:30 p.m. Zoning Board of Adjustment Mtg.
- Thursday, January 14th at 6:30 p.m. Library Board of Trustees Meeting
- Thursday, January 14th at 6:30 p.m. Park & Rec Commission Meeting
- Monday, January 18th Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
- Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7:30 Martin Luther King, Jr. Event at Town Hall
- Tuesday, January 19th at 6:00 p.m. City Council Work Session #1
- Tuesday, January 19th at 7:00 p.m. City Council Meeting
- Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, after regular mtg. City Council Work Session #2
- Saturday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. Family Movie Night at the Library
- Tuesday, January 26th at 7:00 p.m. Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting
- Thursday, January 28th at 7:00 p.m. Preservation Commission Meeting

**The information provided is one-way communication and should not be discussed among you as this would be a violation of the open meeting law.**