

City of West
Branch
Office of the
City
Administrator

To: City Council

From: Matt Muckler, City Administrator

Date: December 23, 2015

Weekly Council Update

FY17 Valuation Data: Valuation data for fiscal year 2016-2017 was received this week from both Johnson and Cedar Counties. West Branch property within Cedar County is valued at \$124,143,729, up 4.5% from last year. In FY16, the value of property for computing tax rates in the Cedar County portion of West Branch was \$118,697,405. This almost returns West Branch to FY15 levels, when the value for computing tax rates in Cedar County was \$126,103,396. So instead of a decrease in valuation of 6.2% like we experienced last year, the City can anticipate receiving more property taxes in the coming fiscal year.

The decrease from FY15 to FY16 was likely driven by the successful tax appeal by Acciona, which reduced their taxable value from about \$15 million to about \$8 million and legislation that provided reduced taxes in the form of rollbacks for commercial, industrial and multi-family property. The nearly 5% increase from FY16 to FY17 shows the City returning to the solid pattern of growth that we have been experiencing over the past several years.

The valuation for the portion of West Branch which lies in Johnson County comprises about 3.5% of the total valuation for the City. In FY16, this portion of West Branch had a value for computing tax rates of \$4,265,969. That number has increased about 7.2% in FY17 to \$4,572,905.

In the current fiscal year, property taxes accounted for about 38.5% of all revenue received, so while the increased valuation is promising news in terms of community growth and city budgeting, it accounts for less than 40% of the total revenue picture. City staff will be working next week to begin preparing the general fund and overall revenue projections for the coming fiscal year. Work has also begun on an employee compensation proposal and department directors are working on proposals for their departmental budgets. After the January 4, 2016 City Council Meeting, a work session will be held to officially kick-off the FY17 annual budget process.

Acciona Lawsuit: Dorsey & Whitney is working to prepare the City's motion to reconsider, which is due to the District Court by January 14, 2016. The deadline to appeal to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit is January 18, 2016. Our appeal to the Eighth Circuit will be filed prior to that deadline.

2016 Animal 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. Registrations and tags for 2016 are now available at City Offices and on the City Website. When registering your pets, please provide current rabies vaccination papers at the time of registration. The fee for registering pets is \$5.00 per animal. A \$5.00 late penalty fee will be applied on registrations after Jan. 31, 2016.

Holiday Trash Schedule: Trash pick-up will be delayed due to the Christmas and New Years' Holidays until Saturday December 26th and Saturday January 2nd. City Offices, the Park & Recreation Department and the West Branch Public Library will be closed on Thursday December 24th, Friday December 25th, and Friday January 1st.

Farewell to Mackenzie Krob: Mayor Roger Laughlin and City Administrator Matt Muckler were on hand on Tuesday December 22nd at Little Lights Events to thank Mackenzie Krob for all of her contributions to Main Street West Branch and to wish her all the best. Mackenzie has been a part of Main Street West Branch as either a Board Member or as the Director since the program came into existence over ten years ago. Other well-wishers also gathered including incoming Main Street Director Kevin Rogers and several Main Street business owners.

Finance Officer Training: The City's financial consultant Lisa Rickertsen spent all day Tuesday training new Finance Officer Gordon Edgar. Lisa provided training on journal entries, recording interest, monthly financial reporting, reconciliation, and accounts payable tasks. City Administrator Matt Muckler and Gordon reviewed the current fiscal year budget and discussed upcoming capital projects. Gordon is also working on the claims for the January 4, 2015 City Council Meeting.

City Tours Available: Please contact the City Office to set up a City Tour at a time that is convenient for you. The tour is intended to provide you with an update on various departments prior to working through the annual budget process. We have an opening for a Councilperson to join us on Tuesday December 29th from 8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. We can also schedule other times that work with your schedule.

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.