

2024 Hiawatha City budget adopted

(KNZA)--The Hiawatha City Commission has adopted a 2024 city budget that calls for a more than 16 percent property tax increase and an additional 1.4 mills levied.

The budget was adopted on a 3-1 vote Monday evening following a hearing in which local residents Stuart Aller and Richard Schilling voiced their concerns about the tax increase.

Commissioner Brian Shefferd casting the lone dissenting vote. Evans Woehlecke was absent. Shefferd proposed keeping the mill levy at the same rate as this year, which he said would still bring in about 12.5 percent in additional funding for the city budget due to an increase in the city's assessed valuation.

Following a second hearing prior to the budget hearing, the Commission approved a resolution to exceed the revenue neutral tax rate for the 2024 budget. The resolution was also approved on a 3-1 vote, with Commissioner Shefferd casting the dissenting vote.

City Administrator Becky Berger reviewed the budget. She said the spending plan maintains service levels, budgets for adequate fund balances, while also providing for needed capital improvements and equipment purchases.

The budget contains an estimated tax rate of 42.459 mills, which is anticipated to raise more than \$1.2 million in local tax revenue.

Berger said the mill levy increase would amount to roughly \$103 more a year on a home valued at \$150,000 or \$68.82 more year on a home valued at \$100,000.

She noted the city's property tax levy is below the average 54 mills for cities of similar size in the state.

In other business, the Commission approved the appointment of three additional members to the city's Housing Rehabilitation Advisory Board. Appointed were Bob Freese, Dave Thompson and Richard Schilling.

The Commission also gave Public Works Director Brad Scott approval to apply for a grant through the Kansas Department of Transportation to help fund a runway lighting project at the municipal airport.

