

## City Council Approves Agreement Between AXM and SPS; Approves Revenue Cap Ordinance

At the Dec. 15 evening meeting of the Hart City Council, council members present approved a settlement agreement between the Alliance of Xcel Municipalities (AXM) and Southwestern Public Service (SPS).

Xcel Energy (parent company of SPS) has reached a settlement with Texas customer groups to increase annual revenues to support close to \$1 billion in capital improvements and recognize the impact of reductions in wholesale sales in 2015.

Excel Energy, the Public Utility Commission of Texas, industry groups and an alliance of the 80 towns Xcel Energy serves in Texas, have agreed to a \$35 million, or 6.9 percent, annual revenue increase. The typical 1,000 kilowatt-hour residential bill will have risen on Dec. 10 by about four percent.

New rates also account for the reduction in wholesale power sold to rural cooperatives and municipal utilities in the region. Excel Energy's contracts with wholesale customers include planned reductions in sales, with most contracts ending in 2019.

In other business, the Council approved a Texas Municipal League resolution in opposition to revenue caps and other legislative interferences with local services. TML notes that it appears that the cities in the state of Texas will be facing a challenge in the form of the 85th Texas Legislature's seriously considering revenue caps on local governments and other measures that may limit a City's ability to locally determine tax rates and the best ways to address local issues.

One provision of the resolution is that the Hart City Council, by signing onto the resolution, feels it is necessary to establish *Ad Valorem* Tax Rates locally without a revenue cap to

meet the health and safety needs of its residents through the provision of statutorily required and allowable activities.

In discussing responsibilities and duties of the new City Administrator (Adrian Rosas), Mayor Castillo told Rosas to make sure all employees arrive on time, address citizen complaints, note problems, such as a trash receptacle having a hole in it and repair them. Rosas has been employed with the City, but was given extra responsibility because Castillo said that because he is employed with Hart ISD, he can't be meeting with citizens and addressing their complaints, questions, etc.

Paying overtime was discussed. In the past, the three employees of the Public Utility Service are allowed to work overtime, such as when spraying mosquitoes, and are paid at time and a half. The employees all punch a time clock, and Castillo said that over 40 hours, the City is required to pay time and a half. It was pointed out that employees get two weeks of sick leave or personal time; and two weeks of vacation time. Monica Guzman, city secretary, and her assistant, Corie Longoria, as well as Rosas with his new job description are each on a 90-day probationary period.

Council member Johnny Carrasco told Rosas that if the three public utility employees are waiting on someone to do a job for the City, that two be sent home (if after hours)...to make wise use of the time and to keep equipment maintained.

Carrasco asked Rosas about the grapple truck, which is back in the shop. A new problem has arisen, and it's at Sonny's Irrigation in Dimmitt.

Council members present were Mayor Eliazar Castillo and council persons Mary Reyna, Johnny Carrasco and Ezekiel Barron.

## School Board Approves Changes In Secondary Teachers

At the December 12 meeting, the Hart School Board approved recommendations by Supt. David Cox regarding high school science. Shane McDaniel, who teaches science to students in Grades 6-8, will also be teaching high school biology in place of Xiong Chen. Chen, of Amarillo, has never taught until this year, having been in pharmaceutical research. This research is often funded by grants, and this wasn't always reliable as a source of income. Cox said Chen will continue to teach the science labs, and also is in charge of Plato, an online standards-based learning program.

Cox is continuing to look for a high school science teacher, as well as an ag science teacher. Maddie Thompson, current ag science teacher, is leaving at the end of this semester.

Cox reported that a high school boy has been hired to help him with work on fences, etc.

The Board voted to again appoint Scotty Clevenger to serve on the Castro County Appraisal District Board.

Cox reported that some school districts will be asking the State Legislature to reconsider the multiplier in funding small schools, and instead, treating all schools the same. He said that the multiplier for small schools (fewer than 1600 students) is 0.025 X the tax base; larger schools use 0.040. For Hart, ISD, he said this can be a loss of annual revenue of at least \$300,000. He said that when this funding mechanism was put in place in 1975, the legislature thought small schools would consolidate.

The board convened in executive session from 7:19 to 7:45 p.m. After returning to open session, the Board approved the resignation of Cassie Baker, middle school math teacher, and employment of her replacement, Alexa Riley, who is a recent Texas Tech graduate. And, the board hired former ag science teacher Jerry Mathis (of Olton) as a temporary teacher in place of Thompson.

## CASTRO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Persons Arrested & Booked into Jail, December 6 to 12, 2016.

*All information of persons arrested and booked into the Castro County Jail are open records:*

### December 7

Daniel Ray Silva, 39, of Dimmitt was arrested by the Dimmitt Police for No Drivers License.

Roxanne Casas, 34, of Dimmitt was arrested by the Texas DPS Criminal Investigation Division for Possession of Controlled Substance, PG 1, under 1 gram.

Brian Todd West, 47, of Dimmitt was arrested by the Texas DPS Criminal Investigation Division for Possession of Controlled Substance, PG 1, over 1 gram-under 4 grams.

Adrian Aguilar, 41, of Dimmitt was arrested by the Texas DPS Criminal Investigation Division for Manufacture/Deliver Controlled Substance PG 1 over 4 grams-under 200 grams.

Jesus Maldonado Jr., 52, of Hereford was arrested by the Sheriff's Office on a TDCJ Parole Warrant.



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