

# **PROJECTED INCOME: Council OKs 2010 Budget**

## **MAYOR SAYS PLAN PASSED ALMOST WITHOUT ANY CHANGES**

By Steve Caraway

Wednesday, November 25, 2009

**SPRINGDALE** — The city budget for 2010 passed the City Council at its meeting Tuesday, two months quicker than last year.

Mayor Doug Sprouse, who oversaw budget cuts all during 2009, came up with a budget that was passed almost without changes by the council.

"I want to thank the mayor and the staff for coming up with information that answered all our questions," said Alderman Jim Reed.

The 2010 budget includes a step raise for city employees. Employees did not receive a raise in 2009 and got a 1 percent cost of living raise in 2008, Sprouse said.

"When I pulled the raises out of the 2009 budget, I said in my state of the city speech that I would help the city employees as soon as possible," Sprouse said. "I think, with the money we saved during the year, the city can afford it."

The 2010 city budget includes projected income of \$27.4 million and projected expenses of \$27.3 million. The budget contains 471 positions, down from 482 in the original 2009 budget.

The city laid off two people during 2009, one at the airport and one in planning, said Wyman Morgan, city director of administration and finance. The other eliminated positions through attrition, when employees who left were not replaced.

"I think, if the position is included in the budget and it's approved, an employee would be pretty secure they would have a job for this year," Morgan said. "All the cuts we made in 2009 were aimed at the 2010 budget."

The 2010 budget bumps salaries an average of 2.9 percent, said Wyman Morgan, city director of administration and finance. The steps are larger for those departments with a steep learning curve, such as the police and fire, said Morgan.

"Those people could have to run into a burning building or face an armed robbery early in their career," Morgan said. "In other departments, you can take the time for a supervisor to come out and show someone how to do a job."

Some people who have reached the top step for their position would not receive a raise, Morgan said.

Sprouse, City Clerk/Treasurer Denise Pearce and City Attorney Jeff Harper would receive 1 percent raises. Pay for city council members and Planning Commission members would not change.

Stan Ludwig, district judge, would not receive a raise, since his salary is set by the state legislature. He did receive a raise during 2009, after a change in state laws.

The budget included an adjustment to the division of the city's sales tax. One percent of the tax has been split with one quarter going to the general fund and three quarters to the capital improvement fund.

The budget calls for a 50-50 division of the tax. Alderman Jeff Watson asked if the division would revert to the old split after this year or remain at 50 percent to each fund.

The division would go back to the old proportions, said Harper.

"I don't want to fool anyone out there," said Sprouse. "Unless we see a significant climb in our sales taxes, you'll see the same resolution next year."