

Rollback neutralizes slight increase in city tax levy

By JOE FOREMAN
EDITOR

After weeks of crunching numbers, the city of Glenwood has put together its proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024, which begins July 1.

The proposed \$3 million budget includes a slight increase in the city's property tax levy but at the same time a slight reduction in actual tax dollars collected.

"The overall arching theme is the levy is going up but I don't think you'll see a difference because the amount of money we're bringing in is less," Glenwood City Administrator Amber Farnan said in an interview Monday.

The city's current levy for FY 2023 is 15.52452 (per \$1,000 taxable valuation). The proposed levy for FY 2024 is 15.83606. Farnan credits a reduction in the state rollback as the primary reason for the decline in tax dollars collected. The rollback is an adjustment the state makes to limit increases in the aggregate taxable value of residential property in Iowa.

Farnan said the city is collecting tax dollars totaling \$3,048,288 in FY 2023. With the projected levy for FY 2024, the city will collect \$3,045,415. There is a chance the FY 2024 levy could end up being slightly lower, Farnan said.



"The reason we might be lowering it slightly is in the employees benefits column," she said. "We have a little bit of an overage and we want to use that up. We might decrease it a little bit more."

Addressing the budget at the April 11 meeting of the Glenwood City Council, Farnan noted that the city's portion of a Glenwood property owner's tax bill is 30-35 percent. The Glenwood Community School District gets 40-45 percent and the remaining dollars go to the county and other entities, like Iowa Western Community College.

"Even if our tax rate doesn't increase, but the school and the county does, then you're going to see an increase in your taxes overall," she said.

Farnan's comment came in response to comments made earlier

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City contribution sought for 'Glenwood' sign being proposed for Highway 34

By JOE FOREMAN
EDITOR

The City of Glenwood has been asked to contribute \$10,000 to a limestone "GLENWOOD" sign that would be placed along U.S. Highway 34 to attract visitors to the community.

Representatives of the Mills County Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Team made the request last Tuesday, April 11, while providing an update on the project to the Glenwood City Council.

The sign will be similar to the lighted "MALVERN" sign on Highway 34. The word "GLENWOOD" will be in black lettering with solar-powered "halo" lighting behind the letters. The sign would be placed on the south side of the highway, across from the Hickory Ridge subdivision, facing eastbound traffic approaching the Glenwood exit.

The chamber committee has been working with the Iowa Department of Transportation and representatives of Leick Construction, Ebmeier Engineering and CBS Signs to develop a design and finalize the cost. Initial projections determined the project's price tag at between \$50,000 - \$60,000.

"We've got it all marked out there along the right of way," Grassau said. "We're working with Ebmeier Engineering on the structural design of it. They are doing it free of charge."

In February, Leadership team members told the city council they are counting on local donations and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars given to Mills County to fund the project. Grassau said the county has since agreed to



COURTESY PHOTO

The proposed "GLENWOOD" sign would be placed on eastbound U.S. Highway 34.

contribute to the project.

"We went to the Mills County Supervisors and asked them to donate something towards it, since we're the county seat. They gave us a \$5,000 donation," she said.. "We are now here in front of you asking for \$10,000 to go towards the sign."

Grassau suggested the city could use ARPA dollars for their contribution.

No action was taken on the request. City council member Holly Jackson stated that the city is still determining how it will spend the \$800,000-plus dollars it received in ARPA funds. Mills County received over \$2.9 million in ARPA dollars.

"The problem is we're trying to figure out how to offset different things on our budget as it is for necessary city infrastructure," Jackson said.

Council member Laurie Smithers questioned if the price estimate for the project first presented to the council was made without knowing the engineering fees would be donated.

"At first, we kind of had a lower amount for solar, but the solar came back as little more expensive than what we thought so that kind of balanced everything out," Grassau said.

Grassau added that if the city were to contribute to the sign project, the committee would like to receive the funds in the next 30 days so supplies can be ordered and the project can move forward.

Citizen input sought for GRC redevelopment plan

■ Four-night series of public meetings set for April 24-27

By JOE FOREMAN
EDITOR

Do you have a suggestion on what should be done with the land and buildings on the Glenwood Resource Center campus after the facility closes next year?

Citizens will have an opportunity to provide input on the redevelopment plan for the GRC during a four-night workshop next week in the Meyer Building gymnasium on the the GRC campus.

The first night of the workshop, facilitated by HDR architectural and engineering consultants, is Monday, April 24, from 5:30 - 7 p.m. The progressive workshop will last four consecutive evenings with daily updates provided to the public each night at the same time. A project team will work each day to incorporate feedback and comments from the previous night's forum. The process will repeat itself until the last day. The end goal is to reach a consensus on a "preferred redevelopment plan."

"Each evening, HDR will gather the information they obtain from the evening before and update the information so it can be discussed at the next evening's public meeting," said GRC Redevelopment Task Force member Larry Winum. "It's important to attend as many evenings as possible in order to stay up to date with changes through the week."

The four-night workshop is a key step in the process to develop a consensus-driven vision and



JOE FOREMAN / THE OPINION-TIBUNE

Reaching consensus on a community plan for the redevelopment of the Glenwood Resource Center is the goal of a four-night series of meetings scheduled for April 24-27 in the Meyer Building gymnasium.

masterplan for the 380-acre campus.

For decades, the stated-managed resource center has provided residential care and vital services for Iowans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In April 2022, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds announced the state's decision to close the facility in 2024.

Since the closure announcement was made, state and local officials have shared input and direction in an effort to repurpose the campus. A task force made of representatives from the Glenwood community was established to ensure the redevelopment plan will meet the needs and goals of the Glenwood community for the immediate and long-term future.

GRC Task Force Members

Debi Durham - Iowa Economic Development and Finance Director.

Adam Steen - Director of Iowa's Department of Administrative Services.

Paul Carlson - Public Service Executive For The State Of Iowa.

Andrew Rainbolt - Executive Director of the Mills County Economic Development Foundation.

Richard Crouch - Vice Chair of the Mills County Board Of Supervisors.

Amber Farnan - City Administrator for the City of Glenwood.

Devin Embray - Glenwood Community School District Superintendent.

Larry Winum - Glenwood State Bank CEO.

Mark Lincoln - President of the Mills County Economic Development Foundation Board of Directors.

Dax Landeen - GRC Assistant Superintendent / Financial Manager.



JOE FOREMAN / THE OPINION-TIBUNE

Repair work at the Glenwood Aquatic Center began last week. The needed repairs are expected to be completed in the coming weeks, allowing the facility to be opened on time for the summer swimming season.

Glenwood Aquatic Center repairs underway

By JOE FOREMAN
EDITOR

Glenwood officials are optimistic necessary repair work at the Glenwood Aquatic Center will be completed in the coming days, allowing the facility to open at the regular start of the summer swimming season.

The facility was closed for the entire 2022 season because of multiple water loss issues.

Crews began making repairs at the 7-year-old facility late last week.

Repairs include the sealing of joints, replacement of a filter tee and adjacent piping and some deck work near one of the diving boards.

The work is being monitored by representatives of JEO Consulting

and Eagle Engineering. JEO was the engineering firm the city selected in 2014 to oversee construction of the aquatic center, which opened in July 2016. Although the warranty for the aquatic center has expired, JEO has agreed to assist the city in making the necessary repairs, and cover the costs. Eagle Engineering was contracted in 2022 by the city to handle its engineering-related matters.

School district adjusting to new restroom law

By JOEL STEVENS
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Transgender students in the Glenwood Community School District will not be allowed to use restrooms or locker rooms that align with their gender identity under a new law passed in the Iowa Legislature.

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds signed Senate File 482 into law March 22. The law prohibits "persons from entering single and multiple occupancy restrooms or changing areas and other school facilities in elementary and secondary schools that do not correspond with the person's biological sex."

Iowa is one of nearly a dozen states to recently adopt a so-called "bathroom bill" targeting LGBTQ+ youth. The final language of Iowa's

measure has been rumored for months and debated in both chambers of the statehouse for the better part of a year. The law went into effect immediately at Iowa's public and private schools.

"It's always difficult when the legislature passes something and then have it go into effect immediately," said Dr. Devin Embray, superintendent at the Glenwood Community School District. "We have to scramble and try and make sure we have the property points addressed and outlined to whatever they've passed. It would be nice if we had a little lead time, but we have made accommodations."

Those accommodations include granting requests from a parent that their student be allowed to use a unisex or private restroom. The law requires trans students obtain written

consent from their legal guardians before receiving permission to use single-person restrooms.

Embray declined to speculate how many students in the Glenwood school district identify as transgender but did say there have not been issues he can recall with those students' using restrooms that align with their gender identity or since the new law went into effect in late March.

"It's been fine in our district," Embray said. "However, should there be an issue we want to make sure we've accommodated those students appropriately and they feel like we are supporting them."

Embray said the district has pledged to "hastily deal" with any instances of bullying.

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\$1.50



DEATH NOTICES

Lanina Condon, 79

Felicia Ann Diggs, 40

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