

The Bedford Citizen

THE NEWS YOU NEED TO GUIDE YOUR CITY

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EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

"IT'S ON THE AUTOPILOT ..."

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ABOUT THIS E-NEWS

The primary focus of *The Bedford Citizen* is on providing the information that Bedford's residents need to know in order to cast an informed vote. [Read more.](#)

FEATURES

MAY 1 CITY COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

On May 1, the Council met for a Strategic Planning Session regarding CFY 2007 - 2008 budget.

MAY 8 CITY COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Council received the Quarterly Financial Report, Mr. David Buchanan made a presentation to the Council on behalf of Dale Resources, a company that specializes in urban drilling of natural gas wells, and a public hearing was held to gather suggestions to be included in the Request for Proposals (RFP) to outsource the Bedford Public Library.

MAY 22 CITY COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The most recent draft of the RFP for outsourcing of the Bedford Public Library was discussed, and Councilmen Orian and Whistler spoke in favor of moving expeditiously to allow drilling for natural gas within the City limits.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

"IT'S ON THE AUTOPILOT ..."

By Stu Updike

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There's an old joke about a couple who decided to buy a motor home and see the country. They bought the motor home, loaded it up and set out. The husband took the wheel first and used that opportunity to demonstrate all the fancy features to his wife. One of the new features was the cruise control. After a while, the husband asked his wife if she would like to drive, and she said yes. They swapped seats, and she drove for a while. When the husband began to feel weary, he went back to the bedroom and fell asleep. He hadn't slept long when his wife tapped him on the shoulder to ask him a question. When he awoke enough to realize that the motor home was still in motion, he asked, "Who's driving?"

She replied, "Oh, it's on the autopilot ... "

When we choose not to fulfill our obligation to keep ourselves informed and vote, we are allowing our government to cruise on the autopilot.

When I came to Bedford 14 years ago, I was thrilled to find the Boys Ranch Park. I had never seen such a fantastic park with baseball fields, tennis courts, the theater, the senior center, the pool, etc., all in one location. At first, I lived in an apartment complex at the intersection of Highway 121

and Bedford Road. I was thrilled that there were horses living in the pastures across the street from my apartment. It was wonderful, but change is inevitable. The pastures and horses have been transformed into townhouses and office space and, over time, the cost of operating the city has no doubt increased.

Fortunately, the Boys Ranch has actually seen a number of improvements. Assets like the library and the Boys Ranch exist today because of budget decisions made by the Council each year for many years.

Balancing a budget usually requires striking a balance between increasing income and tightening one's belt. While a city shouldn't be too quick to increase taxes, it should be careful, also, to avoid tightening the belt to the point of either stunting the growth of or completely suffocating the city. City services like the library and the Boys Ranch are not just assets that we use; they are assets that define the community as a nice place to live and thereby add value to our homes and quality to our lives.

It is our responsibility to stay informed and help to guide our government. That means keeping up with the issues facing our community, studying those issues carefully and making the Council aware of our preferences. It also means careful study of Council incumbents and candidates in order to identify those who best represent our personal values.

Just over 30,000 Bedford residents are registered to vote, yet only about 1400 votes were cast in the recent City Council election. Some would call this apathy, but I believe it is not so much apathy as it is an

inability to discern a difference between the candidates. As any election day approaches, we begin to see signs that read, "VOTE for John Doe for ..." And, why would I want to do this? The fliers are frequently just as vague. If they include the candidate's position at all, it usually appears as an extremely vague bullet pointed list.

It is the goal of *The Bedford Citizen* to provide accurate information about what is happening in Bedford so that residents can make informed decisions about current issues, convey their preferences to the present Council and select the candidates in future elections who will respect their preferences.

The surest way let the Council know what you want is to climb into that driver's seat, take hold of the steering wheel, turn off the autopilot, and cast an informed vote.

LIBRARY COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP

The Bedford Public Library Advisory Board invites you to participate in a Community Focus Group for the library Tuesday, June 19, 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Help us identify the Bedford Public Library's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and obstacles to progress. Activities for school-aged children will be available in the Bonnie Finn Room to allow parents to participate in the Community Focus Group.

ABOUT THIS E-NEWS

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The mission of this electronic newspaper (e-news) is to increase citizen awareness of current events and thereby increase their involvement in our government's decision making process. As a result, *The Bedford Citizen* will focus on providing Bedford's residents with the information they need in order to cast an informed vote. We will also include some helpful and entertaining information as we are able.

The Bedford Citizen is currently a volunteer effort which we expect to be circulated from friend to friend via email in its PDF format. If you find it helpful and informative, please feel free to pass it along to others.

During this introductory period, the subscriptions are free. This will allow us to gauge the demand and work out the bugs. Eventually, we plan to charge a fee for subscriptions. This will allow us to avoid the conflicts of interest that can arise from accepting paid advertising.

Initially, we plan to publish an issue every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, subject to volunteer availability and the amount of news to report.

To subscribe, please send us an email at Be.A.Citizen@earthlink.net Please include your name and email address.

The Bedford Citizen welcomes free of charge:

- ◆ News articles from any volunteer writers, provided we judge the

articles are relevant to our readers and the facts can be substantiated

- ◆ Position papers from political incumbents and candidates provided these position papers clearly state that person's position and they do not attack any other party

Our policies are as follows:

- ◆ Paid advertising is not accepted.
- ◆ Except when identified as editorials, letters to the editor or opinion pieces, stories will contain only facts that can be verified. Writers should expect to be asked to provide documentation before articles are published.
- ◆ All submitted articles must deal with issues relevant to Bedford's residents and not exceed two pages, as published in this format.
- ◆ Only one letter to the editor or opinion piece will be accepted from a single household during any 30-day period.
- ◆ Public service announcements will be included as space allows.
- ◆ The staff of the Bedford Citizen will be the final judge.
- ◆ Submissions must be received at least 72 hours prior to publication.
- ◆ Submissions should be sent to Be.A.Citizen@earthlink.net and must include the author's name, address, email address and phone number.

FEATURES

MAY 1 CITY COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

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On May 1, the Council met for a Strategic Planning Session regarding CFY 2007-2008 budget. Jeff Cason was the only Councilperson absent. City Manager Beverly Queen and City Secretary Shanae Jennings and 6-10 residents were present also.

Joe Gonzales, the facilitator working under contract with the City, was re-introduced and outlined two goals for the evening:

- ◆ To establish guidelines for the budget process for City Fiscal Year (CFY) 2007 - 2008
- ◆ To identify budget priorities for CFY 2007 - 2008

Council discussed those goals and identified key points to address under each.

Council developed a policy for outsourcing (which they renamed "competitive sourcing") in order to focus on whether or not a department or a responsibility within the City should be outsourced. The final policy consists of the following four components:

- ◆ City Manager and staff conduct cost/benefit analysis process in a timely manner.
- ◆ The RFP process and other tools should be utilized as a model for cost/benefit analysis.

- ◆ Develop criteria for cost/benefit analysis that include pros and cons.
- ◆ The request may be made by the consensus of the Council.

Council requested by consensus that City Manager Beverly Queen provide for them by May 15, 2007, a timetable for considering competitive sources within each of the city's departments.

During the session, Mayor Story said that outsourcing should be investigated carefully, to make sure that it makes sense in terms of risk, cost, etc.

Councilman Whistler suggested earmarking \$250,000 so that the Economic Development Department can attract new businesses to Bedford through participation at related conferences. He said that City staff salary increases should be a consistent amount each year, not a varying percentage. He also suggested that the City sell all bonds approved by voters in the November 2001 election and move forward on all related projects.

Councilman Savage said that he isn't opposed to outsourcing but doesn't agree with the way it's been approached so far. He said that considering outsourcing tends to lower staff morale.

Councilwoman Nail suggested that outsourcing of a service not be brought to the forefront until City staff has fully investigated it and that it should be considered only when the council is in agreement that doing so is appropriate. She urged the council to focus on the City's young people as it reviews city services.

Councilman Orea said that outsourcing

has potential in every city service except police and fire. He suggested that the City set aside up to \$10,000 to study the feasibility of building a new library with the bond amount that has been approved for doing so. He commented that the Council is forced to be open even though it's not necessarily the best way to do things and that "We wasted my time tonight by not adopting a policy of looking into competitive sourcing of three specific areas during this budget process." He went on to describe those three as "research competitive sourcing to determine cost effectiveness of all lawn maintenance, routinely scheduled vehicle maintenance and the Human Resources Department. When Councilman Whistler added Code Enforcement, Councilman Orea said that that had not been on his list, but he agreed to add it.

After more discussion among the Council and the facilitator, Councilman Whistler returned to the issue of immediately looking into outsourcing of the previously specified services. He said, "If you set policy that precludes this, I won't attend the budget session. It'll be a waste of time." When asked if he really wanted that information in the minutes, he replied, "Yes, you can put that in the minutes."

For the official May 1 Council Minutes, go to

http://www.ci.bedford.tx.us/council/council_minutes/ccws070501.pdf

A VHS recording of the May 1 Council meeting is available for a three-day check out from the library.

MAY 8 CITY COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

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Work Session Topics

Tom Ross, Director of Administrative Services, presented the quarterly financial report. When he spoke of the General Fund, he reported that the revenues were running better than budgeted and the expenditures were running a bit below the budget.

Prior to this meeting, Councilman Orea had requested 4 items be added to the agenda:

- ◆ Status of preparations for red light camera installations in Bedford
- ◆ Statistics relative to towing of vehicles operated by individuals unable to provide proof of financial responsibility (FR) during March and April of 2007
- ◆ Information relative to the possible impact of a second water billing cycle
- ◆ Proposed SUP (Special Use Permit) to allow expanded vehicle parking on residentially zoned property in Bedford

At the work session, Councilman Orea indicated that City staff has provided information to the Council that addresses those items. He will review this information and, if questions remain after that review, he will request related items for a future work session.

Councilman Orea cautioned the Council

to consider the precedent that could be set by a new SUP process and wanted to ensure that appropriate development standards are tied to any SUP process that is initiated. He expressed concern that, based on how the proposed SUP is framed, the community potentially could be severely impacted.

Executive Session Topics

- ◆ Litigation regarding Sterling Falls Apartment complex
- ◆ Deliberation regarding economic development negotiations
- ◆ City Manager's overall performance
Item requested by Councilman Whistler

Regular Session Topics

- ◆ Mr. David Buchanan made a PowerPoint presentation on behalf of Dale Resources regarding the Natural Gas Drilling Process.
- ◆ Claire Kamego spoke against outsourcing the management and operations of the Bedford Public Library and commented on the RFPs developed to date.
- ◆ Discussion of the City's Military Leave Policy was tabled until the May 22 meeting.
- ◆ Rezoning of a property generally north of State Highway 183 and east of Central Drive (Park Place Meadow Addition) from Heavy Commercial to Heavy Commercial/Hotel-Motel; requested by Nash Patel for Bestway Inn, was

approved as a first reading. There will be a second reading May 22. The Bestway Inn name is a place holder for a national chain name.

- ◆ A public hearing was held regarding the Request for Proposals (RFP) for outsourcing of the Bedford Public Library operation and supervision. *Item requested by Councilman Orea.* Council discussed the RFP among themselves before opening the public hearing. Seven Bedford residents spoke against outsourcing the library and commented on the RFP draft document. This subject will be covered in greater detail in an upcoming issue of *The Bedford Citizen*.

For the official May 8 Council Minutes go to http://www.ci.bedford.tx.us/council/council_minutes/cc070508.pdf

A VHS recording of the May 8 Council meeting is available for a three-day check out from the library.

FREE MUSIC CONCERT AT OBS

The Latin band *Canta* will perform 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. on the lawn at the Old Bedford School. Bring your picnic and your chair.

MAY 22 CITY COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

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Regular Session Topics

- ◆ Rezoning requested by Nash Patel for Bestway Inn, final reading, was approved by consent. (See May 8 highlights.)
- ◆ Bids and contract for Fire Station #1 and #2 Driveway Reconstruction and Sanitary Sewer Line Replacement in E. M. Bilger Jr. Blvd. were approved by consent.
- ◆ Resolution granting approval to Tarrant Co. Housing Finance Corp. for use of proceeds of Series 2007 Single-Family Mortgage Revenue Bonds to finance home mortgages for single-family homes in Bedford was approved by consent.
- ◆ No action was taken on the city's military leave policy due to the fact that staff needs more time.
- ◆ During "Persons To Be Heard", Bob Chochrane shared several citizen complaints that had been brought to light recently. Claire Kamego commented that the library outsourcing RFP appears intended to outsource only the staff. She pointed out, also, that it is very difficult for working citizens to view the RFP prior to the Council meetings under current posting procedures.
- ◆ Councilman Orean read the

changed portions of the RFP to the Council and audience. The RFP will now go to City staff and the City attorney for final review and distribution.

- ◆ Note: The version of the RFP that was discussed at this meeting is available from the city's website: <http://www.ci.bedford.tx.us/>
- ◆ Councilmen Orean and Whistler spoke of the Barnett Shale Expo that they had attended. They encouraged the Council to move expeditiously to enable drilling with the City limits. The drilling issue will be discussed further in an upcoming issue of *The Bedford Citizen*.

Open Forum Issues

Only two citizens spoke during Open Forum. Diane Versocki commented on the apparent failure to communicate regarding the library outsourcing issue. She said that, while many citizens have spoken *against outsourcing*, virtually none have spoken *in favor of it*. She went on to ask why the Council cannot work with the community to establish goals for the library and give our Library Manager an opportunity to implement them.

Ray Champney had the following to say:

"Congratulations Dr. Turner. Mr. Mayor, Council members. I did not plan to get up and speak, but the last person that spoke really almost compelled me to do it - because what has been going through my mind for a long period of time is that this is a very emotional issue. It is not like the

sanitation department. You can outsource something like that, and nobody really cares unless they're not picking up the garbage.

"This is my library. It is their library. It is not necessarily the City's library. People feel very close to it. They feel very warm about it. They go to it. They sit in it. They enjoy it. They're proud of it. It's not something that can be dissected and analyzed as some of the other services can, so I would really encourage you to consider focusing on the opportunity that is presented from the Barnett Shale. I would consider you focusing on the bond issue that was passed for a new library, for which you have already purchased the land. That land with some creative thinking could be used to expand the library under the auspices of the control of the City. Find a sponsor for the library. Put some added value into the library, like a Starbucks or a coffee shop or something else that will help to offset cost. Look at the things that are really going to be beneficial to the city like developing our resources, conforming to what the citizens really feel heartfelt about, their library, and looking for new and creative ways to accomplish what needs to be accomplished."

Official minutes of the May 22 Council Meeting will be available from the City's website after they are approved by the Council.

A VHS recording of the May 22 Council meeting is available for a three-day check out from the library.

CENTRAL POOL UPDATE

The Parks & Recreation Board meeting scheduled for June 7, 2007 will include an update on Central Pool. The public may attend, but may not participate.

Conference Room, Upstairs in City Hall
2000 Forest Ridge Drive, Building A

For the agenda, go to

http://www.ci.bedford.tx.us/council/board_s/board_agendas/070607parkboard.pdf