

# Buck stops with town council

## Payson council's policy won't let town staff waive fees for permits and use of facilities

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The Payson Town Council last week approved an overhaul of its system for giving various groups a break on town fees.

Previously, many town employees had the power to waive town fees — mostly for charitable groups staging events that make use of public facilities.

Now, the council must approve any fee waivers — whether it's a break on the charge for hosting a community fund-raiser in Green Valley Park or the town's \$7,500-per-unit water impact fee.

"I think this is a very good idea," said Councilor Ed Blair, in reference to the town's new, get-tough approach on fees. "It puts it on us. I like that."

"It certainly is the appropriate role for the council," said Mayor Kenny Evans, "although I don't like telling people now."

The council has gotten very good at "no," when it comes to waiving those fees in the face of the seemingly interminable, slow-motion budget crisis.

In the past two years the town has phased out payments it once made to an array of charitable organizations in town and gotten much more stringent about the fees it charges local groups for building permits and park use fees. Groups that have pleaded in vain for a break on the fees include Habitat for Humanity, Payson Community Kids, Mogollon Montoneras, the Beeline Cruise-In Classic Car Show and others.

The policy change got unanimous support from the council.

Councilor John Wilson noted that the Friends of Payson Parks and Recreation has raised some money to provide scholarships for kids who can't afford the fees the town charges to participate in various sports leagues.

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