

City OKs impact fee issue change

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HURRICANE - The Hurricane City Council hopes Thursday's approval of an impact fee ordinance will help spur home building and boost the city's struggling economy.

The ordinance, which allows property owners to pay power impact fees after either a six-month period or at the time of occupancy will save property owners \$1,300 in interest. Those impact fees were originally charged up front.

"We're not changing the amount of the impact fees," said City Attorney Fey Reber. "The owner is agreeing to make the payments prior to a six month period."

If the fees go unpaid after that six-month period or if the property is occupied before the fees are paid, the city would then disconnect the power and legally pursue payment.

"If somebody occupies one of those house before they're paid we have to have the backbone to turn them off," Mayor Tom Hirschi said. "To make this work we would have to shut them off."

Though these changes will do much to benefit builders and property owners, the city will now have to work harder to ensure it receives payment on the impact fees. To address this issue, the city decided to tack on a \$50 fee for the extra clerical work required for delaying the time of payment.

"Fifty dollars seems like a reasonable amount," City Councilman Mike Jensen said. "It doesn't seem like a whole lot of work."

The ordinance will go into effect immediately. Reber assured the council it could return to the original policy with a simple vote whenever it wanted, if things didn't work out.

"If at anytime we want to go back to the old way we just have to pass another ordinance," he said.

After approving the impact fee ordinance the council was also happy to approve nearly \$6,000 to be

added to a federal grant awarded to the fire department.

Chief Tom Kuhlmann said the grant would enable the department to purchase new gear to equip 17 recently trained firefighters.

"Without this equipment we wouldn't be able to use them," he said.

The gear includes new helmets, coats pants and boots.

Kuhlmann added that he originally budgeted more than \$32,000 this year for the purchase of new equipment. With the grant, however, the city only has to supply around \$6,000.

"We'll have \$26,000 that will go unexpended," Kuhlmann said. "And we'll have the latest and greatest equipment for 27 people."

In a time of economic hardship, the council was visibly pleased with any amount of money that could be saved.

"You must be doing a great job with writing the grants," Hirschi said. "This ought to make the firefighters feel a lot better about the work they're doing."

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