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Farmington OKs new impact fees

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FARMINGTON -- Developments will cost more here in the very near future.

City leaders Tuesday approved a pair of new impact fees aimed at generating funds for capital projects. The city council voted to implement a new fire facilities impact fee and in a separate vote adopted new water impact fees. The new fees take effect in 90 days and target new developments.

The vote for the new fire fee was 3-1, with Councilman Jim Talbot voting against it, while a vote for the water impact fee was unanimous. Councilman John Bilton was absent from the meeting. It was the fire fee that generated the most discussion. The fee targets nonresidential structures and is expected to provide revenue for the city to buy a new pumper truck.

The fire fee does not come with limits on who is assessed, and it includes churches and the county's new building, slated for later this year. City Manager Max Forbush estimates the fee could generate as much as \$850,000 over a 10-year period.

"I don't know how we are going to afford a platform truck without the fees," Forbush told city leaders.

A specific breakdown of the fee structures for fire and water was not available, but Forbush estimated the fire fee alone adds as much as \$500,000 in added costs to the Station Park development plan. Forbush said revenue generated by the new fee will allow the city to buy a new platform truck, which officials estimate comes with a price tag of almost \$1 million and could cost as much as \$1.4 million if financed over 15 years as outlined by city officials.

Talbot suggested the new fees are a deterrent to growth, not an enhancement.

"There are shopping centers sitting vacant because of impact fees. The developer has to pass it on to someone," Talbot said. He said the new fees aren't fair and likened the expense to throwing the dart at developers.

Talbot voted against the fire fee, but he was not alone in expressing concern about raising the cost of building in the city.

"As distasteful as it is, we are still left with the same question. How do you pay for it?"

Councilman Rick Dutson said of a new pumper truck.

Councilman Cory Ritz said city officials can either raise impact fees or property taxes to finance projects.

As part of the move to implement new fees, city leaders also voted on separate measures to approve a new fire capital facilities plan and to adopt a water capital facilities plan. The fire facilities plan includes a new pumper and the potential purchase of property in west Farmington for a new fire substation in the future.

The water facilities plan includes a new city well among a list of possible projects in the near future.

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