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Elgin launches program to help residents understand how the city budget works and where their money is going

FEEDBACK

By **GLORIA CASAS**
ELGIN COURIER-NEWS | NOV 08, 2019



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Municipal budgets are filled with lots of numbers, data and big words, which can be intimidating and cause major head-rubbing.

City of Elgin officials are trying to address that by taking a new approach they hope will make the 2020 budget and the budget process in general easier to understand.

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Budget On-the-Go is a series of informal meetings at which city staff will talk with residents about the budget, explain how the city is investing their money and learn what's important to them, officials said.

“We look forward to getting out into the community to talk about the budget, educate our residents and business owners on the city’s investments, gather input and answer questions,” City Manager Rick Kozal said. “You don’t need to be subject matter expert to share your ideas for Elgin.”

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Three informal Budget On-the-Go meetings are scheduled: Budget & Brews, 8 to 10 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 12, at Paul’s Family Restaurant, 1300 Lawrence Ave. and 6 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21, at Lounge 51, Dream Hall, 51 S. Grove Ave. Coffee will be provided at both meetings.

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Let’s Taco ‘Bout the Budget is from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 3, at The Haight, 166 Symphony Way. Tacos will be provided.

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“We know the public has the opportunity to attend these meetings (or) watch online, but we wanted to have better engagement this year with the budget.”

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new series of budget meetings called Budget-on-the-Go where staff will be going out into the community where we know people are already gathering.”

The Elgin City Council has started discussions on the proposed \$275 million budget for 2020 and three-year financial plan. The 209-page document is available on the city’s website, www.cityofelgin.com.

Property taxes are expected to remain the same but a 6% water hike and 2% sewer hike are planned to do infrastructure work, several job opening are expected to be filled and money earmarked for an engineering study for the Dundee Avenue/Summit Street intersection project.

FEEDBACK

In addition to the Budget On-the-Go, the city produced a video explaining what a municipal budget and a financial plan are and how the city determines how its projected revenues and expenditures. Taxpayers who view it should learn more about the budget and ask questions or give feedback to the city council before its adoption, Gillespie said.

Council budget sessions are scheduled for 5 p.m. Nov. 13 and 20 and Dec. 4. A final discussion will be held 6 p.m. Dec. 18 followed by a council vote. The meetings are held in the council chamber, 150 Dexter Court.

Gloria Casas is a freelance reporter for the Naperville Sun.

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