



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Gary Hansen, Mayor
Email: gghansen@cityofwillows.org
Phone: (530) 514-3003

Marti Brown, City Manager
Email: mbrown@cityofwillows.org
Phone: (530) 685-0069

Willows City Council Approves Placing 1.5% Sales Tax Measure on November 2024 Ballot

(Willows, CA) – On Tuesday, April 9, 2024, the Willows City Council approved placing a 1.5% sales tax on the November 2024 ballot. After months of deliberation regarding the City’s fiscal crisis, the ballot measure sailed through to approval with a 4-1 vote and little fanfare.

“It’s the right thing to do. Every other jurisdiction in the region has done the same thing. It’s the only way to ensure the future of our core city services – police, fire and public works,” commented Mayor Gary Hansen.

For years, City revenues have barely kept pace with expenditures as staffing levels have plummeted, roads and infrastructure have declined, failing Fire apparatus and equipment present a public health and safety risk, Public Works vehicles scarcely comply with State mandates, and quality of life services such as recreation and the library operate on shoestring budgets.

When asked to comment, Vice-Mayor Evan Hutson said, “My goal is for this and future city councils to pave a path forward for a better Willows for our neighbors, families, and youth. This measure, along with an action plan and open forum for all citizens to participate in, provides that opportunity.”

In Fiscal Year 2022-23, the Willows City Council voted to reinstate previously vacated positions that were not filled due to the City’s budgetary problems bringing the City back from 12 full-time employees to minimum staffing levels of 18 full-time employees. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, the City’s law enforcement contract with the Glenn County Sheriff’s Office jumped by nearly \$400,000 in one year. These additional expenses require approximately \$820,000 of General Fund Reserves per year.

“The City needs a stable revenue source for the needs of the people. For example, the City swimming pool repairs were not for a lack of desire, but a lack of funding,” commented Councilmember Rick Thomas.

By the end of Fiscal Year 2024-25 and in the absence of new revenue, the City anticipates that approximately \$50,000 will remain in the General Fund Reserve or less than 1% of the total General Fund.

“It’s crucial to the City’s future to fix its ongoing deficit and rebuild General Fund Reserves. And there is no way to do that in the next 15 months without a sales tax measure,” stated Marti Brown, City Manager.

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