



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**City of Willows Approved FY 2024-25 Budget
Forecasts Significant Decline in General Fund Balance**

(Willows, CA) – On June 26, 2024, the Willows City Council approved the City’s fiscal year 2024-25 budget by using more than \$620,000 of General Fund Reserve and one-time monies to balance the budget. By June 30, 2025, the City forecasts that its Ending Fund Balance will be little less than \$600,000 or 9% of overall General Fund revenues. As a result, on April 9, 2024, the Willows City Council voted to place a 1.5% sales tax measure on the November 2024 ballot for voter consideration.

“The City of Willows is a fiscally conservative operation. We have a revenue problem not a spending problem. For the City to continue delivering the effective and efficient services that our citizens deserve, it is imperative that we increase revenues immediately,” commented Mayor Hansen.

With only 18 full-time, permanent city employees, this year’s budget includes cutting one vacant Public Works position, operating with a part-time City Clerk, and continuing to close City Hall on Friday’s due to staffing and revenue shortages.

“With his 34 years of experience in government finance, the City’s Finance Consultant, has done an amazing job budgeting and finding monies where he can. Unfortunately, the city is in dire need of new revenue sources and fast. It’s time to stop the witch hunt and get back to saving the city,” Vice-Mayor Hutson emphatically stated.

For several years, City expenditures have outpaced revenues. To maintain services, the City has cut staffing levels, deferred vehicle and equipment maintenance and purchases, and relied heavily on grants to finance both one-time expenses and, at times, fund the salaries and benefits of permanent city staff and contractors.

“While not the Budget I was hoping for, I am pleased to have an approved fiscal year 2024-25 Budget. This budget is very conservative and controlled in its spending while we work to improve our financial sustainability and services for our citizens,” commented Councilmember Thomas.

In the budget good news, the City has completed a long overdue update to its Master Fee Schedule and will complete a total overhaul of its Municipal Code by December 2024 generating a business friendly investment environment for private developers and entrepreneurs. This past year, the City received more than \$4 million in grant funds to renovate the city swimming pool and construct other amenities in Sycamore Park. The sewage system and lift stations are also being completely refurbished over the next year with bond monies.

“With the progress that we’ve made with the limited resources we have, I’m excited about the future for our citizens especially after the November 2024 election when we’ll be on our way to a better tomorrow for everyone,” added Councilmember Vodden.

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Declining General Fund Balance

