

OPEN LINE

Fall 2008

CITY OF LARAMIE, WY

City Council

At-Large—Dave O'Malley

At-Large—Jodi Guerin

Ward 1—Klaus Hanson,
Mayor

Ward 2—Bryan Shuster

Ward 3—Dee Mickelson

Ward 4—Seth Carson,
Vice-Mayor

Ward 5—Vacant

Ward 6—Joe Shumway

Ward 7—Karl McCracken

Regularly Scheduled City Council meetings are held on the First and Third Tuesday of each month at 6:30. These meetings are open to the public.

Works Sessions and Public Hearings are held on opposing Tuesday evenings and are also open to the public. No official action is taken at work sessions or public meetings.

Regular meetings and some special meetings are televised on Cable Channel 11.

A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

I am thankful for living in a community of engaged citizens with an acute sense of responsibility for the well being of Laramie.

While living in Osaka, Japan some time ago, a Japanese friend told me that citizens there did not see themselves as part of the government. This is evident in the immaculate care citizens take in caring for their homes and private gardens. Just outside of these pristine private areas, however, one will find a public street full of filth and carelessly discarded debris.

This sentiment is not shared here in Laramie. Laramie is truly government of the people, by the people, for the people. Community clean-up days in recent years have brought hundreds of people together to beautify the city. Our harsh climate makes us doubly proud to have been named a "Tree City USA!"

Citizen participation in City Council deliberations is sometimes critical, but mostly constructive. Our City Council listens, tries to find the best solution, is fiscally responsible, looks for new ways of making the city a better place, consults with the competent city staff and consultants, and has not shied away from the difficult but necessary decisions. I can assure you that every vote cast by Council is weighed carefully.

As citizens, we should certainly not blindly trust the City Council or city staff. Instead, we must inform ourselves thoroughly about the issues, understand them and react, and help the city to move forward. Some of our issues and problems have not changed. My mentor and good friend, the late Mayor Fred Homer, observed that government is all about the allocation of scarce resources, and that we have many tough choices to make. We still must find ways to balance our enterprise funds (water, waste water, and solid waste), grow sensibly, protect water resources, and ensure competitive salaries that draw the best people to public service.

I regularly participate in the process of interviewing applicants for our many city boards and commissions. Citizens dedicate their precious time to sit on the zoning board, the traffic or disabilities commissions, the Environmental Advisory Committee, or the Laramie Plains Civic Center Joint Powers Board, to name just a few. This is volunteer work without a penny's worth of compensation and almost 80 members of this community participate in their local government in this fashion.

It takes a village to raise a city, and citizen interest and input in local government is fundamental to our success. One way to participate is to serve on a city board or commission, and I ask you to consider doing so. Below is a list of committees or boards with current or future openings.

—Mayor Klaus Hanson, City Council Ward 1



Volunteers planting trees last month at the Highway 130 entrance to the city.

Current Vacancies

(Application Deadline October 17, 2008)

Board of Health

Downtown Development Authority

Future Vacancy

(Application Deadline January 5, 2009)

Parks Tree and Recreation Advisory Board

Future Vacancies

(Application Deadline November 3, 2008)

Albany County Economic Development Joint Powers Board

Board of Appeals

Civil Service Commission

Environmental Advisory Committee

Laramie Advisory Commission on Disabilities

Laramie Plains Civic Center

Planning Commission

Traffic Commission

THANKS FOR ASKING! “How much of my property and sales tax goes to the city?”

Albany County and the City of Laramie levy property taxes as authorized by state statute. For every \$1,000 of assessed valuation the city receives 8 mills, or \$8 in property tax revenue. So, a property owner with a \$200,000 market valued home would pay total property tax of \$1,311, with \$152 going to the City of Laramie. Property tax comprises roughly 4.5% of the revenue used to pay for basic city services.

In Wyoming, cities can impose taxes or fines, and charge fees, only where State statute grants authority to do so. The State also shares some of its revenue with cities, such as fuels and cigarette taxes, and federal mineral royalties. Typically, State law determines the maximum amount of revenue cities can derive from a source. For example, local-option sales tax may not exceed three cents on the dollar. The first four cents of sales tax on every dollar is a State imposed tax of which the State returns 30% back to local governments. In counties where the voters have elected to impose local-option sales taxes, 99% of these taxes are returned back to local governments. So, if you purchase an item at a Laramie business that costs \$1,000 and pay \$60 in tax, the tax you pay generates revenue to both the State and city as follows:

Type of Sales Tax	State Share	City & County Share	Administration Fee (State)
State Tax - First 4¢	\$27.60	\$12.00	\$0.40
Local Tax for General Purposes - 5th Cent	\$0.00	\$9.90	\$0.10
Local Tax for Specific Purposes - 6th Cent	\$0.00	\$9.90	\$0.10
Total	\$27.60	\$31.80	\$0.60

The city relies heavily upon sales tax to provide basic city services, with 30-35% of general fund revenue typically coming from this source.

SERVING OUR GROWING COMMUNITY

Artist Rendering of Laramie Fire Station #3

Location On Highway 130, between Jefferson and Monroe Streets



Thirty years ago a master plan was developed by city leaders to identify the needs of the city as it grew and developed. This plan included the construction of a fire station on the western edge of Laramie to ensure the best possible service be provided throughout Laramie. Construction on this new station will begin in the spring.

When complete, Station #3 will function primarily as a top notch fire facility, but will include other amenities. As the only municipal building west of the railway, the station will include a community room for public forums. This room may be used by community members and school, neighborhood, or civic groups. Station #3 will also serve as home to historical artifacts from Laramie’s past, including an antique horse drawn water-pumper used by the Fire Department in the 1900’s.

Fire Station # 3 Quick Facts

- Paid for with a State grant of \$3,175,000 and a city match of \$1,325,000.
- Estimated cost to staff and operate the station for one year is \$900,000.
- City secured a \$316,000 grant to assist with the cost of hiring three Firefighter/EMTs.
- A second staffing grant is pending, and will contribute \$975,000 if awarded.

DID YOU KNOW? -A Message From the City Manager

The 2007 Legislature convened a special Legislative Committee to study how best to fund cities, towns, and counties. At the request of the Committee, local governments recently provided information showing the amount they spent providing basic services to their citizens. This data showed that in fiscal year 2007, cities similar in size to Laramie spent \$1,538 per resident. The City of Laramie spent \$1,140 per resident, well below both comparably-sized cities and the state-wide average of \$1,423.

The findings of the Legislative Committee are expected in 2009. Laramie city officials, along with other municipalities, have been working with the Committee on this important and complex topic. We hope the work of the Committee will lead to the creation of a permanent and equitable method of funding for Wyoming’s cities and towns. Such action would allow the City of Laramie to plan more effectively to meet the long-term needs of our citizens in the most economic and efficient manner.

TALKING ABOUT INFRASTRUCTURE

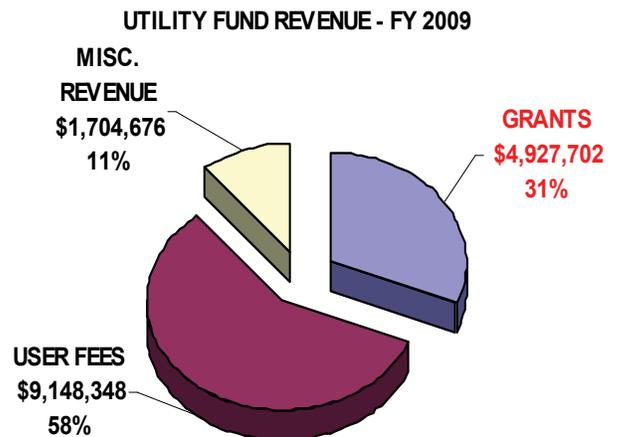
What is it? Why is it important?

Infrastructure is an asset managed by local government that supports community development and the economy, such as water systems, wastewater (sewer) systems, road systems, and storm water management systems. These systems provide critical health and safety services, including potable water, sewage treatment, flood protection, and safe transportation routes.

How do we pay for it?

Common methods used to pay for infrastructure include: 1) user fees, 2) grants, 3) taxes, and 4) bonds. Bonds can affect citizens in the form of higher rates or property taxes, depending upon the type of bond. Raising rates or user fees can affect citizens with low or fixed incomes disproportionately.

Most grants for infrastructure require a cash contribution from the city, typically about 25% of the total cost of a project. Laramie has been very successful in leveraging State grants to pay for infrastructure projects. The graph shows that for the current year, the amount of grant monies secured by the city to support operation of the water and sewer systems is roughly 1/3 of the total cost.



“We have about 2 million miles of pipe in this nation. If you look at what we’re spending now and the investment requirements over the next twenty years, there’s a \$540 billion difference.”

—Steve Allbee, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

WATER & SEWER

Infrastructure throughout the U.S. is nearing the end of its usable life.

The estimated lifespan of these systems is 50-60 years.

The majority of Laramie’s water and sewer systems were installed during periods of rapid growth, primarily during the 1920’s and 1940’s.

The city maintains 260 miles of water line, 160 miles of sewer line, and roughly 170 miles of storm water drain ways that lie beneath or along our roads.

ROADWAYS

On average, Laramie roads have a lifespan of 15-20 years. Laramie has 166 miles of streets and alleys.

To maintain our street system, 8 miles of street should be replaced each year.

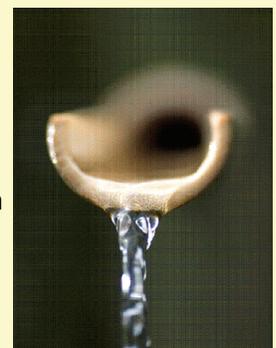
Currently, the cost to reconstruct a street is roughly \$75,000 per block, or \$1.12 million per mile.

The cost for street maintenance and repair has escalated rapidly in recent years — as much as 25% in the current year.

STORM WATER

The storm water system minimizes flooding and protects the watershed.

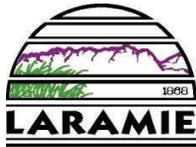
Engineering studies are underway to determine how best to improve the storm water system in the northern and western areas of Laramie.



OPEN LINE

Fall 2008

CITY OF LARAMIE, WY



CITY OF
LARAMIE

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box C
Laramie, WY 82073

City Hall:
406 Iverson Street
Laramie WY 82070

www.cityoflaramie.org

City Hall:
307-721-5200

Fax:
307-721-5211

PRSR STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
LARAMIE WY
PERMIT NO. 8

**RESIDENTIAL
CUSTOMER**

Check out our new website coming soon!
www.cityoflaramie.org

Vote 2008!



The General Election will be
held Tuesday,
November 4, 2008

For Election Information Call:
721-2541

Six City Council Seats Will be
Determined at the Election

City of Laramie Holiday Schedule

<u>HOLIDAY</u>	<u>CITY OFFICES CLOSED</u>
VETERAN'S DAY	TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11
THANKSGIVING	THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27 FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28
CHRISTMAS	THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25 FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26
No Trash Collection on December 25th or 26th Landfill Open for Regular Hours on December 27th & 28th	
NEW YEAR 2009	THURSDAY, JANUARY 1 FRIDAY, JANUARY 2
No Trash Collection on January 1st or 2nd	