

Clovis City Council to discuss \$198 million budget

By Marc Benjamin
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The Clovis City Council is expected to approve a \$198 million budget that will create sports fields, add 10 new positions and other new amenities.

The 2015-16 budget year, which starts on July 1, also includes funding to improve the entryway to Clovis Avenue on Shaw Avenue.

The budget hearing will be part of the City Council meeting that begins at 6 p.m. Monday in Clovis City Hall.

The city will begin to undertake several major projects, including work on its Civic Center North, which holds a transit hub and new, larger senior center. Eventually, the site will be home to a new, larger Fresno County Public Library.

Another major project will get under way at the old Clovis Winery on Clovis Avenue, south of Ashlan Avenue. The first step is demolishing the winery, said City Manager Robert Woolley. The plan is to use the 15 acres to add recreational fields for baseball or soccer, hold tournaments and add businesses on the site to make it a profitable venue, he said.

“The winery is an attractive nuisance and could be a danger,” he said. “We are looking into the possibility of turning that into a full recreation area.”

Shaw Avenue has been attracting new businesses in recent months, including the siting of a new hotel, a motorcycle shop in a vacant church, Harbor Freight Tools Store in the former Boot Barn site and an athletic shoe store in a closed Fresh & Easy near Shaw and Willow avenues.

“We are starting to see some renewed interest from the business community along Shaw Avenue,” Woolley said.

The city has up to \$100,000 set aside for Shaw Avenue improvements in the budget and is discussing a business improvement district with Shaw Avenue property owners. The plan is for property owners to pay fees that will go directly into improvements along Shaw Avenue.

The budget calls for adding 10 positions, chief of which are three new police officers and a community service officer. Six other department will each add one position.

The budget also is proposed to bolster Clovis' emergency reserve to 15.6% of the city's \$60.8 million general fund. The goal is to reach 20%, Woolley said.

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If you go

Clovis City Council meets at 6 p.m. Monday in Clovis City Hall, 1033 Fifth St.