

FOURTH WEEKLY COLUMN FOR CITY'S WEB SITE ON 2021 SPLOST REFERENDUM

Proposed Public Safety Projects to be Funded through 2021 SPLOST Referendum

Several years ago the City of Temple purchased two vacant buildings at the intersection of U. S. Highway 78 and Georgia Highway 113 (Carrollton Street) which formerly had been branch banks. After a limited amount of remodeling, the building in the southeast corner of this intersection became Temple's City Hall and the building in the northeast corner became Temple's Police Station.

For the Police Department, moving into this building was somewhat like moving from an old log cabin into a house with amenities. Previously, the Police Department was housed in two double-wide trailers which were in poor condition when the City of Temple had them moved to land on Johnson Street at the edge of City property. The PD operated in these two trailers until moving to its current site.

Police Chief Creig Lee supervised the work done on this former bank building so it could serve effectively as Temple's Police Station. And while this was a vast improvement over the two old trailers, there were not sufficient available City funds to make the structure totally functional for our local law enforcement agency.

POLICE STATION IMPROVEMENTS. Therefore, one of the City of Temple's priority projects in the scheduled 2021 SPLOST is "Police Station Renovations, Improvements, and Repairs" (\$450,000). The planned improvements include new heating and air units, a 30' x 40' addition to the building, and a new roof over the existing structure. Of this total amount, some \$300,000 would be spent on renovations and repairs throughout the building, which certainly are needed due to its past seven-plus years of 24-7 use.

Another SPLOST project is the \$150,000 upgrade of the Police Department's communications system. Communications technology continues to change, and the men and women in the Temple Police Department need an improved communications system both for internal operations and for contact with the public and other law enforcement agencies at the local and State level.

REPLACEMENT VEHICLES FOR POLICE OFFICERS. The City of Temple has identified seven separate areas in which it would spend its 2021 SPLOST revenues over a period of six or more years. As identified above, \$450,000 has been identified for a combination of upgrading the building in which the Police Department is located and upgrading the agency's communications system. Then, another area included in the City's overall proposed SPLOST program is the purchase and replacement of vehicles and other equipment needed by the PD and some other City government departments.

To maintain a "vehicle replacement schedule" in the Police Department, obviously the City must have a funding source. The proposed 2021 SPLOST includes \$340,800 on a citywide basis. And a significant part of this funding would be to replace police patrol cars. They rack up a lot of miles; and the very nature of police patrol work is not easy on personnel or vehicles. If this SPLOST referendum is approved, it will enable the Police Department to maintain a sensible rotation schedule and avoid very high mileage cars still being used as pursuit vehicles.

Next week, this column will report on Sewer projects (sewer lines, lift stations, treatment plant).