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Dear Residents of Empress,

As your mayor, it is both an honor and a responsibility to address you today. Our small community of Empress has always prided itself on its resilience and optimism, and it is with this spirit that I come before you.

I want to start by expressing my gratitude for your continued support and dedication to making Empress the wonderful place it is. It is because of your commitment that we have been able to maintain our village's unique charm and sense of belonging.

I want to thank you for your understanding as Council has navigated a difficult path to the best of our abilities. A big thank you to Council for your passion for Empress and your continuing hard work and hours invested in the business of keeping Empress a viable and successful village.

Also, we would not be having this conversation in the same way if it wasn't for our great Administration and Public Works Staff both in and out of the village office. You all have pulled through a challenging season. This cannot be overstated! Thank you! I am confident for the coming times that if we continue in the spirit of harmony that has been built, it bodes well for the village as a whole.

However, I must also acknowledge the challenges that we face as a community. In order to continue providing the essential services and maintaining the infrastructure that we all rely on, namely our water treatment and storage facilities, water distribution and sewer collection systems, it has become necessary to implement a small tax increase this year. Total taxes collected will increase by 3.33%, but individual taxes will change in relation to assessment.

I understand that any increase in taxes can be a burden, especially for those on fixed incomes or facing financial difficulties. Please know that this decision was not made lightly, and every effort has been made to keep the increase as minimal as possible while still ensuring the long-term sustainability of our village. Empress offers a tax payment plan which allows taxpayers to pay their taxes in 12 monthly installments; please contact the village office for more information.

I assure you that the additional revenue generated from this tax increase will be used responsibly and transparently, to address the needs of our community and to invest in our future. Whether it's repairing roads, water sewer systems, improving public facilities, or supporting local businesses, our goal remains the same: to make Empress an even better place to live, work, and thrive.

I encourage each and every one of you to stay engaged and involved in the decision-making process. Your input and feedback are invaluable as we work together to shape the future of our village.

In closing, let us remember the strength and resilience that define us as a community. Together, we can overcome any challenge and continue to build a brighter future for Empress.

Thank you for your attention, and may God bless Empress and all who call it home.

Sincerely,

Arlen Johnston  
Mayor of Empress

*Empress has Aspirans...*