



For Immediate Release
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Harkins Administration Proposes Ordinance Revisions To Reduce Legal Costs

Proposal would simplify process for settling claims under \$50,000

STRATFORD— Mayor John A. Harkins today announced a proposal to reduce legal costs incurred by the Town of Stratford. The proposal alters the ordinance governing the Town Attorney’s authority to settle lawsuits without Council approval. The proposal would allow the Town Attorney to settle legal claims against the Town valued at under \$50,000. Current ordinance requires Council action for monetary settlements greater than \$2,500.

“In order to reduce the town’s legal expenses, the Town Attorney must be able to bring cases to disposition in the most efficient manner possible,” said Mayor Harkins. “By requiring Council approval of nearly ever legal settlement negotiated by the Town Attorney, current ordinance does just the opposite by complicating the process in otherwise simple cases. In so doing, the ordinance creates a backlog of pending legal cases in the Town Attorney’s Office and increases the legal fees incurred on each case. Those dollars are better spent elsewhere, and will be if the Town Council approves these ordinance revisions.”

Town Attorney Tim Bishop proposed raising the discretionary settlement value threshold to Mayor Harkins as part of his efforts to reform the Town Attorney’s Office. The proposal has been referred by the Ordinance Committee to the full Council for consideration at its June meeting.

“Tim Bishop, as promised, is continually working to find efficiencies in the Town Attorney’s Office and reduce the Town’s exposure to liability and consumption of legal services,” continued Mayor Harkins. “In giving Tim, and subsequent Town Attorneys, the flexibility to settle cases quickly and out of court, Stratford taxpayers will save thousands of dollars each year. I would encourage all members of the Town Council to approve this common-sense proposal so we can start putting more tax dollars to work improving Stratford rather than defending it in a court of law.”

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