

Vero Beach council OKs 17% tax increase

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VERO BEACH— City Council wasted little time approving a double-digit tax increase and the city's budget Tuesday.



Council voted 3-2 on a tax rate of \$2.38 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

Vice Mayor Jay Kramer and Councilwoman Pilar Turner opposed the 17 percent tax increase over this year's rate of \$2.03. Councilwoman Amelia Graves, absent last week because of a family emergency, cast the deciding vote,

approving the increase along with Mayor Dick Winger and Councilman Randy Old. The decision was delayed last week because of a tie vote.

The council also approved a \$22 million budget, which includes

a 3 percent raise for all employees, by a 4-1 vote. Turner, who was the lone dissenting vote, said among her issues with the budget was that it was built without setting aside money for stormwater and drainage improvements.

"(The council) is trying to vote for a stormwater utility, which will create another tax," Turner said.

Graves, however, said council planned to let voters decide whether to

See TAX, 16A

IRMC cooling off after air fix

■ Procedures still on hold

By Elliott Jones
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VERO BEACH— Indian River Medical Center is getting back to normal, as a repaired central air conditioning system is again filling the multistory building with cool air, a hospital spokesman said Tuesday.



The hospital resumed normal operations at 7 p.m. Tuesday, spokesman Lewis Clark said.

Although the chill-down is underway, Clark said the hospital's operating rooms, catheterization lab and other procedure areas will only begin elective cases at 7 a.m. Wednesday, and medical operations and some procedures will be canceled for a third day.

"We are going through that hour by hour," he said.

The hospital's operating rooms now are back to normal temperatures, but workers will have to check the air quality and disinfect the rooms.

The air conditioning started working Tuesday morning, ending a crippling breakdown that began Saturday night.

Over the weekend, temperatures inside rose to 85 degrees, forcing the shutdown of large medical equipment. Ambulances were diverted. Appointments and procedures were canceled on Monday and Tuesday.

Nonessential staff were sent home Monday and Tuesday as remaining staff and volunteers went room to room, at times offering ice bags or glasses of ice water to patients.

About 100 fans, as well as auxiliary cooling units, were brought to comfort patients and staff, Clark said.

Visitors and employees got free meals.

In the meantime, the

See IRMC, 16A



POPE FRANCIS

HOLY VISIT TO AMERICA



PHOTOS BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pope Francis, accompanied by President Barack Obama and others, is greeted upon his arrival at Joint Base Andrews, Md., Tuesday.

Warm welcome for pope

■ Pontiff met by cheering crowd in U.S.

By Michael Collins
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WASHINGTON — Pope Francis set foot on U.S. soil for the first time Tuesday, beginning a six-day sojourn that will take the popular pontiff to three major cities and give him a platform to challenge the nation's political leaders and American Catholics on controversial issues such as immigration and climate change.

The Argentine-born pope's Alitalia plane, Shepherd One, sliced through an overcast sky and touched down at 3:49 p.m. at Joint Base Andrews, just outside Washington, D.C.

In a rare welcome accorded to a visiting head of state,



The crowd cheers as Pope Francis arrives Tuesday.

President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama were waiting to greet the pontiff, along with a military honor guard, the president's daughters, and Vice President Joseph Biden and his wife, Jill.

A number of Catholic clergy also were on hand, their black robes and purple and red sashes flapping in the wind.

Seventeen minutes after the plane bearing the flags of Vatican City and the United

INSIDE

Immigration activists make a plea to arriving pope. 5A

Faithful wait along motorcade route for glimpse of Francis. 5A

States taxied down the runway, the pontiff stepped through the jet doorway and waved. A cheer went up from the crowd of several hundred onlookers as the pope, wearing a simple white cassock and plain black shoes, descended the stairs for a red carpet greeting.

"We love Francis! Yes we do!" the crowd chanted. "We love Francis! How about you?"

After a handshake with Obama, the president, the pope and their entourages walked to a hangar, where the leader of the free world and the head of the world's 1.2 billion Roman Catholics met

See POPE, 5A

■ For live coverage of the pope's visit, a photo gallery and more, go to TCPalm.com

Summer's heat wave could drop to cooler temps during the fall

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It's really just a slight change, but the lower humidity and degree or two in lower temperatures means it's fall on the Treasure Coast in a big way.

Wednesday morning is the

official change of season and temperatures are starting to moderate.

We've gone from 90 percent humidity last week to 65 percent Tuesday, National Weather Service meteorologists said. That number can fluctuate vastly on a daily basis.

We're moving from a

summer that tied with 1998 for the second warmest on record — with an average 82.7 degrees — to a fall and winter that could, at times, see temperatures slightly lower than normal.

There's also an increased likelihood of more rainfall than we typically receive in the fall and winter,

meteorologist Matt Bragaw said.

El Niño is predicted to result in higher than normal rainfall from clouds that block the sun during what is normally the start of the dry season. According to forecasters, there is a 50-50 chance of a

See WEATHER, 16A

LOCAL RAINFALL

June through September in inches:

City	Actual	Normal	Difference
Vero Beach	28.04	26.01	+2.03
Fort Pierce	20.93	26.94	-6.01
Stuart	18.85	31.32	-12.47

Source: National Weather Service in Melbourne

87°/71°
Rain: 20%
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