

**Council for the Village of Yellow Springs
Special Meeting: Budget**

Virtual @ 3:00 P.M.

Monday, October 22, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

President of Council Brian Housh called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.

ROLL CALL

Present were President Housh, and Council members Kevin Stokes (3:03), Lisa Kreeger, Marianne MacQueen and Laura Curliss (3:02). Also present were Village Manager Josue Salmeron, Public Works Director Johnnie Burns, Finance Director Matt Dillon and Solicitor Breanne Parcels.

GENERAL FUND and SPECIAL REVENUES

Salmeron introduced the topic by explaining that he and Dillon have adjusted the income levels based upon income up to the end of September. This has resulted in a significantly healthier financial picture for 2022. Salmeron stated that he had also gotten figures for savings if employees are made responsible for a greater portion of their health care deductibles, as well as cost savings possibilities available in other plans.

Salmeron stated that he and Dillon have taken a close look at the Police Department (PD) budget. He noted that PD has not increased staffing in the last several years, and that they used a full time officer position to fund the Community Outreach Specialist, and the FT officer position was left unfilled.

Salmeron stated that he is presenting several income sources for Council to consider, ranging from levies for Streets and Parks to implementation of a reciprocal tax to a Storm Water fee.

Dillon then shared the numbers as reconfigured since the last budget meeting. He noted that revenues are trending up significantly since 2020, and the Village should see a reserve of 155 days as of January 2022.

The current deficit projection is now \$175,541, which is a decrease of \$281,094 since the last budget session.

Dillon pointed out budget comparisons for 2019 through 2022. He noted that he has spent a great deal of time with supervisors working to decrease their budgets for 2022. He went through all budget reductions of over \$1,000 made for the 2022 budget. He noted increases as well, these being almost entirely in personnel areas and most being obligations such as longevity and promotions. The bottom line, given these parameters, is a decrease of \$270,080 from the 2021 budget.

In response to a question from MacQueen, Dillon stated that levels of service are being continued, and that he would not characterize the cuts as deferring any maintenance or service.

In response to a question from Stokes, Salmeron stated that the team is looking at the PD schedule to find areas where it might be possible to have only one officer on duty. He noted that there are about 20 categories of calls that require two officers to respond, and if that were the case when only one officer was on, Greene County backup would be required.

Salmeron elaborated that overtime needs tend to come up in emergency situations as well as when officers are out on sick leave, training or vacation. Special events also require overtime hours.

Kreeger called for a “very sharp pencil” on Public Safety, stressing that infrastructure upkeep and improvement must be of paramount importance with regard to budgeting.

Dillon stressed that while the gap of \$175,451 will have some impact upon the budget, it can be addressed by some of the revenue options proposed.

Dillon noted that many of the budget cuts were to contracted services.

Salmeron noted potential income from construction projects which is likely to begin coming in in about 6 months, but which cannot be factored into the budget.

MacQueen recommended that Dillon invest in upgraded software which will make budgeting interaction simpler.

Dillon agreed, stating that this would make responding to “in the moment” Council requests easier to respond to, and would make the budgeting documents more accessible to citizens.

Kreeger suggested a value in this software in moving towards a participatory budgeting exercise. She asked if there are hidden costs to be aware of.

Salmeron agreed that what the Village currently has is accounting software, not a budgeting software with scenario capacity.

Salmeron presented information regarding insurance options. He commented that he has met with a broker to discuss options in this regard, and the Village also has the option of purchasing a plan within an existing pool.

Salmeron noted that the Village does have the option to participate in the Health Care Exchange. Costs for this are unclear as of yet.

Salmeron then directed attention to the PD budget, beginning with overtime expenses.

Kreeger suggested that alternative hiring be done if there were a resignation, such as a social worker. She commented that she has not seen any real effort at alternative hiring in her tenure on Council, and would like this to be explored.

Salmeron responded in describing hiring of a dispatcher with a mental health background who could assist during overnight hours, but that person left for a better paying position. He offered some alternative suggestions, and was encouraged to bring back more detail.

In response to a question from Kreeger, Salmeron stated that 30% of the PD budget is Dispatch, and that 100% of police-related 911 calls are forwarded to Dispatch.

Kreeger asked whether a sub-committee would be useful.

MacQueen asked that the new Chief be informed regarding staffing concerns. MacQueen stated that the PD comprising 1/3 of the total employees is “concerning”, and commented that “this is a relatively safe community.”

Curliss commented that the PD budget should be examined with regard “to the services we want to have.”

Curliss commented that she has no appetite for a levy, and stated her wish that the Village could reduce its budget so that the school levy would not have an impact. She suggested conflating services for EMS and PD as Oakwood has done.

Salmeron commented on the proportion of taxes that the Village receives relative to the services provided.

Housh commented that while he favors innovation and discussion, this budget represents significant decreases over the last two budgets and he does not want to lose sight of that fact.

Salmeron suggested bringing the idea of cross training PD and EMS personnel for joint services to the Goals session, since it is an endeavor years in the making.

Salmeron suggested a model in which all the sidewalk repairs are completed in 2022, and then sidewalk responsibility is turned over to property owners.

Stokes commented on paid parking arguing that residents should not have to pay for parking in town.

Paid parking was discussed generally.

Housh commented that this idea needs to be explored in more depth.

MacQueen stated that she does not want responsibility for sidewalks to be turned over to property owners.

Stokes noted paid parking as a participatory budgeting option.

Burns commented that he is several years behind on sidewalk grinding, and that he would like to see responsibility go back to property owners. If not, he said, enough money needs to be raised to properly maintain the sidewalks.

Salmeron commented that this is a common reason for a levy.

Housh affirmed that past Councils have given responsibility for sidewalks to the Village, but acknowledged that this has not been adequately supported financially.

MacQueen asked for specific staffing for the PD. Salmeron stated that he will provide a sample week of staffing.

Housh noted that a budget update will be provided for the Monday, November 1 meeting. He asked that information on vendors and how to properly tax them be provided.

MacQueen asked how much money was received through the sale of RECs in 2021.

Salmeron stated that he will provide this number, noting that all of those proceeds have been spent on two projects.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5:53pm, Kreeger MOVED, and MacQueen SECONDED a MOTION TO ADJOURN. The MOTION PASSED 5-0 on a voice vote.

Brian Housh, Council President

Attest: Judy Kintner, Clerk of Council