

TOWN OF WHITEHALL
10 AM
BUDGET WORKSHOP ON 2017 TENTATIVE BUDGET
57 SKENESBOROUGH DRIVE

October 11, 2016

PRESENT: George Armstrong – Supervisor
John Rozell-Councilperson
Stephanie Safka – Councilperson
David Hollister-Councilperson
ABSENT: Farrell Prefontaine – Councilperson

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Clerk, Julie Millett; Budget Officer, Joel Carpenter; Highway Superintendent, Louis D. Pratt II; David Waters.

Budget Workshop Notice put in the Whitehall Times on 9/29/16 and also on Town/Village web page and Town Clerk signboard on 9/23/16.

Board received a copy of the Tentative Budget at last board meeting, September 21, 2016 for review for today's workshop.

Supervisor began going through each line item on the Tentative Budget with the Board.

John Rozell had a question on when the PILOT programs for the solar projects would start.

Councilperson Safka stated that the two solar projects that the Board is requesting the PILOTS on haven't even been built yet. Joel stated that if they do start paying it would be listed under income A1081. If we get money in for the PILOT programs, then we would be that much lower under the 2%. Supervisor doesn't feel that we would see that until at least 2018.

Councilperson Hollister stated that we will see a big difference in the fire portion because the solar companies will not be exempt from the fire portion.

Joel stated that if you have one property that goes way up in value the rate per 1,000 for everybody will go down so you will personally pay less.

Joel stated that if we go over the 2% cap then those little rebate checks everyone got last year will go away.

Supervisor thinks anytime you can have your tax base go up it is a good thing. Dave Waters had some comments on the 1st Responders amount in the budget. He doesn't feel the Town should get involved with the Village on the fire contract. His house would be burnt before the fire company got there anyways. Dave feels that the 1st Responders should not be in the Town budget. He has spoken to a lot of people on this matter. We do not have a fire district right now. Dave thinks the \$10,000 should be included in what the fire company gets. Supervisor stated that the Board changed it so that the fire company would do the 1st Responders work. That was a total of the fire budget and we broke it out of the budget. Dave stated that there was something in the paper where they are on a Volkswagen budget on a Mercedes operation. Dave feels the fire company should live within their budget. He feels no one is managing the money and being held accountable. The Supervisor feels that the Town is paying a lot compared to what the Village pays for the fire company. Councilperson Rozell feels before the fire company spends on anything they should be going in front of the Village Board and getting it approved. John feels that they want to do a fire district so they would have their own board and be able to control and spend the money the way they want. Supervisor is not acting on any of it. Dave Waters claims that the fire company is going to be paid to train people and tax payers will not make any revenue with other fire districts coming in for the training. Our fire company wants the elite training facility in Whitehall. Joel Carpenter pointed out that there was one fire company that got a grant and there were stipulations to it. They are now considered a community center and now need a sprinkler system. Sometimes you spend more when you get a grant. Dave Waters claims that the Village sent Brian to grant school to do these grants. Dave claims you get paid when you get a grant. Supervisor spoke on a study Washington County is doing on consolidating highways. The Town of Whitehall has four highway departments. Supervisor feels that we should consolidate the County and the Town without any cost to the Town. Supervisor told Brian Brooks if that happens all the fire stuff at the Whitehall Town garage is going.

Louie Pratt stated when Skenesborough consolidated in Whitehall Fire Company, Skenesborough was the 1st Responders. He stated that the \$10,000 was put into the A fund in the budget and now everyone pays for that. This way it lowers the amount down for the Town people by taking it out of the fire fund and putting it in the A fund. Councilperson Rozell stated that the fire company seems to have more vehicles down there to transport people than they have fire hoses. If the County moves over to the highway garage the Town would have to add on to the building. They would have to add on at least six more bays.

Councilperson Hollister suggested to take down the building especially if it is going to need a new roof in a couple of years. Supervisor stated that we have a few more years to pay the \$10,000 on the museum roof and maybe then, we can start putting the \$10,000 toward the highway roof.

Dave Waters wanted to know if the Town was getting any revenue for the bird group using the park building. Supervisor stated that we are not.

Supervisor looking for money from Betty Little to use for meeting room, Rec fence and displays at pavilion. Councilperson Safka mentioned that Janet Kennedy said they could use the closet space and didn't need a wall. Supervisor thinks we can get around \$80,000 from Betty Little, but that money is targeted for certain projects.

Budget Officer has raised the Rec Center budget a lot for the increase in minimum wage for next year and an increase in activity over there.

Dave Waters wants to know why the Town is paying for the Rec. Center, museum, library, on and on. Why doesn't the Village pay for anything?

David Waters also wanted to know what the \$2500 amount was for Historical Society. He wanted to know if that was part of Carol Greenough's wages. Supervisor stated that is for Historical Society we give out every year under a contract.

CHANGES FROM TENTATIVE TO PRELIMINARY

Page A-2	FROM	TO	DIFFERENCE
A1910.4	21,500	23,500	2,000
A3610.1	773	797	24
A5132.4	14,000	12,000	-2,000
A9010.8	27,000	24,500	-2,500
A9060.8	22,000	23,000	1,000
A9089.8	2600	2300	-300
B4020.1	525	541	16
DA9010.8	15,070	12,000	-3,070
DA9060.8	27,500	30,570	3,070
DB9010.8	13,803	10,000	-3,803
DB9060.8	32,000	35,803	3,803

Highway Superintendent handed a list of equipment replacement to the Board.

He would like to replace the John Deere tractor and Woods mower in 2017. He thinks we can do it for \$45,000 to \$50,000. We can get rid of those two items and the one we use for sweeping. We would like a tractor with a cab so the guys aren't getting all the dust. This way we can also sweep on rainy and colder days. We should be able to get \$15,000 to \$20,000 for the three pieces of equipment. We still need to make a payment on the excavator. He spoke to Community Bank and we can roll that one more year. The following year we will be able to pay the rest of that loan off \$25,000 and be able to buy the Ford F-350 without having to go into our savings for much. At the end of 2018 we will be debt free. Going into 2019 budget we can purchase our next tandem truck to replace the 1999 truck. Then we will have a couple of years where we won't have to replace anything.

Louie stated that then you can build up your highway reserve so when you do need a piece of equipment you don't have to borrow money for it.

We will have a guy retire next year and we will have to hire someone in June and put another guy on our insurance. He has 1200 hours of sick time built up and he wants to put it towards paying his health insurance. The sale of this equipment will help cover the sick time we owe him. If you take the \$15,000 and put it in his insurance account and over the three- year period

before he uses it all up that will be enough to cover his insurance. This way we will not have to bank another amount for another man's insurance in the budget. Joel can do a budget amendment for this. Councilperson Hollister thought it would be easier to just pay him the money for his sick time and then he could pay for his insurance. In the union contract they can put it toward their insurance if they choose and that way he wouldn't be taxed on the 1200 hours.

Councilperson Hollister feels that we should have something in writing if we do this. We should have the attorney draw up something and have the employee sign it. Louie believes the employee has to give a three-month notice of retirement.

Louie would like to get a mower head for the excavator for the road banks only. He would like the Board's permission to look into prices for \$5,000 or so and by selling that truck we have money to do this.

Councilperson Safka feels that we are doing it right by replacing equipment gradually so we don't have to do it all at once.

Supervisor Armstrong agrees with this plan.

Councilperson Hollister feels that Louie is headed in the right direction.

Councilperson Rozell gave Louie permission to investigate with prices on the mower head.

Louie will get prices and get back to the Board.

Louie thinks the highway roof will last until the museum roof is paid off then we can switch the \$10,000 over to help pay for the highway roof.

Highway men are getting a 3% raise for 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020.

Salt shed is full for next year.

Councilperson Rozell wants to know why we don't see the fund balance of each account on Joel's worksheet.

Councilperson Rozell stated that we haven't signed a 2017 contract with the fire company yet.

In this Preliminary Budget we have a 3% increase for the fire company.

The solar projects will bring in a reduction on the fire tax with what they are going to pay because they won't be exempt from the fire tax.

Councilperson Rozell is concerned that the fund balance keeps going down every year he has been here and eventually it will be gone.

This budget right here is a 1 ½ % increase and just under the cap.

Councilperson Hollister stated that if we can stay under the 2% we have done our job well. If we cut it down further and show the people we are giving them a break, then we will end up spending our fund balance more and have nothing left or we will have to cut services. If we leave it where it is right now and if we have say \$50,000 left at the end of the year that will go back in the savings.

Hopefully we won't have many more repairs on this building or at the park and we can start saving.

Councilperson Safka thinks it is good that we have spent some money to make the Town look better so people will come and spend time here.

Supervisor takes pride in our Town and the Town looks really good and we have made many improvements since he has been Supervisor.

Copies of the Tentative and Preliminary 2017 Budgets to be included with the minutes.

Motion to pass the Tentative Budget as the 2017 Preliminary Budget made by Councilperson Rozell and seconded by Councilperson Hollister.

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Armstrong, Rozell, Safka, Hollister
 Nays 0

Public Hearing Date on 2017 Preliminary Budget set for Thursday, October 27th at 10 AM.
Notice will be put in Whitehall Times and on Town Clerk signboard and website.

Motion to Adjourn @ 12:45 PM made by Councilperson Rozell and seconded by Councilperson Safka.

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Armstrong, Rozell, Safka, Hollister
 Nays 0

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Millett
Town Clerk