

Town of Sherman
Board of Selectman
Budget Intake Meeting
Wednesday February 24, 2021 at 7 pm
Via ZOOM Teleconferencing

Member's Present: First Selectman Don Lowe, Selectman Kevin Keenan, and Selectman Bob Ostrosky

Member's Absent: None

Audience & Invited: Treasurer Eric Holub, Business Manager Liz LaVia, Sherman Library board members, Fire Chief Chris Fuchs, Fire Marshal Dave Lathrop, Tax Collector Tabitha Fazzone, and residents from the community

Clerk: Margaret Beatty

Meeting began at 7 pm followed by the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance. Selectman Bob Ostrosky opened the meeting with his public service announcement, reminding participants to remain on mute unless topic is pertinent to a specific person/or group and that he would continue to monitor the chat if questions/comments were presented.

Sherman Library: Executive Director Ashleigh Blake began by thanking the Town for their support during the challenging year. She reviewed the protocols the Library implemented to adjust to the current Covid climate. The Library is not asking for a Town increase in their budget, it will remain flat. She gave an overview of budget increases such as administrative, insurance, maintenance, and payroll but highlighted that through grants and fundraising the Library was able to offset those increases.

Public Works/Tree Removal/Tree Warden: Public Works budget similar to last year's budget, minor change such as an increase in salaries, the Town gas and oil line are down because of the previous year's lock in price, the overtime line has not been confirmed yet. The Tree Warden budget increases by \$250 to make it an even \$2000. The Tree Removal budget will remain flat at \$12,240.

SVFD: The SVFD budget will remain flat, had a surplus due to underspent in person training as a result of Covid. The SVFD had overages in supplies, EMS, ambulance but foreseeing FEMA reimbursement for some of the increase. Aggressive fundraising and seeking grants has helped offset operating costs. The SVFD Capital Plan includes new radios and SCBA air packs. Facility Capital Plan include a sanitizer replacement, Charter Hall divider repair, interior painting of

Charter Hall, and replacement of tile floor. Parade Committee budget remains same as last year, will discuss at workshop.

Social Services: The budget similar to last fiscal budget, savings of \$2000 in salary with new Director. One notable increase of \$1000 for Social Services Assistant to adjust for increased duties, and responsibilities. As discussed on Saturday February 20, 2021, the elderly nutrition line was restored to original ask of \$1154 from previously suggested decrease to \$750. ARC budget cut \$200.

Selectman: Will be discussed at workshop- pay increases are only notable change to budget. The audit contract was flat from previous year

Treasurer: Flat budget, take up at workshop.

Tax Collector: Mostly flat budget except for an increase in salary and education line. New certification requirements are being implemented therefore requiring classes, budget for education line being calculated and will be updated.

Assessor's Office/BOAA: Mostly flat budget except for salary increases.

Planning & Zoning Department: Salary increase, increase fees to state by \$6000 to the amount of \$10,000 due to the volume of permits, a reduction in continuing education of \$150, a \$1000 increase for mileage. Will be discussed at workshop.

Zoning Board of Appeals: Flat budget, no changes

Historic District Commission: Flat, No changes

Conservation Commission: Flat, no changes

Regulation Review: Flat budget at \$1200

Housing Commission: Will be discussed at workshop.

Engineering Consultants: Budget flat at \$5000

Land Acquisition Fund: Fee for 1 clerk

Registrars: Tracks similar to last year's budget, increase in education line for training for moderators, supplies. The department may potentially add more moderators, will be discussed.

Emergency Management: Budget remains flat at \$2500, any Covid expense incurred would go under disaster relief and should be refunded by FEMA.

Fire Marshal: Increase in the budget, Fire Chief Dave Lathrop noted that upon taking over the department he inherited work not being completed by previous chief. His work load increased along with an increased call load. The state changed the code requirements which would require new training and books adding to an increase in budget. Increases in mileage

reimbursement, PPE, and IT. Some clarity is needed to adjust increase and will be discussed further at workshop.

Public Safety: \$700 flat budget for safety supplies, the State Trooper budget will be increased by \$9600 because of a step increase due to years of service. The current year's funding was over funded because the state estimated the fringe rate and came in 10% lower than previously quoted.

General Government: postage and legal notice will remain flat but can possibly be reduced and will be explored at workshop.

Counsel and Court Costs: Budget will remain flat and look into the history of spending

Buildings: Supply line will remain flat, utilizes will also remain flat, oil has been reduced due to a competitive lock in rate, the phone line increases \$1300 because of servicing Mallory Town Hall phones, the maintenance line will stay funded at \$40,000 for possible upkeep.

MTH Technology: Minor increase for IT administrator, possible install of Ransomware, and other possible adjustments.

Reserve Fund for Capital Expenses: Will be discussed at workshop but will be currently funded at \$500,000.

Debt: The overall debt has increased, the interest decreased but the principle increased. Will be discussed at workshop.

Miscellaneous: Will remain flat at \$4000.

Insurance/Employee Expenses: Increases driven by wages and subject to discussion, medical insurance increased by 4%, preliminary discussions with the union state that the union medical insurance will remain flat, Pension plan is over funded so no need to contribute.

Salaries and Wages: No information yet, will be discussed at a later date.

Note: Treasurer Eric Holub commented that grand list has gone which allows for less pressure to hold the Mill Rate or reducing it.

More information needed about possible Town Capital Plan projects/expense submissions so discussion can take place (in particular P&R projects, CLA, SVFD, BOE, and Happy Acres).

Lastly, the BOS will be holding budget workshops, the first workshop is scheduled for March 8, 2021 at 7 pm via ZOOM and second will be held on Wednesday March 10, 2021 at 7 pm via ZOOM. Please visit the Town website for more information.

Selectman Bob Ostrosky moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 pm.

Motioned by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

Seconded by: Selectman Kevin Keenan

All in Favor: Unanimous