

BOROUGH OF WHITEHALL

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MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 7, 2020 BUDGET MEETING

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BOROUGH OF WHITEHALL

Budget Meeting November 7, 2020

The Council of the Borough of Whitehall met at the Borough Building, 100 Borough Park Drive, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Saturday, November 7, 2020, at 9:00 AM, for a budget meeting. President Nagy called the meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Linda J. Book
Kathleen N. DePuy
Philip J. Lahr
Robert J. McKown
Glenn P. Nagy
William J. Veith
James F. Nowalk, Mayor (via phone)

Absent: John A. Wotus

STAFF: James E. Leventry, Manager
Vincent G. Yevins, Finance Director
Courtney M. Wertz, Assistant Manager
Eric Harris, Public Works Supervisor
Jason C. Gagorik, Deputy Chief of Police

LIBRARY:

2020 Budget - \$389,760.00
2021 Proposed Budget - \$389,760.00

President Nagy recognized Paula Kelly, Director of the Whitehall Public Library. Members of Council received copies of the Library's 2021 Budget Narrative. The Library requested no increase in funding for 2021 due to a 2020 surplus carryover, along with community donations raised and held by the Friends of the Library. The Library requested on-site storage when possible. The Library received a Federal Payroll Protection Loan for \$99,800 and Federal Cares Act money earmarked for country libraries to compensate for lost RAD revenue. RAD funding will decrease 5% in 2021 as the funding formula was restricted to the detriment of locally well-funded libraries. This represents a \$23,000 loss in RAD revenue. Potential losses in state funding are also likely and still unknown.

Whitehall Public Library is a program centric Library and while they have been able to successfully transition some programs to online, they are struggling with others. Library visits are very transactional currently.

PUBLIC WORKS:

2020 Budget - \$2,004,673.00

2021 Proposed Budget - \$1,076,444.00

Mr. Harris reviewed the budget line items. Many are carry-through items from 2020 with the exception of the purchase of 2 new trucks. The price of the vehicles has increased by \$16,000. It has been a difficult year with COVID-19 and the Department has periodically been down manpower. This proved challenging as grass-cutting operations were moved in-house in 2020. Mowing equipment was purchased using the monies budgeted under contracted services. Public Works employees continue to utilize their array of skills to provide inhouse labor for various projects, maintenance for equipment and save the Borough quite a bit of money. The Laborer & Labor Foreman salaries in this budget are contractual (3 percent increase for 2021), all others are set at 2%. The conversion of the former salt bays at the Garage was put on hold for 2020. It will continue in 2021. This \$175,000 expenditure will be shown under Capital Projects. The small bay was cleaned out enough in 2020 to be able to store the new grass cutting equipment. That equipment will ultimately be moved to the larger bay and the small bay will be made into usable space by adding electric, heat, a fire alarm system and ceiling and used for Library storage. The line item – Street Resurfacing – is zeroed out for 2021 as the Borough will use 100% of Liquid Fuels Funds for the program going forward. It will be easier to audit as the State is getting stricter with how those funds are used.

FIRE PROTECTION:

2020 Budget - \$352,903.00

2021 Proposed Budget - \$349,103.00

The line item – MRTSA Assessment – will be budgeted at \$180,000.00 in 2021. MRTSA is still finalizing their numbers. MRTSA borrowed \$2.5 million for repairs and a new ambulance. The remaining figures in this budget are historic. Mr. Harris stated that the Fire Company Contribution from the Borough has helped with attendance at fire calls, meetings and trainings.

REVENUE:

2020 Budget -\$11,836,880.00

2021 Proposed Budget - \$10,534,245.00

Real Estate Tax Revenue is projected to be slightly higher than budgeted for 2020 which helped offset losses in Earned Income Tax, Cable TV Franchising Fee, Interest and RAD Tax. The 2021 Budget reflects conservative estimates for EIT at \$4,600,000.00 as the Borough won't have a full realization of the 2020 rate increase until April 2021 when taxes are filed. The Borough could see more money come in early next year with final returns and adjustments but it is ultimately unknown. Cable TV Franchise Fees have been steadily declining over the years as streaming services have become more popular. Income from Interest dropped significantly in 2020 as rates dropped. RAD Tax Revenue declined as it is based on sales taxes. The Borough

did see a one-time payment of \$10,000.00 as incentive to renew the cell tower lease. The Borough also received \$150,000.00 in CARES Act money to cover some Public Safety salaries. There was a windfall in the Worker's Compensation Dividend in 2020 but that will be scaled down in 2021 because of a large claim payout. Pool Revenue was down about \$60,000 in 2020 and will be budgeted at \$0.00 for 2021. Recreation Program Fees only consisted of Comedy Show Revenue in 2020 but the Borough did not spend money on Recreation so there was some overall savings in that Department. Projected use of the Fund Balance is estimated to only be \$123,000 for 2020 as the Borough did not spend any money it didn't need to in 2020.

ADMINISTRATION:

2020 Budget - \$684,911.00

2021 Proposed Budget - \$666,343.00

The projected 2020 administration budget will be under budget as savings were seen in the EIT & LST Commission, the folding of EDS, minimal spending on conferences and very few Property Tax Refunds. Line items that were overbudget in 2020 include Legal Services and Legal Advertising as the South Hills Record did not print for a period of time and the Borough had to advertise in the Post-Gazette which is significantly more expensive. Salaries include a 2% increase. The Tax Collector has requested a \$5,000 salary increase to be effective in 2022. Council will discuss that request at the next budget meeting.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS:

2020 Budget - \$267,574.00

2021 Proposed Budget - \$214,824.00

The line item – Custodial Services – came in under budget for 2020 as the Borough hired 2 part-time employees instead of an outside company. The line item – Phone Maintenance – was overbudget in 2020 as the Borough purchased a new phone system and set up conference calling for public meetings. This required a lot of trouble shooting work from David Davis Communications. The line item – Internet/Web Hosting – was also overbudget in 2020 as the Borough launched a new website. Utility expenses are historical. The Borough purchased equipment for grass cutting in 2020 and that is reflected in the line item – Contracted Services. The line item – Maintenance & Repair/Interior – is budgeted at \$50,000.00 in 2021 as the doors to the Library may possibly need replaced.

Jack McCrea from the Whitehall Committee for Environmental Action reviewed a report that was given to Council regarding the use of renewable energy systems in the Borough. Council was open to continue learning about this technology and potential projects in the Borough.

PLANNING & ZONING:

2020 Budget - \$267,530.00
2021 Proposed Budget - \$244,697.00

The salaries include a 2% increase. The Borough saw savings on Engineering Fees in 2020. They will be budgeted at \$50,000.00 in 2021, a decrease from the 2020 budget. Work on the GIS Program was stalled in 2020 and will continue for 2021. \$3,000.00 is budgeted for a new computer/printer for staff.

HEALTH & SANITATION:

2020 Budget - \$1,097,480.00
2021 Proposed Budget - \$1,120,485.00

These numbers are contractual. The line item – Leaf Waste Collection – fluctuates based on how much Waste Management actually collects. The Animal Control costs fluctuate as well. Those numbers are not received from Mt. Lebanon until after the Borough budget is complete. Mr. McKown inquired about automated recycling. That is something that will most likely be addressed in the next contract.

SWIMMING POOL:

2020 Budget - \$276,412.00
2021 Proposed Budget - \$4,088.00

The Borough spent \$145,971.53 on the swimming pool in 2020, the bulk of which was for wages and salaries of pool staff. Monies budgeted for 2021 represent basic utility costs only as a new swimming pool will be discussed under Capital Projects. Engineering fees for preliminary work on a new pool came out of the line item - Maintenance/Repairs - in 2020.

RECREATION:

2020 Budget - \$124,161.00
2021 Proposed Budget - \$131,332.00

Monies spent in 2020 were mostly due to salaries and maintenance on the parks. The 2021 Budget assumes a Summer Recreation Program will happen. Mrs. DePuy stated that there is a lot of overlap between Recreation and Library Programming and thought should be given to combining them. Mr. McKown stated that they used to be combined and there is overlap. If the Library took on recreation programming there is potential they could receive more outside funding for those programs.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

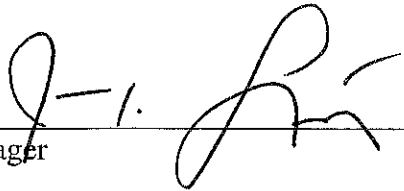
PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

M-1 Mr. Veith moved, seconded by Ms. Book to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Nagy adjourned the meeting at 11:22 AM.

READ AND APPROVED THIS DAY OF DECEMBER 2, 2020.



Manager