

BOROUGH OF WHITEHALL

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MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 6, 2021 BUDGET MEETING

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BOROUGH OF WHITEHALL

Budget Meeting November 6, 2021

The Council of the Borough of Whitehall met at the Borough Building, 100 Borough Park Drive, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Saturday, November 6, 2021, at 9:00 AM, for a budget meeting. President McKown 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 – Arrived at 9:27 AM
William J. Veith
John A. Wotus
James F. Nowalk, Mayor – Arrived at 9:22 AM

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

LIBRARY:

2021 Budget - \$389,760.00
2022 Proposed Budget - \$389,760.00

President McKown recognized Paula Kelly, Director of the Whitehall Public Library. Members of Council received copies of the Library's 2022 Budget Narrative. The Library requested no increase in funding for 2022 due to a 2021 PPP grant carryover, along with community donations raised and held by the Friends of the Library. Those development-related successes allow for a 2022 Friends donation in the amount of \$64,000. RAD money will be increased by 5% in 2022 an estimated amount of \$134,911. With regard to expenditures, the Library has restored money to library programming budgets, and the Library's collection budget reflects additional expenses toward e-books and other downloadable content as demand continues to rise. The Library welcomed a full-time employee in 2021 and benefit costs are in budget. The significant carryover and fundraising revenue streams represent a one-time scenario that will not be sustainable for future budgets.

PUBLIC WORKS:

2021 Budget - \$1,072,661.00

2022 Proposed Budget - \$1,082,889.00

Mr. Harris reviewed the budget line items. Many are carry-through items from 2021 with the exception of a few line items that have increased for the 2022 budget. The line item - Overtime/Salt/Snow Removal - was increased by \$10,000 due to the uncertainty of the winter and going over budget in 2021. The line item - Uniforms - was increased by \$1,000 in anticipation of hiring. There are 3 possible laborers retiring in 2022. The line item - Vehicle Equipment Maintenance - has increased due to this being the 3rd season inhouse grass cutting and maintenance may be required on the machines. The line item - Communications Expenses - will be increased to \$3,000 due to updating of radios in the PW trucks. The line item - Equipment Rental - has been doubled due to more in-house projects being done by PW and more equipment will be needed for these projects. The line item - Vehicle Replacement - reflects that the backhoe is 12 years old and will need replaced at an estimated cost of \$108,000.00.

Parks Maintenance has been moved from the Recreation budget to the Public Works budget. Public Works employees continue to utilize their array of skills to provide inhouse labor for various projects which saves the Borough a lot of money. The line item - Maintenance/Repair Tennis Courts - will be reviewed for the next budget meeting in anticipation of additional costs of updated timers at the tennis courts. The beautification project of the Municipal Complex will be presented in the Capital Project Fund and Public Works will provide the labor necessary for that project.

Mr. Harris stated that he will be retiring as Fire Chief of the Whitehall Fire Company in December 2021.

Council briefly discussed the Fire Company's funding from the Borough.

Mr. McKown stated that Council cannot move forward with a funding plan without full financial disclosure from the Fire Company.

REVENUE:

2021 Budget -\$10,266,750.00
2022 Proposed Budget - \$11,282,544.00

Real Estate Tax Revenue is projected to be slightly higher than budgeted for 2021. The Real Estate Tax Revenue budget is projected to slightly increase for 2022 due to the Grove Pointe Phase II Properties. The 2021 Budget reflects conservative estimates for EIT at \$5,936,350.00 as the Borough won't have a full realization of the 2021 rate increase until April 2022 when taxes are filed. Line item – Real Estate Transfer Tax – will also increase mainly due to the South Hills Square Retirement Building coming onto the tax rolls. The Grove Pointe Developments have created more revenue which keeps taxes flat. Cable TV Franchise Fees have been steadily declining over the years as streaming services have become more popular. Income from Interest dropped significantly in 2021 as rates dropped. Radio tower rent will remain at historical numbers. RAD Tax Revenue slightly increased as it is based on the additional 1% sales taxes. Pool Revenue will be budgeted at \$0.00 for 2022. Recreation Program Fees came in under budget in 2021 as programs were cancelled due to the pandemic. Recreation Program Fees are budgeted at historical numbers for 2022 as the Comedy Show and other activities are scheduled in 2022. The Police Department sold two vehicles in 2021, therefore Sale of General Fixed Assets was higher than originally budgeted for and will help offset the cost of new Public Works trucks. Sale of General Fixed Assets is proposed at historical numbers for 2022. Assessing the expenditures, the Borough should add to the fund balance. The use of grants and inhouse projects has saved the Borough a significant amount of money.

ADMINISTRATION:

2021 Budget - \$684,610.00
2022 Proposed Budget - \$705,801.00

The projected 2021 Administration budget will be over budget due to increased legal services, the hiring of a new employee, and an increase in Commission/EIT & LST. Administrative staff is proposing that the Borough hire a Finance Assistant in 2022, starting in the middle of the year in anticipation of the Finance Director retirement in 2023. The line item – Legal Advertising – will almost double in 2022 as the South Hills Record only prints once a month and advertising in the Post-Gazette is significantly more expensive. Salaries include a 3% increase.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS:

2021 Budget - \$214,824.00
2022 Proposed Budget - \$204,516.00

The line item – Custodial Services – will remain at historical numbers as the Borough employs 2 part-time employees instead of an outside company. The line item – Materials and Supplies – was overbudget in 2021 as the cost of cleaning materials significantly increased. The line item – Electricity – was overbudget in 2021 as the cost of natural gas increased. The Borough has locked in fairly low utility rates for 2022 and those costs remain steady. The line item – Maintenance & Repair/Exterior/Interior came in underbudget in 2021. A new security door will be replaced this year.

FIRE PROTECTION:

2021 Budget - \$351,103.00
2022 Proposed Budget - \$408,875.00

Items are projected to moderately increase for 2022. The largest increase is the – MRTSA Assessment – as significant capital expenditures are expected, and a major reconstruction occurred. The purchase of fire trucks will be discussed under Capital Projects.

PLANNING & ZONING:

2021 Budget - \$241,295.00
2022 Proposed Budget - \$248,785.00

Planning & Zoning came in at an estimated \$25,000 underbudget in 2021. The Borough saw savings on Engineering Fees in 2021. The salaries include a 3% increase.

HEALTH & SANITATION:

2021 Budget - \$1,120,485.00
2022 Proposed Budget - \$1,144,990.00

The line item – Refuse Collection came in underbudget in 2021 but will increase as more developed townhomes are being purchased. 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 until after the Borough budget is complete. Mayor Nowalk inquired about adding funds to the line item - Animal Control. The line item will increase \$10,000 in anticipation of future discussions. The Deer Population Control proposal has not been voted on by Council at this time.

SWIMMING POOL:

2021 Budget - \$4,088.00

2022 Proposed Budget - \$4,222.00

Monies budgeted for 2022 represent basic utility costs only as a new swimming pool is being developed.

RECREATION:

2021 Budget - \$101,111.00

2022 Proposed Budget - \$101,606.00

The Recreation fund came in underbudget in 2021. Most of that was due to low expenses for the line item – Wages-Recreation Aides. This was mainly due to weather cancellations. The salaries include a 3% increase. The line item – Recreation Board Program will increase for the 2022 budget, but this does not include revenue from these programs. Mrs. Bower stated that purchasing 8-foot white tables would be cheaper than renting tables for all outdoor events. Since the Recreation Department was underbudget in 2021, the tables will be purchased this year.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Donna McCrea, a member of the Shade Tree Commission requested three items for consideration, a tree replacement, a soil test kit, and mulch.

Council instructed Mrs. McCrea to work with staff on her requests.

ADJOURNMENT:

M-1 Mr. Veith moved, seconded by Ms. Book to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Nagy adjourned the meeting at 12:28 PM.

READ AND APPROVED THIS DAY OF NOVEMBER 17, 2021.

Manager

