

SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING

2022 Budget

Town of Ulysses

September 22, 2021

The meeting was held via videoconference on the Zoom platform.
Notice of Town Board meetings are posted on the Town's website and Clerk's board.

CALL TO ORDER:

Ms. Zahler called the meeting to order at 8am.

ATTENDANCE:

TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Supervisor- Nancy Zahler

Board members- Michael Boggs, Katelin Olson, Rich Goldman, Mary Bouchard

Town Clerk- Carissa Parlato

Budget Officer- Michelle E. Wright

Bookkeeper- Blix Taetszch

Highway Superintendent- Scott Stewart

OTHERS PRESENT:

(none)

HIGHWAY CAPITAL PLANNING

Ms. Taetszch noted that they have been discussing a capital planning approach that keeps the budget flatter over time while still keeping a frequent replacement schedule. This will avoid dramatic changes in both the highway and overall town budgets.

Mr. Stewart added that they are working with a bank that offers a customized, low-interest loan to lease equipment. He noted that buying equipment now is more difficult due to supply chain issues and availability.

Board members asked questions re: self-funding vs. leasing. Ms. Olson noted that although interest is low, it is still an extra cost to lease.

Mr. Goldman and Ms. Bouchard wondered how this compares financially to paying for items out of reserves/putting money aside each year.

Ms. Wright noted that they don't have enough money in reserves (\$209,000 balance projected for end of 2021). She also doesn't recommend spending reserves down to 0 as it is for emergencies also. She clarified that the amount of interest for the lease in question is about \$7000.

Ms. Taetszch said that the interest depends on down payment and monthly cost and can be lessened. She also reiterated that there isn't enough money in reserves to purchase outright, and if they are on a regular replacement schedule, maintenance costs will be lower.

Ms. Olson would like to see the interest calculations as well as our purchasing/self-financing history.

Ms. Zahler said that the dept. used to buy used equipment but in recent years has been buying new.

Mr. Goldman asked about why the previous capital plan isn't correct anymore.

Ms. Wright said that the reserve should now be thought of as an amount needed for emergencies rather than a financing/purchasing plan. She added that the plan has changed with a new superintendent.

Mr. Stewart added that continually rotating equipment is ideal. He added that there are not enough funds in reserves for repair.

Mr. Boggs said that the reserve plans has changed each year and projections made years back no longer apply. He would like to see the new capital plan based on this new philosophy.

The group discussed the use of fund balance for emergencies.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Ms. Zahler moved to go into Executive Session at 8:45am for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining. This was seconded by Mr. Boggs and passed unanimously.

Ms. Bouchard moved to end Executive Session at 9:23am. This was seconded by Mr. Goldman and passed unanimously.

2022 BUDGET DISCUSSION:

Ms. Wright shared some preliminary budget data, noting that it is not in a final form at this time.

The following items were discussed:

- Tax rate and line increases based on current projections
- Changes to 2022 budgeting
 - Community grants
 - Larger contingency funds
 - Use of appropriated fund balance
 - Use of ARPA funds
- Investing in staff/core services
- Savings & efficiencies
- Items for discussion

ADJOURN

Mr. Goldman made a move to adjourn at 10am. This was seconded by Ms. Bouchard and passed unanimously.

*Respectfully submitted by Carissa Parlato, Town Clerk
9/24/2021*