Town of Lake Santeetlah Budget Workshop minutes

April 28, 2022

Mayor Gross asked for a motion to open the meeting. Emerson made a motion to open the second budget workshop. Mitchell seconded. All others approved. The motion carried.

Mayor Gross asked for roll call for acknowledgment of members present. Councilmembers Tina Emerson, Jim Hager, Diana Simon and Ralph Mitchell were present. Town Administrator Kim Matheson and Clerk Emily Hooper were also present.

Finance Officer Tina Emerson introduced Mr. Darrin Love, Regional Sales Director from Edmund Gov. Tech. Love has been involved in the financial software industry for 17 years. Edmund software specializes in local government agencies, 50 years of experience and 27 states served. A family led business that is determined to support and serve. Town staff has completed two sessions with Edmund representatives gaining an overview of the software and its capabilities.

Diana Simon asked if the current meter reading system is compatible. Concerning tax collection, Simon asked does the software easily collect taxes that are paid through escrow. How are personal property taxes collected, such as boats, campers, cars? Does the software file liens for non-payment? Love explained that Neptune software is compatible with Edmund. Both real and personal property taxing can be completed through Edmund. The information is imported into the software from the County and the customer can make the payment by mail, calling, or online. Liens can also be tracked in the software. The homeowners would be notified that the Town would be collecting taxes. The resident would contact the mortgage company and change location for escrow payment. The Town and County would need to work together during the transfer. Simon asked if certain modules of the software could be purchased later if they were not needed. Love explained that the modules could be purchased as needed.

Love explained, the software offers a high level of support for customers and in depth training as staff learns to navigate the new software.

Mayor Gross asked about Edmund software payroll capabilities. The Town currently outsources payroll, but would process through Edmunds if the Town purchases the software.

Matheson explained that the new software eliminates steps that are now manually calculated which would save time.

Matheson and Emerson provided an overview of changes made to the proposed budget from last week’s meeting.

(34) Mileage was increased from $1,800 to $2,400. This would allow more training opportunities for Staff.

(43) Employee Health Insurance. The figure was low in the last presentation and was changed from $9,660 to $9700.

(73) Maintenance to Public Buildings from $700 to $1,200. Prices are going up and this line item would likely need more funds available.

(75) Maintenance to Building went to $14,000 based on the current estimate received.

(80) Electricity was decreased $100 for Manierre Park.

(92) Leaf Removal remained at $7800. The contract will not expire until 2023.

(100) Paving for Indian Trail $40,000. Emerson explained that she planned to take $40,000 from escrow and put into this line for paving.

(101) Capital reserve – roads $59,302.50. This will be designated for paving and road repair.

(110) Truck maintenance decreased from $2800 to $2000. The truck will not need new tires in this budget year.

The changes made left $82.50 remaining in the general fund.

Hager asked where the $40,000 moved to line item 100 comes from. Matheson stated this comes from Escrow from the settlement funds.

Matheson explained that she had contacted Sharon Edmundson to confirm that what is being proposed can be done. Hager is uncertain that you can take $40,000 from escrow to fund the budget.

Diana Simon stated that the $40,000 settlement received had been earmarked for water line discovery. Emerson explained she had looked back at previous minutes and the money had not been specifically earmarked but simply placed in Escrow to later determine where it was needed.

Hager asked how much from the general checking account do we anticipate going into reserves at the end of this fiscal year. Emerson stated we have approximately $40,000 that remains for the front entrance and $26,000 in paving in this fiscal year. Emerson offered to make a projection for Hager and provide at a later time.

Changes in the water budget include:

(3) Investment Earnings $65 to $59. This change was just made to make the total revenues an even number.

(7) Late fees $500. This line item was created for this budget year.

(8) ARPA Funds the Town will receive total, $13,385.

(32 & 33) $1,000 for each line item was added in for N Sight Software and Trimble Maintenance.

(35) ARPA Funds – Scadia $8,600

(36) ARPA Funds - $4,600 for fencing around the water tank

(37) ARPA Funds - $9,000 for a new meter reader. The trimble is outdated and every time Scott tries to complete a water read there is an issue with it. This may need to be replaced with a new type of meter reader.

(50) Maintenance the wording was changed from long term maintenance to just maintenance.

(55) Water repairs, $2,000 was placed in this line item. The water system is so uncertain and when there is a water line break extra funds are needed.

After line items were filled $3,673.48 remains in water. After it is determined what the ARPA funds can be used for this money will be allocated as needed.

Diana Simon stated she understands that James Aldridge reported the Town roads are in fairly good condition other than Indian Trail. Simon pointed out that it had not mentioned that the roads were resurfaced approximately three years ago.

Simon does not feel that the Town should purchase the equipment for leaf removal. It requires more than a machine and several workers to remove the leaves.

Simon stated that $100 should be placed in a line item for Kudzu removal for chemicals.

Simon stated the costs for water meters and hook up should be increased.

Simon explained that past Council member Keith Predmore had a contact for an individual who could locate the water lines within the Town. The estimated cost for this is $35,000.

Jim Hager pointed out that in the current week’s Graham Star there were liens being filed against residents from Lake Santeetlah who had not paid their current year taxes.

Emerson presented a power point presentation to overview the financial software and the benefits of moving to an updated software. If the Town begins tax collection the savings would total $13,000 yearly. Simon stated that when totaling the budget line items the total was $29,500 for Edmund software. Emerson will review and confirm. Emerson reviewed the proposal for retirement options for employees. The Town currently offers a Simple IRA that only the two full time employees qualify for. The max contribution from the Town is 3% in this program. The state offers two options, NC 457 Plan and NC Pension Plan. Emerson explained that currently the NC 457 Plan seems most suitable for Lake Santeetlah’s budget. The NC 457 Plan allows the Town to contribute a higher amount and this amount can be matched by the employee. Part time employees qualify for this plan as well. Emerson proposes that the Town move to the 457 Plan and contribute 8-10% in the upcoming budget year.

Emerson pointed out priorities in the upcoming budget were roads in need of repair and equipment needed in water. A detailed list was included of each road within the Town. This will be updated to identify when the roads were last repaired or resurfaced. The costs listed on the street list are for replacement and not repair.

The Town has many needs and must haves in the upcoming budget as detailed by Emerson. Road repair and replacement, equipment for the water system, a roof for Town Hall, financial software, water meter reader, new truck (2023). Emerson does not plan to raise the rate for taxes or water in the upcoming budget.

The power point presentation will be attached to these minutes for reference.

The capital reserve fund in the budget is handled by Resolution. A specific amount of money is placed in an account and designated for a specific purpose. The proposed amount in this budget is $59,302.50.

Mayor Gross proposed to change the Mayor fee in the upcoming budget to $1,200 and use the remaining $1,200 to donate to the Nantahala Regional Library.

Mitchell made a motion to adjourn. Emerson seconded. All others approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:16PM.

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Connie Gross, Mayor Emily Hooper, Town Clerk