

**TOWN OF ASTATULA
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
SUMMARY MINUTES**



**COUNCIL WORKSHOP
THURSDAY JULY 27, 2021
2021-2022 BUDGET**

Having been duly advertised as required by law, Mayor Mitchell Mack called the workshop to order at 5.33 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance had been said at the prior Special Council Meeting.

Members Present:

Mitchell Mack, Mayor
Stephen Cross
Gayle Sikkema
Orita Issartel

Absent:

Kimberly Kobera

Also Present:

Graham Wells, Town Clerk
Wally Hoagland, Police Chief

Roll call was taken and there were no residents present.

The council members present had previously met one-on-one with the Clerk to go over the details of the budget and the mayor requested councils' guidance on how they wanted the meeting to proceed.

The Mayor handed the floor to the Clerk. He stated that he had received the new revenue figure for State Revenue Sharing for 2021-22 which was an additional \$10,224 which was split between the General Fund and Transportation fund on a 78/22 basis. This increased the surplus in the general fund to \$85,621.

Ad Valorem taxes are based on 95% of the projected tax revenue from the property appraiser. The budget is based on the current millage rate of 7.5000 mills and the Mayor asked for council's input on whether the town should go to the rolled back rate. It was discussed that the savings to the individual resident was minimal, and the consensus was to keep the rate at 7.5000 mills. The Clerk went over the revenue expectations line by line.

He said that the building permits revenue was based on fifteen new homes from existing lots in the town and thirty from the new development at Colina Del Lago. He also reported on expense code 524 which is the cost side of the permits.

On conclusion of the revenue items, the Clerk added that although not in the budget, it was anticipated that the final part of the foreclosure on the New York property was imminent and that when sold, the proceeds less attorney fees and costs would go into the General Fund.

Each department was then discussed starting with the Legislative (Council) department (511). The Clerk had added an increase to the Mayors and Councils Stipends; an additional \$50.00 per month for the council members and \$75.00 for the Mayor. Following some discussion, it was decided that the stipend would remain at the current level. There was also \$4,720 for the cost if an election was necessary this November. Two council positions are open, Seat 1 and 2 and qualification notices have been posted on the web site and both bulletin boards. At this time the sign is out of commission.

On the Executive (Town Hall) Department (512) Mr. Cross stated that it was a twenty-two percent increase in the total budget. Clerk Wells responded that he had made the adjustment for Jane moving to permitting so that it was on a like for like basis. There was a proposed increase in the Clerks salary and \$22,095 plus FICA and FRS for an additional part time employee. Health insurance had gone up and a big increase in the insurance from \$46,109 to \$54,000.

The Financial & Administrative (513) department saw a decrease in the accounting fees that the clerk has taken on board and an increase in the audit fee due to the addition of the Enterprise Fund.

The level of budget for Legal fees (514) was discussed and whether the attorney should be present at the council meetings for protection of the town. The Clerk responded that it costs \$800.00 each time she attends a meeting and that she is on stand-by during a meeting by telephone. Everything that needs to be is reviewed by Heather is done prior to council meetings.

Public Works (519) was discussed, and it was unanimous that the town should have a full-time person who could operate machinery. It was also decided that the hourly wage be increased to \$18.00 per hour and the same health insurance plan as other employees were on would be offered to the new employee. The Clerk said that only 60 percent of the salary and benefits was in 519, the other 40% is in the Transportation Fund. Also, the health insurance cost is based on a 40-year-old person. Anyone older would cost more money.

The Clerk calculated that the increase would be \$10,442 and the Mayor instructed the Clerk to factor the proposed changes into the budget and bring the new figures back to Council. He went on to explain the increased budgeted costs for repairs and maintenance, vehicle repairs and capital outlay.

The Police Department (521) budget showed a \$86,975 increase over last years budgeted amount. Clerk wells explained that aside from the salary increases, Officer LaJuenesse will be made full time which increased her hours and added health insurance. Officer Tisdell was also added as a part time employee. Mr. Cross said that the PD budget had gone from forty-seven percent to fifty percent of the GF expenditure and doesn't include the cost of insurance which is in the Town Hall Budget. Clerk Wells offered that neither was the revenue received for the SRO and Traffic citations totaling \$56,145 which is directly attributable to the police department. He added that it was showing a larger percentage due to the stormwater and fire control being taken out of the General Fund and put into the Enterprise Fund.

Mr. Cross asked the Chief what his plan was for the replacement of police vehicle over the next five years. The Chief deferred to the Clerk who said that there was no plan to purchase cars in this next fiscal year and that the Infrastructure Fund revenues would be used to repay the debt on the Community Building. He added that we still have two lease payments, \$26,850 each to pay as well. From the 2022-23 fiscal year onwards, there would be ample money in the Infrastructure fund to replace at least one vehicle per year.

The Deputy Clerks wages have been moved out from Executive (512) and put into Protective inspection (524) as most of her time is spent on permitting, which will only increase as the new subdivisions come on stream.

There is no change in Garbage/Solid waste Services (534) rates for the upcoming year. There are new addresses which will increase bot revenue and expenditures. The revenue budget is based on 95% as it is collected on the tax roll to account for the discounts and the tax collector's commission.

Parks & Recreation (572) highlights are that the building has turned out to be far more efficient than had been thought, reducing the budgeted utility cost by \$4,200. There is \$5,000 set aside for furniture for the entrance way of the new community building. Due to the condition of the Olive Ingram Community Building, its future was discussed.

In the Transportation Fund (541) the payroll has increased due to the PW person going full time with benefits. The amount for road signage and paving changes to ensure that the revenues and expenses balance.

The infrastructure Fund Revenue is projected to be \$190,000. The expenses provide for a carry forward figure of \$16,100 after the loan of \$130,000 has been repaid.

The new enterprise fund is the most difficult to predict but it is budgeted for revenues to exceed expenses by almost \$40,000. The figures are based on the best guess estimates of connections to the system over the year.

At this point Councilwoman Sikkema requested that a \$1,000.00 bonus be paid to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk in line with the state payments to Law Enforcement Officers and Teachers for working through the COVID pandemic. She felt that as the town remained open when so many closed to their residents, that they should receive the same bonus. As a vote could not be taken, this would be added to the agenda at the next council meeting.

The meeting then moved on to projects that the town needed to address in the upcoming year. The mayor brought up the need for security cameras for the new community building and a generator for town hall. The cameras can be funded from parks impact fee and the generator from buildings and police impact fees. Cost estimates would be included for the next meeting.

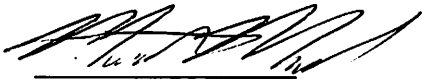
The issue of wage rises for PD and Town Hall staff was discussed. Comparisons were made against the raises for the school teachers. Councilman Cross thought that the percentage proposed in the budget was high and Councilwoman Sikkema felt that what was proposed was still not enough however wanted a more even year to year increase. Chief Hoagland went over the base wage for starting officers for every city and town in Lake County. The starting pay for an officer in Astatula is around \$35,000 which is lower than any other agency. He added that last year his officers and Jane got a three percent increase while he and the clerk only received two percent.

The Clerk stated that due to COVID, the budgeted revenues last year were dumbed down as we did not know what the effect was going to be. As it turned out, sales taxes and state revenue sharing came in much higher than a normal year. The Chief said that in prior years the town did not have the money but now it does, and we should take the opportunity to bring the wages up to where they need to be. The Clerk stated that for each percent that the increase was lowered it would save \$5,450. If the increases were lowered two percent, the saving would be \$11,000. The Increase in state revenue sharing announced this week amounts to the approximately the same, so it is a wash.

Councilwoman Issartel said that with the rising cost of everything, she wanted the salaries to be brought in line with other towns. The Mayor said that he was more comfortable with three to four percent but understood the arguments that the Clerk and the Chief had made. He said that council should look further at individual raises rather than percentages and felt that this would have to be voted on at a future council meeting. With that he adjourned the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

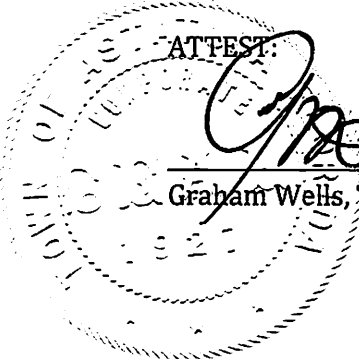


Mitchell Mack, Mayor

ATTEST:



Graham Wells, Town Clerk



THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

1954

