

**Council for the Village of Yellow Springs
Special Meeting: Budget**

Virtual @ 5:00 P.M.

Thursday, November 11, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

President of Council Brian Housh called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

ROLL CALL

Present were President Housh, and Council members Kevin Stokes, Lisa Kreeger, Marianne MacQueen and Laura Curliss. Also present were Village Manager Josue Salmeron, Public Works Director Johnnie Burns, Finance Director Matt Dillon and Solicitor Breanne Parcels.

GENERAL FUND and ENTERPRISE FUNDS

Dillon presented the funds, noting either increases or decreases in each, and the rationale for these.

Housh asked Dillon if the Village is tracking income from sources such as the Pottery Shop and baseball and softball organizations.

Dillon responded that this is tracked into the General Fund.

Housh requested that this be reflected in such a manner that Council can see what has been contributed by each group, since it is a goal of Council to assure that such groups contribute to their costs to some extent.

In response to a question from Housh, Salmeron explained that the team has decided to delay one infrastructure project to 2023 in order to complete engineering work and be in better position for a Resiliency Grant (electric grids and poles) as well as in better position to take into account the impact from the Cresco expansion. Salmeron stated that the team is working strategically to go after upcoming infrastructure bill grant funds.

Staff noted a number of improvement projects slated for 2022.

Curliss stated a request for \$15,000 for a Wetland Delineation Study (WDS) at the Glass Farm.

Dillon noted that what Council has before them is the staff recommended 2022 budget. He asked that Council then make motions and conduct votes for items they wish to add to the recommended budget so that he can incorporate those into the final budget.

Housh asked that the requests be made at this meeting, but asked that any motions or votes come at the next regular Council meeting so that there is greater public awareness and participation.

Stokes asked for “up to \$30,000 for Home, Inc.” for 2022. He noted that Home, Inc. is projecting a need for \$60,000 for “pre-development” costs for upcoming projects, but that he is asking for half of that.

Parcels noted that Council has already promised \$12,000 to Home, Inc. for 2022 (Resolution 2021-30), which would make the total request \$42,000 for 2022.

Stokes reiterated that the entire ask will be \$60,000, and suggested that perhaps Council could set aside \$60,000 “to assure success”.

Salmeron expressed confusion as to the process, noting that any additions will significantly increase the budget deficit.

Housh reiterated that he did not want votes taken at this meeting. Housh stated that a discussion will need to occur related to the challenges inherent to adding these to the budget.

Curliss suggested increasing the asks for infrastructure to include more projects to pitch for grant.

Burns expressed frustration that each year he makes cuts to the Streets and Parks budget to comply with needed budget reductions, and each year he gets farther behind in sidewalk repair. “I have cut \$100,000 out of the Streets budget this year,” he said, and I see more expenditures that are going to impact my budget again.

Housh stated that he wants to know when cuts are being made in each department so that Council can make an informed decision about whether they in fact may want to prioritize a particular project.

Dillon reiterated that a lot of time was spent cutting projects that were simply not possible given the limited resources. When we see these additions, he said, it is discouraging, given the work that has gone into creating a solid budget.

Housh noted availability of American Rescue Plan funds for 2022, stating that all possible avenues for funding need to be pursued, and that it is better to have included projects in the budget and be aware of those needs than to be surprised by a request mid-year and to end up “piecemealing”.

Housh stated that there is a lot of flexibility in what projects are eligible for funding, and that essentially anything that is shovel-ready for 2022 is eligible.

Kreeger noted that if a project is in the budget, it does not necessarily need to be spent, but that if it is not budgeted it will not be spent.

Kreeger requested funds for the CRB, but stated that there is money allocated to legal expenses in several departments, some of which is set aside for investigations, based upon past precedent. These are funds that could go to the CRB to fund CRB investigations, she said, making the only additional cost that of a paralegal or sub-contractor to perform the neutral intake—perhaps \$20-24 thousand dollars per year. She asked that these funds be reallocated to the CRB, so that additional funds are not allocated.

Curliss commented that the amount budgeted for Boards and Commissions has “grown and grown” and that some of that amount could be allocated to the CRB budget. She asked for a CRB line in Boards and Commission in the amount of about \$5,000.

Housh noted that it is time for Boards and Commissions to get their requests in for 2022.

MacQueen commented that this is Council’s first opportunity to make additions to the budget. She requested a list of items cut from the budget by staff prior to Council seeing it.

Salmeron noted that he has set aside \$30,000 in Economic Development for a grant writer, and another \$20,000 for seed money for the YSDC, plus \$15,000 in dues to that organization.

Kreeger stated that the YSDC will not require the \$20,000 for 2022.

MacQueen requested a concept proposal for a conservation development for the Glass Farm if it is warranted by the WDS. She was unclear as to the amount required for this study, but thought \$18,000 would cover both the WDS and a concept proposal.

MacQueen asked for \$25,000 to fund the CASP Coordinator for another year, and asked whether this could be paid for from the sale of RECs.

Salmeron stated that yes, RECs can be sold, if Council votes to do so, but noted that REC funds have to go to the Electric Enterprise, so any projects have to be directly tied to the Electric Enterprise.

In response to a question from Housh, Salmeron stated that solar project costs are figured into the PPA and not separately funded.

Housh asked that funding be set aside for directional signage for parking as well as development of the Cemetery Street parking area.

Burns stated that he has budget numbers for several parking projects and will bring those to Monday's meeting.

Kreeger asked to meet with Dillon ahead of the Monday meeting to determine whether her request regarding the CRB would be feasible.

The Clerk asked whether staff has considered expenditure of REC funds as a part of their budgeting process. She suggested that this be clarified as a Council policy, since if RECs are to be sold that changes what the Electric Department has to work with.

Salmeron stated that this is not considered by staff in the budgeting process, since staff is unaware of Council's position on the matter in any given year.

Stokes asked whether Council can take this vote in time for the budgeting process.

Housh stated that this could be done on Monday.

Curliss noted the complexity of the discussion regarding the sale of RECs.

Burns asked rhetorically why the Village commits to buying green when it is willing to sell the RECs for any number of projects not directly related to the Electric utility. He stated that if the Village is going to sell the RECs it would be better to buy the coal power cheaply in the first place and not claim to be "green".

Curliss defended the expenditure of REC monies to clean up the old Antioch power plant, noting that there should be a commitment to adequately clean up what is constructed in the generation of power.

Kreeger stated that she has not yet seen the detail to the PD budget that she had requested previously. She asked for information on scheduling and overtime. She asked to see what has been cut from that budget prior to the budget that Council is seeing.

Housh stated that Council is better able to weigh their decisions when they are aware of the trade-offs. He commented that Council members can assist by being aware of grant opportunities they can pass along.

Gyamfi Gyamerah commented on the importance of funding the CRB.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7pm, Curliss MOVED, and MacQueen SECONDED a MOTION TO ADJOURN. The MOTION PASSED 5-0 on a voice vote.

Brian Housh, Council President

Attest: Judy Kintner, Clerk of Council