

TOWN OF SNOW HILL, MARYLAND

BUDGET SESSION

April 1, 2020

A Budget Session of the Mayor and Town Council of Snow Hill, Maryland was held via public telephone conference on Wednesday, April 1, 2020 with Mayor Gary Weber presiding and called to order at 4:39pm.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS PRESENT

Mayor Gary Weber
Councilwoman Alison Gadoua,
Councilwoman Melisa Weidner

BUDGET CONSULTANT

Don Giancoli

STAFF PRESENT

Margot Resto

MINUTES APPROVED FROM 3-18-2020

Alison - No increase on prop tax, good; expected increase in water/sewer
Summary pages very helpful

Capital improvement budget – need to learn more from Mayor and Don Giancoli

Town Manager salary – seems very high, did research surrounding towns with bigger budgets not paying that much; agree to an increase, but \$100K is very high for town our size, maybe 80/85K, how we can support it in our budget; median 70K town manager country wide

Mayor – in search for TM, the ones who have the experience – bring block grant, planning, projects similar to ours experience; always have to go outside for attorneys, planners, etc. for high dollar; local towns moved people up from within, many have lost TM's recent years; believe have budget for it; appreciate raise of any kind; trying to get a lot more experience than I and previous TM had

Melisa – planner and TM would be great, but where is extra 20K coming from? Potential candidates with experience are higher, maybe 85-90 range

Alison – looking at pay scale – unbalanced across the board

Mayor – don't agree, every company has people at top with higher pay scale, education, experience and special skills; money coming from different places – something budgeted for 12K could be 10K; have new income for some of this money based on category changes; qualified TM is critical; if we don't plan to grow, lose more population, can't function as a Town, financially in good position

Don – budget is in its entirety; beginning of year it's balanced, town running surplus for years, moving items into Capital projects frees up Operational funds; be careful – keep going into long term, need to think about debt and having Operating fund for debt service; confident budget is balanced; there are things that can be adjusted throughout budget for TM salary increase; right now you have a lot of moving pieces and revenue items to work with until July 1 adoption. Re: COVID, etc... generally cautious with spending at this point, budgeted and actual, be real careful not to spend it just to spend it; the good part is Snow Hill doesn't have user fees, rental fees, etc...Ocean City will lose a lot of revenues; Snow Hill is relatively fortunate – most revenues are fixed.

Alison – what specifically would be reduced

Don – more of what would be another use for the fund, not what would be reduced

Alison – can't support 100, agree come up, someone with experience – 85/88; asked others – what are your thoughts, Council?

Mayor – sort out changes today, first reading at Town Meeting

Don – if you don't agree on numbers, Mayor don't agree to change your numbers, that gets presented on 14th, the council has to approve their numbers

All agreed on \$88K on salary of TM.

Alison – another question – police dept removing PT admin completely?

Mayor – in further conversations with Chief, scheduling – bustling with State Police, FBI, Sheriff, us, covered? Able to have officer in office to cover? Yes, they could do that. Have been operating a long time with 4-8hrs per pay period; reality of need is not there. If need to hire, maybe another PT officer. Budgeted for PT officer.

Alison – concerned with removing Admin budget completely. Chief before him – very vocal, pushed pretty hard. Want to talk to Chief about that.

Mayor – have a lot of officers; pay County taxes and get help from them on shifts, state as well. Our police dept in turn backs up County. Over years population dwindling, officers doubled. Very hefty budget for a municipality this size. Chief said it has not been a hardship.

Alison – want to make sure no spillover onto Town Hall staff, years past it became cumbersome.

Melisa – makes sense to consult with Chief.

Alison – will contact Chief. Capital Improvement Budget – money being moved into Cap Imp Budget, if we find ourselves in a negative space, can we move it back. Fully supportive of projects coming up; Purnell Street, biggest issue is flooding – maybe there might be grant money, etc... Is it fluid?

Don – yes, the money can be moved back. Purnell St – rev side included 700K grant, unlikely. Expense 857K, if grant doesn't come through, becomes loan, but you want to look at funding for 157K for paving and drainage; because funds are appropriated doesn't mean they're spent; making est, putting money aside; only ready for spending 196K; will give operational efficiencies – replacing vehicles, etc.; also have another 100K Parks Riverwalk – planning funds; a lot of time for further conversation about how that money could be spent

Melisa – my first time doing this; biggest thing was Capital projects, understand now; nothing else

Mayor – talk with Chief, share with Melisa, 88K is number

Mayor and Council and Don Giancoli, budget consultant, went into CLOSED SESSION, then returned to OPEN SESSION.

OPEN SESSION –

Mayor - Election – spoke with Kevin Karpinski and Melissa Entnoyer – how to do it by mail, absentee, etc... the prospect of having a walk-in election, not for whole town; referendum postpone, try to have it as close to schedule and as safely as usual; Melisa talk to her Commission volunteers; use voting machines and have protection plexiglass, other protections; postpone referendum; only Eastern District showing up for vote (100 people); looking into that, mail-in thing? Scary with everybody voting by mail, rarely get more than 10% absentee; town

went through great deal of turmoil with this, have to be very careful; don't want to put everybody in harm's way, left it up to Melissa E. because they have to do the work. Goal is try to get it to happen. Trying to get a different machine – ones we use, more than half the time has to go behind curtain to get job done. Other machines are digitized, Melissa E will look into this. Karpinski no problem legally to hold an election, especially for a small-town election.

Alison – re: referendum – to receive this increase, it has to be on the Election year of that office.

Mayor – have to be done before end of June. Talking about Election process more in coming meetings. Don't have a lot of time, maybe decide by next work session. Karpinski said legally we can do it however we want, staying within safety protocols. Can't campaign, maybe put signs out, maybe Chamber can do group forum. Berlin tonight first simulcast meeting.

Alison – maybe still knock on door, keep distance.

Mayor - not recommend anybody going on other's property uninvited now, may get fewer votes, not setting a good example. Any ideas to share with candidates to reach more people. Would love to have a phone number and email for every resident for emergency and important communication. If online get info, some info not coming through locally, a lot of confusion. Maybe through water bill asking for email and phone only to be used for emergency communication. Mayor's letter not fast enough.

Staff working from home mostly with alternate shifts.

COVID task force working to help businesses and individuals.

Alison – are we doing anything?

Mayor – deferment of loans. Using our funds, can't. Don't think there's enough money to make an impact, we need those funds to maintain our services to Town, protect them that way, may put us in a scary position. Previous admin left us in good shape, but not enough to bail out. Our job is to keep them safe, keep Town afloat and intact.

COVID Task force helping shepherd and hand hold through process. Can not be evicted, no water cut-off.

Alison – I hope this task force knows of tax relief from IRS, no levies, etc...

Mayor spoke with Carozza, her number one person has gotten this info together in the same way, Mayor asked her to network with our task force

Mayor - Motion to adjourn, seconded, approved. Meeting adjourned at 6:20pm.