

**VILLAGE OF FREDONIA
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 28, 2023**

The Finance Committee meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Chair Haas.

Committee members present: Josh Haas, Rick Abegglen, and Tiffany Bartz.

Staff/Officials present: Village President Dan Gehrke, Village Administrator Christophe Jenkins, Village Treasurer Melissa Depies, Director of Public Works Eric Paulus, Fire Chief Brian Weyker, Marshal Mike Davel, and Sergeant Eric Leet

Approve Minutes

Motion by Trustee Abegglen, seconded by Trustee Bartz, to approve the July 27, 2023 Finance Committee meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments

None

Presentation of the Draft 2024 Annual Budget

Administrator Jenkins presented the 2024 Annual Budget, thanking Village Staff for all the hard work in developing said budget.

Administrator Jenkins stated:

- This is a balanced budget in all funds within the Village.
- The Mill Rate is determined by dividing the levy by the assessed value. With this budget the Mill Rate will go down by \$0.29.
- Personal Property tax will be eliminated due to Act 12, that amount will be captured in the manufacturing value.
- He highlighted all income and expenses for all funds.

Chief Weyker requested that funding for Food/Drink and Donations be included. He stated that the Food/Drink line item is to provide a meal for the volunteers once a month after a training and monthly meeting. The Donations line is for the annual recognition banquet. The Association pays the bar bill and the Village pays for the meal. These are small tokens of appreciation to our volunteers for their service.

Director of Public Works Paulus stated that the lab is now up and running; certified in water and wastewater testing. This will eliminate our contract with AgSource, which was approximately \$15,000 annually. The Village currently has contracts to test water for Gibbsville and Onion River that will bring in approximately \$3,500 per quarter. Director Paulus is also talking with other municipalities to see if there is additional interest.

Administrator Jenkins stated that the proposed wage increase for staff is a 3% cost of living and up to an additional 3% merit for a total overall maximum increase of 6%, with the DPW staff receiving the cost of living in January and the merit on July 1.

Trustee Abegglen stated that the Village cannot afford this type of increase. Trustees Bartz and Haas agreed. The Village needs to be cautiously optimistic and needs to relook at the proposed wage increases.

Trustee Bartz questioned why only \$90,000 for lot sales in the TID. Administrator Jenkins stated that this is for the remainder vacant lots. The Village has already received the funds for the lots already sold.

Trustee Bartz noted that improvements to Highland Drive was budgeted; questioning what happened to improvements to Martin Drive. Administrator Jenkins stated that the Village has applied for grant funding for the improvements on Martin Drive. If a grant is received then the Village will need to switch to Martin Drive as a first priority and not Highland Drive. The Village cannot fully fund both projects in 2024.

Items for Discussion and/or Action: Motion to Recommend Approval to the Village Board of the Draft 2024 Annual Budget

Trustee Abegglen stated that the Village has been asking more of our crews and has eliminated some of the contracted services; however, he still cannot support a 6% wage increase.

Trustee Bartz stated that the average for the county and the private sector is 3.5%. She also questioned the large increases received in 2023. Administrator Jenkins stated that the increases in 2023 was due to a market rate adjustment nothing else.

Trustee Bartz suggested a 2.5% cost of living increase and up to a 2.5% percent merit for a total maximum of 5%.

Administrator Jenkins stated he came up with the proposed increase based on Federal Government increase of 5.2% and State at 6%.

Trustee Haas stated that he could support 2.5% cost of living increase +merit with a maximum of 5%. He also stated that he likes having the increases based on merit rather than a flat increase.

Trustee Bartz suggested to give the cost of living increase as of January 1 and the merit increase effective July 1.

Trustee Bartz commented that the Village approved the simplified rate increase of 8% for water and now a recommendation for a 3% increase in the sewer. She stated that the Village should to be cautious about increases at this time of inflation. Trustee Haas suggested that we remove the 3% sewer increase this year and readdress this increase next year. All Committee members agreed.

Director Paulus stated that the DNR mandates for Phosphorus; the Village's variance and permit expires in 2026. Depending on the Phosphorus mandates a plant upgrade may be needed. A plant upgrade could cost as much as \$4.5 million.

Trustee Haas noted that the wage for the Fire Chief increased significantly. He noted that he was good with it he just wanted to make sure everyone was aware of it. Trustee Abegglen stated that it is justified as he is doing more due to the paramedic program. Trustee Haas stated that Chief Weyker has been a huge advocate for the Northern Ozaukee County paramedic program.

Administrator Jenkins stated that he will implement the changes discussed and will have a presentation ready for October 5 Village Board meeting with adoption in early November.

Summary of Changes:

- Reducing the Merit-based Increase from a 6% maximum to a 5% maximum
- Removing 3% Increase to Sewer Rates
- Adding back in Funding for Fire "Food/Drink" and "Donation" line items

Motion by Trustee Abegglen, seconded by Trustee Bartz, to recommend the Village Board approve the draft 2024 Annual Budget as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

Correspondence

None

Items for Future Consideration

None

Adjourn

Motion by Trustee Bartz, seconded by Trustee Abegglen, to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 p.m. Motion carried.