

**VILLAGE OF HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON, NEW YORK  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SPECIAL MEETING  
FEBRUARY 27, 2001**

A Special Meeting was held by the Board of Trustees on Tuesday, February 27, 2001 at 8:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room, Municipal Building, 7 Maple Avenue.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Wm. Lee Kinnally, Jr., Trustee Elsa C. DeVita, Trustee Michael Holdstein, Trustee David Walrath, Trustee Bruce Jennings, Village Manager Neil P. Hess.

**CITIZENS:** 3

**PRESENTATION: 2001-2002 VILLAGE BUDGET**

**Mayor Kinnally:** The purpose of this meeting is to have the presentation of the 2001-2002 Village budget by the Village Manager.

**Village Manager Hess:** I am presenting my budget proposals for the 2001-2002 fiscal year, which begins June 1, 2001. I am proposing a property tax decrease of \$1.35 per thousand, or 1.1% decrease. This would be the second consecutive year of a tax decrease in the Village. The general fund is proposed at \$8,060,250, which is an increase of only 1.55%. The pool fund is down \$50, essentially a 0% decrease. The library fund of \$461,750 is an increase of 3.84%. The Draper Park fund at \$29,500 is a decrease of 27.52%. The operating budget, \$8,779,950, is up only 1.76% from the current budget.

General fund revenues: the property tax represents 64% of the general fund. This year it will bring us \$5,154,750. Another large source of our revenue is the sales tax which is now 9.1% of our budget at \$735,000. Other miscellaneous revenues make up \$912,800, which includes county aid, federal aid, day camps, and other types of recreation charges; recreation is separated out. Surplus represents 5.9% of the proposed budget of \$475,000.

Our assessed value has increased almost \$500,000 from the prior year. Our sales tax revenues will be up about \$35,000 in the coming year. Our investment income will be up about \$13,000. Fire protection on our contract with the Town of Greenburgh and Donald Park will bring in an additional \$15,000.

**Trustee Holdstein:** The \$500,000 increase in assessed value: is that primarily due to turnover of houses, with pricing being so healthy and houses going for over asking price?

**Village Manager Hess:** No, because houses cannot be reassessed when they are sold. This is based on the Riverpointe Condominium development and new construction in the Village.

**Trustee Holdstein:** What about when people do renovations to their homes?

**Village Manager Hess:** Those are usually very minor in terms of assessment increases. Assessments on the Riverpointe units ranged from \$30 to \$32 thousand per unit. There were several new houses on Ravensdale Road and on Saunders.

**Trustee Holdstein:** Do they get the C of O's when they are assessed, not when they are sold?

**Village Manager Hess:** New construction is assessed by the Assessor on the assessment date, January 1, for whatever construction is complete. If it is incomplete, there will be a partial assessment. If it is complete, they will get a full assessment. The assessment review is done based on the building permits, not necessarily C of O's.

**Trustee Walrath:** How much of *certiorari* reductions would we expect to wind up with?

**Village Manager Hess:** As I point out in my budget message, this is the preliminary assessment. We will not have a final roll filed until April 1.

**Trustee Walrath:** Sales tax and investment income are somewhat variable with the economy. How much variation have we had?

**Village Manager Hess:** Our growth in terms of sales tax has been phenomenal over the years. This represents only about a 5% increase in sales tax revenue from the previous year; we have experienced growth as high as 7% in the past.

**Trustee Walrath:** Does that date back to the last time we had a significant recession? That was my concern.

**Village Manager Hess:** Our growth on an annual basis has been in the 5% range even during recession.

**Trustee Holdstein:** What has driven that strong growth?

**Village Manager Hess:** We do not collect sales tax ourselves. We share in the sales tax collected on a county wide basis outside the cities and then shared based on percentage of population. It has been a tremendous growth revenue for the county and for us. School districts also get a chunk.

Expenditures: Public Safety and Public Works combined make up about 45% of the entire budget. The largest expenditure is Public Safety, at 27.1%, which includes police, fire, and ambulance.

Appropriations: general government support services have increased by \$114,500. The largest increase came in special items: contingency fund, recommended at \$175,000; maintaining our tax reserve fund; and unallocated insurance. The net increase in special items is \$69,470. I have recommended additional funding for outside counsel of \$15,000 and a \$12,000 increase for maintenance of the Municipal Building. The technology budget, which is helping bring us the slide show tonight: I am asking for an additional \$10,000 for both hardware and software upgrades.

Public Safety: an increase of \$24,900. In terms of equipment, we are looking for new emergency lights for our police vehicles; in-car video cameras for five cars; an additional defibrillator; pager replacements for the fire department; air bottles; hose, fire protective clothing, a hydro-ramp entry tool, and a thermal imaging camera, again for the fire department, \$39,300. We are in the middle of employee negotiations with the police. That is a question mark in terms of impact on next year's budget. What I have in the budget is based on what we have offered as a legitimate offer for settlement.

Public Works: an increase of \$47,850. Equipment purchases include the purchase of two power-angle plows. I want to propose over several years that we start replacing older plows with new power-angle plows. That would help us in our plowing of streets and widening out. I have proposed the addition of a mechanic's helper, at \$23,7000, to assist Jerry Daley in our maintenance program. Again, employee negotiations will determine the exact impact on the budget.

Community Services: increase of \$14,045. Planning: increase of \$18,500. Celebrations: increase of \$20,000. Drug abuse prevention has decreased by \$26,955 only because we no longer fund the Ardsley Youth Advocate Program. We were a pass-through; we helped develop their program. We no longer receive funding from the state and county for that program, and we no longer are involved.

Parks and Recreation budgets are increased \$12,650. We have recommended increased staff for our day camps; a feasibility study on the possibility of dredging, or rehabing, Sugar Pond; and we have some new programs in terms of the skate park and expanding the youth football program to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades.

Employee benefits have increased \$47,000. Our Social Security and health insurance costs will be up about \$75,000. Retirement costs will decrease by \$45,000. Interfund transfers are recommended at an increase of \$15,000. These transfers go to the library and capital fund. The entire increase is going to the library. The debt service fund will decrease by \$153,000.

**Trustee Holdstein:** Does that decrease include the pool, or is that separate?

**Village Manager Hess:** The pool bond is paid off. This was the final year: 2000-2001. The Parks and Recreation Commission recommended a 5% increase in the pool fees to be used for engineering and architectural studies on the pool renovations. Pool fund overall is down \$50, but the additional funding is going into two areas: the renovation project engineering, and employee benefits, charging off the appropriate amount of employee benefits to that fund.

Library fund overall has increased \$17,100 for an additional full-time librarian that the Board approved two years ago. This would provide for the full-time salary, benefits, and health and dental insurance.

The Draper Park fund has decreased by \$11,200. All the major work at Draper Park has been completed, or is in the works. We have some additional work to be done with the roadway area. We hope to repair the entrance steps and put in railings near Aqueduct Lane and the Aqueduct for access to the park.

Capital fund is provided in the budget for information purposes only. A number of these items are included in the operational budget, but are considered by the Board individually as the projects are discussed. Emergency lights for all police cars, \$10,500, is included in the police department budget. The current lights are approximately 15 years old. Recommended video equipment in five of our police cars: there are a number of reasons to do it, number one being liability. When we have complaints or lawsuits filed, if we have a video record of every stop it is certainly to the Village's advantage. We applied for a federal grant passed through the state to provide 90% of the funding. Even though I have \$20,000 appropriated in the general fund budget, it is very likely that our share will only be about \$2,000. We have four defibrillators now, and wish to purchase a fifth; that is also in the police department budget.

Street resurfacing of \$100,000 is in interfund transfers and is budgeted. The Municipal Building, \$20,000, a portion of that is budgeted and is for exterior work on the north and east sides of the building. Hook and ladder building includes repairs to the rear roof and carpeting on the second floor. That is in the fire department budget and is budgeted.

Equipment replacement in the fire department, \$17,700, I itemized what those items were before. Equipment replacement in the ambulance of \$2,500 is in the budget. Garage door replacements: that would replace two of the garage doors at the Public Works facility. Two power-angle plows for \$12,000 is also in the budget. Youth Advocate van replacement, \$25,000, we are going to apply for a grant for that item.

Acquisition/ development of Marinello Cove, \$200,000 is an estimate. Graham School acquisition: we have two grants outstanding on that possible acquisition, total cost \$660,000. We received a preliminary estimate on dredging and rehab of Sugar Pond of \$150,000. Parks truck replacement: \$40,000. Also this coming year we have a garbage truck and a 2-yard dump to replace. Mr. Gunther and I are reviewing our vehicle replacement program and will have recommendations to the Board on the possibility of extending the useful life on some of this equipment based on our vehicle maintenance program.

Ball fields rehabilitation, Zinsser and Uniontown, \$30,000. Roof replacements at two of the park buildings at the Zinsser ball field and the Sugar Pond shack, \$20,000. Tennis court improvements, \$40,000. The parking lots at Zinsser and the pool resurfacing, \$50,000. Computer hardware and software upgrades, \$35,000. That is included in the general fund budget. The Fenwick drainage, \$250,000, is an estimate. Library renovation and addition, \$1,500,000. That is a maximum budget figure established by bond resolution. The pool renovation project is undefined and I have estimates that range anywhere from \$1.4 million to over \$6 million. Total capital: \$3,227,200 with a number of those items already included in the budget.

There has been a fairly steady growth in our general fund since 1992 of just under \$6 million to the proposed of \$8,060,000. When you compare that to the CPI, you will see the growth is fairly similar. It has been our attempt over the years to maintain budget growth at CPI or less. The overall budget, at 1.76% increase, is certainly less than the CPI as it stands now.

The total budget is available on our website. If anyone has any comments or questions, they can e-mail me at [villagemanager@hastingsgov.org](mailto:villagemanager@hastingsgov.org) and I would be glad to respond. We put out over the e-mail list the budget message and the schedule of budget meetings and we hope that people will take advantage of coming down and reviewing the budget with the Board. The Public Hearing will be on Thursday, April 5 at 8 p.m. in this room. The budget review sessions will be taped so the public can have a chance to view those on TV. There will be summary budgets available in the Municipal Building and in the library.

**Trustee Holdstein:** In year '92-'93 was the police force 21 members as it is today?

**Village Manager Hess:** Yes.

**Trustee Holdstein:** How long has it been 21?

**Village Manager Hess:** Since 1977, I believe. They were at a strength of 26 until Anaconda closed. Then it was reduced over several years.

**Trustee Holdstein:** It is always exciting to offer up a decrease without losing any, as you noted in the budget report, decrease in services, facilities, and everything else.

**Village Manager Hess:** I know the Board is going to be discussing not only the budget but goals over the next several months. The staff looks forward to working with you on this budget and the plans you have for the future. Several members of the Board gave me input on the budget for inclusion for the coming year and, hopefully, it is a budget that really looks to the future.

**Mayor Kinnally:** Thank you for the presentation, Neil. As usual, it is a very professional one. It includes a lot of items for the Board and for the public to consider. It certainly does look toward the future. But it also builds on the past, and especially if you look at the amount of money you are committing from surplus, \$475,000, which is more than one-half of our sales tax revenue, it is a substantial amount of money. We always try to put in a certain amount every year in our budget. We try to build on that. This year we are going to appropriate a lot of money from surplus because it is there to appropriate.

**Village Manager Hess:** The Board established in 1992 a tax reserve fund which the Board has appropriated funds to every year since. It helped develop a surplus of approximately \$1.3 million. It helps keep the budget on an even keel. You are appropriating funds and still keeping within the recommended fund balance area of 7-10%, even though a portion of it is being appropriated. The budget adheres to the financial policies established by the Board in 1982.

**Mayor Kinnally:** The tax reserve fund helped cushion the substantial reduction in the assessment when we had to bite the bullet and settle the taxpayer *certiorari* proceedings with Harbor at Hastings. We are climbing back up from that number, but it was difficult in the years coming up to it. Sooner or later we had to make a decision, and we finally did. It not only helped us from a budgeting standpoint, but also with our gaining credibility with other layers of government in dealing with the waterfront with ARCO remediation and RPA and the planning initiative. The entities who are considering the development of the waterfront would not be as optimistic about the waterfront if that burden had not been resolved.

I invite the public to be with us during the work sessions, to follow it on WHOH, and to use our web link to get information from us and give us input, which is helpful in reaching a budget that is workable and that will address the needs that we have today and tomorrow.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On MOTION of Trustee Holdstein, SECONDED by Trustee Walrath with a voice vote of all in favor, the Board scheduled an Executive Session immediately following the Regular Meeting to discuss personnel.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On MOTION of Trustee Holdstein, SECONDED by Trustee Jennings with a voice vote of all in favor, Mayor Kinnally adjourned the Regular Meeting.