

Meeting Minutes of the Town of Dewhurst Budget Meeting
Tuesday, December 10, 2024 – 6:45 PM (CST)
Town of Dewhurst – Town Hall

Board members present: Bill Kolve, Chairman; Bruce Delaney, Supervisor 1; Troy Wyss, Supervisor 2; Kelly Errthum, Clerk; Todd Schultz, Deputy Treasurer

Town of Dewhurst Employees present: Chris Holt; Rollin Opelt

Citizens present: Steve & Barb Kunes, Dave Baumeister, Randy Nichols, Gene O'Brien, Paul Sullivan, Jean & Nate Vandeberg, Paul & Robyn Stearns; Chuck & Marie Kaufman, Ralph Johnson, Barb Deml, Duane Gjersest, Steve Errthum, Marilyn Grace, Sally Wipfli, Barney & Laura Adams, Lorri and Richard Johnson, Dan Kohls, Scott Zenz, Neil Czarnecki, Ted Janicki, Rollin Opelt, Barb & Jeff Hagenbrock, and Steven Wertz. (Note: if you did not sign in, your attendance will not be documented.)

Call to Order: Bill Kolve called the Budget meeting to order at 7:04 PM (CST). At that time, Bill stated that there would be a slight change on the agenda. The approval of the budget will follow after the citizen comments.

Approval of Agenda:

*Motion by Troy Wyss to approve the revised agenda; second to the motion: Bruce Delaney

*Motion carried: 3/0

Reading of the budget: Todd began by explaining the process to attendees. He stated that previously it was done in front of a meeting. This year, the board held a special meeting to put the budget together. Ahead of that meeting, Todd took nine (9) months of the 2024 actual spend and projected for the rest of the year in column "G" and column "H" is reference for 2025 budget.

The top part of the sheet is the revenue items and the history dates back to 2021 in case there were anomalies. He proceeded to explain several items:

Highway Aid is forecasted by the Department of Revenue so that is known in advance. Did not have the new numbers for 2025 expectation would be \$111/\$113.

Tax Levy is "\$118 and change" and we had \$118. That is the net given back after we pay the school district and the county so the township keeps \$118k of the \$2M that is billed.

PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) had a bump last year and are estimating that again this year.

Timber sales are what is given for counties that has county forest receives money from county timber sales. We get 10% of 10% of what the money the county makes as we are 10% of all the county forest in Clark County.

GFL – recycling we get about \$1,200/annually.

Shared revenue – this is calculated by the county treasurer and the number is provided in February.

Fire dues a rebate that we get back. Troy indicated that previously it was tied in with another line item.

MFL Managed Forest law – we don't pay taxes via the normal process. This is a payment that is made and then the state refunds.

Licenses – this is the liquor, building, permits, inspections.

Permits – in red this was a special liquor license that was issued for the current year and there is

no expectation for that to occur again.

Interest this was bumped a bit as we invested funds into a CD which allows for more interest to be earned.

Misc. this include a sale of property and as there is no expectation for this to occur again, this is also noted in red. Budget was then adjusted to the “expected” amount.

Todd opened up the floor to citizen questions on revenue.

Fire dues confusion – Steve Kunes clarified that is for certification by the Hatfield Fire Dept. that is an in and out cost as \$4,000 is listed as both revenue and expense. Todd validated and stated that when the funds come in, they are almost immediately written out.

PILT -Diana asked if it was just the DNR? Todd stated that he believes that is correct and that we are given very little detail regarding the payment. Diana understands it to be that there is land within the Town of Dewhurst that is controlled by the DNR and this makes it non-taxable. This is the compensation for the loss of tax funds for that property. Todd stated that there is about \$18,000 of MFL taxes so the state subsidizes the township.

Grants – Robyn Stearns asked what the made up the grants. Todd clarified that it was mostly the recycling and some misc. from the state for computers etc. These are very low dollar amounts. Robyn then asked if Todd had to write the grants. Todd responded that these “grandfathered” in grants from his knowledge.

Todd then moved to the expense portion of the spreadsheet.

General Government – these are the funds to keep the building open.

Electricity, facility repair/maintenance/postage (highest is tax bills Todd stated he had the Merrilan addressed tax bills if anyone present would like to get theirs at the end of the meeting), telephone/internet, travel, website (previously included design/administration has now moved to strictly administration), elections (2024 November bills were not available at time of meeting), fuel (LP & Diesel), office supplies (incurred expenses that were not annual expenses in 2024), wages (general labor, board wages, travel), dues, ads (meeting notices in print), heating fuel, drug testing (annual -non board members), legal fees (includes ordinance committee, and higher legal fees in 2024, sale of land), tax refunds (this is when there is an overpayment of taxes that needs to be returned.)

Bill asked that the EMT funds of \$8,880 be added to the budget. Further detail will be discussed at the Regular Monthly meeting.

Citizen Comments:

Diana Laufenberg questioned the 25% increase on the line 26 (General Gov't) is there something that we are not doing in 2025? Or are we having that amount of money available from year to year? Todd indicated that we are budgeting for increased legal fees as well as the meeting stipend for the Ordinance committee members. Diana asked if we had approx. \$6,800 in legal fees for 2024 are you expecting the ordinance committee to run approximately \$5,000 in compensation. Todd clarified stating that the budget was per member, per meeting, for twelve (12) months. Diana stated that there was still some discrepancy. Troy clarified that there is expectation that there will be legal oversight as the ordinances are created and that is above and beyond the “ordinance” fund. Diana is questioning if the township was banking the funds. Todd explained that there were also changes on wages and other lines.

Todd stated that we did go conservative on the budget. He felt that this was a fair assessment of the upcoming budget year.

Bernie Adams asked as Todd had the Merrilan address tax bills, when would the others be available? Todd stated he mailed out over ½ of them yesterday (Black River Falls, Neillsville, and other locations). He is hoping to have the remaining ones done by Thursday.

Dave Braumeister asked about the road materials/repairs and what were the items on that line. Todd stated he will circle back after touching on the other items.

Fire protection was an increase from Hatfield Fire Dept and the new EMT costs.

Fire dues – this shows the payment going out from the previous line item

Insurance increase – Todd pointed out that there was an increase and residents maybe seeing that personally as well.

Sanitation this includes the GFL contract – expense of running the dump

Road materials/repairs there was an increase with the storm damage and repairs on Riviera and there are bills that are still arriving. There was an increase as there were funds available to address additional road repairs.

Dave Baumeister has an issue with the Riviera project. He states that the Riviera project is 100% illegal. The road ditches are a disaster and are dangerous. They don't drain any way people wanted them. He stated that the project was a farce. He requested all copies of the bids that came in for the project. Todd stated it would have to come from the board. Dave stated that the bids are public knowledge.

Virgil Bohac stated that he was having a difficult time reading the screen. Bill invited him to the front of the room. Virgil requested a hard copy of the budget and all bills paid in 2024. He stated he would pick it up.

Equipment repairs and maintenance – 2024 experienced a few issues that are not expected in 2025.

Labor and payroll looks light as this is general labor for Donny/Rollin

Assessment done after the budget and there will not be a full assessment in 2025

Equipment purchase there is an item for the grader that will need to be purchased but, no large equipment purchase is expected.

Tood shared the surplus amount of about \$21k after expenses/revenue.

Approval the 2025 budget

*Motion made by Bill Kolve to approve the budget as it was presented; second to the motion – Troy Wyss

*Motion carried: 3/0

Adjourn

Bill adjourned the meeting at 7:36 PM (CST).

Citizens present were able to collect their tax bills after adjournment as there was a small break before the Regular Monthly Meeting.

Minutes submitted by: Kelly Errthum, Interim Town of Dewhurst Clerk