

Village tax rate rises 7.2%

Written by Mark Jaeger

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Increase fails to draw anyone to budget hearing; employees get 1% raises

The Saukville Village Board had no reason to give the proposed 2011 budget any second thoughts Monday when no residents showed up for a public hearing on the spending plan.

That silence made approving the \$3.3 million budget a simple task for trustees.

Department head requests were scrutinized by the Finance Committee, resulting in the operating budget rising just .6%.

Capital spending will increase \$31,600, essentially the cost of buying a new police squad car. That purchase was deferred from this year.

Debt payments for the coming year will be \$833,000, an increase of nearly 18% from this year. Those payments will include the local share of the proposed reconstruction of Highway 33 and the debt for the new police station.

Overall, the tax levy will be \$2.6 million, an increase of slightly more than 8%.

The budget will require a 7.2% hike in the village tax rate. The new rate will be \$6.40 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, an increase of 43 cents from this year.

For a property valued at \$200,000, officials said the budget will boost the village tax bill by \$86.

A separate fee for garbage and recycling will also rise \$5 next year, to \$159.

Public Works Director Roy Wilhelm, the only village resident in the audience during the budget hearing, said he looks at the tax bill philosophically.

"When I sit down with my tax bill and deduct the payments to the school district, county and state, the village's share on my taxes comes down to about \$3 a day," Wilhelm said.

"What can you get for \$3 a day? Maybe a couple cups of coffee or bagel. People should look at what they get from the village for \$3 a day as a bargain."

Village President Barb Dickmann tried not to read too much into absence of residents at the budget hearing.

"I think people realize we have done the best we could in dealing with a lot of things that are not in our control in this budget," Dickmann said.

She said the village has held its spending in check and urged the state to control costs on the Highway 33 project.

"When you consider we lost \$1.5 million in our tax base and the lack of interest income, it was

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like a perfect storm of challenges for the village,” Dickmann said.

Shortly after unanimously adopting the budget, trustees approved the 2011 salary schedule for non-represented village employees.

The schedule offers full and part-time workers 1% raises, the same pay adjustment given to workers in the village’s two unions, AFSCME and LAW.

Last year, all village wages were frozen.

Dickmann abstained from voting on the salary for her husband, Utility Supt. Jerry Dickmann.