

Analysis of Sleepy Hollow's 2020-2021 "Mayor's Budget" Proposal

by Daniel Convissor, danielc@panix.com, @DanielConvissor, April 21, 2020

Expenses

The new budget proposes a \$616,046 increase to regular spending. The major components are:

- \$200,000: to the Local Development Corporation
- \$152,200: retirement system to encourage more Fire and Ambulance volunteers
- \$103,518: police get 2.5% raises, a new officer and \$25k more in overtime
- \$67,200: Spanish speaking Community Outreach Liaison

On top of the regular spending, a \$484,163 contingency is proposed, I assume to cover possible emergency expenses and/or revenue shortfalls due to the COVID-19 crisis. This is a good idea.

Also good are the new expenses for outreach to the Spanish speaking community and efforts to boost Fire and Ambulance volunteers.

I encourage the Trustees to reflect on Police Department staffing. Does our modest village really need 27.5 officers (including the Chief)? Is \$475,000 in overtime appropriate?

Revenue

On the revenue side, a 19% jump (\$300,000) in sales taxes is anticipated because the County's sales tax rate going up 1%. While this estimate was already lowered 5% in anticipation of COVID impacts, it may be prudent to lower the estimate further.

Similarly, parking permits and meter income will likely drop, perhaps significantly.

This budget shows total State Aid staying at \$291,549. While the State's budget says it will be the same, we should anticipate the Governor using his new authority to make major cuts in response to the precipitous fall in the State's tax revenue.

Sanitation

Garbage collection is slated to cost \$109,563 *more* than the sanitation fees we pay on our water bills. While I am glad the Board cut this subsidy in half three years ago, the Board needs to eliminate it.

The budget plans for the Village to pay an astounding \$753,973 for waste handling. We can do better, saving us all money *and* the environment.

Several efficiency measures implemented for the COVID emergency should be made permanent. Collecting residential garbage once per week and alternating which recycling types are picked up each week are good moves in most neighborhoods. The Inner Village may need refinements due to limited storage space.

Further staff and equipment savings can be achieved under the new system by:

- using the automated truck to pick up the recycling
- using the automated truck in more neighborhoods
- ending collection of loose leaves

Most importantly, residents and businesses need to pay for trash like we pay for water. Places that have adopted “waste metering” throw out an average of 44% less trash!

The first step in this direction is charging for bulk garbage pickups. The fact that it is free encourages people to throw out massive quantities of perfectly good items, especially when moving out of a home (photo, right). Placing a user fee based on the size and weight of items being discarded has two benefits. First, it provides an incentive to sell or donate usable items. Second, it covers the Village's costs for handling and disposing these materials.



This this video shows how easy waste metering is: <https://youtu.be/TZbMLQxuMT0>

Several success stories are covered, here: <http://wastezero.com/>

In the Inner Village, waste metering should be combined with restructuring how garbage is stored and collected. Rather than having loads of garbage cans in front of each apartment building, municipal bins can be installed that measure how much each person discards and provide centralized locations for trucks to pick it up. Here is a video of one such system:

<https://youtu.be/VIxEXSvD3Sw>

“Clarified View” of Sleepy Hollow's 2020-21 Mayor's Budget

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Items Subtracted in this View

* Contingency	25,000	484,163	Not a “real” expense
** CHIPS	142,365	142,444	Paving expenses directly reimbursed by State

	2019-2020 Adopted	2020-2021 Mayor's	Change	Change	% of Sect. Change	% of Total Change
General Fund Expenses						
General Govt. Support *	2,376,989	2,445,726	68,737	2.9%	11%	8%
Public Safety	5,219,629	5,352,492	132,863	2.5%	22%	16%
Health	249,399	257,524	8,125	3.3%	1%	1%
Transportation **	1,289,587	1,307,956	18,369	1.4%	3%	2%
Economic Assistance	97,900	364,600	266,700	272.4%	43%	32%
Culture and Recreation	1,914,450	1,981,631	67,181	3.5%	11%	8%
Home and Community Svcs.	33,390	33,380	(10)	(0.0%)	0%	0%
Employee Benefits	4,598,500	4,813,900	215,400	4.7%	35%	26%
Debt Service	1,696,988	1,535,669	(161,319)	(9.5%)	-26%	-19%
	17,476,832	18,092,878	616,046	3.5%		
Other Fund Real Expenses						
Sanitation	733,127	753,973	20,846	2.8%	9%	2%
Parking	327,837	333,275	5,438	1.7%	2%	1%
Water	3,303,097	3,492,302	189,205	5.7%	83%	22%
Sewer	652,607	663,837	11,230	1.7%	5%	1%
	5,016,668	5,243,387	226,719	4.5%		
Total Real Expenses	22,493,500	23,336,265	842,765	3.7%		
General Fund Revenues						
Real Property Tax	12,438,595	13,275,520	836,925	6.7%	67%	65%
Other Property Tax Items	700,000	725,000	25,000	3.6%	2%	2%
Non Property Tax Items	1,890,000	2,205,000	315,000	16.7%	25%	25%
Departmental Income	444,219	435,530	(8,689)	(2.0%)	(1%)	(1%)
Intergovernmental Charges	14,815	18,675	3,860	26.1%	0%	0%
Use of Money and Property	108,000	110,688	2,688	2.5%	0%	0%
Sale of Licenses and Permits	806,000	867,000	61,000	7.6%	5%	5%
Fines and Forfeitures	80,000	80,000	0	-	0%	0%
Compensation for Losses	95,000	105,000	10,000	10.5%	1%	1%
Miscellaneous	52,500	52,500	0	-	0%	0%
State Aid **	149,105	149,105	0	-	0%	0%
	16,778,234	18,024,018	1,245,784	7.4%		
Other Fund Real Revenues						
Sanitation	650,000	655,000	5,000	0.8%	14%	0%
Parking	372,000	372,000	0	-	0%	0%
Water	4,070,000	4,100,000	30,000	0.7%	86%	2%
Sewer	680,000	680,000	0	-	0%	0%
	5,772,000	5,807,000	35,000	0.6%		
Total Real Revenues	22,550,234	23,831,018	1,280,784	5.7%		