

Village Board holds budget workshop for 2013-2014 fiscal year

Written by Wauneta Breeze
Thursday, 12 September 2013 15:53 -

By Sheri Hink-Wagner

The Wauneta Breeze

Wauneta village board members met Monday for a budget workshop to review a preliminary budget for the 2014 fiscal year, which starts Oct. 1, 2013 and goes through Sept. 30, 2014.

Board members Tony Cribelli and Page Johnston were present at the workshop as well as village staff members Evelyn Skelton and Bill Bischoff.

During the meeting board members present reviewed each of the village's budget categories including water, sewer, electric, general, street, cemetery, fire, park, library, police, other funds and nursing home.

The total proposed budget for the village is \$4,265,725 and includes a proposed 2013 tax rate of 0.499997, down slightly from the 2012 tax rate of 0.500000.

Below is a summary of the proposed budget in each of the village's budget categories.

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Water

The water category of the preliminary budget totals \$202,050 and includes funding to continue work on the water main on Cheyenne Street, \$50,000 to dig alternate well sites for the arsenic water project and \$10,000 for upgrades.

The budget also includes \$25,000 for water line work and new hydrants. Anticipated income in the water budget includes \$30,000 from the Department of Environmental Quality for the water main project and arsenic project.

Fees from water users were also increased slightly in the FY 2014 budget. Staff members present stated the water user fees may need to be raised in the upcoming year.

Sewer

The proposed sewer budget for FY 2014 totals at \$136,650. Several capital improvements are included in the preliminary budget including erosion control at the village lagoons.

Village Superintendent Bill Bischoff said the village needs to clean cell one at the lagoon this spring. He said the lagoon's sedimentation is at the 2-foot allowed level and needs to be cleaned up. Bichoff is currently working with an engineer to plan for the project, which is anticipated to cost \$50,000.

The budget also includes \$25,000 to fix a sewer pipe behind Harchelroad Motors that has a large crack in it.

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Staff members also mentioned possibly applying for a \$24,000 grant to purchase a generator for the lift station.

Electric

The proposed electric budget totals \$1,139,100. A 3.5 percent increase in user fees was included. Staff members said they believed the raise would be necessary due to a 3.5 percent increase from Nebraska Public Power District which is forthcoming.

The proposed electric budget also included \$75,000 for capital improvements at the sub station and \$50,000 for a new sub-transformer.

General

The general category in the proposed budget totaled \$134,200. The most notable planned expense is \$7,500 set aside as a contingency for a new air conditioning unit at the village offices.

The current system is quite old and staff and board members felt it important to plan for its potential demise. The contingency money may also be used to complete repairs to the elevator at the village office.

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Street

The proposed street budget totals \$334,550 with a deficit of \$97,022. The possible deficit would be realized if the village did a street project in the year. However, funds for the street project could also be taken from the village's highway allocation, making the deficit a mute point.

Most notable within the proposed budget is \$55,000 set aside for possible equipment upgrades. Included on the "wish list" of equipment upgrades is a new sand truck, grader upgrade and brush mower.

Discussion of the proposed street budget included possibly writing a grant for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding. Village Clerk Evelyn Skelton described the program as a grant meant to make walking to school safer for students, such as sidewalk improvements. The grant, if written, could be for as much as \$12,500.

Cemetery

The proposed cemetery budget totals \$20,300 and includes \$5,000 for tree spraying and \$6,500 for a new mower.

Bischoff explained the pine trees at the cemetery are stressed due to the drought, making spraying 3-4 times per year necessary to keep them alive.

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Park

The total for the proposed park budget is \$79,300. The proposal includes \$15,000 for a new concession stand at the ball park, with \$5,000 expected to come from a donor. The project is still in its preliminary phase and may or may not happen during FY 2014.

The park budget also includes \$5,000 for improvements to the pool including a lift chair for handicapped pool patrons, pumps and leaning poles.

Fire, library, police

The proposed fire budget totals \$36,400 and includes \$6,500 to complete repairs to the building such as roof work, cement work on one of the bays that is shifting and a possible air conditioning unit.

Bischoff stated the fire department members and rural fire board would assist with the work to be done on the roof of the fire hall.

The proposed library budget of \$18,275 comes directly from the library board and includes standard expenses including payroll, new books and building maintenance.

The proposed police budget of \$53,300 includes standard budget figures for the village's contract with the sheriff's office for providing police services in the village.

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Nursing home

The proposed nursing home budget totals \$47,500. The budget includes the village's portion of the nursing home budget, which mainly consists of revenue bond payments of \$43,000 per year.

The nursing home gives the village the money each month to make the revenue bond payments and the village then cuts the checks to bond holders.

A budget hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 17 at 7:00 p.m. MT at the Village office to adopt the FY 2014 budget.