



**VILLAGE BOARD BUDGET MEETING MINUTES**  
**THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.**

A Special Budget Meeting of the Village Board of Trustees was held on Thursday, April 29, 2021. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the meeting was held by teleconference.

Present:       Edward Markunas, Mayor  
                  Steven Alpert, Trustee  
                  Charles Barone, Trustee  
                  Jo Meegan-Corrigan, Trustee  
                  Fred Sauberman, Trustee  
                  Robert Magrino, Attorney  
                  Amy Paffenroth, Village Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor Markunas called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

A Workshop Meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 26, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. A Regular Meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 3, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

**TREASURER:**

Treasurer Michael Genito presented a summary of the proposed 2021-2022 Budget. As summary is as follows:

The General Fund is the major operating fund of the Village and includes all accounts that would not otherwise be required to be kept in another fund. General Fund appropriations will decrease \$75,004 (0.5%) from \$15.9 million to \$15.8 million and revenues other than property taxes will decrease \$215,060 (5.3%) from \$4 million to \$3.8 million. As a result, the real property tax levy will increase \$140,056 (1.2%) from \$11.9 million to \$12 million. Together with a \$34,776 increase in taxable assessed valuation of real property, the 2021-2022 real property tax rate will increase from \$90.06 to \$91.09 (1.1%) per \$1,000 taxable assessed valuation. The real property tax rate changes approximately one percent (1%) for every \$120,000 change in estimated revenue or appropriation and for every \$1.32 million change in taxable assessed valuation. The increase in Village taxes for the year on a single-family home with the median taxable assessed value of \$41,100 is estimated to be \$43.

The Curbside Solid Waste District provides residential refuse and recycling services to residents of the Village, other than those living in condominiums, cooperative apartments (“co-ops”) and apartments. Costs of operating the Curbside Solid Waste District increase \$21,026 (2%). The number of units serviced remains the same at 1,870, resulting in an annual service charge per unit that will increase \$11 from \$551 to \$562.

The Container Solid Waste district provides residential refuse and recycling services to residents living in condominiums and co-ops. The \$356,661 required for services to 1,723 units remains the same, resulting in an annual rate of \$207 per unit. These services are provided by an independent refuse and recycling contractor under an agreement that expires on May 31, 2022.

**Water Fund** The Water Fund accounts for the activities of the Village's drinking water treatment and distribution system. Total costs of the Water Fund decrease \$27,042 and estimated revenues increase \$1,500. It is estimated that the annual cost of water for the average single-family home will decrease three dollars.

The Sewer Fund accounts for the activities of the Village's sanitary sewer treatment plant and collection system. Total costs of operating the Sewer Fund will increase \$142,811 (5.3%) and total estimated revenues other than sewer rents will increase \$5,000. It is estimated that the annual cost of sewer service for the average single-family home will increase \$30 per year.

**Debt Service Fund** The Debt Service Fund is used to accumulate the resources (money) necessary to meet the required payments of principal and interest (debt service) on outstanding serial bonds. Debt service requirements for 2021-2022 will increase \$35,085 (3%) from \$1,155,981 to \$1,191,066. This increase is primarily due to the addition of the 2020B Serial Bonds issued through the Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) that closed on December 17, 2020. Debt service payments are funded by transfers in from the General, Water and Sewer funds.

**Capital Projects** The \$2.9 million list of proposed capital projects represents assets that have a value of at least \$15,000 with an estimated life of at least three years. Debt is the proposed source of funding for all the capital projects listed, but the source of funding is subject to change based on the availability of grants and aid or other revenues.

**Real Property Tax Levy Limit** On June 24, 2011, the real property tax levy limit ("tax cap") was signed into law as Chapter 97 of the New York State Laws of 2011 and became permanent as part of the 2019-2021 New York State budget, which was adopted on March 31, 2019. The tax cap law establishes a limit on the annual growth of real property taxes levied by the Village to two percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is less. There are limited, narrow exclusions to the tax cap, including certain costs of significant judgments arising out of tort actions and unusually large year-to-year increases in pension contribution rates. The tax levy cannot exceed the cap unless 60% of the total voting power of the Village Board (at least three affirmative votes) adopt a local law to override the tax cap. It is important to note that the tax cap is on the tax levy (the amount to be raised in real property taxes), and not the tax rate (the amount to be raised in real property taxes divided by the total taxable assessed value of the Village). On April 12, 2021, a public hearing was held to consider the 2021-2022 Tentative Budget and to consider a local law to authorize a property tax levy in excess of the limit established in General Municipal Law Section 3-c for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2022. At the conclusion of the public hearing, a motion made and seconded to adopt the local law failed on a vote of three against and two in favor of the local law. The budget as adopted on April 29, 2021 is \$170,097 below the tax levy limit ("tax cap").

**RESOLUTION NO. 69 OF 2021 - ADOPTING CHANGES TO THE TENTATIVE BUDGETS FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING MAY 31, 2022**

Section 5-508 of Village Law provides that the 2021-2022 budget for fiscal year ending May 31, 2022 must be adopted on or before May 1, 2021. The 2021-2022 Tentative Budget (“Tentative Budget”) was transmitted by the Village Clerk to the Village Board on March 18, 2021. A public hearing on the Tentative Budget was held on April 12, 2021. A public hearing on the proposed 2021-2022 water rates and the proposed 2021-2022 sewer rates was held on April 19, 2021. Members of the Village Board have proposed amendments to the Tentative Budget. That the Village Board of the Village of Suffern does hereby adopt the following amendments to the Tentative Budget:

- Decrease A1010.4 BOARD OF TRUSTEES Contractual \$525
- Decrease A1110.1 VILLAGE JUSTICE Personal Services \$2,000
- Decrease A1110.4 VILLAGE JUSTICE Contractual \$2,089
- Decrease A1325.4 VILLAGE TREASURER Contractual \$3,300
- Decrease A420.4 VILLAGE ATTORNEY Contractual \$20,000
- Decrease A1990.4 CONTINGENT ACCOUNT \$25,000
- Decrease A3120.1 POLICE Personal Services \$87,614
- Decrease A3120.2 POLICE Equipment \$60,000
- Decrease A3120.4 POLICE Contractual \$3,870
- Decrease A36204 SAFETY INSPECTION Contractual \$675
- Decrease A5110.4 STREET MAINTENANCE Contractual \$23,500
- Decrease A5142.4 SNOW REMOVAL Contractual \$5,000
- Increase A8160.1 CURBSIDE SOLID WASTE Personal Services \$5,000
- Decrease A8160.4 CURBSIDE SOLID WASTE Contractual \$10,000
- Increase A8160.8 CURBSIDE SOLID WASTE Employee Benefits \$930
- Decrease A9010.8 STATE RETIREMENT \$530
- Decrease A9030.8 SOCIAL SECURITY \$5,800
- Decrease A9031.8 MTA COMMUTER TAX \$400
- Decrease A9045.8 LIFE INSURANCE \$900
- Increase A9060.8 HOSPITAL & MEDICAL INSURANCE \$27,000
- Decrease A3265 CURBSIDE SOLID WASTE FEES \$4,070
- Decrease A1001 REAL PROPERTY TAX LEVY \$214,203
- Decrease F8310.1 WATER ADMINISTRATION Personal Services \$1,826
- Decrease F8310.4810 WATER ADMINISTRATION State Retirement \$530
- Decrease F8310.4830 WATER ADMINISTRATION Social Security \$100
- Increase F8320.1 WATER SUPPLY Personal Services \$6,947
- Decrease F8320.4 WATER SUPPLY Contractual \$5,000
- Increase F8320.4810 WATER SUPPLY State Retirement \$529
- Increase F8320.4830 WATER SUPPLY Social Security \$500
- Increase F8320.4831 WATER SUPPLY MTA Commuter Tax \$100
- Decrease F8340.4 WATER DISTRIBUTION Contractual \$5,000

- Decrease F2140 METERED WATER SALES \$4,380
- Decrease G8110.1 SEWER ADMINISTRATION Personal Services \$1,826
- Decrease G8110.4810 SEWER ADMINISTRATION State Retirement \$530
- Decrease G8110.4830 SEWER ADMINISTRATION Social Security \$100
- Decrease G2120 SEWER RENTS \$2,456

A motion to approve the foregoing resolution was made by Trustee Charles Barone and seconded by Trustee Steven Alpert and a roll call vote was recorded as follows:

NAME	YES	NO	ABSENT
Alpert	X		
Barone	X		
Meegan-Corrigan	X		
Sauberman	X		
Markunas		X	

Mayor Markunas declared the Resolution adopted on April 29, 2021.

**RESOLUTION NO. 70 OF 2021 – ADOPTING THE FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 BUDGETS FOR THE GENERAL FUND (INCLUDING THE CURBSIDE SOLID WASTE DISTRICT AND THE CONTAINER SOLID WASTE DISTRICT), THE WATER FUND, THE SEWER FUND AND THE DEBT SERVICE FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING MAY 31, 2022**

Section 5-508 of Village Law provides that the 2021-2022 budget for fiscal year ending May 31, 2022 must be adopted on or before May 1, 2021. The 2021-2022 Tentative Budgets (“Tentative Budgets”) were prepared and transmitted by the Village Clerk to the Village Board on March 18, 2021. A public hearing on the Tentative Budget was held on April 12, 2021. A public hearing on the proposed 2021-2022 water rates and the proposed 2021-2022 sewer rates was held on April 19, 2021. On April 29, 2021, the Village Board of Trustees adopted a resolution amending the Tentative Budgets. The Village Board of the Village of Suffern does hereby adopt the 2021-2022 budgets for the General Fund (including the Curbside Solid Waste District and the Container Solid Waste District), the Water Fund, the Sewer Fund and the Debt Service Fund for fiscal year ending May 31, 2022 as follows:

<b>General Fund:</b>	
Appropriations	\$ 15,829,770
Less: Estimated revenues other than real property taxes	<u>(3,805,781)</u>
Real property tax levy	12,023,989
Taxable assessed valuation	<u>132,001,530</u>
Tax rate per \$1,000 taxable assessed valuation	<u><u>\$91.09</u></u>
<b>Curbside Solid Waste District:</b>	
Appropriations	\$ 1,049,696
Less: Estimated revenues other district service charges	<u>-</u>
Amount to be raised by district service charges	1,049,696
Units to be serviced	<u>1,870</u>
Annual service charge per unit	<u><u>\$562.00</u></u>
<b>Container Solid Waste District:</b>	
Amount to be raised by district service charges	\$ 356,661
Units to be serviced	<u>1,723</u>
Annual service charge per unit	<u><u>\$207.00</u></u>
<b>Water Fund:</b>	
Appropriations	\$ 2,131,718
Less: Estimated revenues other than water rents	<u>(32,000)</u>
Amount to be raised by metered water sales	<u>\$ 2,099,718</u>
Per unit water rates within Village:	
Minimum charge up to 10 units	\$35.00
For the portion over 10 but less than 71 units	\$3.66
For the portion over 70 units	\$4.77
Per unit water rates outside Village limits:	
Minimum charge up to 10 units	\$60.00
For the portion over 10 units	\$5.49
<b>Sewer Fund:</b>	
Appropriations	\$ 2,820,609
Less: Estimated revenues other than sewer rents	<u>(25,500)</u>
Amount to be raised by sewer rents	<u>\$ 2,795,109</u>
Per unit sewer rates within Village:	
Minimum charge	\$25.00
Per unit of water consumed	\$13.31
Per unit sewer rates outside Village limits:	
Minimum charge	\$25.00
Per unit of water consumed	\$16.64
<b>Debt Service Fund:</b>	
Appropriations	\$ 1,191,066
Estimated Revenues	<u><u>\$ 1,191,066</u></u>

The Village Board of the Village of Suffern does hereby adopt the Comprehensive Financial Policies of the Village of Suffern as presented in the 2021-2022 Adopted Budget document. A motion to approve the foregoing resolution was made by Trustee Steven Alpert and seconded by Trustee Charles Barone and a roll call vote was recorded as follows:

NAME	YES	NO	ABSENT
Alpert	X		
Barone	X		
Meegan-Corrigan	X		
Sauberman	X		
Markunas		X	

Mayor Markunas declared the Resolution adopted on April 29, 2021.

Mayor Markunas made a statement about his vote not to adopt the 2021-2022 Budget. A summary of the statement is as follows: The Village Board's vote tonight in favor of the 2021-2022 fiscal year budget, in his opinion, included major cuts to the Suffern Police Department; cuts that may affect the safety of the residents, the police officers, and possibly other first responders.

He believed all police officers and all first responders should be given the proper equipment and tools to do their jobs in the safest, most efficient way possible. This is the responsibility of the Board to the employees and volunteers that put their lives on the line each day to respond to emergencies in our community. To properly equip police officers would have cost the average tax payer an additional \$18.00 per year, and as a united Board, a budget could have been achieved that each of them could have been proud to vote for. The Board made budget cuts to the Police Department while the country is still reeling from the impact of a pandemic – a pandemic that greatly impacts first responders who are on the front-line providing emergency response to the community. Now was not the time to cut the Police Department budget, especially for equipment that is used by officers 24/7, 365 days each year.

He stated, the Board cut the budget for equipment that was recommended to be replaced not only by our Chief of Police but also by our Department of Public Works Supervisor, both who have a detailed understanding of the condition and cost of repairs to bring police vehicles up to required safety standards. Rather than respect the opinion of experts who are best able to evaluate and make recommendations to the Board, the Board chose to disregard recommendation and cut the budget for police vehicles. Rather than replace outdated police vehicles, the Board's decision not to replace these vehicles will require tax payers to spend money than \$18.00 per household on costly repairs that will exceeded the value of the asset. In good conscience and for the reasons stated, he voted no. He said it is time to stand up for Police Officers in Suffern and across this state and nation. As a Police Officer for 20 years, he knows what it is like to put on a uniform, a gun belt and a bulletproof vest. For an additional \$18.00 a year, he would have proudly voted for this year's budget. But he voted no because the Board's decision may affect the safety of residents, police officers, and possible other first responders and put an unnecessary burden on tax payers to pay for costly repairs to emergency vehicles that exceed the value of the asset.

In response, members of the Board disagreed with the Mayor’s statement. The Board felt the budget provided for necessary expenditures and was not jeopardizing the safety of first responders. The Board members stated they were pleased to adopt the budget that reflected a 1.1% tax increase and a budget that was below the tax cap.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 p.m. was made by Steven Alpert, seconded by Fred Sauberman and passed unanimously by the Board.