

2020 Preliminary Budget Summary

Compensation

Salaries and wages were increased 1.9% as a cost-of-living adjustment.

Proposed salaries of elected officials:

<i>Town Supervisor</i>	<i>\$19,312</i>
<i>Town Councilperson</i>	<i>\$2,387</i>
<i>Town Clerk</i>	<i>\$34,442</i>
<i>Highway Superintendent</i>	<i>\$65,960</i>
<i>Town Justices</i>	<i>\$13,857</i>

The hourly wage rate for part-time employees was adjusted to \$15.66/hr, reflecting the 2019 Tompkins County Living Wage of \$15.37/hr with a 1.9% cost-of-living adjustment for next year.

Capital Improvements and Long-term Fiscal Planning

Old Town Hall - following past practice, \$30,000 we budgeted for the Town Hall Capital Reserve for improvements to the Old Town Hall, which will bring the total to \$104,000. With the geothermal installation completed and operational, we will now be making additional improvements to reduce energy and operational expenses.

Highway Barn - Also following past practice, \$65,000 we budgeted for the Town Highway Barn Reserve Fund for a new highway garage now being planned, which will bring the total to \$386,000.

Highway Equipment - We budgeted \$300,000 for a needed snow plow truck.

Caroline Fire Protection

The contract for fire protection services from Speedsville Volunteer Fire Co. decreased 3.6% from 2019. The contract for the Brooktondale Fire District increased 5.0%. The total Caroline Fire Protection District budget decreased by 1.7%.

Personnel

We have recently hired a part-time Bookkeeper and Assistant to the Supervisor. With this addition, we removed the previous Assistant to the Supervisor line. We also budgeted two other part-time positions, a Deputy Clerk and an Assistant to the Highway Superintendent.

Budget Comments

The tax levy for town tax items (General Fund, Highway Fund, Caroline Fire Protection, and Streetlights) increased over 2019 by 4.1%, \$974 below the Tax Cap. The reason that we could stay below the tax cap with a 4% levy increase is because of an allowed carryover of about \$26,000 from 2019 when our levy increase was 0.2%. This allows towns to strive for efficient use of tax moneys, but not face constrictions and penalties for annual variation in needs. With an increase in Total Assessed Value of Caroline properties of 6%, the combined tax rate for General and Highway Funds declined by 0.72%.

We are budgeting and planning for future capital expenses, with attention to maintaining a responsible amount of reserves. This budget leaves \$620,000 in uncommitted town reserve funds (370K General, 250K Highway). This is 23% of 2020 budgeted expenses, in line with OSC recommendations in order to provide a buffer for unforeseen events.