

# Village of Williamsville 2015-16 Proposed Budget Summary



## ***Important Dates:***

**April 13, 2015** – Budget Public Hearing – 7:30 p.m.

**April 20, 2015** – Village Board Budget Vote – 7:30 p.m.

Both at Village Hall - 5565 Main St., Williamsville, NY 14221

# Letter from the Mayor



Dear residents, property owners and all members of the community:

I am pleased to submit for your consideration the 2015-16 Village of Williamsville tentative budget.

This \$3.46 million budget proposal achieves something not done in recent history: it cuts your General Fund tax rate to \$4.49 per \$1,000 of assessed value and also cuts the General Fund tax levy to \$1.66 million. This was made possible by increased revenue and a healthy gain in assessed valuation.

People often ask, "What am I getting for my village taxes?" For starters, here is a list:

- Fire protection from the brave men and women of the Williamsville Fire Dept.;
- Development and enforcement of a form-based zoning code that preserves our village character and stands as one of the most progressive zoning laws in the region;
- Street maintenance, paving and cleaning; snow removal on streets and sidewalks; street lighting; storm sewer maintenance; garbage & recycling collection; leaf pickup;
- Development and maintenance of our four main parks, the Lehigh Memorial Trail and the new library pocket park; beautification of village buildings and maintenance of Main Street flower pots, which are purchased by the Williamsville Preservation Foundation from Taste of Williamsville proceeds;
- Programs and traditions like Winterfest, the Halloween Parade & Party, the Holiday Tree Lighting, the Main Street Block Party, Movies in the Park, the Glen Part Art Festival, Garden Walk and music and theater at the Meeting House and in the parks;
- A village court system that is a beacon of justice and a model of efficiency;
- An active Historic Preservation Commission that preserved 23 new landmarks this year;

But we're not satisfied with simply keeping the lights on --and we shouldn't be. In order for the village to maintain key services, we need our overall assessed value to continuously grow.

That's why we are focusing in on the economic development projects driven by the vision laid out by the residents through our Community Plan. Ground will break on the Spring Street project this summer, just as restoration of the Water Mill winds down. And engineers are working hard to design the Picture Main Street streetscape and South Long green infrastructure projects that will be put into place in 2016.

This type of economic development makes our tiny little village a shining example of what a community can do when it unifies and plans for the future. This strategy of making smart public investment that generates business activity helps all of us pay a lower tax bill. Thank you for your consideration of the 2015-16 tentative budget and I hope to see you all on April 13.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Kulpa".

Mayor Brian J. Kulpa

# Budget At A Glance – Key Facts

## General Fund

- The village stayed under the property tax cap by \$44,229. The General and Sewer funds feed into the property tax cap.
- The tax rate is \$4.4969 per \$1,000 in assessed value. This is a decrease of 0.71 percent from last year's tax rate, which was \$4.5292 per \$1,000 in assessed value.
- Tax Levy (the total amount of taxes collected by the village): The tax levy is \$1,661,745. This is a decrease of 0.31 percent from last year's tax levy of \$1,666,914.
- This is the first time in five years (2010) that the tax rate has been cut and the first time in recent history that both the tax rate and the tax levy have been cut in the same year.
- Total spending has increased by 1.3 percent, from \$3.42 million to \$3.46 million, but taxes have gone down. Two factors account for this:
  - A 2.75 percent increase in revenue, from \$1.75 million to \$1.8 million.
  - A .40 percent increase in total assessed property valuation, from \$368 million to \$369.5 million.

## Sewer Fund

- The tax levy (Capital Portion) of the Sewer Fund increased by 7.25 percent, from \$384,842 to \$412,762.
- The Capital portion of the Sewer Rate (per \$1,000 of assessed value) increased 6.8 percent from \$0.9804 to \$1.0472. The Operation and Maintenance portion of the Sewer Rate (per 1,000 gallons water) increased 6.8 percent from \$4.0672 to \$4.3437.
- These increases are attributed to a wet year and the cost of treating sewage at the Amherst treatment facility. The cost is expected to increase \$90,000 from \$680,000 to \$770,000. Treatment accounts for 59 percent of all expenses in the Sewer Fund.

## Water Fund

- The water surcharge will remain at \$1.87. The Erie County Water Authority charges this to Village water customers and remits back to the Village, which uses this to pay off previously existing debt (bonds) and to pay ECWA for work required to consolidate.

## General Fund

### ***General Government Support:***

*Totals: Budgeted 2014-15: \$691,821 Proposed 2015-16: \$699,945*

#### **Mayor/Board of Trustees**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$29,745 Proposed 2015-16: \$29,745

Includes the Mayor, who is responsible for oversight of all operations of the village, and Trustees, who are the legislative arm of the government and who help to set a yearly budget for the village. Positions are part-time, 4-year terms. Village officials also lobby for state funding in Albany, including more than \$2 million this year for projects on Spring and South Long streets.

#### **Village Court**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$62,791 Budgeted 2015-16: \$63,305

Elected Justice (4-year term), Acting Justice (appointed yearly) and two Court Clerks who process parking/traffic tickets, criminal/civil matters, fines, small claims and pleas. Court is held on Friday mornings and office is open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.

#### **Village Clerk**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$240,218 Proposed 2015-16: \$246,764

Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer runs village's day-to-day operations and oversees departments. Also includes Deputy Clerk, Deputy Treasurer, Mayor's Secretary and Account Clerk-Typist who help manage records, perform accounting functions and handle resident questions, budget preparation, tax collection, elections, permits, legal notices, bonds and local laws. Also serves as the Registrar of Vital Statistics.

#### **Attorney & Engineer**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$49,835 Budgeted 2015-16: \$52,495

Village Attorney and Engineer of Records are outside firms, which saves money and adds land use, historic preservation and environmental expertise. Village Prosecutor also budgeted here.

#### **Village Hall & Department of Public Works Garage**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$185,400 Budgeted 2015-16: \$181,584

This includes costs to run Village Hall, 5565 Main St., and the DPW Garage on Village Square Lane. The DPW performs maintenance whenever possible to save taxpayer money.

#### **Villagewide Items**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$59,602 Budgeted 2015-16: \$61,100

Apply to village as a whole: liability insurance, tax & assessment and municipal association dues.

#### **Contingency**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$60,000 Budgeted 2015-16: \$60,000

Covers any unexpected items that occur during the fiscal year.

## **Public Safety**

*Totals: Budgeted 2014-15: \$643,142 Proposed 2015-16: \$665,104*

### **Fire Protection**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$532,915 Proposed 2015-16: \$552,038

Led by the Fire Chief, 2 Assistant Chiefs, 5 Captains and 10 Line Officers, the full service volunteer department puts out fires and provides EMS, vehicle, water and low angle rescues, weather emergency response, event support and public education. Will upgrade 2 vehicles with infrared cameras to locate fires inside buildings before sending firefighters inside.

### **Safety Inspection (Building Dept.)**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$84,558 Proposed 2015-16: \$87,052

Building Inspector, Fire Inspector and Building Clerk regulate construction and adherence to building and fire codes by reviewing plans, investigating property complaints, issuing citations, conducting annual fire inspections of all public buildings and issuing building/plumbing permits.

They also refer plans to village committees/boards. Planning & Architectural Review Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and Historic Preservation Commission are codified boards consisting of village residents with professional expertise who review site plans, perform architectural review and make determinations on signs and variances. These boards are independent decision-making bodies that are not influenced by the Village Board. Traffic & Safety and Environmental committees, also consisting of village residents, make non-binding recommendations on submitted plans.

### **Traffic Control (Parking Enforcement & Signs)**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$25,669 Proposed 2015-16: \$26,014

Parking Enforcement Officer walks the village and enforces the village code as it pertains to parking. Violations are handled in Village Court. The Public Works crew puts up and maintains signs (such as "No Parking") and paints streets and crosswalks to control traffic.

## **Transportation: Department of Public Works**

*Totals: Budgeted 2014-15: \$458,870 Proposed 2015-16: \$465,077*

General Crew Chief, Working Crew Chief, 8 Motor Equipment Operators and seasonal help maintain all village property, including roads, sidewalks, trees and sewers. They mill, pave, plow, salt, stripe and sweep streets, plow sidewalks, patch potholes, stripe crosswalks and erect signs.

The focus of the department has shifted from below-ground infrastructure to above-ground improvements to village public spaces. The crew saves money by building more of its own items for Village parks and public spaces and relying less on contractors to complete the work.



## **Economic Assistance & Opportunity**

*Totals: Budgeted 2014-15: \$77,785 Proposed 2015-16: \$69,483*

### **Website/Marketing**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$17,500 Proposed 2015-16: \$8,000

The Director of Community Development designs and posts documents to the website. Marketing firms are occasionally hired to design specialized logos like Picture Main Street.

### **Other Economic Opportunity & Development**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$60,285 Proposed 2015-16: \$61,483

The Director of Community Development writes news releases, calls news conferences, pitches stories to reporters, responds to business and resident concerns, plans economic development events, promotes events through social media and writes letters to state officials.

## **Culture & Recreation**

*Totals: Budgeted 2014-15: \$189,798 Proposed 2015-16: \$202,089*

### **Parks**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$143,363 Proposed 2015-16: \$146,674

Includes the development and maintenance of Island Park, Garrison Park, South Long Park, the Lehigh Trail and the library Pocket Park.

### **Events/Youth & Recreation**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$27,610 Proposed 2015-16: \$31,415

The Youth & Recreation Committee organizes activities including Winterfest, the Halloween Parade & Party, Tree Lighting and Movies in the Park. The Village Block Party has grown into an annual tradition where residents “take back” Main Street with a street fair. The Arts & Culture Committee has also grown in activity with theater, concerts and the Glen Park Art Festival. The Village assists with the promotion of the Memorial Day Parade & the Taste of Williamsville. A senior exercise program is also offered.

### **Historical Property**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$27,610 Proposed 2015-16: \$31,415

This includes the maintenance and rentals of the Meeting House and the Water Mill. Rentals of the Village Meeting House have increased with the dedication of the Village Meeting House Committee, helping the village bring in more revenue. The Village plans to cushion the old pews of the former church to make the venue more accessible and more appropriate for weddings and other community events. The Water Mill is planned to be sold to Sweet Jenny’s LLC, putting the structure back on the tax rolls and anchoring the Mill District.

## **Historic Preservation Commission**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$200 Proposed 2015-16: \$700

The Historic Preservation Commission is a codified board that landmarks properties and recommends changes to the village's historic preservation law; reviews applications for modifications to the village's local landmarks and issues Certificates of Appropriateness.

## **Home & Community Services**

*Budgeted 2014-15: \$540,199 Proposed 2015-16: \$541,444*

## **Zoning & Planning Boards**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$450 Proposed 2015-16: \$375

The Planning & Architectural Review Board and Zoning Board of Appeals are codified boards consisting of village residents with professional expertise who review site plans, perform architectural review and make determinations on signs and variances.

The village recently revamped its zoning code, changing from a use-based code to a form-based code. This encourages the type of human scale, pedestrian-centric development that is essential to village character. The hallmark of this new zoning is the Main Street Mixed-Use District, which encourages a varied array of uses and activities in the central village core.

## **Department of Public Works**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$455,559 Proposed 2015-16: \$460,333

This includes the responsibilities of the DPW or contractors that are not included in the General Government or Transportation categories of the budget, including stormwater collection, garbage & recycling collection and disposal, leaf pickup, electronics recycling, street cleaning and operation of the gates of the dam along Ellicott Creek in an attempt to prevent flooding.

## **Community Beautification**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$34,700 Proposed 2015-16: \$30,773

A partnership between village employees and a cadre of dedicated volunteers creates the beauty of the Williamsville community. The hardworking Beautification Committee handles holiday decorations like "Candy Cane Lane" to the flowers of village buildings and the 1812 Heritage Garden at Main and Evans streets. The annual Garden Walk has been "blooming" as of late with a new social media campaign called #GardenWalkWMSVL.

## **Shade trees**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$49,490 Proposed 2015-16: \$49,963

Duties of the DPW include planting new trees in the right-of-way and in village parks, pruning of limbs and providing a stump-grinding service. The village has planted trees to restore the rights-of-way beside village streets where green space gradually was paved over. More than 48 trees have been restored to the village right-of-way in the last three three years, for a total restoration of 12,232-square-feet of green space and 1,443 linear feet of sidewalk area.

## **Employee Benefits/Interfund Transfers**

*Employee Benefits: Budgeted 2014-15: \$427,312 Proposed 2015-16: \$429,059*

*Interfund Transfers: Budgeted 2014-15: \$388,272 Proposed 2015-16: \$389,355*

### **Employee Benefits**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$427,312 Proposed 2015-16: \$429,059

The salaries of Village employees are categorized within the individual departments and budget categories (listed above). Other benefits include State Retirement, Social Security, Worker's Compensation, Unemployment Insurance, Disability Insurance, Hospital & Medical Insurance, Dental Plan and Flexible Spending Plan. To save money, the village switched its employee health insurance to a high-deductible plan. As a result, cost increases are not double-digit increases as were experienced in the past or as experienced by other municipalities.

### **Prov. For Longevity/Salary Increases**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$4,230 Budgeted 2015-16: \$4,952

Employees are eligible for longevity payments after five years with the village. This is budgeted under General Government Services.

### **Interfund Transfers**

Budgeted 2014-15: \$388,272 Proposed 2015-16: \$389,355

This section includes Transfer to Debt Service (Payment on outstanding bonds) and Transfer to Capital (Down payment on future capital projects, primarily street paving).

## **Water Fund**

In June 2014, the Village turned its water system over to the Erie County Water Authority. In order to do so, water meters were replaced by the Village, a small waterline was installed on S. Cayuga, and several other compliance items were resolved (removal of multiple meters on one service line, installation of meter pits due to lengthy service lines, and installation of backflow prevention devices where necessary). This resulted in some administrative costs being transferred over to the General Fund in the 2014-2015 fiscal year. ECWA will also be undertaking a project in 2015 which will complete work required due to the turnover. This includes installation of additional waterlines, and interconnections between ECWA system and the system previously owned and operated by the Village.

Revenues budgeted within the Water Fund represent a water surcharge, set by the village annually, and collected by ECWA from former Village water customers. This surcharge is used to pay off bonded debt that exists from prior to the turnover, as well as to make payments to ECWA to cover the cost of the work being done in 2015. The agreement between the Village and ECWA is that costs for all work completed by ECWA will be paid off within a period of 20 years. Debt in the water fund will be paid off in the fiscal year ending May 31, 2029, but drops significantly in FYE 2026 from an annual payment of \$50,000 to \$10,000.



## Sewer Fund

The Sewer Fund budgets for all expenses related to the collection and treatment of sanitary sewer throughout the Village. The Village Dept. of Public Works maintains the sanitary sewer lines. Sewage is collected and then treated at the Town of Amherst Sewage Treatment plant. Treatment of sewage accounts for almost 60% of the entire sewer budget.

Costs related to this fund have increased in recent years due to periods of extremely wet weather due to rain and snow melt. This was particularly the case in 2014. Inflow & infiltration (I&I) into the sanitary sewer system results in the treatment of rainwater that would not normally be treated. The Village has increased activities such as slip-lining of sewer lines and rehabilitation of manholes to try to reduce I&I.

A grant was received and is currently underway to study inflow and infiltration. Once this study is complete it will serve as a guide to areas where the Village can reduce I&I. The study will be complete in 2015, with work to follow shortly afterward.

## Glen Park Fund

Glen Park jointly owned by the Village of Williamsville and Town of Amherst. It is operated through a joint agreement between the two entities, which also created the Glen Park Joint Board to oversee maintenance of the park and advise the Town and Village on issues related to the park. Each municipality contributes half of the funds necessary to maintain and operate the park. Revenue used to fund the park is collected through the General Fund and then transferred to the Glen Park Fund annually. The Williamsville Dept. of Public Works oversees all work done in the park, and the Village Treasurer's office handles all accounting for the fund.

## Debt Service Fund

The Debt Service Fund is used to pay long-term debt for all funds of the Village. Each fund transfers the money required for payment of bonds related to its function to the Debt Service Fund each year. Bond payments are then made out of the Debt Service Fund.

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