

Village of Williamsville

2016-17 Proposed Budget Summary



Important Dates:

April 11, 2016 – Budget Public Hearing – 7:30 p.m.

April 25, 2016 – 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 2016-17 Village of Williamsville tentative budget.

This \$3.52 million budget proposal cuts your General Fund tax rate to \$4.3960 per \$1,000 of assessed value. 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.;
- 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 Village Volunteer (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 has designated 34 landmarks to date;

But we're not satisfied with simply keeping the lights on – or even just growing year-to-year. In order for the Village to create a bright future, we need to spur economic development while at the same time making a new commitment to sustainable practices in our Village.

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. The restoration of the Water Mill is complete and work continues on the Spring Street project this summer. And engineers continue to work on designing the Picture Main Street and South Long Street projects scheduled for 2017.

This type of sustainable development makes our tiny little village a shining example of what a community can do when it unifies and plans for the future. Thank you for your consideration of the 2016-17 tentative budget and I hope to see you all on April 11.

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

Mayor Brian J. Kulpa

Budget Statement – Key Facts

The Village of Williamsville Board of Trustees has worked diligently on the proposed 2016-2017 budget. The “2% Property Tax Cap” afforded the Village and other municipalities with a fiscal year of June 1 – May 31 an increase of only 0.12% over last year’s tax levy. For Williamsville, this is equivalent to less than a \$2,500 increase. Fortunately, we did not use the entire allowable levy in prior years, and had an additional amount of \$31,830 available for use in the 2016-2017 budget. The Village of Williamsville will NOT be over-riding the property tax cap in the 2016-2017 fiscal year, which will result in our residents receiving a tax rebate under the Property Tax Freeze in 2016.

The proposed budget for the Village’s 2016-2017 General Fund includes a tax rate decrease of 2.24%, from a rate of \$4.4969 to a rate of \$4.3960 per \$1,000 AV at a 100% equalization rate. Properties in the Town of Amherst have an equalization rate of 97%, which translates to a tax rate of \$4.5319. Properties in the Town of Cheektowaga have an equalization rate of 100%, so their tax rate remains at \$4.3960. The total amount being raised by the tax levy is \$1,681,788, up 1.21% from \$1,661,745.

The Water surcharge will remain at \$1.87 per 1,000 gallons consumed. This rate is added to the Erie County Water Authority water rate. If you use less than the ECWA minimum, the surcharge only applies to actual water used, not the quarterly minimum. The surcharge is used to pay existing debt and costs related to work completed by ECWA related to the turnover of the Village Water System to ECWA.

Sewer rates remain steady at \$4.3437 per 1,000 gallons of water consumed and \$1.0472 per \$1,000 AV. The amount being raised based on AV in the Sewer Fund is increasing a mere \$25 (or 0.01%) to \$412,787.

A public hearing on all budgets will be held on Monday, April 11, 2016. A copy of the proposed budget is available for review at the Village Clerk’s Office during regular business hours, Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, and is posted on the Village web site.

General Fund

General Government Support:

Totals: Budgeted 2015-16: \$694,993 Proposed 2016-17: 705,489

Mayor/Board of Trustees

Budgeted 2015-16: \$29,745 Proposed 2016-17: \$30,270

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 for projects on Spring and South Long streets.

Village Court

Budgeted 2015-16: \$63,305 Proposed 2016-17: \$64,104

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 2015-16: \$246,764 Proposed 2016-17: \$248,807

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, 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 2015-16: \$52,495 Proposed 2016-17: \$52,493

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 2015-16: \$181,584 Proposed 2016-17: \$182,215

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 2015-16: \$61,100 Proposed 2016-17: \$67,600

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

Contingency

Budgeted 2015-16: \$60,000 Proposed 2016-17: \$60,000

Covers any unexpected items that occur during the fiscal year.

Public Safety

Totals: Budgeted 2015-16: \$665,104 Proposed 2016-17: \$695,858

Fire Protection

Budgeted 2015-16: \$552,038 Proposed 2016-17: \$580,975

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.

Safety Inspection (Building Dept.)

Budgeted 2015-16: \$87,052 Proposed 2016-17: \$88,773

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 2015-16: \$26,014 Proposed 2016-17: \$26,110

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 2015-16: \$465,077 Proposed 2016-17: \$474,612

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 2015-16: \$69,483 Proposed 2016-17: \$69,794

Website/Marketing

Budgeted 2015-16: \$8,000 Proposed 2016-17: \$7,500

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 or to facilitate economic development or business outreach efforts.

Other Economic Opportunity & Development

Budgeted 2015-16: \$61,483 Proposed 2016-17: \$62,294

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 2015-16: \$202,089 Proposed 2016-17: \$197,279

Parks

Budgeted 2015-16: \$146,674 Proposed 2016-17: \$146,346

Includes the development and maintenance of Island Park, Garrison Park, South Long Park, the Lehigh Trail, the Village Volunteer Park (aka the Pocket Park), and the War of 1812 Garden.

Events/Youth & Recreation

Budgeted 2015-16: \$31,415 Proposed 2016-17: \$38,597

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.

Historical Property

Budgeted 2015-16: \$23,300 Proposed 2016-17: \$12,136

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 continues to invest in 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 2015-16: \$700 Proposed 2016-17: \$200

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 2015-16: \$541,444 Proposed 2016-17: \$557,014

Zoning & Planning Boards

Budgeted 2015-16: \$375 Proposed 2016-17: \$450

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 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 hallmarks of this new zoning are the Mixed-Use District, the Neighborhood Mixed-Use District and the R-3M District, which encourage a varied array of uses and scales.

Department of Public Works

Budgeted 2015-16: \$460,333 Proposed 2016-17: \$473,994

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 2015-16: \$30,773 Proposed 2016-17: \$32,054

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 2015-16: \$49,963 Proposed 2016-17: \$50,516

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 on Main Street have been restored to the village right-of-way in the last four 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 2015-16: \$434,011 Proposed 2016-17: \$413,966

Interfund Transfers: Budgeted 2015-16: \$389,355 Proposed 2016-17: \$406,987

Employee Benefits

Budgeted 2015-16: \$429,059 Proposed 2016-17: \$408,966

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 several years ago. 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 2015-16: \$4,952 Proposed 2016-17: \$5,000

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

Interfund Transfers/Interest

Budgeted 2015-16: \$389,355 Proposed 2016-17: \$406,987

This section includes Transfer to Debt Service (Payment on outstanding bonds) and Transfer to Capital (Down payment on future capital projects, primarily street paving). It also includes Interest on Bond Anticipation Notes (BANs), which are short-term borrowings that are typically rolled into Bonds at a later date.

Water Fund

In June 2014, the Village turned its water system over to the Erie County Water Authority. 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 that was 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. The surcharge for 2016-17 remains at \$1.87 per 1,000 gallons of water consumed.

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. 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 to study inflow and infiltration and was completed in 2015. The study is serving as a guide to areas where the Village can reduce I&I. Village officials this year met with officials from the Department of State, which has funds available for municipalities who find savings through major consolidation efforts. The Village is exploring such an effort with the Town of Amherst and the sewer system is likely to play a role in any plan that is developed.

Glen Park Fund

Glen Park is 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 \$23,000 each to maintain and operate the park. Revenue used to fund the Village's portion 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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