



# | Village of Williamsville |

Office of Community Development

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Village of Williamsville presents \$4.3M budget proposal; public hearing set for April 13

### Spending plan includes funding for ‘tangible’ parks improvements

WILLIAMSVILLE, NY (April 6, 2020) – The Williamsville Village Board will hold a public hearing regarding the municipality’s 2020-21 budget at 7:30 p.m. Monday, April 13, in the auditorium at Village Hall, 5565 Main St.

Due to preventive measures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, [the meeting and public hearing will be held remotely](#), with call-in and video-based access available to the public.

During the board’s development of the proposed budget – which totals about \$4.3 million for the general fund– the mayor and trustees agreed that due to a foreseen budget gap, the village would need to exceed its tax cap for the 2020-21 fiscal year..

The village’s cap was set by the state at 2.22 percent. In accordance with the state’s cap override process, the Village Board held a public hearing regarding the matter on Feb. 24. No one from the public stated opposition to the proposed cap override during the hearing.

The board’s proposed 2020-21 budget:

- Increases expenditures by \$333,172.
- Sets an estimated tax rate increase of 51 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation at 100 percent valuation. As such, the tax rate for the 2020-21 fiscal year is estimated to be \$4.71 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation at 100 percent valuation.
- Posts the tax levy – the amount to be raised in taxes – at an estimated \$2.64 million, an increase of about \$386,047.

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The Village Board is stressing to its constituents that other than in 2014, when the Water Department was turned over to the Erie County Water Authority, each of the village's budgets were within the state's mandated tax cap.

Mayor Deb Rogers added that the budget increases will assist in funding improvements at the Department of Public Works facility and projects within village parks.

"The Village Board is working hard to improve the community," Rogers said. "While a tax increase is never our desire, there are areas of our infrastructure in need of major repairs. In particular, our parks and Department of Public Works headquarters are in need of maintenance and upgrades which have not been addressed for more than a decade."

### **Improvements planned for Department of Public Works facility**

Renovations planned at the DPW garage site include replacement of collapsed drainage pipes within the building and adding drainage to create a wash bay so that employees can better clean equipment. Other improvements include building renovations to enhance the safety of employees, such as reducing exhaust fumes and noise in work and non-work areas of the garage.

Additionally, the garage's roof is in need of replacement, a task that must be completed before a planned solar panel installation can be accomplished. The village will use funding from a Dormitory Authority of the State of New York grant for the solar upgrades to the DPW garage.

### **Budget funding to assist parks updates**

Regarding the village's parks, which include Garrison, South Long, Island and Lehigh Memory Trail, Trustee Matt Etu said he regrets not having the opportunity to present the Parks Master Plan during the Village Board's meeting on March 23. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the public hearing on the proposed master plan – as well as all other public hearings – will be postponed until further notice.

Etu said the plan, Picture Our Parks 2025, represents the culmination of a yearlong effort. He said the Parks Committee, in concert with Molly Vendura, a landscape architect, have proposed plans for the reinvigoration of Island Park, the complete redevelopment and renewal of South Long Park, as well as minor improvements and capital projects for the balance of village parks.

The proposed improvements total an estimated \$2 to \$3 million throughout the next five years. Specific details of the Picture Our Parks 2025 plan will be released when a public hearing can be held on the matter.

"Picture Our Parks 2025 will need more grants and sponsorships to make some of the bigger projects a reality, but the smaller projects need our investment now," Etu said. "It is plain to see that the \$20,000 that has been historically allocated to our parks just isn't enough to achieve substantive improvements. This is why



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we have proposed a \$125,000 increase in the budget for parks capital improvements. These expenditures will be tangible; every resident will see it, touch it, use it and benefit from it.”

In addition to DPW and parks considerations, other items that created an increase for 2020-21 spending include:

- Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) payments, totaling \$14,000
- Cancer insurance and service contract hikes of \$5,000 and \$3,900, respectively
- New bonding for recent improvement projects, including East Spring Street and Cadman Drive, as well as the recent purchase of Fire Department and Department of Public Works equipment – all totaling more than \$74,000.

Another increase in the 2020-21 spending plan is a 2.5% hike in refuse and recycling costs. The rise is part of an annual increase stipulated in Modern Disposal’s contract with the village.

Additionally, the village previously budgeted for the hiring of a part-time court clerk; however, the board agreed to eliminate that line item, saving \$16,000 in the spending plan.

The Village Board is expected to approve the proposed budget during its meeting on April 27. Per state law, the village must approve a budget for its next fiscal year by each May 1.

Anyone with budget-related questions or comments can email Keaton DePriest, director of community development, at [kdepriest@village.williamsville.ny.us](mailto:kdepriest@village.williamsville.ny.us). The feedback will be forwarded to the Village Board for its review.

The board will not close the public hearing on April 13; instead members plan to leave the hearing open until April 27 to allow more opportunity for the public to comment and review video of the meeting. The video will be posted to the village’s website and feedback related to the budget may be emailed to DePriest until 8 p.m. Friday, April 24.

Further information about the budget is available at [www.WalkableWilliamsville.com](http://www.WalkableWilliamsville.com).

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