

TOWN OF KIRKWOOD PUBLIC HEARING

October 25, 2016

A public hearing regarding the Town of Kirkwood's Preliminary Budget for 2017 was held on October 25, 2016 at 6:15 PM at the Joseph A. Griffin Town Hall with Supervisor Gordon Kniffen presiding.

Present: Supervisor Gordon Kniffen
Councilman Robert Weingartner
Councilman Lewis Grubham
Councilwoman Linda Yonchuk
Councilman William Diffendorf, Jr.

Also Present: Oliver Blaise III, Attorney
Gayle Diffendorf, Town Clerk
Raymond Coolbaugh, DPW Commissioner
James Smith, Budget Officer

Supervisor Kniffen thanked Budget Officer Jim Smith for all his work on this budget and the Town Board for their input.

Supervisor Kniffen explained that for many years in the past he provided a slide presentation but no one came to the hearing so the presentation is now a handout. There are three main sources of revenue and spending; general fund, highway and fire. In regard to proposed spending for 2017, general fund is down 2% which is because of FEMA funds. Highway spending will be going up 5.3% and fire will go up 1.4%. He said year after year the fire companies do an exceptional job with their budgets, with an increase this year of about \$6,000. He said they sacrifice and volunteer their time but are also concerned with what the Town is doing. The total increase for 2017 is 1% and on the average assessment of \$75,000, this amounts to a tax increase of \$1.09 per year or \$.02 per week.

Supervisor Kniffen explained that the tax cap has been in effect for a number of years. It started out to be 3% or the inflation rate, whichever was lower. For next year the inflation rate is .37% so there was not a lot to work with. They have always met the tax cap and have again for 2017. They keep reminding the public that there are cuts involved such as in the Code Office and engineering. He said they will not meet the tax cap every year in the future because they can't do that and still plan for the future. He said they accept it and think it is a good challenge. Once again this year there will be a \$185 rebate check for everyone. There will be an additional check of an unknown amount because they met the three (3) year efficiency plan. Last year communities were asked to submit a three year efficiency plan and save each year by cutting 1% in spending. Kirkwood opted to join Broome County as a consortium and that plan was approved. In years 2017, 2018 and 2019 there will be another rebate based on income and a percentage of the star savings. He gave an example of someone making \$75,000 or less would get 28% of whatever is saved in the star program.

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Supervisor Kniffen noted this will be the 15th consecutive year the Town Board has not received a salary increase.

Supervisor Kniffen stated while there are sacrifices by all of us to meet this challenge, we must not forget or lay aside our mission and responsibility to not only work for the present but to take the present and plan for the future.

Supervisor Kniffen opened the hearing to public comment. Hearing none, Supervisor Kniffen ordered the hearing closed at 6:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayle M. Diffendorf
Town Clerk