

Lagoon repairs monopolize Brady village budget numbers

Written by Deb Egenberger

Thursday, 13 September 2012 13:36 -

BRADY VILLAGE BUDGET			
The following is the 2012-13 Brady village budget to be considered by trustees on Sept. 12 (today), as well as a comparison to last fiscal year:			
	2012-13	2011-12	Difference
Valuation	\$14,480,200	\$14,222,867	1.8%
Budget	\$450,000	\$420,203	17.3%
Tax asking	\$72,302	\$60,690	3.8%
Levy	.4889	.4864	2.1%

The Brady village board of trustees has operated on far less than expected for the past four years.

During the most recent budget year, for instance, the village spent nearly \$60,000 less than it anticipated.

And with any luck, the village will come in under the line again at the end of this budget year, said board chairman Jeff Miller.

But it will definitely take a little luck.

“We’re looking at the possibility of \$1.4 million when this lagoon project is all said and done,” Miller said. “In the meantime, we have to make sure we have the budget authority to pay for it.”

He explained that just because the village didn’t spend \$60,000 of what it budgeted last year, doesn’t mean that money is sitting in an account somewhere for trustees to use.

The difference between the budgeted amount and the actual expenditures is simply the room trustees have left for future growth, he said.

Trustees will vote on a 17.3% budget increase for the 2012-13 fiscal year during their regular monthly meeting on Wednesday (today).

Much of that increase is immediate costs for the mandated lagoon repairs.

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In September 2009, the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality issued a notice to the village that the lagoon's seepage was far above the allowable limit.

DEQ ordered the village to make necessary repairs. Trustees used grant money to hire an engineering firm to study the lagoon situation but progress has been slow.

"It's not that we haven't wanted to get this thing going," Miller said. "It's just that we want to make sure we're doing what's best for the village in every aspect."

Over the summer, though, DEQ has demanded a timeline for repairs. With the installation of a flow meter on the lagoon intake, data will more accurately reflect the village's true needs.

"We should see some real movement on the project soon," Miller said.

Expenses

Trustees have included \$100,000 in the 2012-13 budget for capital expenses.

Miller said \$20,000 of that will cover the cost of land for a new fire hall.

The remaining \$80,000 will hopefully pay for immediate research and engineering costs for the lagoon project.

"The bad thing is, at this point, we don't know what the actual costs of the lagoon research will be," Miller said. "We've tried to stay conservative enough to not raise taxes an astronomical amount and, at the same time, be aggressive enough to be able to cover the costs."

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Plans call for a final design followed by bid letting next fall.

Miller said additional funds were budgeted for street repairs but pavement will likely have to wait.

Revenue

Miller said revenue is an issue in the village budget.

“It’s probably one of my biggest concerns,” he said, “especially since it didn’t come in where we expected it last year.”

The village will consider a 3.8% increase in the property tax asking from \$69,690 last year to \$72,302.

“Those property taxes are our main source of income,” he said.

Other funds come from a Dawson Public Power use tax in which village residents pay a 12% fee on their electric bill.

That money comes back to the village through a lease payment, Miller said.

And finally, monthly water and sewer fees paid by each household make up much of the rest.

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Trustees raised the fees over the summer by \$10 per home.

Miller said the increase alone will produce approximately \$22,000 annually, nearly matching the amount the village will have to pay yearly on its low-interest loan to make lagoon repairs.

“I’m disappointed that we are not able to give residents a little tax relief,” Miller said, “but I think surely everyone in town realizes what we’re up against with this lagoon.”