

## Municipal Corner – FY'16 Budget

In accordance with the Stowe Town Charter, I presented the Selectboard a proposed FY'16 General Fund Operating and Capital Budget. The proposed FY'16 operating budget has a slight decrease in expenditures from the current year's budget, but the net budget shows a 3.81% increase. The main reason for the decline in expenditures, but the increase in the net budget is the decrease in available surplus carry forward, which decreased by \$383,566. It is a status-quo budget with no additional personnel or changes in service levels. Luce Hill Road is proposed to be paved.

The Town anticipates approximately \$795,000 in local option taxes. \$350,000 of it is used to pay for the Annual Arena debt, leaving \$445,000 available for capital spending. The Town also has approx. \$450,000 in unallocated capital reserves that can be directed to new capital spending. It is prudent to keep a certain level of unallocated reserves on-hand to address unforeseen emergencies, such as the stream bank failures that resulted in infrastructure damage in recent years.

The proposed FY'16 Capital Budget submitted to the Selectboard includes \$460,000 of new capital spending and includes the following projects:

**Trash / Recycling Receptacles (\$20,000)** A new state law requires all public trash cans to also have recycling containers as of 7/1/15. The Town has 23 trash receptacles along the Rec Path and in our public parks that are in poor condition with no recycling containers. We also have four trash receptacles on Main Street that don't have recycling containers. This is to purchase 23 trash / recycling receptacles for Parks / Rec Path and 4 recycling receptacles for Main Street.

**Bridget Street Bridge Local Match (\$160,000)** The Bridge is the one with the covered walkway and is scheduled to be replaced in 2016. This is our local match.

**Village Sidewalk Replacement Preliminary Engineering (\$75,000) and Main Street Utility Line Relocation Feasibility & Preliminary Design (\$50,000).** The existing sidewalks are in disrepair. The Main Street Utility Line Relocation Feasibility Study is to work with the utilities on the overhead utility lines to understand what it would take to relocate the lines and poles off from Main Street. They would be warned as separate projects, but could be pulled together as one project at a future date if relocating the overhead utilities on Main Street is determined to be feasible, receive voter approval and determined that it makes sense to do the projects at the same time.

**Luce Hill Culvert Rehabilitation (\$65,000).** The large culvert is deteriorated and makes sense to rehabilitate prior to paving Luce Hill Road which is planned for in the highway operating budget.

**Re Path / West Branch Erosion Mitigation Design & Permitting (\$50,000).** This money would advance the design, permitting and enable us to apply for grants to repair the stream bank failures along the Rec Path. The intent is to perform this work and seek federal grants in 2016 with the goal of implementing the project in 2017.

Mountain Road Village Sidewalk Phase 2 Design & Permitting (\$30,000). The first phase was completed in 2014 from Cape Cod Road to the Gale Farm Center. The second phase is proposed to extend to Cottage Club Road. This is just the money for design and permitting. Once this is done and we have a firmer understanding of cost, further funding will be required for construction.

Town Clock Rehabilitation (\$10,000) Remove, overhaul and synchronize the four sides of the town clock. It is located in the Stowe Community Church steeple, but are owned by the Town. The intent is to improve the clocks reliability.

The Selectboard will begin deliberating on the proposed operating and capital budget at their January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. At their January 26<sup>th</sup> meeting they will hold a public hearing on the proposed operating and capital budget. Once they have finalized their deliberations, they will warn an operating and capital budget for your consideration at Annual Meeting. Annual Meeting is always the first Tuesday in March at Stowe High School. The public is invited and encouraged to attend all of the aforementioned meeting. Please remember that if you want to vote at Annual Meeting, you need to register to vote with the Town Clerk by February 25, 2015.

Please contact me at 253-7350 or [csaford@townofstovermont.org](mailto:csaford@townofstovermont.org) if you have any questions. In addition, my door is always open if you want to stop in during normal business hours (M-F 8am to 4:30pm).