

Village of Lewiston to approve budget ahead of 'shaky couple months'

BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

The Village of Lewiston Board of Trustees stands ready to adopt a budget for fiscal year 2020-21 – one that will include an 8-cent property tax increase for residents.

For more than two hours on Monday, physically distanced elected leaders meticulously went through more than 20 pages of budget items. The consensus was a nominal tax bump (\$12 for a home valued at \$150,000) could prevent a larger hike next year.

The proposed property tax is \$7.65 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, which is a 1.01% increase over the current figure.

Mayor Anne Welch said the village is receiving a \$345,000 Lewiston Landing phase five grant from New York state, which will require \$100,000 in shared services.

Other notable expenses:
 ✓ Water costs will be \$377,087, with sewer fees at \$405,533.
 ✓ Police costs remain the same, at \$284,004.

✓ The Recreation Department requested an increase of \$3,635, to \$110,902.

Village employees will receive a 3% pay increase, while the Department of Public Works overall financial plan is essentially flat, and the clerk's office expects to spend \$600 less in the new budget.

Expenses – which trustees said are 80% contractually fixed by the town, county and state – are expected to go up \$192,090. Even with the \$29,495 extra in tax revenue (\$1,158,059 total), the board projects an appropriated

fund balance transfer of \$448,138 will be necessary to zero out the \$3,918,756 budget.

Deputy Mayor Vic Eydt said, "This is a huge fund balance – this is the biggest one I've ever seen."

That said, trustees earmarked a multi-hundred-thousand appropriated fund balance in each of the past two budget cycles, but wound up not needing those monies thanks, in part, to larger-than-expected cost savings.

Revenue (minus property taxes) is expected to be \$2,312,559 – but Welch said that's anyone's guess, with the COVID-19 pandemic severely stalling the economy.

Trustee Claudia Marasco asked if there was a way to postpone the tax increase. Welch said no, because, "I'm just afraid that, if we don't do it, with this whole virus thing going, we may end up next year really, desperately, in need of taxes. I just don't want to not do it and really get slammed next year."

Welch explained village costs are up across the board.

The mayor described the current pandemic as a "shaky couple months." Welch said she and Treasurer Stephanie Myers, "We went through (the proposed budget), and we cut where we thought we could cut."

Welch said she expects a "rocky start" to the next fiscal year, which begins June 1.

"We don't even know if we're going to get that projected money from AIM (aid and incentives for municipalities), or mortgage tax or sales tax revenue," Welch said. "We don't know if we're even going to get that. And if we don't,

then we're really going to be in trouble."

"Just like these people, if they don't get their (stimulus) money, or if they can't pay their bills; they don't have an income. This is just a terrible situation for everybody," Marasco said.

The board previously agreed to waive late fees related to the April 1 water bill, to help residents not working or unemployed because of Gov. Andrew Cuomo's "New York on PAUSE" order to slow the spread of coronavirus.

Proposed rates for water (\$3.70 per 100 cubic feet) and sewer (\$4.74 per 100 cubic feet) would remain the same in this proposed budget. These accounts should net the village a total of \$768,705.

Trustees will meet again on Monday, April 20, in the Red Brick Municipal Building gymnasium. They must approve the budget by April 30.

Trustee Nick Conde said the board needs to earnestly look at ways to avoid tapping into the appropriated fund balance for the next budget.

"I think we really need to look at this for the future of the village," he explained.

"We'll have to work harder this year," Welch said.

DPW Update

DPW Superintendent Larry Wills said his crew would do one more leaf pickup, collecting clippings at the edge of residential lawns next week. After that, leaves will have to be bagged and set out for garbage pickup.

For those homeowners using a contractor or landscaper, Welch said it's the hired party's responsibility to remove debris.

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Call **800.272.3900** anytime, or find help at **alz.org/crf.**



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CLOSED EASTER SUNDAY

 SKOL 80° Vodka \$11⁹⁹ <small>1.75</small>	 E & J California Brandy \$13⁹⁹ <small>LTR</small>	 SVEDKA 80° Vodka \$17⁹⁹ <small>1.75</small>	 BACARDI Silver or Amber Rum \$18⁹⁹ <small>1.75</small>	 FLOWER CITY GIN \$18⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 VICTORIA Pink Gin \$20⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 BLACK BUTTON Bourbon Cream \$25⁹⁹ <small>750</small>
 SKREWBALL Peanut Butter Whiskey \$26⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 GODIVA Chocolate Liqueur \$26⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 CAPTAIN MORGAN Spiced Rum \$27⁹⁹ <small>1.75</small>	 HENNESSY VS Gift Set \$35⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 WOODINVILLE Bourbon Whiskey \$36⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 TANGUERAY London Dry Gin \$37⁹⁹ <small>1.75</small>	 SPEYBURN Companion Cask \$37⁹⁹ <small>750</small>
 JIM BEAM Single Barrel \$30⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 HIGH WEST Double Barrel Rye \$39⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 TACONIC Double Barrel Maple Bourbon \$39⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 HUDSON Baby Bourbon \$45⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 JEFFERSONS RESERVE Very Small Batch \$47⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 WIDOW JANE 12yr Single Barrel \$71⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 WHISTLE PIG 10 yr Rye Single Barrel \$74⁹⁹ <small>750</small>
 BERINGER MAIN & VINE California Wines ALL TYPES \$7⁹⁹ <small>1.5</small>	 CHATEAU STE MICHELLE Riesling \$7⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 LITTLE PENGUIN California Wines \$8⁹⁹ <small>1.5</small>	 COLUMBIA CREST Grand Estates Chardonnay \$8⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 KENDALL-JACKSON Vitners Chardonnay \$10⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 FRANCISCAN Chardonnay \$10⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 ESTANCIA Cabernet Sauvignon \$10⁹⁹ <small>750</small>
 KENDALL-JACKSON Rosé \$11⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 J LOHR Pinot Noir \$12⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 LIBERTY SCHOOL Cabernet Sauvignon \$12⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 RODNEY STRONG Rosé \$14⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 A TO Z Pinot Noir \$15⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 DECOY SONOMA Merlot \$17⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 FEDERALIST Zinfandel \$18⁹⁹ <small>750</small>
 DAVINCI Pinot Grigio \$7⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 VILLA SOPITA Sangiovese \$7⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 CINZANO Asti \$8⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 LOUIS JADOT Beaujolais Villages \$9⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 ANTIGAL UNO Malbec \$11⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 RINALDI Moscato D'Asti \$12⁹⁹ <small>750</small>	 LOUIS JADOT Pouilly Fuisse \$22⁹⁹ <small>750</small>