

**TOWN OF KIRKWOOD
PUBLIC HEARING**

October 25, 2016

A public hearing regarding the Town of Kirkwood's Preliminary Budget for 2018 was held on October 31, 2017 at 6:10 PM at the Joseph A. Griffin Town Hall with Supervisor Gordon Kniffen presiding.

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

Absent: Councilwoman Linda Yonchuk

Also Present: Oliver Blaise III, Attorney
Gayle Diffendorf, Town Clerk
John A. Finch, Jr., DPW Commissioner
James Smith, Budget Officer

Supervisor Kniffen explained that in 2017 the tax rate for general fund, highway, fire, etc. was \$4.6035 per thousand and for 2018 we are looking at \$4.6180, which is about a 1 ½ cent increase. For an average \$75,000 home that increase will be \$1.09 for the year.

Supervisor Kniffen said this is the 16th year the Town Board has not taken a salary increase. He said we continue to meet the tax cap, which is not only good for the taxpayers by keeping the taxes down, but it also makes us eligible for any rebates. We've received a couple of rebates and he thinks there will be a rebate this year as well as a couple of more years. Councilman Grubham added we could have gone up to a 1.8% increase but the increase is 1.3%, which is substantially below the tax cap this year. Supervisor Kniffen said that in spite of that we are keeping spending down and are still able to increase services. An example of that is John Finch, the new Highway Superintendent, for the first time in many years has initiated leaf and brush pick up. Supervisor Kniffen explained that many times projects, such as a Comprehensive Plan, never get completed but Councilman Grubham is chairman of the Comprehensive Plan Committee and has taken the initiative to take the heart of this and make something happen that is good for Kirkwood and its people. He also noted that for a long time the Board has felt there are some environmental conditions in our town which he calls "blight" regarding properties that have not been maintained and reduces the value of not only their property but of the adjacent properties as well. He said the Board is working on that along with our legal team and when we get further along we will report more explicitly.

Supervisor Kniffen said one of the things he likes about this Board is that we don't wait around for things to happen, he said he thinks we make things happen, and that's our job. It means looking into the future now to make things better for the future.

Mr. Smith reviewed information he added to the index page for the Preliminary Budget. At a previous meeting a decision was made to approve increases to the court clerks for their compensation for 2018. Those changes were made to three lines, with additional social security being added as well. Contractual expense for the Assessor was added for the County and some interfund revenues were increased by \$10,000 because he is going to have sewer and water absorb some of that cost. In regard to highway, Mr. Smith added \$12,300 for part time help as well as social security. The Kirkwood Fire Company's budget decreased by \$749. He said when we went through the PILOTS in more detail, we adjusted the revenue on two of the light districts. All the changes were modified through adjusting how much appropriated fund balance we were using versus changing the tax rate at all.

Supervisor Kniffen stated that Mr. Smith did an excellent job and opened the hearing to public comment. Hearing none, Supervisor Kniffen ordered the hearing closed at 6:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayle M. Diffendorf
Town Clerk