

Village Cost Cutting Measures

Amberley Village has been in the process of analyzing its finances, communicating to the public the loss of revenue streams, and has begun engaging the citizens in a dialogue about the Village's financial state. The Village has taken a number of significant steps in response to our declining revenues, which has reduced expenses.

Cuts to Employee Positions, Wages and Healthcare

The Village has reduced expenses through several cost saving measures involving its workforce:

- In 2011, a wage freeze was enacted and will continue through 2012.
- Employees began paying 10% of their healthcare premium this year and will pay 15% in 2012.
- The Village no longer allows employee spouses to be covered under its primary health plan, if other insurance is available. This policy change resulted \$34,109 in savings for the Village.
- Village employees have been on a high deductible health care plan. Employees are responsible for funding 35% of the deductible, an increase from paying 5% in previous years. In addition to the deductible, employees have an out-of-pocket exposure of \$5,200 under this plan based on their individual usage.
- The vacant police lieutenant position will go unfilled, resulting in savings.
- The vacant position of finance administrator will be reconfigured resulting in some savings as well.
- The full-time front desk position has been reduced to part-time hours and the police clerk is being shared with the administrative office.
- The vacant full-time maintenance worker position will go unfilled.
- Seasonal maintenance employees have not been hired this year to assist with leaf collection (which is why the Village has suspended brush pickup during the months of November and December to focus on leaf removal).
- A proposal is being considered to modify the schedule for police to reduce overtime.
- Contracting out payroll is also being pursued.

Cuts to Equipment

Cost reduction efforts pertaining to equipment have included:

- New cruisers were not purchased in 2010, 2011, or planned for 2012.
- A 1997 dump truck that provides critical snow and ice removal was due to be replaced in 2009 but has been delayed.
- Vehicle replacements have been postponed.
- Replacement of the chipper equipment has been delayed.

Deferring equipment and vehicle replacements, as well as many training and operating needs, enables the Village to stretch its available resources. Departments have been cooperative in reviewing all planned and discretionary spending and are, as always, thinking about what's best for Amberley Village.

The Village will still need to make long-term investments in its infrastructure. The annual street program which includes resurfacing, patching and curb work, has been severely curtailed. The Village has not resurfaced any streets with General Fund monies since 2008 - except a few streets like Belkay and Hudson Parkway, where Greater Cincinnati Water Works replaced the waterline and will partner with the Village to resurface the streets. Delaying these types of programs saves money in the short term but must eventually be funded. The rehabilitation of Galbraith Road was completed by securing a \$1 million grant from the federal government (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 or “stimulus” funding).

Additional Cost Savings Measures

Village staff constantly look for grant opportunities and file grant applications. The Police Department is currently utilizing a bullet proof vest program through the U.S. Department of Justice where two vests are purchased for the price of one. The Fire Department recently submitted a \$145,408 grant to FEMA for equipment and applied for a \$2,000 Gold Star Chili award. Additionally, the Police Department submitted a proposal to the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Law Enforcement for \$20,000.

The Village continues to look for ways to change how it does business. Collaboration with other local governments is an on-going initiative that may offer additional savings to the Village. Collaboration has existed with emergency medical service provided by Golf Manor and Silverton, but the Village is pursuing other partnerships to capitalize on our efficiency.

The Village’s brine making system reduces the budgetary impact of salt prices and a proposal to generate revenue by selling brine to other communities is being considered. Cuts and efficiencies are being made with a long-term strategy in mind. Analysis of how to be more efficient will be on-going and staff will continue to be resourceful. Every department and every employee is being asked to find ways to further cut costs and closely examine existing programs and procedures from a cost-benefit standpoint.

The Village uses a variety of tools to ensure that the fiscal health of the Village and our residents is protected, including:

- Contracting for services where more cost effective. For example, a private grass cutting business mows Amberley Green. Amberley Village does not own the necessary equipment for mowing a large property like Amberley Green.
- When appropriate, catch basin repair is contracted out to a concrete contractor and vehicle maintenance is outsourced.
- The Village takes advantage of cooperative purchasing:
 - Collaboration with the City of Cincinnati has proven very successful in purchasing road salt at reduced rates.
 - Collaboration with local municipalities to share equipment, avoiding new equipment purchases.
 - Vehicle fuel is purchased through a contract bid by Hamilton County that enables the Village and numerous other jurisdictions to save significant dollars by participating in bulk purchasing.

- The Village contracts directly for energy purchasing for its buildings.
- Supplies and equipment are purchased through state and county bid processes.

Efficiency and effectiveness in Amberley has been a cornerstone of our service delivery, but we must take further action, define the level of services our residents are willing to pay for, and develop a long-term fiscal plan. Additional sources of revenues must be identified to continue funding the level of services residents expect and appreciate. While the need for lean government and cost cutting measures are integral to solving our financial situation, they are not sufficient to balance the Village budget.