

Budget Information

How important is it to every day operations to get a budget passed? Well, that's a loaded question. The first response, if it wasn't needed, it wouldn't be asked for. Public demands are higher as are public transportation expectations. Take a piece of equipment, whether it be a truck, grader, loader or tractor. Highway equipment is used, most of it on a daily basis. During 5 to 6 months of the year, these trucks for example are carrying extra weight in the form of sanders all of the time. When out salting, there are pockets of salt residue that collect in the smallest nooks and crannies of the trucks. Even though the trucks are washed after each and every winter operations usage, it is impossible to get completely salt free. Every three weeks or so, depending on usage, the sanders are removed and the trucks and sanders completely cleaned underneath.

The same holds true with the loader/backhoe. This piece of equipment is a multi use item. It is used for loading trucks during winter operations and then used for ditching operations in the spring/summer months as well as loading gravel in the town pit. One machine does a lot of work.

The Highway Department asked for the purchase of a chipper in the form of a warrant article. It was defeated. Somewhere within the default budget, funding needs to be found to rent a chipper during the summer. Brush is being managed on an as needed basis. It is man and time consuming to cut entire roads when brush needs to be hauled away and disposed of by the truckload.

When work needs to be rescheduled from a default budget, there are still road repairs that must be completed. In the Highway paving line this past budget, we were asking for nearly \$300,000.00. When the tally was in, the town did not get an operating budget so we went to the default budget once again. This reduced the paving budget line to \$213,000.00. This then forces the budget to be looked at and paving projects cut for that budget year. Once a project is cut in that year's budget, it then moves to the next year. Nottingham road grinding and resurfacing was cut from this years project list so it will be part of next year's budget. Also slated for next year is the top coat of Reservation Road and Pleasant Hill grinding and resurfacing. IF there is a default budget in 2013, Nottingham road and the top coat on Reservation road are first on the list moving the needed repairs on Pleasant Hill to 2014.

The Highway Department has tried to create a 20 year plan. The basis for a 20 year plan is the life expectancy of today's paved roads. With approximately 50 miles of paved roads, we need to grind and repave base and top coats 2.5 miles of road annually at a current projected cost of roughly \$600,000.00 just to stay even with industry standards. In the default budget of 2012, we got roughly 1/3 of that. With the cost of asphalt going up the way that it has, the projected cost of the same 2.5 miles of road in 2032 would be somewhere around \$1,000,000.00!

The winter operations portion of the budget roughly stayed the same as did the summer portion.