

Annual budget process already kicking off for fiscal year 2016-17

Today marks the day that I married my husband 27 years ago! Happy Anniversary, Joe! Through most of those years, he and our three children have lived through numerous budget cycles. If you ask him he would say he has “suffered” through too many annual budget processes, but I’m sure he is just joking.

The District is kicking off its fiscal year 2016-17 budget process. The boards are in the process of approving their budget workshop and meeting dates related to the fiscal year 2016-17 budget process. After each district has approved its calendar, the approved budget calendar will be provided on the District’s website – distict.gov.org.

Fiscal year 2016-17 actually begins Oct. 1, 2016; however, we start the budget preparation process eight months before the fiscal year actually starts.

Did you know that the original fiscal year 2015-16 budget is \$270,705,980 for 48 funds over 15 Districts? This includes more than \$190 million for operations and maintenance costs in addition to more than \$60 million for debt service costs for the purchase of infrastructure and amenity fee revenue stream and more than \$20 million for District 11 capital funds.

The total operations and maintenance portion covers numerous functions such as Utilities, Sanitation, Recreation, Property Management, Safety and support services – Administration, Budget, Clerk, Finance, Purchasing, Human Resources, Customer Service, etc. Below is a small sampling of operations and maintenance items that are considered during the budget preparation



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process:

The Department of Property Management is responsible for the maintenance and replacement of all of the district-owned facilities and infrastructure, including more than 285,000 square feet of recreation facilities, 30 postal stations, pools, 506-plus acres of preserves, 1,126 acres of wetlands, 392 water retention areas/basins, more than 41 miles of multimodal paths, 120 miles of roadways, street lighting, irrigation systems and more than 1,015 acres of landscaping. They oversee more than 180 different contracts ranging from landscaping to janitorial to pool maintenance.

The Recreation Department is responsible for the operations of more than 1,157 facilities, including 10 regional, 24 village and 48 neighborhood recreation centers; nine sports pools, 23 family pools and 48 neighborhood pools; five fitness clubs, 11 softball fields, four dog parks and many others. Plus, there are 16 District-owned executive golf courses that had more than 1 million rounds of golf played on them last year.

Community Watch Department has 93 gate complexes with 21 staffed gates, including 11 that are staffed 24/7, with approximately 145,000 vehicles/carts per day passing through them. Patrol drives more than 1,140,000 miles a year to patrol every

neighborhood at least two times a day, 365 days a year.

The Villages Public Safety Department is responsible for seven fire stations that are staffed 24/7, providing commercial and residential coverage over a service area of more than 40 square miles. They served more than 18,984 requests for services last year, of which 80 percent were medically related.

The Utilities funds includes the operations and maintenance costs of more than 77 lift stations, 440 miles of potable water mains and 380 miles of sanitary sewer gravity mains to provide water and sewer services to the residents.

All of these services and more are carried out by 1,000 full-time and part-time District employees. Operating costs for all of these departments and more are included in the budget.

Now you may have a better understanding of why it is a major undertaking to prepare, review, adjust and finalize so many budgets for that amount of funding.

There are 14 Districts that operate as separate governments with the responsibility to review and adopt their own budgets. In addition, the North Sumter County Utility Dependent District reviews and provides a proposed budget to Sumter County Board of Commissioners for adoption.

There are also two committees (Amenity Authority Committee and the Project Wide Advisory Committee) that review certain funds and make recommendations to the respective District Board.

We have an awesome

District Budget Preparation Team that includes staff from all departments. Most are veterans of the budget process, so with their professional experience and knowledge, the process runs smoothly.

The departments currently

are reviewing the needs and priorities for their areas of responsibility and preparing their budget requests to be submitted at the end of March. The Office of Management and Budget, along with the District Manager, will review each budget during April and May.

During the May budget workshops, the board

supervisors will review the recommended budget by line item to determine a proposed budget. Proposed budgets are approved in June and final budgets are adopted in September with a whole lot of work happening in between.

Of course the budget process is a public process and we encourage everyone to attend. You can express your thoughts

and comments by attending a budget workshops or a monthly board meeting, calling Janet Tutt or myself at 751-3939, or emailing me at barbara.kays@districtgov.org. All budget workshops are open to the public and we urge you to attend even if you don't have any comments. This is a great way to learn how your District government works.

Thank you for taking the time from your Villages lifestyle to read about your District government's budget process, and be sure to join us next week at Our Place!

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