

Village of Withee

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The Withee Village Board met on October 27, 2025, in the Municipal Building, Conference Room, for a 6:15 pm Budget Meeting.

ROLL CALL-President Klabon called the meeting to order. Roll call was answered by Klabon, Trustees Shelton, Amacher, Kroeplin, and Kalepp. Clerk Niemi recorded the meeting. Also present were DPW Derek Schad and Withee Library Director Brandon Hardin.

LIBRARY BUDGET PRESENTATION-The Library Director, Brandon Hardin, addressed the board, requesting \$1,000 more than the \$36,000 budgeted for the Withee Public Library. Trustee Amacher asked about the county funding, Hardin answered that it has been suggested at 85% but won't know until November 15, 2025. President Klabon asked what kind of decreases have been made to the library budget to which Hardin replied less spending on books, DVDs, prizes for programming and applying for grants. He says they use the savings but didn't give an amount when President Klabon asked how much savings were available. Trustee Shelton suggested using the money that is usually given to House of Friends to be given to the library. Trustee Amacher said the library does a lot with the money they get. Clerk Niemi told the board that the \$13,512 that the library pays to the Village is for rent and percentage of the utilities and has not increased since 2013.

CLOSED SESSION PER §Ch. 19.85 (1)(c) CONSIDERING EMPLOYMENT, PROMOTION, COMPENSATION OR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION DATA OF ANY PUBLIC EMPLOYEE -

A Kalepp/Amacher motion to convene into closed session per §Ch. 19.85 (1)(c) considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee for employee wage and benefits at 6:26 pm carried with all ayes. A Kroeplin/Shelton motion to reconvene into open session at 6:39 pm carried with all ayes. A Kalepp/Kroeplin motion to approve a 3% wage increase for Derek Schad, a 3% wage increase for Ellen Niemi, and a 1% wage increase for the David Laabs effective January 1, 2026, carried with all ayes.

REVIEW OF 2026 BUDGET-The board reviewed the budget proposal for the year 2026. The increase for the tax levy this year will be .31% for net new construction which increased the levy \$452. The water PILOT payment decreased from \$79,142 to \$52,696. Shared revenue increased due to supplemental aid. TIF amounts are not known yet but are predicted to decrease \$8,302.00 due to equalized value adjustments. General transportation aid increased. Municipal Building budget may have to increase if Xcel and WE Energies gets their rate of increase requested. Board wages could be increased if trustees thought they were going to have more meetings. Legal increased because of hiring a new firm with higher fees. Elections were increased due to four possible elections in 2026. The state increased the pension from 13.9% to 14.4%. The clerk's office budget decreased by \$2,000 due to savings with new phones. When the internet goes out, the VoIP phones don't work. Hopefully, we can continue using the current internet, which is at no cost due to an agreement with Country Wireless, otherwise we could pay \$50-\$75/month for internet. Insurance expense decreased due to selling the dump truck. Mobil home parking fees and lottery credit is a guess every year and a portion gets paid to the school. The police budget increased slightly. The fire budget increased slightly. Fire protection has increased from \$54,223 to \$59,776 according to the PSC rate case. Many municipalities charge the fire protection fee to the parcel owners. That may be a future decision to make but not at this time, as there are other rates increasing. The DPW's budget was reviewed with few increases except for wages. DPW Schad got a quote for a new Gravelly mower with trade in of our current one to be purchased in 2026 for \$2,399. Schad mentioned the need for new Christmas lights, which may cost approximately \$400 each for a total of \$8,000 to replace

all of them. Xcel is switching out electrical poles during the next two years. As new poles get installed, new electrical hookups would have to go on the poles. Trustee Amacher suggested not purchasing the lights until the pole project is done, or not decorating poles, instead decorating the Lions Park. DPW Schad set aside monies to start saving for the next time Hixwood Road needs gravel. Schad put \$30,000 aside for overlaying a road and plans to apply for the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) funding in 2026 which is a matching grant. Schad mentioned that he will probably have to clean the water tower next year which could cost approximately \$65,000 to \$95,000, depending on any repairs. Schad mentioned the VFD went out on well#3 and will be replaced at warranty as soon as a new VFD arrives. They thought it was the well pump that went bad, but it was the VFD, although the pump still needs to be pulled for inspection. Garbage/recycling income and expenses are higher as the rates change from \$17.65 to \$18.00 per residence per month. The cemetery stayed the same at \$6/resident. Debt service is the same as last year covering the municipal building and endloader loans. Summer rec/donations were put at \$1,000 to cover the surveying expense share for the bike trail. Monies were put into Transfer to Other savings found on the right-hand side of the budget worksheet with remaining funds put into TIF road savings for future growth. Sewer subsidy was put at zero as the sewer enterprise account should pay for that amount with the increase in rates. The board discussed whether to increase the library apportionment. Trustee Amacher understood that the library has expenses with a tight budget. In lieu of rent increase, the board won't increase the amount paid for library appropriation, so it will stay at \$36,000. Trustee Amacher requested more details on the amount spent in each category for the police budget and asked if the committee is able to make suggestions on that budget. An Amacher/Shelton motion to approve the proposed 2026 budget as presented carried with all ayes.

NEXT BUDGET MEETING AND BUDGET HEARING-A Kalepp/Kroeplin motion to set the next budget meeting for November 10, 2025, at 6:15 pm and the budget hearing for November 17, 2025, at 5 pm carried with all ayes.

A Kalepp/Kroeplin motion to adjourn at 7:59 pm carried with all ayes.

Ellen Niemi
Village Clerk