



Budget Discussed At Godfrey Village Board Meeting

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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GODFREY - A large portion of the Godfrey Village Board of Trustees meeting on May 16 was spent discussing the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024. A proposed \$1.1 million deficit raised a few questions from trustees, who also debated the future health of the village's finances.

Mayor Mike McCormick said that as long as he's been mayor, the village has always included a deficit in its budget, but has never actually gone into a deficit. He attributed this to department heads who include projects in the budget that don't get completed.

"We're OKing a budget to go ahead and overspend by \$1.159 million," Trustee Rich Lauschke said. "Why don't we tighten it up to where we're really going to spend it? Because we did the same thing last year, and I think we're betting that the capital projects don't get done and therefore we end up not spending as much money, but we have given approval to go into a negative budget."

Village Attorney Philip Lading explained that isn't exactly what the ordinance in question would do.

"Your appropriation ordinance, which is what this is, is by and large a useless document. It has no correlation to your actual budget expenses," Lading said. "All it says is at the municipal level, you have to pass an appropriation ordinance and you can only spend annually up to the amount you appropriate. Those individual expenditures still have to come back to the board for approval."

McCormick said that he believes Godfrey is in great financial shape, adding that the village lowered taxes seven times and still has more money "in the bank" than when he first took office.

Economic Development Director Jim Mager said that while the Street Department came in under budget last year, they have had to pull money from the village's General Fund rather than its Motor Fuel Tax Fund after the state cut off the Rebuild Illinois Program funding that was going into the Motor Fuel Tax Fund. He said he'd like the Motor Fuel Tax Fund not to go below a balance of \$500,000 - it currently sits at around \$800,000.

Trustee Jeff Weber said that while there was "no question" McCormick has done a "great job" as mayor, he expressed concern that the millions in grant funding the village has received over the past two years will eventually stop. McCormick responded by agreeing that COVID-related funding will stop, but he didn't want to "handicap in any way." He then asked Weber to tell him what part of the budget he wanted cut.

Weber replied that he didn't want to make any cuts, but wanted to revisit the situation in three months to see how it's going before the village goes into a deficit. McCormick and Mager said the village's department heads already keep an eye on that every month when they receive the Treasurer's Report.

Since this item was only for discussion, no official action was taken on the appropriation ordinance at the May 16 meeting. A full recording of the meeting is available at the top of this story, on [Riverbender.com/video](https://riverbender.com/video) of the [Riverbender.com Facebook page](https://riverbender.com/facebook).