

Borough Budget Gets First Look

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{audio}http://www.kmxt.org/images/stories/mp3/080512.borough_budget.mp3{/audio}

Jay Barrett/KMXT

At Thursday's work session, the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly got its first look at the administration's proposed budget for the next fiscal year, which begins in July. For the first time ever, the borough will be funding the school district to the maximum allowed by law.

Costs keep going up for the Kodiak Island Borough, but there shouldn't be a mil rate increase this year.

The borough's general fund budget totals about 15-point-4 million dollars, out of a total budget of 31-point-1 million dollars. School funding, debt service and solid waste collection are the largest expenditures.

Finance Director Karl Short said that even though the budget is growing, he's managed to hold the line on property taxes:

-- (Budget
1 23
sec “… another almost 900-thousand
dollars.”

He said the borough would, however, be dipping into its savings account to balance its spending this year:

-- (Budget
2 32
sec “… down a lot next year. They won’t
stay.”)

About
11-million dollars of the general fund budget is dedicated to the Kodiak Island
Borough School District. Those costs have nearly doubled in the past 10 years.

Several
school board members, along with senior staff were at Thursday’s meeting and
made their case for the borough to fund the district to the cap, or the maximum
allowed by law.

Heating
fuel and electricity costs were driving the request for the borough to fund the
district to the cap, according to Norm Wooten.

-- (Budget
3 48
sec “… there is no advantage for us to
exceed the cap.”)

The
assembly members who spoke on the district’s request all were in favor of
funding to the cap. It will be the first time in anyone’s memory that the
borough has done so, says Short, who has worked in the finance department for
25 years.

More than
1-million-dollars was trimmed from the school district’s budget before it was
brought to the assembly, and those cuts include some staff. Gone next year will
be a central office administrator, a curriculum coordinator, a Kodiak Middle
School teacher and one rural schoolteacher. That’s on top of the savings of
closing the Danger Bay and Chiniak schools. Superintendent Larry LeDoux has
also ordered an across-the-board reduction of 15-percent in equipment and
supplies.

The
assembly will take a closer look at the budget at this Thursday’s regular meeting.

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