

LONG ISLANDSUFFOLK

Brookhaven approves \$302.4M budget for 2019

Board votes in favor of fiscal plan that hikes spending by about \$8 million with the bulk of it - \$5.4 million - set aside to pay salary increases for unionized employees

By Carl MacGowan carl.macgowan@newsday.com @CarlMacGowan Updated November 20, 2018 10:13 PM

The Brookhaven Town Board Tuesday night approved a \$302.4 million budget for next year with a tax increase officials described as "minimal."

The board voted 7-0 in favor of the plan, which boosts overall spending by about \$8 million, or 2.9 percent.

The budget had aroused no public controversy. In fact, the only three town residents who spoke at a Nov. 12 town board public hearing all said they supported it.



Brookhaven Town Hall is shown in 2017. Photo Credit: Joseph D. Sullivan

The largest share of the spending increase is related to \$5.4 million in salary increases for the town's unionized employees. The employees are due a 2.36 percent raise next year.

The budget also includes increases in town reserve funds for snow removal and closure of the town landfill. The facility is expected to close within a decade due to declining available capacity.

Supervisor Edward P. Romaine has said the 2019 budget does not rely on surpluses to pay expenses. Town officials plan to eliminate more than \$45 million in debt, including \$15.8 million in pension debt, Romaine said.

Tax increases vary depending on whether homes are located inside or outside villages. Officials have said all tax hikes would be less than the 2-percent maximum increase allowed by the state tax cap. The town did not offer more specific figures on individual property tax increases.

Garbage district fees will remain at \$350 per home, and the budget sets aside an additional \$3 million for road maintenance, officials said.

In addition to the operating budget, the town board approved a capital budget that includes \$60 million in new projects.

Carl MacGowan is a Long Island native who covers Brookhaven Town after having previously covered Smithtown, Suffolk County courts and numerous spot news and feature stories over his 20-plus year career at Newsday.