

Monticello manager selected

Board approves budget raising taxes 4 percent

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MONTICELLO — The Monticello Village Board last night selected an interim village manager and approved a \$7.1 million budget for next year that reflects a 4 percent tax increase.

George Panchyshyn, head of the village's public works department, was tapped once again to fill the job he held before current Village Manager David Berner was hired last fall. Berner resigned recently, citing personal reasons.

Panchyshyn, 53, will take the village's top administrative position effective July 20. Berner's last day is July 19.

Panchyshyn will continue to oversee the village's water department. His annual salary will be \$57,100 — a \$2,500 increase from what he's currently being paid as head of the village's public works department. He currently manages the village's water, sanitation and highway departments.

Bill Bertholf, superintendent of sewers, will take on the sanitation department. The village will look for a manager to head the highway department.

The interim village manager job is not new to Panchyshyn, who served in that capacity from May 1995 to October 1995 following the departure of then-village manager William Cummings. He stepped down when Berner was hired.

"The department heads have to take on more responsibility," Mayor James Kenny said. "We've had such a hard time keeping someone (as manager) in the village."

Panchyshyn afterward called the village manager's job "frustrating and rewarding. . . . And if it wasn't for this board, I wouldn't do it again." The board made no decision on whether to actively start looking for a new village manager.

The decision to hire Panchyshyn temporarily is expected to save the village about \$72,000 in personnel costs this year, Kenny said.

The tax increase is due in part to a drop in village assessments the past two years, totaling \$2.3 million. The total assessed value of land in the village sits at about \$189,328,320.

Factors behind the tax increase include 4 percent salary increases from union contracts, the recent purchase of a fire/rescue truck, the planned purchase of several pieces of highway maintenance equipment and rising utility costs.

The village's sewer assessment rates, which residents pay annually, will drop an average of 15 percent — due to anticipated cost-cutting measures.