

Suttons Bay purse gets a close watch

By DAVID AVERILL
Record-Eagle staff writer
SUTTONS BAY— Fiscal conservatism in the management of public funds is a standard policy among Suttons Bay council members, Mayor William S. Gregory maintains.

"We certainly believe in progress but we also believe in keeping our expenditures in line with our budget," he says.

Gregory, 41, is a native of Petoskey and a resident of the Traverse City area since 1944. Since 1956 he has lived in Suttons Bay and has been a member of the village council for the past four years, three of them as mayor.

"During the past year we have managed to consolidate our operations at the village hall," he said. "We now have the village administrator, the clerk and treasurer working together in one office where all the records are kept."

He cited the strict enforcement of zoning regulations as a recent accomplishment of the council.

"We've had the zoning code for some time but in an effort to maintain and upgrade the community's quality we have put the zoning regulations into permanent operation."

He said that during 1976 the village's new water production facility and a needed extension of services were established at a cost of \$80,000.

Ski lifts were also constructed at Bahle Park and the slopes have been opened for use by area residents.

"We have also tried to settle a number of land disputes in the marina area on the waterfront. When these are cleared up we may have more land at the marina than we previously thought."

Among immediate projects will be the installation of restrooms at the marina this spring, he said.

According to Gregory, about \$20,000 has been earmarked for a sinking fund to finance sewer construction along the village's south shore sometime in 1978. Engineering for the project has been completed.

"I feel that another forward step was in changing our elections from a partisan to a non-partisan basis. It's a more honest and less cumbersome method of electing public officials. It tends to eliminate a lot of unnecessary politics."

Gregory himself is no stranger to the political arena. A Democrat in a strongly Republican region, he has twice been an unsuccessful candidate for state representative of the 104th District, absorbing his latest defeat in the November general election.

"I have found that a major problem we have at the local level is in working with the state government. It is very difficult to establish personal contact through exchanging letters. I think this can only be accomplished if we succeed in getting more people at the community level interested in their government."

"Only when large numbers of ordinary citizens become active in government will the state take more interest in their problems."

He said he was encouraged by the fact that four people will be running for three posts on the council in the spring election.

"This shows interest in local government. I wish more people would run in elections. One of our major problems is to maintain the community's quality in an era of growth. I hope more people become involved in these matters."

He described the village's financial

records as being in "excellent" shape.

"The council has been able to keep the budget at about the same rate for several years. This is a good record in an era of rising prices, growth, and additional services."

Actually the community's 1977 total budget of about \$197,000 is less than 1976 when the total outlay was 204,000.

A liberal arts graduate of Central Michigan University, Gregory also has a master's degree in Latin American Studies.

"That one came in handy during the three years I spent in Venezuela as a Peace Corps member from 1965 through 1967," he said.

A former teacher at Suttons Bay High School, Gregory recently resigned his position.

"I'm planning on studying law," he said. "I've made application to a downstate law college and if I'm accepted I expect to start my studies in May."

Asked if he intended to seek state political office in the future, he grinned.

"No comment," he said.

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