

TOWN BOARD BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING

September 15, 2016

A Town Board Budget Workshop Meeting was held on Thursday, September 15, 2016 in the Town Hall 284 Broadway Ulster Park, New York at 9:00 AM with the following people in attendance:

Supervisor Diane L. McCord
Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet
Councilperson Les Kalmus
Councilperson Wayne Freer - Absent
Councilperson Kyle Barnett – Absent

Recording Administrator Holly A. Netter, Town Clerk
Debbie Kain, Bookkeeper
Brian Pickard, CPA

Supervisor McCord called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM.

Preliminary 2017 Budget was reviewed by Debbie Kain, Bookkeeper and Brian Pickard, CPA. Departments that requested raises or had a budget increase for 2017 were met with to discuss their proposed budget.

Don Kiernan, Water/Sewer Superintendent

The Water Sewer District has lost significant sewer revenue from Dyno Nobel. The account used to bring in \$30,000 and now is zero. Approximately half of the new meters have been installed. There will be 300 more meters installed in 2017 and an additional 300 in 2018. The new meters are very effective and an increase in revenue has been realized by their installation; however not enough revenue to close the deficit. Water Superintendent Don Kiernan said we may need to increase the sewer rates. Whether to increase taxes or increase the sewer rate was the topic of conversation. Superintendent Kiernan said he felt the fairest way to handle the situation was to raise the rate verses the taxes because people can control their usage. The alternative of raising the funds through taxes would mean, the person who lived in a more expensive home would pay more for the same amount of water as someone in a house of less value even though they had the same consumption.

****The Board will need to pass a resolution to raise the sewer rate 7% in December so it is in effect for the January bill.**

The water tank at the plant will need to be replaced next year. The existing tank will need to be relocated to the adjacent property. There is approximately \$120,000 set aside for the purchase of the property plus legal and engineering fees. The Town would have to obtain a bond for the rest of the money. The Town Board can redefine the purpose of the money through a public hearing. The tank they are looking at is AquaStore, which is ceramic inside and out with a steel center. It will take approximately 2 months and the current tank can be used until the water is ready to be transferred. The reason a new tank is needed is because painting the tank has become cost prohibitive, 1.3 million.

HIGHWAY

Highway Superintendent, Mike Cafaldo, was attending training, therefore Brian Pickard and Debbie Kain reviewed the Highway budget for him.

Mike needs to replace 3 trucks and the cost per year will be \$90,000 for the next 5 years. Highway has a surplus and is giving back \$80,000 to help balance the budget. Debbie and Brian reminded everyone the budget did not include any raises. Health costs have increased. Brian Pickard, CPA said it was important for the Board to look at what the Town is paying towards insurance. Currently employees pay 10% and the new employees pay 15%.

Mike asked for a \$5,000 increase in salary. However, it is not in the figures.

PARK PROGRAM

Brian Pickard reviewed areas that need to have revenues increased such as the Park Program and Transfer Station. Although Kathy DiSciullo will be at the upcoming workshop meeting, a review of the number of participants was given. The rates will need to be increased. Currently there are 90 residents with 37 of them having a sibling in the program. There were 15 non residents with 5 of them having a sibling in the program. Suggestions to raise revenue:

Non residents pay full price for all children, assess late payment for those not paid on time, cut back on counselors and raise the ratios. A full discussion with Kathy will take place at the next workshop meeting. No decisions have been made.

ASSESSOR

JoAnna Mignone received a raise of \$5,000 last year and has requested a \$7,600 raise in the 2017 budget to raise her salary to \$52,000. She also asked for an additional \$1.00 per hour for her deputy Mara Rothman. A copy of the letter is attached to these minutes. Joanna will email a copy of this letter to Councilpersons Barnett and Freer who were unable to be here today. Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet said you need to know the budget is really tight. No one is paid

what they should be. We would love to give everyone more. Everyone deserves it but how do we justify it. The Board will discuss the request further. Assessor's letter attached Addendum A.

Addendum A

Dear Esopus Town Board Members:

Once again budget time approaches. I realize that last year you generously gave me a raise in salary, and I do appreciate it. However, I am still the lowest paid experienced Assessor in the area. Here is a chart of surrounding towns with similar parcels, and the Assessor's 2016 salaries.

Township	Assessor Salary 2016	Parcels in Town
Marlboro	\$53,708	4060
New Paltz	\$47,700	4255
Lloyd	\$70,000	4400
Esopus	\$44,400	4400

I would like to bring your attention specifically at this time to New Paltz, the assessor was appointed in 2015. She had been in the assessor's office for a total of 5 years and in 2016 received a Salary of \$47,700, she was promised a raise to \$50,000 in 2017 upon completion of her certification. As you are aware, I have been in this office for over 25 years, with 3 years' experience as the assessor and I am certified.

My accomplishments include keeping the assessment at 100% for my entire tenure, even with pressure from the state. After many years of discord between the community and the Assessor's office, I have improved relations and made residents feel comfortable with the approachability and fairness of the Assessor's office.

I would appreciate the respect of a fair and equitable salary, a salary that is competitive for this region. I am seeking to have my salary increased to \$52,000. The Assessor's Office is an important office, as the equalization rate and the equity in the roll, drive tax dollars.

I believe our office is running smoothly because we have a great team. Mara has been a great assistant and has learned a lot in her three years with the office. I would like to request an additional \$1.00 an hour. This would help to bring her salary to be more equitable with the other offices in the town hall.

Thank you for your time and consideration to this matter.

52,000
- 44,400

7,600

TAX CAP

Brian Pickard suggested passing a resolution to go over the cap. He made a suggestion of increasing taxes 5% once opposed to going over the cap for the next three years. The Building Inspector, Water Superintendent and Highway Superintendent positions have all been being paid half of what their position warrants. When these individuals leave the Town will have to pay a competitive rate to replace these individuals.

COURT

Court is in a deficit. New Paltz is in need of a court room. It was suggested the Town rent the space to New Paltz on evenings when the area was not being used. New Paltz cannot afford to build a court at this time. Marblertown, Rosendale and Rochester are all held in the same location. There is approval needed from the legislature if the Town wishes to take this route.

Transfer Station

Increase of revenue is needed. The question of whether we could operate 3 days a week was posed. The difference in Liberta Bid for 3 days and 5 days is \$1,000 per month.

Dogs

Brian made the suggestion that the rates for the dogs go up. There are many dogs not licensed in the Town.

Parks and Recreation – Dan Vedder

Ross Park – an increase of 10,000 was put into the budget for fencing. Mulch will need to be replaced. This is done every other year.

HUTT – The current recreation garage has a column that needs to be fixed. It has rotted and collapsed prohibiting use of one of the overhead doors.

New Recreation Garage

Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet asked about the bathrooms and heating for the new recreation building based on plans that were recently drawn by Charlie Westley. Dan said water is needed in the building. At the time of the build he would like to have the plumbing in place for a future bathroom, which could be budgeted and renovated in the future. It would be a lot cheaper to run the pipes now, and as money became available, a toilet and sink could be installed. Dan plans on bringing the heat from the old building up to the new location. It was installed with the intention to expand to a new location someday and can be switched from propane to natural gas if desired.

An estimate of the shell of the building is \$65,000 - \$70,000. The old building will be sold and is expected to bring in \$35,000. The building capital account is currently \$130,000. Current numbers need to be obtained from Lowes and will have to go out for bid. Dan was asked to get preliminary costs from Lowes and attend the workshop meeting on September 20th. He will let Supervisor McCord know if he is available.

Solar Panels at Town Hall are not rotating and a motherboard needs to be replaced. Dan will look into how much the cost will be to replace it.

The Board discussed what to do with the skating rink fencing. The skating rink has not been usable for the past few years because once the ice is solid the kids climb the fence and destroy it before anyone is able to skate on it. St. Remy has a skating pond which is not vandalized and people enjoy using that location. Supervisor McCord has suggested putting in a 20 foot x 20 foot water pad for the use of the park program; the cost is \$17,000. A discussion took place

regarding the placement of this feature. Originally she planned on having it next to the pavilion near the horseshoe pit. The area is very soggy and the concern of vandalism was raised. A suggestion of using a small section of the skating rink with a fence around it was made. The remainder of the ice rink could be used for additional parking and a guardrail could be installed so cars were unable to drive through the park. This topic will be discussed further.

GRANT WRITER

A line has been added to the budget for a grant writer. There are numerous grants available but they take time and expertise to obtain them. Perhaps a writer could be hired and paid contingent of approval and the amount of the grant received.

Comprehensive Plan

Money that was put aside for the Comprehensive Plan for 2016 can be rolled over to 2017. Councilperson Van Vliet expressed concern and asked if Myles has sufficient time to do the Comprehensive Plan since he is so busy with the Planning Board.

Zoning changes are also needed.

A MOTION WAS MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 11:29 AM BY SUPERVISOR MCCORD AND SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON LES KALMUS. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR MOTION CARRIED.

Respectively Submitted,

Holly A. Netter
Town Clerk, RMC

