

PUBLIC HEARING 2020 BUDGET
October 22, 2018

A Public Hearing of the 2020 Budget was held on Tuesday, October 22, 2018 in the Town Hall, 284 Broadway, Ulster Park, New York at 7:15 PM with the following persons in attendance:

Supervisor Shannon Harris
Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet
Councilperson Kathie Quick
Councilperson Jared Geuss
Councilperson Chris Farrell

Also in attendance: Deb Kain, Bookkeeper
Brian Pickard, CPA

Recording Administrator Holly A. Netter, Town Clerk, RMC

PUBLIC HEARING 2020 BUDGET

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILPERSON KATHIE QUICK TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2020 BUDGET AT 7:15 PM. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON JARED GEUSS. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

Pledge

Public Comment:

Jim Banks said the late Supervisor John Coutant always thought government should be run like a business. All towns have problems but Jim felt there was no need for going over budget.

Board Comments:

Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet said she was not pleased with this budget. We continue to take from the surplus, last year \$275,000 was taken from the General Fund and again this year we are taking another \$275,000. The budget is increasing by \$360,000; of course staying under the 2% cap. She asked, Could we have done better? There is also \$30,000 in revenue in Franchise Fees from Spectrum expected if an agreement can be made. Councilperson Van Vliet felt it was a hidden tax to the residents and added those who have Direct TV or fire sticks do not have to pay the fee. Things are moving quickly and we are spending a lot of money this year and there are many more projects where additional expenses will be coming in 2020-2021. Councilperson Van Vliet said this is her last budget and wanted to express her opinion on how she felt about the budget.

Councilperson Chris Farrell asked Gloria where she felt cuts could have been made. She said Stormwater and Water Improvements are needed but moving too quickly: too much at one time. A lot of money was spent on the Master Plan; \$72,000 has been given to Tighe and Bond. She said not that we don't need these things but we should take them in slower increments. We also agreed to bond for stormwater and infrastructure. Even if grants are acquired, they only cover around 60% and we still have to come up with the other 40%. In the water district the water tank was needed and we are fortunate that the payment is interest only, \$36,000 for 2020 but it will go up once principal is added. It's been a very difficult year. She said she has always been conservative with spending the taxpayer's money and worries about the future.

Chris Farrell said as a team the Board has been addressing the deficits and moving forward in a progressive and effective manner to address serious issues that have been overlooked over the years. Although it is an expense now, in the long run will be more cost effect. Councilperson Van Vliet asked are we moving too quickly? He agreed it is a hard balance. He also agreed he was not a fan of the hidden tax through the franchise fees.

Supervisor Harris said it is a transition of moving from being reactive to proactive: either way there is a cost. In the past we have been putting band aids and still paying thousands of dollars for the cost of tearing up our roads, having to pay overtime to fix water main breaks, repair/repave roads, and paying property owners for damage that was caused by the break. We are not going to see immediate savings. It is shifting the cost from having to repair and rebuild into being proactive by doing it correctly and having a long term capital plan in place to see what needs to be done and budget accordingly.

Kathie Quick said some of the items we have waited too long to address and it is just going to get worse. We have to look at the long term effort.

Councilperson Jared Geuss said one of the prime examples of investing in the Town was when they started looking at the Comprehensive Plan. It was as an upfront investment in the Town, and on the heels of that, we were able to secure a grant for the Water Tank for 2.6 million dollars. For the past 6-8 years we have needed a tank but no progress was being made. Now that areas needing attention have been identified through the Comp Plan hopefully grant opportunities will be available. If not we are moving in the right direction and know what needs to be addressed and can budget accordingly.

MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS MADE BY COUNCILPERSON KATHIE QUICK AT 7:28 PM. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON CHRIS FARRELL. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectively submitted,

Holly A. Netter
Town Clerk, RMC