

TOWN BOARD BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING

September 18, 2019

A Town Board 2020 Budget Workshop Meeting was held on Wednesday, September 18, 2019 in the Town Hall 284 Broadway Ulster Park, New York at 4:30 PM with the following people in attendance:

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

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

Supervisor Harris called the meeting to order at 4:35pm (Third budget workshop)

Supervisor Harris gave an overview of changes made to the budget and said any additional money people were asking for, except something that was a real important capital improvement, was cut back to what the department had last year. The following were kept in the budget;

Server and computer upgrades for \$5,000
Windows 10 upgrade because windows 7 is not going to be supported
Business development target marking \$2,000 which will be controlled by Supervisor Harris and Councilperson Geuss
QPICK cash match grant \$10,000 (also a revenue in that)
Outreach Mail \$2,000 (rezoning mailing)
DEC cash match grant we were already approved so we need it
Zoning \$32,000

Assessor Removed \$6,000 Reval (hasn't used it in years)

Dropped Attorneys \$50,000 to \$40,000
Tekcon decreased to \$5,000
Office supplies and telephone reverted to last year
Town Signage from \$2000 to \$500

Building Department Phone from \$2,250 to \$1,500 (extra cell phone removed)

Highway Copy machine from \$1,500 - \$574
Street lighting from \$25,000 to \$5,000
Esopusol is \$175,000

Buildings and grounds

Fuel 16,000 to \$10,000

Bathroom repairs \$3000 to \$2500

Building repairs (Hutt) \$3,500 to \$2500

Propane \$6,000 to \$5,000

Cleaning supplies \$6,000 to \$5,000

Water Chestnut removal from \$6,500 to \$6,274

Supervisor Harris would like to rent out the water chestnut cutter to other municipalities for revenue. Councilperson Quick said there is such a small window of time to cut we don't have time to rent it. Volunteers can only cut at high tide and sometimes people cut at night. Supervisor Harris said Rosendale needs it for their lakes. What happens if the machine is broken, who is going to pay for the repair. Supervisor Harris said if we could loan it out we can get revenue and the other municipality can get reimbursed by state for shared services. Rental has been explored in the past but there are many questions that need further research. Councilperson Quick said there are two major areas that need to be cut, the cove by Freer Park and giant cove by Esopus Lighthouse. Moving the machine is a serious hassle, not easy to maneuver. A concern over proper usage and damage of the machine was raised. Volunteers who are trained currently run the machine. A suggestion of paying a volunteer to cut at another location was made. Salary to operate the machine typically runs about \$25 per hour per person. There needs to be a conversation with the Water Chestnut cutting crew to see if this is feasible.

ZBA Legal Contingency dropped from \$8,000 to \$3,000

ZBA consultant fee decreased from \$5,000 to \$2,500

Planning Legal fees from \$4,000 to \$2,000

Sorenson new contract \$35,000

Water and Sewer

What is driving the increase in water/sewer is the retirement of Peter Koelli; buyout of vacation and sick time. Peter is also eligible to keep his medical benefits as a retiree and his replacement will also be entitled to benefits.

Usage is not what we anticipated. Why is usage down? Customers conserve water, rainy, replacement appliances more efficient.

Supervisor Harris suggested extending the sewer district. If the sewer district was extended on River Rd it would be a separate district and only those homes would pay for the improvement. If the cost was 2 million dollars only those home would split the cost and be prohibited. There are no densely populated areas that would benefit from an extension.

Don offered to lower contractual services \$370,000 down to \$360,000 and take \$10,000 off of equipment down to \$75,000.

Capital Reserve Account was decreased to \$30,000

Don shared the following calculation- based on the last 5 years consumption:

Every penny you raise the sewer rate yields \$690 in revenue

Every penny you raise the water rate yields \$764 in revenue

Don propose to raise the water rate from \$4.79 to \$4.99/ \$100 gallons numbers need to be checked to make sure that will work. Don will work with Brian.

Water and Sewer rates need to be increased. No decision was made on the exact increase, a review of the numbers is needed.

Councilperson Van Vliet said she was concerned because it is just hiding the tax increase into the rates of water and sewer. She said it's a really bad budget.

Supervisor Harris said we are trying to be profitable and we are still cheaper than other towns. We are providing more services.

Don had recommended the Board consider imposing a \$25 per quarter fine for people refusing to install the meters and having them manually read. A resolution would need to be put into effect if the Board decides to implement this fee.

Sometime in the future, after the remaining meters are installed, the Water Department will be going out to commercial properties to make sure the meters are working correctly. Meters that need to be replaced will be at the owner of the commercial properties expense.

(NEW) Film Tax \$2,000 Implementing a permitting fee, action needed

Park Rentals increase \$2,000 - Rates will be raised, different parks will have different cost and Cas Landi Park will be rented. An additional a pavilion at Freer Park would also warrant more revenue if the Bruderhof was willing to donate it. Rental cost for the Community Center will also be reviewed and implementation of fees for those who use the space for meetings will be considered.

Brian said last year the Town balanced the budget with the surplus. He warned if they continue to give back and balance the budget from the surplus there will be nothing left in a few years. There are hard choices that need to be made. A Franchise Tax would bring in a considerable amount of money, some feel it is another hidden tax to keep the Town under the 2% cap. Marbletown receives \$100,000 from their franchise tax. Renters and homeowners pay the franchise tax which is a benefit to the taxpayers. It needs to be researched. Brian said revenues need to increase so look at what people use and increase the cost of those items. People can have some control, if you use a service you pay and if you don't it has no bearing on your taxes.

Budget #3 9/18/19

Still need to cut the budget and raise revenues.

(NEW) Inspections of Airbnb \$100 Add \$2500 revenue

Jim Banks said Kingston charges to inspect rental properties. Research needs to be done to see if we are also able to capitalize on that.

Bookkeeper Deb Kain said there are certain things we have always lost money on:

Summer camp

Seniors Trip

Transfer Station, although there has been great improvement

Town Justice request – add 2% to existing salary for judges and justice clerks but include no benefits

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILPERSON CHRIS FARRELL TO CONTINUE THE BUDGET MEETING WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 24, 2019 AT 4:30 PM. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON JARED GEUSS. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

Ended approximately 7 pm

Respectively submitted,

Holly A. Netter
Town Clerk, RMC