

TOWN BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING

November 03, 2014

A Public Hearing of the 2015 Budget was held on Monday November 3, 2014 in the Town Hall 284 Broadway Port Ewen, New York at 7:30 PM with the following persons in attendance:

Supervisor John Coutant
Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet
Councilperson Wayne Freer
Councilperson Kyle Barnett
Councilperson Diane L. McCord

Recording Administrator Holly A. Netter, Town Clerk
Brian Pickard, CPA
William Kemble, Daily Freeman

Supervisor John Coutant called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM.

The Town Board worked diligently to stay within the tax cap once again. Supervisor Coutant said consequently the Town is using fund balances to subsidize the decrease in revenues received by the town. The Supervisor explained the Mortgage Tax as well as the Sales Tax revenue was down considerably. It is the lowest it has been since he has been in office. The Town is running as tight as it can. The vendors do not have any consideration for the needs of the municipality. Salt, workers compensation and health insurance rates have all had a significant increase. The Supervisor asked Brian Pickard for a recap of this year's budget.

Fred Zimmer asked if we were basically balancing the budget out of the fund balance appropriations. Brian Pickard said yes as we have for years. Brian Pickard said he estimates we will have approximately \$600,000.00 in the general fund at the end of this year depending on how we finish the year.

Councilperson Kyle Barnett said it gets harder and harder to bring the budget in under the cap. This has been the hardest budget they have encountered. If the revenues continue to go down and the constraints placed on the town are increased, we will be faced with cutting government services. Fred Zimmer asked what the down side was if the Board went over the cap. Councilperson Barnett explained the State has added a penalty of taking away the tax check the residents receive from the State if the municipality does not stay within their cap.

Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet said we are eliminating our Dog Kennel and seeking a contract with the SPCA to board our dogs. Councilperson Wayne Freer said he is not a proponent of

using the fund balance but favors this option instead of cutting back even more services. Everyone hopes the mortgage tax and revenues start to increase and we can build the funds back up. Tim Halpin inquired why the workers comp has gone up considerably and why we could not go out on our own. Mr. Halpin felt the county must have many more claims than the town. The Board explained it would be cost prohibitive. When the agreements were drawn up years ago the agreement was made the town would co share the outstanding claims which would cost the town more than \$175,000 to get out of the plan. In addition we would also need to pay a new insurance company on top of that. Supervisor Mike Cafaldo said salt has gone up \$10 a ton. Everyone wants a tax break but the municipality has to pay more for what they are getting. Everyone hope the economy turns around.

A MOTION WAS MADE AT 8:00 PM BY COUNCILPERSON KYLE BARNET TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE CONTRACT NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE WATER/ SEWER AND HIGHWAY PERSONNEL. BRIAN PICKARD, CPA WAS INVITED INTO THE SESSION. COUNCILPERSON WAYNE FREER SECONDED THE MOTION. ALL WERE IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

A MOTION WAS MADE TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION BY KYLE BARNETT AT 8:03PM AND SECONDED BY SUPERVISOR JOHN COUTANT. ALL WERE IN FAVOR MOTION CARRIED. NO ACTION WAS TAKEN.

Councilperson Kyle Barnett explained to the public that we are still in negotiation with the union employees regarding the terms of their contract for next year. The current budget is not changing which includes a 1% increase for all non union employees. The union is still to be negotiated.

COUNCILPERSON WAYNE FREER MADE A MOTION TO CLOSE THE BUDGET HEARING AT 8:04 PM AND WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON GLORIA VAN VLIET. ALL WERE IN FAVOR MOTION CARRIED.

COUNCILPERSON WAYNE FREER MADE A MOTION TO PASS THE 2015 BUDGET AND WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON DIANE MCCORD. ALL WERE IN FAVOR MOTION CARRIED.

Supervisor Coutant called to order the regularly scheduled workshop meeting at 8:06 pm.

Public Comment – none

Curt Dankelmann – Plan for Profitability of Transfer Station

Curt Dankelman presented a package which included 3 plans on how to make the Transfer Station Profitable. Councilperson Barnett said since the Town Board just received the information at the meeting they would like an opportunity to look it over prior to having a

lengthy discussion about it. The Board had already discussed options to cut costs during the budget hearings. Councilperson Barnett suggested a special committee be formed to review in detail Curt's ideas. To discuss the possibility of bringing the management back in house, continue privatization, alter the agreement and share services with other municipalities or cutting back on the days of operation. All of the options will be reviewed and analyzed. This committee will present costs and benefits to the Board so a decision can be made for 2015.

COUNCILPERSON KYLE BARNETT MADE A MOTION TO CREATE A COMMITTEE AND AUTHORIZE THE COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE VARIOUS OPTIONS AVAILABLE INCLUDING THE LEASING OPTION. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON WAYNE FREER. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

Curt Dankelman said the public at large does not understand the complexity of the recycling process. The Supervisor's and Mayor's Association was able to negotiate some of the expenses with Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (U.C.R.R.A.) and a copy of the communication was given to all Town Board members for review. It appears some of the costs have been scaled back.

Fred Zimmer, resident and Planning Board Member, suggested leasing the transfer station.

Employment Agreement – Timothy Keefe

A copy of the employment contract for Timothy Keefe, Building Inspector, was given to all Board Members for review. If all are in agreement, the authorization to sign the contract will be on the agenda for the November Town Board meeting. Supervisor Coutant said it was the same as last year's contract.

Resignation from Environmental Board - Kathy Foley

Kathy Foley has submitted her resignation from the Environmental Board. Supervisor Coutant said he was sorry to see her go. Kathy has done a good job and Supervisor John Coutant said he would send a letter thanking her for her service.

Association of Towns – 2015 Training School & Annual Meeting

The 2015 training School and Annual Meeting will be held in New York City February 15- 18, 2015. Supervisor Coutant asked the Board to review the information.

Superior Telephone System Agreement

Superior's maintenance contract needs to be reviewed. A motion to authorize Supervisor Coutant to sign the contract will need to be made at the Town Board Meeting.

Bill Fitzgerald Reappointment to Assessment Review Board - Resolution

A resolution to reappoint Bill Fitzgerald to the Assessment Review Board will be presented at the November Town Board Meeting. Bill was appointed to fulfill the remainder of Lorrie Morses' term, which expired September 30, 2014. Bill will be reappointed for a 5 year term. It has been confirmed by Tracey Williams from Ulster County Real Property; Mr. Fitzgerald will not have to attend school again this fall since his training was just completed in 2014, and his reappointment falls within the same year.

SPCA Letter

Supervisor John Coutant, Town Clerk Holly Netter and Councilperson Diane McCord had a meeting with Marie Shultis, Executive Director and Adam Saunders, Executive Director of the SPCA to discuss the needs and services that would be necessary to shelter and maintain dogs from the Town of Esopus. In addition, the subject of other municipalities needing alternative housing for their dogs came up. Marie and Adam explained the possibility of removing an old, abandoned barn adjacent to the current complex which could be renovated to house 20-24 dogs. They had ideas about how to raise funds and suggested municipalities could financially contribute toward this mutual endeavor. A letter was written by Supervisor Coutant to the Board of the UCSPCA and offered to actively participate to work toward this common goal. Marie Shultis explained in the meeting, one of the biggest challenges is creating awareness that the UCSPCA is not the ASPCA. Donations need to be made to the local UCSPCA because they do not receive any portion of contributions made to the ASPCA. Gloria Van Vliet mentioned November 8th is the UCSPCA fashion show and silent auction annual fundraiser at the Hillside Manor. Councilperson Diane McCord suggested having the SPCA speak at a Supervisor's meeting, however the UCSPCA Board Members need to be on board with the idea prior to talking to the Supervisors.

Douglas W. Terrone - Eagle Scout Recognition – November 8, 2014

Town resident Douglas W. Terrone will receive an Eagle Scout Recognition Award on November 8, 2014. Supervisor Coutant asked if anyone was available to go to the event to make a presentation because he would be out of town. Councilperson Wayne Freer said he would check his calendar to see if he was available.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at 8:33 PM was made by Councilperson Wayne Freer and seconded by Supervisor John Coutant. All Town Board members voted in favor. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly A. Netter
Town Clerk