

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING OF
THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
ON THE TOWN BUDGET FOR 2019
HELD ON NOVEMBER 8, 2018**

Present: Colleen Teal, Supervisor
Kevin Smith Sr., Councilmember
Jesse Newton, Councilmember
Mark Baumli, Councilmember
Norman Rasmussen, Councilmember

Recording Secretary: Tistrya Houghtling, Town Clerk

Others Present: Jeff Winestock, Highway Superintendent
Bill Black, CC Emergency Management
Kevin Darcy, LVPA
Eugenia Browning, LVPA
Mary Young, LVPA
Several Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER:

The public hearing was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Supervisor Teal.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE:

Supervisor Teal asked Town Clerk Houghtling to enter the following public hearing notice aloud:

**TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
ON THE LVPA 2019 PRELIMINARY BUDGET AND
THE TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
2019 PRELIMINARY BUDGET**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the PRELIMINARY BUDGET of the TOWN OF NEW LEBANON for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2019, including general town funds, highway funds, and fire protection district funds, has been completed and filed in the office of the Town Clerk at the New Lebanon Town Hall, 14755 NYS Route 22, New Lebanon, New York, where it is available for inspection by any interested persons during regular Town Clerk office hours. The Preliminary Budget for 2019 has also been posted on the town website (www.townofnewlebanon.com) and can be viewed or downloaded from the website.

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Town Board of the Town of New Lebanon shall hold a public hearing on the Lebanon Valley Protective Association's 2019 Preliminary Budget on Thursday, November 8, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the New Lebanon Town Hall, 14755 NYS Route 22 for the purpose of receiving public input on said budget.

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Town Board of the Town of New Lebanon shall hold a public hearing on the Town of New Lebanon's 2019 Preliminary Budget on Thursday,

November 8, 2018 at 7:05 p.m. at the New Lebanon Town Hall, 14755 NYS Route 22 for the purpose of receiving public input on said budget.

The following are the proposed 2019 salaries of the Elected Town Officers of the Town of New Lebanon:

| | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| Supervisor | \$22,772 |
| Councilmembers (4) | \$4,000 each |
| Town Clerk | \$37,737 |
| Highway Superintendent | \$61,752 |
| Town Justices (2) | \$10,931 each |
| Tax Collector | \$10,812 |

The following is the proposed amount for 2019 for the Lebanon Valley Fire Protective Association:

| | |
|------|-----------|
| SF-1 | \$159,500 |
|------|-----------|

By order of the Town Board of the Town of New Lebanon

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Supervisor Teal stated that there is a correction on the summary on page i. It shows the unexpended balance of \$85,000 from general is going to be applied and \$53,650 from highway but if you look within the budget on page 14, there is a list of the unexpended balance and that lists \$69,000 for general so that needs to be corrected to \$85,000 and page 17 shows \$49,000 and that needs to be corrected to \$63,650. Neither of those numbers affect calculations anywhere else, but they need to be corrected on those pages.

Supervisor Teal opened the floor to public comment.

Meg Robertson asked for clarification on the new proposal for health insurance that is going to be provided for employees. Supervisor Teal stated that about 75% of the employees employed by the town are part time. We looked at acquiring and retaining employees. These are all appointed positions, they are still the lowest or second lowest paid throughout the county. We looked at what would be another way to retain and bring in employees. It is not all part time employees. It is only the part time employees that are working between 20 and 34 hours a week on a year round, consistent basis and all that the town is providing if 40% of the premium of employee only. The employee is responsible for 60% of the premium and if they choose to add children or a spouse or a family, they would have to pay the entire additional. The total cost on a home assessed at \$200,000 would be \$1.76 for each employee that participates and we have 3 that would potentially be eligible, of those we already know that two of them are not going to participate. She stated that we have had high turnover on some of these positions and it is a high cost to the town to keep training new people in to these positions. We were trying to find an incentive that would not cost the town too much and would entice employees to stay.

Michael Deegan stated that the headline in the paper is way off as it stated that this is the biggest increase in taxes in 7 years. Supervisor Teal stated that there was a \$300 increase in the total amount to be raised by taxes somewhere in the last 6 years, but other than that

it was all either stay the same or a decrease so this is the first increase in taxes in 7 years. Supervisor Teal stated that it is the biggest increase in 7 years because, other than the \$300 one, it is the only increase in 7 years. Councilmember Baumli asked what paper that was in. Supervisor Teal stated the Register Star. Michael Deegan stated that the headline is what got him to the meeting but now that he is getting all the information it sounds like a good plan. He thanked the town board for working so hard to keep the town moving forward.

Meg Robertson asked if there is truth to the rumor of the tax collector once again being absorbed into the Town Clerk's office as it had been years before that turned out not to work out so well. Supervisor Teal stated that the compensation committee was looking at the significant inequities. There were some positions that were substantially underpaid but in order to figure out what those were, there were some calculations that we did and when we did those we found that some of the positions were significantly overpaid and we felt as a committee we weren't doing our job if we didn't propose those to the board, show them and give them a proposed option. She doesn't think the board has made a final decision on that but she got the sense from the board that they weren't interested in pursuing that option. Councilmember Smith stated that he thought we took it right off the table.

Supervisor Teal stated that there is still more to do for the compensation plan. We set starting rates for all positions. We need to develop the merit evaluation form by June so all evaluations can be done before next year's budget process. Most of these are looking at appointed positions so there are job descriptions that need to be put together. This was a huge step forward but there is still a lot to be done. This is also something that needs to be reviewed and reevaluated on a regular basis.

Meg Robertson asked if a brand new part time employee coming in will now start at the minimum wage of \$15 per hour. Supervisor Teal stated that it would depend what the position is. We took all the positions and graded them based on responsibilities and duties and then set that base rate for each position. It is clear then to the boards and anyone coming in what their starting rate is. We have also done that for some of the elected positions. We need to continue to work on setting them for the rest of the elected positions. Some of the positions have had a person in it for many years. We have set a starting rate, but that won't be applied until a new person comes in to that position. Supervisor Teal stated that the lowest starting rate is \$13.00 per hour which is still very low and she believes is the lowest in the county. We may be looking at some of that again down the road. Meg Robertson stated that she would because minimum wage was supposed to go up and cap at \$15 per hour which is still kind of pitiful.

Meg Robertson asked if the town had a model to go by as far as the health insurance is concerned, other places in the county. Supervisor Teal stated no. Town Clerk Houghtling stated that there are other towns that do health insurance for part time employees. There is one town that 20 hours a week and up get full paid 100%. Supervisor Teal stated that the county has a bonus program also where if you are part time, your paid a higher rate because there are no benefits so if you are a part time doing the same job as a full time you are actually making more and then there is an added bonus based on the number of hours that you end up working that whole year. There are a lot of incentive programs at the different municipalities and levels because most of us have part time employees and in order to keep

them and get them, you have to start looking at ways to do that.

Meg Robertson asked if the part time employee has coverage and then gets into a position within the town of full time, does the rate change for health insurance. Supervisor Teal stated it does. We would take up the 80% coverage when they become full time. Meg Robertson stated that the contribution is less as a full time employee than as a part time employee. Supervisor Teal stated yes, part time pays for 60% of their insurance premium and full time only pays 20%. Town Clerk Houghtling stated that the full time employee would also have the deductible funded through an HRA account by the town whereas the part time employee would be fully responsible for the deductible.

CLOSING OF PUBLIC HEARING:

All persons desiring to be heard, having been heard, a motion was made by Councilmember Smith, seconded by Supervisor Teal and approved unanimously to close the public hearing at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tistrya Houghtling
New Lebanon Town Clerk