

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET WORKSHOP OF
THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
HELD ON OCTOBER 22, 2020**

Present: Tistrya Houghtling Supervisor
Jesse Newton, Councilmember
Deborah Gordon, Councilmember (online)
John Trainor, Councilmember

Absent: Norman Rasmussen, Councilmember

Recording Secretary: Marsha “Marcie” Robertson, Town Clerk

Others Present: Jon Tingley, Town Attorney (online) 7:13pm

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Houghtling.

CHATHAM RESCUE SQUAD 2021 CONTRACT:

A motion was made by Councilmember Newton authorizing Supervisor Houghtling to enter into the contract with Chatham Rescue Squad for 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Trainor.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilmember Rasmussen -	Absent
Councilmember Gordon -	Aye
Supervisor Houghtling -	Aye
Councilmember Newton -	Aye
Councilmember Trainor -	Aye

EMPLOYEE MANDATORY TRAINING:

Supervisor Houghtling made a quick update that due to budget cuts; they will not be able to do an in-person training. We will set the room up as we have been doing for our meetings and do it on-line for those who do not want to do it on-line from home.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that she has not yet booked dates for this training, she will be sending out an email very soon.

MISCELLANEOUS BUDGET ITEMS:

Supervisor Houghtling stated that at the last Budget Workshop, the Town Board was in agreement that due to financial restrictions they really do not have the ability to give raises this year, although recognizing that their employees are stellar and that COVID has affected many of the offices making their jobs much harder.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that this Budget Workshop was left on the agenda to allow for any employees or department heads to come and be heard regarding salaries or .1 accounts. There is no one present for that purpose.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that she wanted to make it clear on the record that there is a false rumor going around that she asked for a \$5.00 per hour raise. Supervisor Houghtling stated that is absolutely false, she asked for no raise. She stated that she does believe that everyone deserves a raise but she was not one of the employees or one of the Elected Officials that asked for a raise this year. Just to set the record straight and all of the requests are public records if anyone wanted to come and see them, they can request a copy from the Town Clerk's Office.

UNEXPENDED BALANCE ESTIMATES:

Supervisor Houghtling stated that this was the document that she thought Brian Fitzgerald, Town Accountant had filled out when she shared it at the last Budget Workshop. The worksheet wasn't completely filled out. Supervisor Houghtling went over the worksheet.

In summary, for the 2020 budget:

1. Highway - we had planned to take \$10,398 from unexpended for the 2020 budget and the estimate now is \$36,820 (highway was the one department who did not lower expenditures for coronavirus yet revenues decreased which is why more is needed from unexpended to balance his budget). This would leave an unexpended balance of \$124,102 in highway at the end of 2020. In the budget as proposed, we are taking \$70,988 from highway unexpended which would leave a balance of \$53,144. We may want to consider lowering this number slightly which would raise the amount taken from general. Originally, I had proposed an 80/20 split from unexpended general/highway however the overall budget has come down due to some changes we made with decreasing expenditures and increasing revenues. If we kept that 80/20 split for the current numbers it would bring the highway number down to \$61,938.
2. General - we had planned to take \$378,803 from unexpended for the 2020 budget and the estimate now is \$152,949 (we cut back many expenditures due to coronavirus and loss of revenues so we not only balanced out the lost revenues but gained back over \$125,000 so our unexpended isn't depleted as it would have been by taking that \$378,803 to balance 2020 budget and buy new highway equipment outright). This would leave an unexpended balance of \$712,424 in general at the end of 2020. In the budget as proposed we are taking \$238,700 from general unexpended which would leave a balance of \$473,724. We may want to consider taking a bit more and going back to the 80/20 split that I had proposed in the tentative budget (since the overall number for unexpended came down from the tentative from lowering some expenditures and increasing some revenues, we may want to adjust the overall amount from unexpended to be an 80/20 split the way I had proposed in the tentative before releasing the preliminary - we can discuss tonight).

3. If the budget doesn't change from where it is now (I will email you next the budget as it sits with all the changes we have already agreed to), the amount needed from unexpended is \$309,688 to keep taxes per \$1,000 assessed value the same as 2020. You will note on the budget I am about to send you that it shows a tax increase of 1.56% which is the max allowed this year under the tax cap. Even though the amount per \$1,000 assessed remained stable, the taxes increased due to increases in assessments. The number they use to decide if taxes are stable or increased is based on overall amount raised by taxes which would have shown a 0% increase the way I calculated it for tentative budget by having that amount to be raised remain even - Norman argued and the board agreed that we should be looking to keep the amount per \$1,000 assessment the same meaning if you are assessed at the same value in 2021 as you were in 2020 your taxes remain stable but if your assessment was raised, your taxes will go up. So, by doing it the way we agreed to, it will show as us raising taxes 1.56% which is the max tax cap allowed amount in 2021.
4. If we keep these numbers and stay with the 80/20 split from unexpended general/highway, the total amounts would be \$61,938 from highway leaving a balance of \$62,164 and \$247,750 from general leaving a balance of \$464,674.

MISCELLANEOUS BUDGET ITEMS:

The following changes to the tentative budget were agreed to by all Town Board members present:

- Page 7, A-3310.2 will remain in the budget because it existed in the Tentative Budget but the amount will be changed to zero.

RECESS FROM PUBLIC PORTION OF MEETING FOR LEGAL ADVICE:

Supervisor Houghtling made a motion to take a recess from the public portion of the Budget Workshop so that the Town Board can consult with their Town Attorney for legal advice at 7:18pm. Councilmember Newton seconded that motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilmember Rasmussen -	Absent
Councilmember Gordon -	Aye
Supervisor Houghtling -	Aye
Councilmember Newton -	Aye
Councilmember Trainor -	Aye

Supervisor Houghtling stated that the Town Board will return from recess and resume the public portion of the meeting at 7:53pm. Per the Town Attorney, no motion is needed.

Supervisor Houghtling asked if any other Town Board members had any other questions, comments or concerns regarding the budget.

Councilmember Newton stated that they discussed increasing fees from different methods

and he did get some information from E-Code360 about other towns in the State of New York that either have a licensing procedure or exemption for the use of side-by-side or ATV's on public roads. He will be coming to the town with a proposal.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling and seconded by Councilmember Newton to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcie Robertson
New Lebanon Town Clerk

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