

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET WORKSHOP OF  
THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF NEW LEBANON  
HELD ON OCTOBER 28, 2020**

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

**Recording Secretary:** **Marsha “Marcie” Robertson, Town Clerk**

**Others Present:** **Ted Salem, ZBA Member & ZRC Chair**  
**Mary Defreest, President LV Seniors**  
**Betty Donnelly, Vice President LV Seniors**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Supervisor Houghtling.

**MISCELLANEOUS BUDGET ITEMS COMP PLAN:**

Supervisor Houghtling stated that we have Ted Salem here as the Chair of the ZRC and the Comprehensive Plan Committee to discuss the 2021 budget for the Comprehensive Plan rewrite. Supervisor Houghtling stated that as they initially discussed, the ideal amount for the budget is the \$10,500 which would cover all of the costs as discussed prior but the grant is no longer available for the offset of the revenues. Supervisor Houghtling stated that she wanted to acknowledge that the board wants to give the Comp. Plan Committee what they need to do a good job on the rewrite without putting too much stress on the volunteers, that they are all working very hard, but to still be as fiscally responsible as possible. The Town Board doesn't want to cut it so much that they cannot get a quality product.

Ted Salem, ZRC Chair and ZBA Member stated that the committee is facing the reality that there is likely not going to be any grant funding available in 2021. They are also cognizant of the local fiscal situation. Ted stated that the committee is concerned about utilizing the original \$10,300 that they requested. Ted stated that the committee wanted to address that we are in a volatile situation, social and demographical, COVID is having all sorts of impact on everybody.

Ted stated that the committee is convinced that the best course of action and they are recommending to the Town Board is that this Comprehensive Plan update be an interim update. The committee would then recommend that a more thorough update be conducted within the next three to five years timeframe, when a little more is known from the Census

data as well as the impacts of COVID and other social economic changes. Ted stated that the committee is looking at a scaled down update and for that reason they don't think that they will need the same level of consultant help that they had originally envisioned is necessary. That does not mean that the committee is not going to give a really hard look at some significant issues, the committee has already identified a number of things over the past several months. Ted stated that the committee will recommend to the Town Board the things that they think should happen over the next two years toward goals that are more or less short term and point out other areas that should be considered for longer term.

Ted stated that this is the committee's vision and they think this could be accomplished with the volunteer resources for the most part. Ted stated that the Comprehensive Plan Committee would recommend eliminating the \$7,300 that was requested for consulting fees. Ted stated that in hindsight they realized that they didn't include anything in their budget request for legal fees, they may be a need for some legal fees for things like a SEQR and public hearing support. Ted stated that the committee guessed at printing costs, really no clue of the expense but the \$3,000 that they asked for for printing is in excess of what they need.

Ted stated that as part of this interim update, one of the things the committee thought of doing to save on pages was to incorporate the information in the Natural Resource Conservation Plan that is duplicated in the Comp Plan.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that she thinks that is a great idea with the NRCP and she assume there would be some notation to refer to the NRCP for these documents.

Supervisor Houghtling asked could what they are talking about be an addendum document at the back of the Comp Plan? Or are you talking about going in and changing the entire book?

Ted Salem stated that the Supervisor's predecessor was really against the addendum concept, which was actually the concept that Supervisor Houghtling and Ted Salem did talk about. Ted stated that however, that being said, they are going to be doing a significant amount of cutting, so the addendum concept is really unreliable. Ted stated that one of the things the committee wants to do is look at the action plan, which is really detailed. Ted stated that the action plan they see going forward will be much shorter with only short-term actions.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that her vision would be an addendum document with this full Comp Plan from before and then in three to five years do a whole new replacement Comp Plan.

Councilmember Newton stated that this is supposed to be your guide book for your zoning and your code enforcement and growth of the town. He thinks it really needs to be its own book.

Ted Salem stated that his vision and the committee's is essentially the same, rather than calling it an addendum, call it an update.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that the towns printing costs are pretty low, approximately \$1,000.00 for one hundred books.

Ted Salem stated that the only other cost item that the committee considered would be for advertising, maybe a couple hundred dollars.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that that expense would come out of the town's central printing and mailing account.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that her recommendation is to put the printing costs under Comp Plan and to put the estimated Attorney costs into the regular Attorney line

Councilmember Newton stated that he is estimating about \$2,500 for attorney fees.

The Town Board agreed to change:

- Page 12, A-8010.41 – Comp Plan, from \$10,500 to \$1,500
- Page 4, A-1420.4 – Attorney, from \$40,000 to \$42,500

Supervisor Houghtling stated that they do not need to adjust central printing and mailing, there is enough wiggle room in there for notices as needed to go out.

Councilmember Rasmussen stated that he is really glad to hear that they are going to do a limited revision focused on what the Comp Plan Committee thinks needs to be revised, however his concern is that the Town Board is not likely to be the same Board in three to five years, so they can state an intent to review the Comprehensive Plan in three to five years but it is no mandate. Whoever is on the board at the time can decide to do it or not.

Councilmember Rasmussen asked that if they refer to this as an interim or anything other than our Comprehensive Plan will that have any affect on their legal obligations?

Supervisor Houghtling agreed, that is a valid point. She thinks that Ted could consult with Jon on that.

Councilmember Newton stated that it is a New York State recommendation that the Comprehensive Plan gets revisited every five to ten years, ten being the maximum.

**MISCELLANEOUS BUDGET ITEMS LV SENIORS:**

Supervisor Houghtling stated that Mary Defreest, President of the Lebanon Valley Seniors Club is present to discuss their increased budget request with the Town Board. Supervisor Houghtling stated that the Town Board had a preliminary discussion regarding the increased budget request from the Lebanon Valley Seniors, they requested \$9,000 this year instead of the \$8,640 that they had last year. Supervisor Houghtling stated that the board realizes that this is not a huge difference but they are on a very tight budget, not even allowing for employee raises. Supervisor Houghtling stated that it is not that the board does not want to give it to the LV Seniors, it is just a very tight budget and typically in the past few years they have not used all of the money in their budget, so the board wanted to give the LV Seniors a chance to speak to the board on why the increased budget request is needed.

Mary Defreest, President of the LV Seniors stated that a lot of the seniors live on a very limited income and some are living with illnesses and even loneliness. Their group tries to provide luncheons, outings, trips and an opportunity for the seniors to get out and socialize. Those that can afford to pay for these activities do and for those that can't afford it, the group will cover their expense so that they can still participate. Mary stated that she has reached out to a lot of the restaurants that they frequent and the bus companies that they use for their trips and due to COVID their costs have gone up. Mary stated that the LV Seniors as a group have a lot of fundraisers and tag sales to help offset some of their expenses. Mary stated that the increased amount of their budget request will hopefully allow their group to still provide these opportunities to their members without the worry of monetary issues.

Councilmember Trainor asked Mary what the average attendance is?

Mary Defreest responded by stating that before COVID shut them down, they had about forty members attending a meeting or participating in the trips.

Betty Donnelly, Vice President of the LV Seniors stated that as Mary had stated the group has fundraisers and tag sales but that money goes back into the community by way of donating to the Holiday Gift Drive, the school's Backpack Program, schools supplies for the school, donations for Charlie's Pantry and donating to the Regional Food Bank.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that obviously this year due to COVID the LV Seniors haven't used any of the money that was budgeted for them for 2020, if this happens again in 2021 and they are not able to meet or go to luncheons or go on trips, the board can expect that they won't be spending what they budget.

Supervisor Houghtling asked if any other Town Board members have any other questions?

Councilmember Gordon asked if she understands correctly that there haven't been any trips or events this year so far?

Supervisor Houghtling stated, no they have not spent any of their 2020 budgeted funds.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that in the past, when she was in the Town Clerk's office, there were conversations had about the Seniors having money left in the budget, it needed to be spent, what could they buy and it wasn't necessarily necessities. Supervisor Houghtling asked Mary if the board were to give them what they are asking for, could they get a commitment that if they don't need the money, they won't spend it understanding that they are in a budget crisis. Obviously, not in writing, but just a verbal commitment that if they have money left, they will let the town not spend that money.

Mary Defreest stated that they have her commitment that if the LV Seniors do not need to spend all of the budgeted funds, they will let the town have it back.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that personally makes her feel a whole lot better.

The rest of the Town Board agreed, they were all okay with that.

Supervisor Houghtling thanked Mary and Betty for coming and stated that the Town Board will leave the \$9,000 in the budget for the LV Seniors.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS BUDGET ITEMS FIRE INSPECTION FEES:**

Supervisor Houghtling stated that the other thing that Councilmember Newton mentioned was that the board will be passing a resolution at the November meeting to add in fire inspection fees. She did get the following rough estimate from ZEO / CEO Hernandez as far as how many of those are done.

Per Cissy Hernandez, ZEO / CEO, on an annual basis we have fourteen public assemblies and twelve buildings at Darrow school for a total of \$1,300.00 annually. For every three years we have sixteen multi-dwellings and seventy-four non-residential, to the best of Cissy's knowledge. The numbers could vary slightly. Supervisor Houghtling stated that this brings in \$4,500.00 every three years. They try as much as possible to have a third done one year, a third done the next year and a third the following year. It's safe to say let's budget \$1,500 for those triennials each year along with the \$1,300.00 annually which would increase that line by \$2,800.

The Town Board agreed to change:

- Page 17, General Revenue, Safety Inspection Fees under Departmental Revenue-A-1560 from \$10,000 to \$12,800
- Page 19, General Revenues, Appropriation of Fund Balance - from \$247,750 to \$238,500

#### **OTHER BUSINESS SHATFORD PARK PAVILION VANDALISM:**

A motion was made by Councilmember Trainor to authorize the Supervisor to enter into and execute the agreement currently before the Board on behalf of the Town with John Doe, Jane Doe, and their minor child, J.D., for the payment by such parties to the Town of New Lebanon in the amount of \$7,903.75 for compensation for damages caused to town property at Shatford Park on or about September 4, 2020. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Newton.

Roll Call Vote:

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

A motion was made by Councilmember Trainor to authorize the Supervisor to take any and all action reasonably necessary to withdraw Insurance Claim No. TNT-0161415 relating to the damage caused to town property at Shatford Park on or about September 4, 2020. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Newton.

Roll Call Vote:

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

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling and seconded by Councilmember Newton to adjourn the meeting at 6:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcie Robertson  
New Lebanon Town Clerk