

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET WORKSHOP OF
THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
HELD ON OCTOBER 12, 2021**

Present: Tistrya Houghtling Supervisor
Jesse Newton, Councilmember
Norman Rasmussen, Councilmember
Deborah Gordon, Councilmember
John Trainor, Councilmember

Recording Secretary: Marsha “Marcie” Robertson, Town Clerk

Others Present: Mark Baumli, Cemetery of the Evergreens, Treas
Mary Young, NL Rep to CC Office for the Aging
Other members of the public

CALL TO ORDER:

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

TOWN TAXABLE ASSESSED VALUE FOR 2022:

Supervisor Houghtling stated that when the Assessor gave her the amount of the Town Taxable Assessed Value for the 2022 budget, she gave it with a caveat that there was one property that the Assessor was pretty sure was going to be exempt but the Assessor hadn't gotten final determination from the State. Supervisor Houghtling consulted with Attorney Tingley on what to do. The Attorney instructed Supervisor Houghtling that the amount has to be entered in the budget the way it is now, even if you know it is going to change. Supervisor Houghtling stated that it has changed, it is final now and it is about \$2 million less, which means that 2022 number is a little less than the 2021 amount, it is \$307,254,892.00. That means that if everything in the budget were to stay the way it was, there would be a tax increase. Supervisor Houghtling stated that the way she did the Tentative Budget is to have a zero-tax increase. The overall amount to be raised by taxes increased with the same proportion that the Town Taxable Assessed Value increased. She stated that this was the way this board did it last year and she stayed with that same theory. With this new number, they need to either decrease some of the expenses in the budget, increase some of the revenues in the budget or taxes would raise because that number is coming down by \$2 million. Supervisor Houghtling stated that once she plugs that number into the calculations, she will have a better understanding and they can look at that at another Budget Workshop.

MISCELLANEOUS BUDGET ITEMS:

The Town Board reviewed the 2022 Tentative Town Budget as presented line by line having discussion on any line items that any board member had questions on or needed more detail on.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that all .1 accounts are the same in this Tentative Budget as 2021 with the understanding that one of the Budget Workshops will be dedicated to pay. There is something on the agenda tonight from the Compensation Plan and if that gets adopted tonight, she will be able to change a lot of these .1 numbers for the next Budget Workshop so they can see where they are.

Supervisor Houghtling reported that she put in a place holder in the budget on pg. 5, Contingent Temp Pay Raises, **A-1990.4** with \$40,000 as a holding line until the .1 pay is determined by the board.

Supervisor Houghtling reported that for the Attorney fees she broke out a separate line item under the Planning Board budget under **A-8020.41**, pg.11. She put \$18,000 in there based on recommendations from both Attorney Ferradino and Planning Board Chair, Elizabeth Brutsch. Part of the \$18,000 will be paid via escrow by the applicant but they still need to include it in an expense line. When money is received from escrow it will go into a revenue line.

Supervisor Houghtling reported that **A-1620.4**, Buildings went down from last year.

Councilmember Newton doesn't remember why A-1620.4 went down. He would like to star it and come back to it at the next Budget Workshop after he goes back over it.

Supervisor Houghtling and Town Clerk Robertson are going to look **over A-1670.4**, Central Printing & Mailing to see if it needs to increase more from last year because there is a budget amendment for this month's meeting. It was under budgeted for 2021 and Supervisor Houghtling wants to look it over to see why and to make sure it is properly budgeted for in 2022.

Councilmember Rasmussen questioned why on pg.5, **A-1990.4**, Contingent was \$20,000 and the previous year's show nothing for this line item.

Supervisor Houghtling responded that she believes this is an error, as long as she can recall the Town does use Contingent, especially towards the end of the year. Contingent is used for accidental under budgeting or unforeseen increases.

Supervisor Houghtling reported that on pg.6, **A-3120.4**, Police Constable is now in a .4, not in a .1 because they contract with the Columbia County Sheriff's now.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that she has again put in her request for the Town to purchase two traffic control devices that can be moved around town to different areas as needed. She stated that she is consistently hearing from residents in town about speeding on many different roads. Supervisor Houghtling reported that in conversations that she has had with Sheriff Bartlett and the NY State Police, asking for help with speed control, they told her that the best thing that they have found that works as a speeding deterrent are the flashing speed signs. The board did not approve it for 2021, she is requesting it again for 2022. It is on pg.6, **A-3310.2**, Traffic Control for \$6,000.

Supervisor Houghtling read the BEDC's request for a budget increase this year from \$3,000 to \$5,800, pg.8, **A-6410.4**, Publicity. The BEDC would like to continue with the two mailers that they did this year and they would like to do a destination map for New Lebanon to be distributed to various informational sites in and around the County. They are also working on a welcome packet to give out to new residents and new businesses to New Lebanon. The BEDC would also like to form a LDC (Local Development Corporation). The Town Board would still have approval of their budget and any projects that they may wish to do.

Supervisor Houghtling and Councilmember Newton had discussion regarding Playgrounds, **A-7140**, pg. 9 of the budget in regards to making future improvements to the park assets. Supervisor Houghtling stated that in the next meeting there will be a presentation on a Master Park Plan and hopefully there can be further discussion by the Town Board on this matter. The pavilion kitchen is in need of being updated. The water feature in the park is very outdated and in need of renovation. Supervisor Houghtling stated that she would like to see a new splash pad be put in its place.

Supervisor Houghtling mentioned that the Library, **A-7410.4**, pg.10 is currently the same. There is currently a 414 initiative on the ballot in November, the voters will decide if that is to change.

Supervisor Houghtling pointed out that there is no change to the actual .1 salary for the Planning Board Clerk (**A-8020.1**), pg.11. Michelle Bienes currently does three different time cards within the Building Department and the Accountant has to pay her from three different account codes within the Building Department. Most of her time in the Building Department is under the Planning Board, so instead of having Zoning Clerk, Planning Board Clerk and Building Department Clerk, because it is the same person right now, all three .1's were combined into one .1 line under Planning Board. If ever it is a different person for those positions, it can be split out again.

Supervisor Houghtling noted that this year at the Town Clean-Up Day we accepted electronics, it was very successful, the cost was \$1,200. The money left in the 2021 Town Clean Up budget line (A-8160.41) was transferred by a budget amendment to the Climate Smart .4 account (**A-8797.4**), pg.12. Going forward, Supervisor Houghtling stated that she would like to see that in the CSC budget line because she thinks it is important for the

residents to see that the electronics recycling is due to the Climate Smart Committee as one of their programs.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that there is an increase in the New Lebanon Cemetery this year, **(A-8810.4)**, pg.14 as requested by Mark Baumli, Treasurer of The Cemetery of the Evergreens. She read an email correspondence from Treasurer, Mark Baumli explaining their request for an increase in their .4 budget line due to the increased costs in maintaining the cemetery and the lack of fundraising last year due to COVID conditions.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that she increased the disability insurance **(A-9055.8)**, pg. 14 based on the potential of two new male employees but it should be on the Highway side of the budget so the amount on the general budget will be reduced by \$400, and the highway side will be increased by \$400.

HEALTH INSURANCE:

Supervisor Houghtling reported that health insurance is coming down slightly. The CDPHP came down a little, the MVP stayed the same. She stated that the \$32,000 in the budget line **(A-9060.8)**, pg. 14 should be sufficient.

HIGHWAY, LVPA, .1 PAYROLL:

Supervisor Houghtling stated that Highway, the LVPA and .1, payroll will have their own discussions at the upcoming future budget workshops.

SALES TAX REVENUE CALCULATION:

Councilmember Rasmussen asked Supervisor Houghtling to walk through the sales tax **(A-1120)** calculation on pg. 1 of the general fund estimated revenue in the budget.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that they are supposed to slightly over estimate expenses and under estimate revenues and every year the town board has estimated \$285,000 on the budget. She increased it this year after looking back at how much more the actuals were year after year.

Councilmember Rasmussen thought this was way too low and it should still come up more. He recommends increasing it to at least \$450,000 and the board agreed.

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

- Change A-1440.4 (Engineer) from \$5,000 to \$7,500
- Change A-7510.2 (Historian) from \$288 to \$0 (adding \$288 to A-7510.4)
- Change A-7510.4 (Historian) from \$2,529 to \$2,817
- Change A-8797.4 (Climate Smart) from \$1,649 to \$2,849
- Change A-9055.8 (Disability Insurance) from \$2,000 to \$1,600
- Change A-1120 (Estimated Sales Tax Revenue) from \$400,000 to \$450,000
- Change DA-9055.8 (Disability Insurance) from \$600 to \$1,000

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling and seconded by Councilmember Newton to adjourn the meeting at 7:08pm.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Respectfully submitted,

Marcie Robertson
New Lebanon Town Clerk