

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF
THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 6, 2022**

Present: Tistrya Houghtling, Supervisor
Marianna Anthonisen, Councilmember
Britt Buckenroth, Councilmember
Deborah Gordon, Councilmember
John Trainor, Councilmember

Recording Secretary: Marsha “Marcie” Robertson, Town Clerk

Others Present: Jim Carroll, Planning Board & ZRC Member
Josh Young, Planning Board & BEDC Member
Bruce Shenker, NL Rep to CC Env Mgmt Council & CSC
Member
Abbie Shoobs, NL Recreation Commission Chair &
Deputy Court Clerk (6:37pm)
Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER:

The Special Meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Supervisor Houghtling.

Due to a scheduling conflict with the meeting and another board meeting at the Town Hall, the meeting was held in person at the Shatford Park Pavilion, 170 Old Post Road, New Lebanon, NY 12125 and it was not live streamed.

FUND BALANCE:

Supervisor Houghtling gave a brief summary of what she hoped the board would accomplish tonight. The Town Board needs to decide what types of Capital Reserve accounts or specific accounts they are going to designate unallocated funds to. The types are more ideal than the specific because the specific will require permissive referendums when they are set up. The town attorney told Supervisor Houghtling that it is a Town Board decision to make but he recommended that if the board decides on any specific accounts to make sure they are absolutely doing the project that the money is being set aside for and within a reasonable time frame. Once the money is put into a specific account it cannot be used for a different project.

The Town Board held further discussion on the fund balance and the possible types of Capital Reserve accounts to be set up. The Town Board came up with a few different Capital Reserve account types and Supervisor Houghtling will discuss them further with the town attorney. The category ideas are; Town

vehicles and equipment, parks and recreation, buildings and properties or one category called town facilities that would include parks, buildings and properties all in one.

RETIREMENT SPIKES:

Supervisor Houghtling reported that the town's typical budgeted amount of retirement for general is around \$50,000 and when it spikes it goes up to around \$59,000. This year they budgeted \$38,000 for highway because they were hoping to double the number of highway employees, before that they were budgeting \$19,000.

The Town Board held discussion on the amount of money to put in an account to cover the years that the retirement may have spikes. This money will not be put in every year. They would plan for it in the 2023 budget and when that money is spent on a retirement spike, the board can discuss replenishing that money at the next budget.

The board agreed to put \$15,000 in for general retirement to cover both general and highway.

REPAIR ACCOUNTS:

Supervisor Houghtling stated from the last meeting the Town Board had agreed that they should put something aside in a repair accounts.

The Town Board held discussion on the possibility of a repair account and defining what it would be used for. Supervisor Houghtling will discuss repair accounts with the town attorney and report back to the Town Board.

Supervisor Houghtling will obtain updated unallocated fund balances from the town accountant and report back to the Town Board.

The Town Board held further miscellaneous discussion on how the unallocated fund balance is created and used, grant funding, budgeting the splash pad, budgeting procedures in general and follow-up information for the next meeting.

The Town Board will schedule the Budget Workshops at the next meeting. Supervisor Houghtling mentioned changing the regular town board meeting start time from 7:00pm to 6:00pm, she will put it on the agenda for the next meeting.

ARPA FUNDS:

Supervisor Houghtling stated that as of now, she has not heard back from any of the committees other than Josh Young and Monte Wasch of the BEDC who created an application process and got them out. So, the process of the direct support to businesses has started.

Supervisor Houghtling will follow-up with the other committees.

Jim Carroll asked Supervisor Houghtling if she could outline how the ARPA funds are distributed and if PPP is included in the distribution.

Supervisor Houghtling responded that she didn't want to misspeak on the total overall picture of ARPA. She responded with the following:

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) gave counties, towns, cities and villages direct funding and left it up to the counties, towns, cities and villages to decide how to spend it. Originally there was very stringent criteria and guidelines, it was sewer and water, broadband and a few other specific categories. She stated that the initial guidelines were changed and it then included revenue loss of up to approximately \$10 million, even if the municipality didn't lose any revenue, New Lebanon actually increased our revenue. It doesn't matter if you actually lost revenue, you can report up to \$10 million as lost revenue.

Supervisor Houghtling reported that for Columbia County who is getting \$12 million, \$10 million of that can be spent on whatever. She stated that she is on the County ARPA committee and she has pushed very hard that they spend the money on the negative effects of COVID. New Lebanon is receiving approximately \$220,000 in ARPA funds. She stated that PPP loans, direct funding for childcare, direct funding through federal government and the state, she is not as familiar with, she is only familiar with the ARPA funding to the county and towns directly. She stated that she is not sure if the PPP money was through ARPA or through a different COVID relief program. Her understanding is that ARPA is the counties and towns direct funding.

Jim Carroll asked if a business received the PPP money can they also receive ARPA money for the same thing?

Supervisor Houghtling responded that there is nothing preventing that but one of the questions on the application asks if they have received any other COVID relief money such as the PPP and if so, how much was received. She stated that would be something that the Town Board would consider in this process.

Further discussion took place regarding the ARPA funds application for local businesses. Supervisor Houghtling stated that the Town Board already voted on and agreed to designate up to \$100,000 of the \$220,000 that they would give directly to local businesses through this grant program.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that she thinks the deadline is December of 2024 to allocate the funds and December of 2026 to spend the funds.

Jim Carroll, Planning Board & ZRC Member suggested getting high speed electric car charges and making improvements to the parking lots for our plazas downtown.

Abbie Shoobs, NL Recreation Commission Chair & Deputy Court Clerk spoke about cleaning up our downtown and various ways that it could be done.

Josh Young, Planning Board & BEDC Member spoke to the Town Board regarding the ARPA survey and that he didn't think it touched on sewer and water as much as it should have. He stated that on behalf of the BEDC he spoke to many businesses and they stated that sewer and water would really help their businesses, that they are encouraging the town to take the next step and to do a feasibility study and to use ARPA funds to help this process along.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that her understanding from the survey was not talking about ARPA funds but that his sub-committee is looking into grant funding for the feasibility study.

Josh Young responded that they took a petition type letter to all of the businesses that stated that they wanted the town to do this and they want the town to use ARPA money.

Supervisor Houghtling stated that the BEDC and the Town Board passed a motion for the sub-committee to look into grant funding, is that still happening or is the committee changing their ask of the Town Board.

Councilmember Gordon responded no, not at the moment; they are still looking into grant funding. She stated that this is also something to discuss at the CAC in regards to water quality.

Councilmember Buckenroth stated that the information gathered from the BEDC sub-committee's survey changes the way she thinks about the results of the Town Board's survey. The Town Board survey wasn't specific to business and landowners in town and business owners were prioritized in the other survey, hearing their specific need changes the way she is looking at the survey results.

Supervisor Houghtling responded that if supporting local businesses is the board's number one priority and all of the local businesses are saying that they want a sewer and water feasibility study done to be supported, then that is a different route. She stated that only the landowners in the district of the sewer and water are the ones that will be paying for it. She stated she was surprised in those results because that is the opposite of what she heard in conversations with business owners in that same downtown.

Josh Young stated that the business owners have no idea of what the cost to them would be but they want the town to figure that out.

Further discussion took place on the topic of the sewer and water feasibility study.

ADJOURNMENT:

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A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling, to adjourn the meeting at 7:53pm. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Trainor.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilmember Buckenroth -	Aye
Councilmember Gordon -	Aye
Supervisor Houghtling -	Aye
Councilmember Trainor -	Aye
Councilmember Anthonisen-	Aye

Respectfully submitted,

Marcie Robertson
New Lebanon Town Clerk