

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET WORKSHOP / SPECIAL MEETING OF
THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
HELD ON OCTOBER 24, 2023**

Present: Tistrya Houghtling, Supervisor
Deborah Gordon, Councilmember
John Trainor, Councilmember
Norman Rasmussen, Councilmember
Susan, Tipograph, Councilmember

Absent: Marsha “Marcie” Robertson, Town Clerk

Recording Secretary: Ashley Saviano, Deputy Town Clerk

Others Present: Sharon Powers, IT Website Support, BEDC & QOL Comm. Member
Steve Powers, CAC & ZRC Member & CSC Chair
Mary Young, NL Rep to CC Office for the Aging & Traffic Safety
Ed Godfroy, LVPA
Steve Houghtling, LVPA
Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 5:00p.m. by Supervisor Houghtling.

LVPA BUDGET:

Supervisor Houghtling recused herself at 5:01pm and left the room. Supervisor Houghtling deferred to Councilmember Rasmussen, her Deputy to lead this portion of the meeting.

Councilmember Rasmussen asked if there were any questions on the LVPA contract or budget? No one answered. Councilmember Rasmussen stated, he has a concern, he would like the town to add \$75,000 for reserves so there is allocated money for future capital expenditures. The idea is that this would reduce and hopefully eliminate the use of bonds.

Ed Godfroy, LVPA responded, they can not go for bonds due to being a private corporation. Councilmember Rasmussen asked how the LVPA plans to get a truck when the next one is needed? Ed Godfroy responded; they have the capital reserve account that the town gives the LVPA money every year for. There is currently \$152,000 in the reserve account. They estimate their next truck to cost approximately \$325,000 and they have a vehicle to sell to help offset some of that cost.

Councilmember Rasmussen stated, so the LVPA does not need anymore reserves? Ed

Godfroy responded, when the LVPA built the new firehouse, they made a promise to taxpayers that the LVPA would not raise taxes to build the new building. The building was built out of their savings and donations. Ed stated, the LVPA wants to make it clear to taxpayers that the Town Board is offering them this money to create an equipment account. Councilmember Rasmussen stated, it will not increase taxes. He stated this can be done without increasing taxes but making sure that the LVPA has a reserve so they are able to have the equipment they need when they need it.

Councilmember Tipograph asked Ed how often does the LVPA buy new trucks? Ed responded; they have a twenty-year replacement plan. Ed stated, the smaller 2012 vehicle is the next line item to be purchased through Ford, but that has been pushed back until 2024 due to the strike. Ed reported, the next large truck to be replaced will one of the large pumpers with a smaller pumper that does the exact same thing but it is a smaller vehicle so that more people can drive it. The smaller truck fits better into the town with the smaller driveways.

Councilmember Trainor asked when the LVPA might purchase the truck? Ed replied, they are still waiting for prices from the manufacturer. Councilmember Trainor commented to Ed that the LVPA does not need the money that Councilmember Rasmussen was going to give the LVPA. Ed commented, the LVPA was glad to take it.

Councilmember Rasmussen stated, the LVPA does not need the money next week. He stated, the LVPA does a great job at making their vehicles last. Eventually they will break down and never at a convenient time. If the LVPA does not have the money in an account for purchasing a vehicle when it is needed, it could be an issue.

The board and the LVPA had further discussion on the values and conditions of the trucks that they have, costs to replace, etc. There were no other questions on the LVPA's budget.

A motion was made by Councilmember Rasmussen to allocate \$75,000 to the LVPA Truck Reserve. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Trainor.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilmember Rasmussen -	Aye
Councilmember Gordon -	Aye
Supervisor Houghtling -	Recused
Councilmember Trainor -	Aye
Councilmember Tipograph -	Aye

The following change was made:

Fire Protection District Page, SF-3410 add \$75,000 into the LVPA budget for capital reserves, making the total LVPA budget \$228,302.

Deputy Town Clerk Saviano suggested the Town Board make a motion to adjourn the meeting.

A motion was made by Councilmember Rasmussen to adjourn this meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Trainor. Deputy Town Clerk Saviano called for an all-in favor vote.

Supervisor Houghtling came out from recusal at 5:11pm. Deputy Town Clerk Saviano asked if there were two different live streams? Supervisor Houghtling replied, there is not another one, it is one meeting. Councilmember Rasmussen stated, they just adjourned. Supervisor Houghtling questioned that they adjourned the meeting. Councilmember Tipograph asked if someone else was coming at 5:30? Supervisor Houghtling replied, no that there was a tentative schedule of the LVPA and then Highway, but the Highway Superintendent can not make it.

Supervisor Houghtling asked the board if they ended the meeting? The Deputy Town Clerk responded, yes, they did. Supervisor Houghtling asked if they roll call voted? The Deputy Town Clerk responded, yes, she did. Supervisor Houghtling questioned the roll call vote. The Deputy Town Clerk responded; she did an all-in favor. Supervisor Houghtling stated, an adjournment needs a roll call vote, so the adjournment has not been voted on to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn the meeting was done in error and not properly voted on, so the meeting was not adjourned and is still in session.

HIGHWAY BUDGET:

Supervisor Houghtling stated, she spoke with Highway Superintendent Winestock today. He asked if there was anything that the board needed to discuss with him. In regards to the piece of equipment, it was him just letting the board know that is the next piece of equipment that the highway will need, not expecting it to be put in the budget.

Supervisor Houghtling stated, the question she had in her notes on the highway budget was the **DA-5110.4 (pg.1 of highway appropriations)**. This was the budget line that needed a budget amendment recently. The Highway Superintendent has put in for \$150,000, the same amount in the 2024 budget that was in his 2023 budget for DA-5110.4. Town Clerk Robertson and Supervisor Houghtling had discussion because there had recently been a budget amendment to that budget line to add money to it. Town Clerk Robertson increased that amount from Highway Superintendent Winestock's request of \$150,000 to \$190,000 but had not been able to discuss it with him prior to the first budget workshop meeting. Supervisor Houghtling stated, she did get to talk to Highway Superintendent Winestock about it and he felt that a lot of that expense was from the beaver dam break and the excessive rain that we had this year. He does feel that it should come up a little but not as much as it was increase to. Supervisor Houghtling suggested bringing it up by \$25,000 and Highway Superintendent Winestock thought that would be good.

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling to amend DA-5110.4 from \$190,000 to \$175,000. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Rasmussen.

Roll Call Vote:

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

The following change was made:

Page 1. Highway Fund Appropriations General Repairs, DA-5110.4 decrease from \$190,000 to \$175,000.

Supervisor Houghtling reported, the other thing that she discussed with Highway Superintendent Winestock was if he did not win re-election, he has been Highway Superintendent for over thirty years, closer to forty, he would like the Town Board to consider covering his health insurance until he turns 65. At that point, he will be old enough to get Medicare. Supervisor Houghtling suggested, if he does not win re-election, keeping him on as a part-time employee. Highway Superintendent Winestock is one of the only ones that knows how to operate the grader and he holds a wealth of knowledge. Supervisor Houghtling spoke with both the current Highway Superintendent and his opponent, who get along well and they would both love a solution.

Supervisor Houghtling stated, instead of just paying for his health insurance, to make an exception that a part-time employee got health insurance based on his years of service. She stated, this is not for vote tonight. This will be revisited after election results.

MISCELLANEOUS BUDGET ITEMS:

Supervisor Houghtling reported that she met with Councilmember Tipograph yesterday and they went over all things budget. In their review, they notice on **Page 1. General Fund Appropriations Town Board, Cont. Exp. VOLS., A-1010.41** had been brought down significantly going into 2024 because past Councilmember Anthonisen had been the volunteer for the Volunteers. They had budgeted for “Thank You” cards in 2023 and a “Thank You” event that in the past Councilmember Anthonisen cooked all the food for. Supervisor Houghtling had suggested that she have the event catered by local restaurants this year. Now that Councilmember Anthonisen has stepped down and other various reasons, that event is not taking place this year.

Supervisor Houghtling reported, when she prepared the Tentative Budget this year, knowing that she could not personally take on that volunteer event, she only put in for the thank you cards. Councilmember Tipograph has offered to take on the coordination of the

Volunteer efforts. Supervisor Houghtling suggested bringing that budget line up to \$1,500, \$500 for thank you cards and \$1,000 for a thank you event for volunteers to be held in 2024. The board agreed.

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling to bring line A-1010.41 to \$1,500, instead of \$500. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Trainor.

Roll Call Vote:

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

The following change was made:

Page 1. General Fund Appropriations Town Board, Contractual Exp. VOLS., A-1010.41 increase from \$500 to \$1,500.

COLA'S – SCALE FOR EVALUATION BASED RAISES:

Supervisor Houghtling stated, the way this has been done in the past, is to set the raise scales blindly, before they know what any employee's score is on the evaluations.

Supervisor Houghtling stated, she did perform some of the evaluations so she has an idea how they did but she has not actually scored any yet.

Supervisor Houghtling stated, between now and the next meeting on October 30th, which is when the board will apply those evaluation-based raises as well as discuss any COLA that may be applied, she wants to set what the scales will be. Supervisor Houghtling reminded the Town Board of the evaluation process; employees get evaluated twice a year. They get evaluated in April, those scores show the employee where they can potentially improve to raise their score for October which may or may not lead to an evaluation-based raise. There is nothing tying the board now or in the future from applying an evaluation-based raise. The way the board has done it the last few years, since the evaluations came into play, is they have decided on a COLA increase that gets applied equally across all .1 accounts; salaried employees, elected employees, appointed employees, etc. that gets applied to the starting rates that are on the Compensation Plan Resolution. On top of that there is an evaluation-based raise so that employees that are here for a long time, doing a good job, get a little bump. This differentiates between a five-year employee and a starting employee. There are no longevity raises.

The board held discussion on the COLA's given last year and what to give this year. The board also discussed the percentages to assign to the scores of the evaluations.

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling that at the October 30th budget workshop, the board applies evaluation-based raises as follows:

anyone who scores between a 3 and a 3.5 gets a 1% evaluation-based raise; anyone who scores between a 3.5 and a 4.5 gets a 2% evaluation-based raise; and anyone who scores between a 4.5 and a 5 gets a 3% evaluation-based raise. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Tipograph.

Roll Call Vote:

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

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling to adjourn the budget workshop at 5:46pm. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Rasmussen.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Respectfully submitted,

Marcie Robertson
New Lebanon Town Clerk