

## ISSUES CONCERNING THE NEW LEBANON SUMMER CAMP

To the New Lebanon Town Board and the residents of New Lebanon,

At the Town Board meeting of last month, there was a discussion about the proposed fee structure for this year's summer's camp. Amongst the issues raised were wanting to better understand how other towns dealt with their camp (if they had one), proposed fee waivers and the deficit (the amount between the revenues taken in by the Town for the camp and the monies spent).

I took on doing some research and am submitting this packet to assist the conversation and hopeful resolution of the issues in a better-informed way. I appreciate that there are differences on some of these issues and everyone will not be happy with every decision, but let's do our best.

Attached to this letter is the following:

- 1) 3-page chart of comparisons with other towns
- 2) 1-page copy of the proposed New Lebanon camp fee structure which was provided in last month's agenda and was the subject of the past discussion
- 3) 2-page response we received from the Supervisor's designee in Chatham regarding their camp's expenses and revenues
- 4) Copies of 2 letters (totaling 3 pages) received for Privilege of the Floor in our last meeting

The information was gathered from a variety of sources, including the Town Supervisors (or someone in that town who deals with the camp), town websites, Facebook pages, Wikipedia, other town's board minutes and budgets. I compared us with 12 other towns although only 11 appear on the attached chart. I did not include Gallatin (population 1628 in 2020 census, down 2.4% from the 2010 census; per capita income is \$21,365; % of population under 18 is 24.2) as it would have required a 4<sup>th</sup> page of the chart and they have no summer camp or recreation programs. They can go to Ancram camp and Gallatin residents are provided with passes to Taghkanic State Park.

I thought that the information provided would be useful for comparison purposes.

Some observations (in no particular order)

Far and away, the fees for the New Lebanon camp are higher than those of all the other towns. Some are free to town residents or require only a "nominal" fee. One provides busing with stops in their town for \$25 for the entirety of camp. Ancram's camp is free for residents' children and grandchildren. Some provide free lunch and a number have field trips.

New Lebanon is the only Town of the 13 which gained population from 2010 to 2020.

The deficits for New Lebanon camp, based on the revenues and expenses are for the years 2022 and 2023 were \$25,101.45 (2022) and \$26,236.84 (2023). The Assessor figured out for us that if we subsidize the 2024 camp at the same level as 2023, it would cost the taxpayer \$7.89 per \$100,000 assessed property value.

The only other towns we were able to get any specific information as to their deficits were Copake (estimate was \$20,00 to 30,000 per summer) and Chatham (using their expenses for 2024 and their revenues for 2023 plus additional revenues they will get from enlarging the camp) will be \$5,360.57.

Yes, both Copake and Chatham have a larger population and a higher per capita average income. If you look at the costs of running a camp (personnel, equipment, etc.), it would NOT be possible for any of the other towns to run a camp, charging what they do and not have a significant deficit.

Copake and may be other towns got grants to support their camp, either through the state or local businesses. Copake, for instance, got one from the Bank of Greene County. All of us have seen articles in our local papers touting grants given to these kinds of efforts by Price Chopper, Hannaford, local insurance companies and businesses. If we have not pursued them, we should.

I will continue to try to get some additional information and will share if and when I do. I hope that this can be helpful. Thanks. Susan Tipograph

Comparison of various information relevant to summer camps in Columbia County towns 2024	
	<p>New Lebanon</p> <p>2020 census: <b>2,514</b>, an increase of 9.1% over 2010.</p> <p>26.1% of population under 18, 12.9 % over 65</p> <p>Average per capita: \$20,529 Median: \$44,805</p> <p>9.0% below poverty line, including 15.7% of those under 18</p> <p>4.7% over 65</p>
Population information	<p>Ancram</p> <p>2020 census <b>1,440</b>, decrease of 8.5% from 2010. 22.4% under 18, 17.1% over 65</p> <p>Average per capita: \$22,541 Median: 45,726</p> <p>7.4% below poverty line including 5.4% of those under 18</p> <p>12% over 65</p>
Income information	<p>Austerlitz</p> <p>2020 census - <b>1625</b>, decrease of 1.8% from 2010.</p> <p>20.4% under 18, 17.5% over 65</p> <p>Average per capita: \$38,054 Median: \$42,195</p> <p>7.9% below poverty line including 9.3% of those under 18</p> <p>5.7% over 65</p>
Camp information	<p>Canaan</p> <p>2020 census: <b>1,570</b>, decrease of 8.2% from 2010, 34.2% under 18, 14% over 65</p> <p>Average per capita: \$28,709 Median \$ \$51,607</p> <p>5.1% below poverty line including 4.1% of those under 18, 5.4% over 65</p> <p>July 5- August 16 10a.m. to 12.00 Freeswim lessons for residents M-F</p> <p>Canaan Recreation Committee plans summer programs (Swimmin and afternoon "camp") for resident kids</p>
	<p>7/3 to 8/31</p> <p>2023 Camp was free for residents' children and grandchildren.</p> <p>\$75/wk for non-residents including swimming lessons and free lunch.</p> <p>Pool free for residents, Non-residents: \$3.00/per person/day</p> <p>\$550.00 for family/season.</p>
	<p>(see attached proposed fee schedule for 2024)</p> <p>Pay for Staff: Director: \$22.06/hr. (Max of \$11,472/year), Ass't Director: \$17.30-21.48 Counselors: \$13.54-17.15* CIT's: \$10.30/hr</p> <p>Maximum for all non-Director jobs is \$58,401</p> <p>*based on years worked and certificates earned</p>
Budget	<p>2023 deficit: \$26,236</p> <p>Assessor calculated that if we subsidize camp at 2023 level, it would be \$7.09 per \$100,000 assessed value. (If house assessed at \$200,000 it would reflect \$14.18 a year based on 2024 budget.)</p>

Comparison of various information relevant to summer camps in Columbia County towns 2024			
	Chatham	Claverack	Copake
Population information	<p>2020 census: 4,104, a decrease of 0.6% from 2010</p> <p>under 18: 23.5%</p> <p>over 65: 13.2%</p>	<p>2016 (est) 5,766 a decrease of 4.2% from 2010</p> <p>under 18: 24.4%</p> <p>over 65: 11.8%</p>	<p>2020 census: 3,346, a decrease of 7.4% from 2010</p> <p>under 18: 21.4%</p> <p>over 65: 18.3%</p>
Income information	<p>Average per capita \$28,599</p> <p>Median: \$49,234</p> <p>6.6% below poverty line including 6.6% of under 18</p> <p>4.6% over 65.</p>	<p>Average per capita \$19,848</p> <p>Median: \$41,647</p> <p>6.8% below poverty line, including 6.8% under 18</p> <p>7.1% over 65</p>	<p>Average per capita: \$23,088</p> <p>Median: 42,261</p> <p>8.1% below poverty line including 11.8% of those under 18</p> <p>4.5% over 65</p>
Camp information	<p>July 5-Aug 11 9a.m. to 3p.m</p> <p>Enrollment: 2023 - 115</p> <p>2024 - 130 (adding 2 counselors)</p> <p>Residents camp \$225 per kid</p> <p>Non-residents camp \$450</p> <p>Swim: Residents \$115 Non-residents: \$225</p> <p>10% discount for multiple kids per family.</p>	<p>Five weeks following July 4</p> <p>Average enrollment: 65</p> <p>5-16/17 year olds. Residents: Free</p> <p>Non-residents: \$100</p> <p>Transportation within town: \$25 per child</p>	<p>July 5-August 11</p> <p>Enrollment: 2023: 90 kids.</p> <p>Residents: \$100 per camper</p> <p>\$250 per family</p> <p>Non-residents: \$175 per camper, \$350 per family</p> <p>Director: \$46/hr-college students, Ass't Director: \$38/hr</p> <p>Counselors: about \$10/hr: sliding scale based on years at camp</p>
Budget	See attached sheets	<p>2023 staff: 18 (may be reduced in 2024)</p> <p>Director: \$30/hr, Nurse \$30/hr</p> <p>Assistant Dir. \$25/hr, 2nd Assistant Dir. \$17/hr,</p> <p>Counselors: \$15/hr</p> <p>Total Budget: \$60,000 (about) including payroll, transportation, 4/5 field trips, sports equipment &amp; games, maintenance.</p>	<p>Deficit: About \$20,000-\$30,000 each summer. They try to get private donations and grants (e.g. from Bank of Greene County)</p>

Comparison of various information relevant to summer camps in Columbia County towns 2024				
	Kinderhook	Germantown	Ghent	Hillsdale
Population information	2020 census: 8,330, a decrease of 2% from 2010 24.5% under 18 15.5 over 65	2020 census: 1,936 a decrease of 0.9% from 2010 18.1% under 18 18.1% over 65	2020 census: 5,303 a decrease of 1.8% from 2010 24.2% under 18 17.2% over 65	2020 census: 1,831 a decrease of 5% from 2010 22.4% under 18 17% over 65
Income information	Average per capita: \$24,258 Median: \$52,604 4.6% below poverty line 5.3% under 18 4.4% over 65	Average per capita: \$22,198 Median: \$42,195 7.9% below poverty line including 9.3% under 18 5.7% over 65	Average per capita: \$21,365 Median: \$43,529 4.6% below poverty line including 4.0% under 18 8.8% over 65	Average per capita: \$27,186 Median: \$40,156 8.3% below poverty line including 8.5% under 18 5.1% over 65
Camp information	July 5 - Aug. 11 9a.m. - 3p.m. In 2023, camp fees were \$150 for the summer - or \$30/wk per camper	6 weeks 9a.m. - 3p.m. Camp Palatine Residents of Germantown and Clermont: \$225 Non-residents \$275		6 weeks 9a.m. - 3p.m. M-F Enrollment: 65-75 campers Fee schedule varies between \$125-\$135 per camper 10 counselors, 2 funded by Columbia-Green workforce NY, 3-7 unpaid CITs and volunteers
Budget			Playground and Recreation Center personnel services: \$7,175 Youth Program personnel \$20,000 Revenue for park and recreation charges: \$28,000	Total expenses: \$23,000 Director: \$26.61/hr (includes \$2000 bonus at beginning so actual hourly rate is \$17.50. Senior counselors: \$14.35 Counselors: \$14.20

# Proposed New Lebanon camp fees

## **Early Registration Fees (discounted 20% if final payment is received by June 5<sup>th</sup>):**

### Resident (Town taxes paid to New Lebanon):

1 child	\$480/season
2 children	\$720/season
3 children	\$882/season
4+ children	\$1002/season

### Local Non-resident (Town taxes not paid to New Lebanon, School taxes paid to NLCSD):

1 child	\$810/season
2 children	\$1,200/season
3 children	\$1,620/season
4+ children	\$1,920/season

### Non-resident (Town taxes not paid to New Lebanon; School taxes not paid to NLCSD):

Per child	\$1,620/season
-----------	----------------

## **Registration Fees:**

### Resident (Town taxes paid to New Lebanon):

1 child	\$600/season
2 children	\$900/season
3 children	\$1,102/season
4+ children	\$1,252/season

### Local Non-resident (Town taxes not paid to New Lebanon, School taxes paid to NLCSD):

1 child	\$1,013/season
2 children	\$1,500/season
3 children	\$2,025/season
4+ children	\$2,400/season

### Non-resident (Town taxes not paid to New Lebanon; School taxes not paid to NLCSD):

Per child	\$2,025; and
-----------	--------------

# Chatham Summer camp information (p. 1 of 2)

How many kids do you have enrolled on average?

2023: 115

2024: 130 (Adding two additional counselors)

What is your fee schedule for camp registration?

Residents: CAMP-\$225/child , SWIM: \$115/child

Non-Residents: CAMP-\$450/child, SWIM: \$225/child  
(10% Discount for multiple children per family)

How long does your camp run?

6-Weeks: 9AM – 3PM, Monday through Friday

How much do you pay your staff? **2024 BUDGET**

Recreation Director (1)	\$26,933.00	Annual
Waterfront Director (1)	\$18.50	Hr
Head Lifeguard (1)	\$16.40	Hr
Supervising Lifeguard (2)	\$15.30	Hr
Lifeguard (2)	\$15.10	Hr
Junior Lifeguard (4)	\$15.00	Hr
Head Counselor (2)	\$15.30	Hr
Supervising Counselor (2)	\$15.20	Hr
Recreation Counselor (2)	\$15.10	Hr
Counselor-in-Training (4)	\$15.00	Hr

# Chatham summer camp (p. 2 of 2)

What is the overall revenue for your camp for registrations and other revenue sources and what is your overall expenditure for staff and other expenses?

## 2023 REVENUE:

Registrations: \$35,669.50 (Includes scholarships from CARP, PS21 Donation)

Swimming: \$15,754.50

Concession: \$1,100.00

County Youth Programs: \$3,000.00

## 2024 PAYROLL BUDGET:

- Director: \$26,933
  - Waterfront Director: \$5,040
  - Counselors: \$35,496
  - Lifeguards: \$24,069.82
- TOTAL: \$91,538.82

## 2024 EXPENSE BUDGET

- General Supplies: \$600
  - Food: \$1,000
  - Professional Contractual/Red Cross, etc.: \$1,550
  - Cell Phone Stipend: \$106
- TOTAL: \$3,256.00

## 2024 BENEFITS:

- NYS Retirement: \$2,462
  - Social Security: \$7,002.72
- TOTAL: \$9,464.72

TOTAL BUDGET: \$104,259.54



Dear Tistrya and Town Board members,

I am writing regarding the summer youth program in our town. As the Jr/Sr High School librarian (and parent) I am acutely aware of how important this program is to our town's youth. In a town with zero public transportation and not a lot of options for employment for teens, the SYP provides jobs for a good number of our students. For many, it's their first opportunity to make money and build their resume.

As a parent, having a camp in town provided invaluable and convenient support (for me) and experiences for my children. Giving the kids in our community a chance to socialize and play together is vitally important to their well-being. I am so grateful my kids were able to attend the SYP when they were young.

Regarding the cost - I was unaware of exactly how much the town subsidized. I hope a solution can be found that keeps it affordable for families that depend on the camp for summer child care. I looked at Chatham's summer camp fee- in 2022 they charged \$200 per child for a 6 week session (9-3) for residents (\$400 for non-residents). That's \$33 (\$66) a week! Additionally, the town of Canaan provides free swim lessons for all residents for 6 weeks of the summer from 10-12. They are discussing extending it to 9 to 12 this summer. New Lebanon is not unique in subsidizing summer youth programs. I hope we will continue to value the children in our community.

Lastly, at the Jan 2 meeting I heard a suggestion to solicit college students and ask them to work/intern for free. While they might receive credit needed for college requirements, I think it is irresponsible to not pay young people for work that is hard. It requires attention to detail and caring for the safety of children. And most importantly, in today's economic climate EVERYONE needs a paycheck, especially young adults trying to pay for college. If a college student is in need of a 6 to 8 week volunteer position, that could prove very helpful. However, I would hope the town would want to avoid a situation where different people are volunteering every week - unaware of the campers' needs and unable to build meaningful relationships.

Please feel free to share at the board meeting if appropriate and I appreciate all of you for your time

and hard work governing out town.

Respectfully,  
Britt Buckenroth, Library Media Specialist  
New Lebanon Jr/Sr High School  
Just Food Club Advisor  
MakerSpace Club Advisor  
Manga Club Advisor  
Spirit Club Advisor  
Community Education Coordinator

Dear Town Board Members,

At the meeting on January 2, 2024 there was some discussion regarding fees for the Summer Youth Program in New Lebanon, Resolution #8, 2024. I have some comments to add for your consideration.

The \$54,000 hole from the Summer Youth Program represents about 5.2% of the tax levy!

Town poverty level 10%

Over 65 21%, not including weekenders

Median age 50, not including weekenders

SYP Eligible children, about 200 perhaps.

SYP Children served about 80, 3.5% of population

1. The proposal to give 20% discount for fee payment by June 5<sup>th</sup> is too high. I propose no discount; a deposit at time of registration to hold the slot, and full payment by some other date. No discount is necessary as it brings no benefit to the town.
2. The fee structure is set such that there is a 25% discount for two kids, a 39% discount for three kids and a 48% discount for 4+ children. This is extremely gracious. I would suggest reducing the discounts to 10, 20, 30%, max.
3. If larger fee reductions are of interest perhaps some grants or donation/sponsorship programs could be developed.
4. The proposal to waive fees for children of employees and grandchildren of employees could be termed taxpayer abuse. Grandchildren are two generations removed from the town and may not even live in town.

Waiving fees for children of town employees is also not appropriate. Employees have jobs that are as good as, or better than, other workers. Why is the town waiving fees for people who have jobs? Town employees need to pay their fees as they are no different from other employed people in town. This might be viewed as a benefit, but only for a select group of employees.

Side question: Have employees had their past reported taxable income increased by the full value of their waivers?

5. If the town wants to waive fees, how about for those who have no job? If parent(s) are not employed for 6 months they can send their children free, BUT, they must also put time in working at the camp to cover the costs and earn some money.

A last question:

How many of you have children or grandchildren who are eligible for this program? You are not employees, but would benefit from the discounts. Does this require recusal?

Please consider these comments in your discussions on this subject.

Best Regards,  
Jim Carroll