

**DATE:** OCTOBER 17, 2023

**KIND OF MEETING:** BUDGET

**WHERE HELD:** SCHODACK TOWN HALL

**CLERK:** DEBRA L. CURTIS

**PRESIDING OFFICER:** CHARLES J. PETER

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** JAMES E. BULT  
MICHAEL KENNEY  
SCOTT SWARTZ  
TRACY REX

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**ATTORNEY:**

**COMPTROLLER:** PAUL HARTER

**OTHERS:** DAWNE KELLY, ASSSITANT TO THE SUPERVISOR  
BRUCE GOODALL, DIRECTOR OF TRANSFER STATION  
OPERATIONS  
BRIAN BRAHM, HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

---

Supervisor Peter called the October 17, 2023 Budget Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance and dispensed with roll call. All present as noted above.

### **Transfer Station**

**A8160.2 Refuse & Garbage Equipment:** S. Peter noted that a container was slated for purchase in 2024, which was standard practice.

**A8160.4 Refuse & Garbage Contractual:** S. Peter mentioned that the main increases for this budget line included animal control for trapping woodchucks and skunks on the property, parking lot repairs (including fence, building repairs and maintenance) and repairs for the roll-off truck and backhoe. B. Goodall added that the fuel tank on the backhoe was leaking, which was currently being repaired by the mechanics at the Highway Department. The cylinders in the backhoe were also leaking, showing the age of the unit. He had purposefully not purchased any containers in 2023 to cover the repair costs.

**A8189.2 Recycling Equipment:** S. Peter said another container was to be purchased in 2024.

**A8189.4 Recycling Contractual:** S. Peter said increases for Recycling were similar to Refuse, with the exception of the line for single stream recycling. B. Goodall added that he had received an email from County Waste, stating that a flat fee of \$150.00 per ton would be charged, regardless of annual tonnage. C. Bult felt it was proactive to increase the budget line from \$25,000.00 to \$45,000.00 for 2024. B. Goodall said as of August, he had exceeded the \$25,000.00 budget, leaving him in the negative for the remainder of 2023. C. Bult noticed that \$10,000.00 was budgeted for repairs in both A8160.4 and A8189.4, totaling \$20,000.00 and wondered if that amount was necessary. B. Goodall said it could be decreased if the

board deemed it necessary; however, he expressed his concern if an issue arose. C. Bult followed by asking if there were any known changes in the regulations from NYS DEC or requirements for upgrading the fencing at the Transfer Station. B. Goodall said that NYS DEC had a self-assessment that he completed for MS-4 but he was unsure how it might affect the Transfer Station. As for the fencing, he said PESH had visited and advised that the block wall in front of the Construction and Debris containers was too low. He also informed the board of an incident where a resident was injured in that same area, breaking her leg. There was no known issue; however, he mentioned that the area was not blacktopped.

**B8160 Household Hazardous Waste (HHW):** B. Goodall said he anticipated joining Rensselaer County for their Household Waste events again for 2024. He noted that there was a slight increase in the budget line for labor and supplies.

**Tax Cap:** C. Kenney asked, based upon the current estimates, how close they were to the tax cap. P. Harter said adjustments needed to be made for the water/sewer rates, so an exact estimate was not known. He mentioned that there was adequate fund balance in the A and DB funds to offset, as well as ARPA funds could be used.

### Open Discussion

**A1010.1 Town Board Salary:** S. Peter noted that the salary for board members had not been increased in many years and felt it was well deserved. The projected increase was \$2,500.00 per member.

**A1220.4 Supervisor Contractual:** S. Peter said he had increased the budget lines for advertising town events and mileage.

**A1315.4 Comptroller Contractual:** S. Peter noted a decrease in ADP Payroll Service. P. Harter said there was no current contract; however, their price remained consistent.

**A1320 Auditor:** P. Harter said there had not been a contract renewal for Bonadio & Co. in a few years and he had mentioned to them that the audit statements were coming later and later.

**A1330.4 Tax Receiver Contractual:** S. Peter noticed a decrease in the cost of envelopes and wondered why. P. Harter said the Receiver had been notified of a rate increase and had requested to purchase additional envelopes for 2022. As there were adequate funds in his budget, P. Harter agreed and a total of two years' worth of envelopes was obtained. S. Peter asked if there would be a need for an increase for the next budget cycle. P. Harter said yes, for 2025-2026.

**A1355.1 Assessor Salary:** S. Peter asked if salary requests were built into the budget. P. Harter said no, only a 3.5% increase.

**A1355.2 Assessor Equipment:** C. Bult noticed that there was \$10,000.00 in total for the equipment line; however, there was nothing stating what it was for. The Town Clerk said she had been in contact with the Assessor regarding the replacement of their copier, which is no

longer serviceable. She believed the \$10,000.00 was intended for the purchase of a new copier. S. Peter said the Justice Court was looking into purchasing a new copier using grant funds and their old copier would be given to the Assessor for use. If for some reason this did not happen, contingency funds could be used for the purchase. **Determination: It was the consensus of the board to remove \$10,000.00 from A1355.2.**

**A1410.2 Town Clerk Equipment:** The Town Clerk informed the board that she had included in her budget funds for a new computer as hers was a hand-me-down from the Comptroller's Office. The unit had an issue with the hard drive but IT was able to install a solid-state drive and the computer worked fine. C. Bult recommended the clerk investigate a laptop instead of a tower as it could be useful if an incident such as COVID-19 happened again.

**A1430.1 Personnel Salary:** S. Peter noticed that the Human Resource Manager had requested an eighteen percent increase in her salary. According to the projected raise of 3.5 percent, her salary should have been \$55,740.00. **A1430.1 was decreased by \$7,960.00.**

**A1430.4 Personnel Contractual:** S. Peter noted that the primary increases he noticed were for advertising and identification badges. D. Kelly mentioned that badges were purchased for the Highway Department in 2023 and costs should not be so high for 2024. C. Bult felt there was no need to make any adjustments.

**A1460.1 Records Management Salary:** S. Peter noticed an error in the salaries for M. Hulsopple and K. Vecchione. The salaries should have been \$7,569.00 for M. Hulsopple and \$15,741.00 for K. Vecchione. **The result was a decrease in A1460.1 by \$7,569.00.**

C. Swartz asked how the training was progressing for M. Hulsopple. The Town Clerk said it was going well but there was still much for her to learn, including records destruction.

**A1620.1 Building/Town Hall Personnel:** S. Peter recommended that the salary for snow removal be removed as it was included in the job description for the Director of Building and Grounds. **Determination: It was the consensus of the board to remove \$1,154.00 from A1620.1.**

**A1620.2 Building/Town Hall Equipment:** S. Peter said the current cost for the replacement of the cooling tower was \$182,000.00. The board had anticipated replacing the tower in 2023; however, the Request for Proposal (RFP) had not been completed in time. Instead, some of the funds were used to pave the Town Hall Parking Lot. There were still funds remaining which, if a contract was signed in 2023, those funds could be encumbered. P. Harter added that if a contract was not signed, the funds would go into fund balance. C. Kenney recommended removing the \$120,000.00 in A1620.2 for the tower and use fund balance or American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds instead. A discussion ensued. **Determination: It was the consensus of the board to remove \$30,000.00 from A1620.2.**

## Highway

**A5010.1 Superintendent of Highways Personnel:** S. Peter said an increase had been made for salary of the Administration Assistant.

**A5010.4 Superintendent of Highways Contractual:** S. Peter asked if there were any noted changes for the 2023 Contractual Budget. B. Brahm said only to the vehicle maintenance, fuel and supplies from staples.

**A5132.1 Town Garage Salary:** S. Peter said he had been informed that the cleaning person for the Highway Department and Police Department would be resigning. He noted that an adjustment to the budget line may be needed once a replacement has been found.

**A5132.4 Town Garage Contractual:** B. Brahm said the main increases for A5132.4 were Albany Fire Extinguisher, building repairs, copier maintenance and first aid. C. Bult noticed that the totals for 2022 for first aid were very high. B. Brahm said the representative was restocking more frequently than necessary and he would monitor the situation.

P. Harter informed the board that the capital charges for water districts SWC1 and SW9 would be \$1,276.00 and the operations & maintenance costs would remain at \$350.00.

C. Swartz noticed a large increase in the budget line for uniforms and asked why. B. Brahm said he had been informed by Unifirst of a \$30.00 increase per month. In lieu of the increase, he was currently looking at other companies and obtaining quotes.

S. Peter explained that the new phone system had been installed; however, the phone line (518-766-4000) could not be ported over to the new provider. It had been investigated to obtain a different 477 or 766 phone number; however, none were available. For the time being, the town would be staying with Consolidated Communication for ease of access for residents.

B. Brahm informed the board of an issue with the fuel maintenance system, which involved police cars unable to obtain fuel during the weekend. It was determined that the problem involved the connection between the fuel island and the computer that the software was downloaded on. He contacted Wayne Manufacturing who advised that the computer may need to be replaced. He was unsure of the cost but he would keep the board apprised of the situation.

**DB5110.4 Road Maintenance Contractual:** S. Peter noticed that the highest increases were equipment rentals, topsoil and fuel. B. Brahm said, now that the department had access to the gravel bank, he anticipated them to start screening topsoil in 2024 for road shoulders. He added that, to close the permit for the water plant bridge, NYSDEC required them to move the pile of 1A stone. This allowed space for the screening of topsoil. C. Kenney asked if patching of roads for 2023 would be close to the \$65,000.00 budgeted. B. Brahm said yes; however, he was unsure for 2024 as many of the usual roads that needed patching had been paved. C. Swartz asked if paving was complete for 2023. B. Brahm said he would like to pave the roads in the Battisti water district. He noted that preconstruction photos had been taken and a requirement of the project was to leave the site in the same or better condition than it was found; however, that was subjective. He recommended that the board ask American Evergreen to bring in a paver to shim coat the roads. If the town paved Orchard Road, Loretta Lane and Northern Boulevard, the estimated cost would be \$93,000.00.

**DB5112.4 Road Repairs & Maintenance:** B. Brahm noted that the budget line would remain the same for 2024.

**DB5130.2 Machinery Equipment:** B. Brahm explained that he included the purchase of a

trailer for 2024 as it was needed solely for the mini excavator. He said the department was noticing an issue with moving equipment with only having one trailer which would be alleviated with a second trailer. He added that he was requesting to purchase a laptop and software to aid the mechanics in diagnosing mechanical issues with the fleet and potentially clearing error codes which would render a truck inoperable during emergencies. He said he had sent both mechanics to HL Gage for training on the software and was confident that it would be a great benefit. C. Bult agreed and felt that the software/laptop would pay for itself over time. He added that other software could be loaded on the laptop but may require more training. C. Swartz asked if there was an annual fee for the software. B. Brahm said yes.

B. Brahm noted that the single axle truck, which was ordered for 2023, would not be coming in until July 2024 and the tandem axle truck, which was to replace the truck that burned, was built but would not be ready for another three months. He added that he had budgeted \$140,000.00, in addition to the \$187,000.00 which was received from the insurance company, to cover the remaining cost of the truck. C. Bult asked, with the lengthy lead times, should they consider ordering a year in advance for trucks. B. Brahm felt that would be advisable. He said he could look at other manufacturers; however, it was easier for the mechanics to have a fleet of the same make and model. C. Bult also agreed as it would mean they would need to have double the parts and knowledge.

B. Brahm informed the board that he was in the process of having battery disconnect switches installed on all trucks as a requirement from the town's insurance company. If the switches were not installed, the town would not receive the full replacement cost for any damaged highway vehicles. He said the mechanics were about halfway through the fleet and all new trucks would be equipped with switches. C. Swartz asked if the switches were generic. B. Brahm said yes, from HL Gage.

B. Brahm said the town patch truck was slated for replacement (purchased in 2008). He mentioned that he had looked at a Heavy-Duty Chevy Silverado with a stainless-steel bed that Rensselaer County had purchased from HL Gage and felt it would be a wise investment. The cost was \$165,000.00.

B. Brahm informed the board that, in 2025, the skid steerer would be up for replacement, per the schedule. Currently, the unit is shared between the highway department and the transfer station. He proposed that the skid steerer be permanently moved to the transfer station and a track skid steerer, which would cause less damage on softer surfaces, be purchased for the highway department. The estimated cost would be \$74,000.00. C. Kenney asked if it should be included in the 2024 budget request. P. Harter said it could be purchased with fund balance if the board desired. C. Bult asked if the transfer station would have to reimburse the highway department for the value of the old skid steerer. P. Harter said yes, through an interfund transfer from the A fund to the DB.

**Park Truck:** B. Brahm explained that the mechanics had gone over the current park truck and found that there was an issue with the four-wheel drive, the front axle was shot, it is burning coolant and the body was rusting out. The estimated cost for repair was \$5,000.00. He said the town had a few options, including obtaining a used truck from Rensselaer County, purchase a new F250 in 2024 and transfer the current truck to the park, or contact Rensselaer County about sharing the cost of a new truck. He noted that the park truck was used to plow the town hall parking lot and the park road; therefore, a heavier duty truck would be needed.

**DB5140.4 Brush & Weeds Contractual:** S. Peter asked who was being used for towing as

Sunnyside Garage was no longer in business. B. Brahm said he was contracting with Dawsons.

**DB5142.4 Snow Removal Contractual:** S. Peter noted an increase for road salt for this appropriations code.

**ADJOURNMENT**

As there was no further business before the Board, C. Kenney made a motion to adjourn the 10/17/2023 Town Board meeting at 8:09 p.m., seconded by C. Swartz, with all voting in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra L. Curtis  
Schodack Town Clerk