

DATE: OCTOBER 18, 2018

KIND OF MEETING: BUDGET

WHERE HELD: SCHODACK TOWN HALL

CLERK: DEBRA L. CURTIS

PRESIDING OFFICER: DAVID B. HARRIS

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

ATTORNEY:

COMPTROLLER: PAUL HARTER

OTHERS: DANIEL GARVANSITES, PARK MANAGER
JOSEPH BELARDO, CHIEF OF POLICE
DAWNE KELLY, ASSISTANT TO THE SUPERVISOR

S. Harris called the October 18, 2018 Budget Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance and dispensed with roll call. All present as noted above.

Parks

A7110.1 Parks Personnel: D. Garvansites, Park Manager, said he had a few requests that had been included in his budget. He explained the 2018 budget for salaries included 720 hours for himself and 300 hours for his part-time attendant. He noted he would be in the red, adding 50 hours of work for the year, due to an increase in rentals at the pavilion, improvements to the bridge over the creek, organizing Eagle Scout projects and time allocated for the new playground. C. Bult suggested a monthly report be sent to the board to keep them informed of such changes. He felt the board should have been informed prior to this point about the increase in hours. D. Garvansites said he would begin the practice. He added a considerable amount of work still needed to be completed for 2018 including the potential for plowing the park road and he anticipated more time to be needed in 2019 due to the new playground. C. Bult asked how the increase in salary should be handled. P. Harter said for 2018, they would take the added amount from contingency through budget modification. C. Bult asked if more hours needed to be added for 2019. D. Garvansites said he was requesting an increase from 720 to 820 hours. C. Rex asked, with the increase in hours, would there be a change in his employee classification. P. Harter said no as he would not be exceeding the 21 hours per week for benefits. **Determination: It was the consensus of the board to add 100 hours for the park manager, increasing A7110.1 by \$2,031.00.**

Parkland Fund: C. Kenney asked if any information had been received regarding how the Parkland Funds could be used. P. Harter said he was advised by the Association of Towns (AOT) to contact the town's attorney. He said it was their understanding that the funds could not be used for salaries but could be used for equipment purchases.

Albany-Hudson Electric Trail (AHET): C. Kenney said no decision had been made; however, if the town chose to opt in for the maintenance of the trail, the board would need to decide which department would be responsible. His thoughts were that it would fall under Parks & Recreation. D. Garvansites asked what the proposed length of the trail would be. C. Kenney said an estimated seven miles which would equal fourteen miles round trip for mowing. C. Swartz noted that the original projection of mowing a minimum of four times a year had been increased. C. Kenney asked Mr. Garvansites if he felt his department could take on the added task. D. Garvansites explained his department currently mowed the ball field at the park but the highway department mowed the grounds around the pavilion. C. Bult said the reason for the highway mowing was to limit hours to allow Mr. Garvansites to tend to rentals without going over his budgeted hours. C. Rex asked if another employee would be needed. C. Kenney proposed increasing the hours or changing the Park Manager position from part to full time if needed. D. Garvansites said he would accept the added duties if the board chose to do so.

A7110.2 Parks Equipment: C. Bult asked, with the addition of the playground, would any money need to be budgeted for equipment such as trash receptacles. C. Kenney said a fund needed to be established for the mulch to be replenished annually. C. Swartz asked what the cost per yard of mulch was. S. Harris said it was dependent on the type but could cost upwards of \$75.00 per yard. He estimated an annual cost of \$400.00 for mulch. C. Kenney asked if the parkland funds could be used for mulch. P. Harter said the funds could be expended for equipment but warned the funds were limited. He said if the (Amazon) distribution center goes in, more money would be added to parkland funds. D. Garvansites asked the current balance of the parkland fund. P. Harter said, after the cost of the playground, it would be around \$57,000.00. C. Kenney suggested removing the \$500.00 budgeted for picnic tables and also purchase them through the parkland fund. P. Harter said that would be acceptable. All board members agreed. **Determination: \$500.00 was removed from A7110.2.**

A7110.4 Parks Contractual: C. Swartz asked why nothing had been budgeted for employee mileage reimbursement. D. Garvansites said he had only submitted once in 2018 for reimbursement. C. Kenney asked if there was any need for W & E Phillips Locksmith to be budgeted at \$500.00. D. Garvansites said no, all locks were changed years ago. C. Swartz proposed moving the funds from W & E Phillips Locksmith to employee mileage reimbursement but decrease the amount to \$200.00. He felt, as the prior years reflected less than \$200.00, it was a more realistic amount. All board members agreed. **Determination: \$500.00 was removed from W & E Phillips Locksmith and \$200.00 was added to Employee Mileage Reimbursement. A total of \$300.00 was removed from A7110.4.** C. Bult asked what the determination was for who was reimbursed for cell phones. S. Harris said it was decided for all department heads to be reimbursed. He felt the \$360.00 budgeted was fine.

C. Bult said he was concerned that Mr. Garvansites was unfazed about going over the hours he budgeted for. He felt the board should have been informed prior to the meeting. C. Kenney said it seemed that it was unforeseen due to the increase in rentals.

Police

A3410 Fire Investigation: Chief Belardo explained he was able to decrease this budget for Evidence Collection Equipment as well as eliminating funding for Equipment Replacement for the Bus. C. Bult asked why nothing was budgeted for the NYS Fire Academy Re-Certification under A3410.1. Chief Belardo said the Personnel Overtime was only to cover when someone from the Fire Investigation Team is called to a fire scene. He explained the academy was paid through contractual (A3410.4).

A3120.1 Police Personnel: Chief Belardo said he had made a presentation in April to the Board regarding additional staffing for the department. He summarized those requests below:

1. **Assistant Chief of Police** – The Chief explained the Town of Schodack was one of the last police departments in the county to not be accredited. To become accredited, it was his wish to bring in an individual with experience, as Assistant Chief, to review and create new policies, guiding the department towards this goal. S. Harris asked, once accredited, would they stay on. Chief Belardo said as it would be a part-time position, working 20 hours per week, the board could decide if they stay depending on need. S. Harris asked if there was a need for recertification for being accredited. The Chief said yes, after a few years. C. Bult asked if the Assistant Chief would be responsible for conducting the training on the new policies. The Chief said yes. C. Rex asked the benefits of becoming accredited. Chief Belardo said savings would be seen under the town's insurance policy by providing liability protection. C. Kenney asked if he had an estimation of those savings. The Chief said no. C. Bult asked if consultants could be brought in for the accreditation and once completed, to conduct the recertification. The Chief warned that private contractors could be quite expensive. He said the board could consider hiring a civilian employee rather than an Assistant Chief.
2. **School Resource Officer (SRO)** – Chief Belardo said he was requesting to hire an SRO to implement added safety in the Schodack Central School District (SCSD). He added a large number of areas had already hired SROs in schools to institute programs, work with the children and anticipate any problems. The SRO position would need to be discussed with the union as the schedule would change to five days a week at eight hours a day to coincide with the school day. He noted, currently, the department has officers only present at the beginning and ending of each school day. He explained that he had been in contact with the Superintendent for SCSD and they had discussed a 50/50 split for the cost between the school and the Town. C. Bult said he was concerned by the sample agreement he had seen as it seemed to give more power to the school to choose who they would want in the position. He also had concerns regarding splitting the cost as residents from East Greenbush Central Schools would be paying without reaping the benefits. He recommended the Chief discuss having SCSD pay the full amount. The Chief said he would ask and mentioned he had spoken to S. Harris about potential other sources of funding for the position. S. Harris said the county was considering funding up to \$25,000.00 per school district for hiring an SRO. He said he was also looking into other potential grants. C.

Swartz said he agreed that the school should pay the full amount. Chief Belardo said if they did, the position may not be filled until 2020 so it could be budgeted. C. Swartz said an SRO was needed and it might not be good to wait but felt the whole town should not have to pay. Chief Belardo said he would talk to the school and report back.

3. **Detective Position** – Chief Belardo proposed moving Officer Thomas from the night shift to day shift, working five days a week for eight hours a day (7:00 a.m. to 3 p.m.) and hiring another full-time officer to take his place. He noted Officer Thomas was often brought in during the day, for overtime, to investigate incidents that had occurred. C. Swartz asked if any other officer would be willing to move to nights. The Chief said all other officers had seniority and none wanted to work nights. He felt by adding the full-time position, it would decrease the amount of overtime being charged by Officer Thomas which, for 2018, was already at 390 hours totaling almost \$21,000.00. The added officer would also be paid at a lower pay grade, saving money even if overtime was accrued. C. Swartz asked if the position could be filled using part-time officers. The Chief said an issue would be that they were sometimes unavailable and it would be hard for them to dedicate to the shift as they all work elsewhere. C. Bult asked if there would be a problem with the union. The Chief said he had discussed the change with them and they were willing to work with them. C. Bult asked why there was only a \$10,000.00 decrease in overtime if he was anticipating moving Officer Thomas. He felt it should be higher. The Chief said, under the union contract, it was difficult to eliminate overtime. C. Kenney asked where the police were in regards to overtime for 2018. P. Harter said the department was at \$83,347.00 for overtime, which meant they should be under budget for the year. C. Bult asked if Officer Thomas could be brought in to work overtime for shift coverage. Chief Belardo said he would consult the union. S. Harris warned that, based on the number of hours he was currently working, Officer Thomas could become burned out and was concerned that cases could go cold. C. Kenney asked if Officer Thomas could respond to calls if they came in before 8:00 a.m. The Chief said yes, as there is a current issue with the county holding calls for the department until the shift starts at 8:00 a.m. C. Kenney asked if they would have the option, in the event it was needed, to change the hours for Officer Thomas to four ten hour days. Chief Belardo said that could be negotiated with the union. C. Bult asked, in the event Officer Thomas retires, what would happen with the position. Chief Belardo said they would have the option to fill it or not. They would not have any requirement to do so.

C. Swartz asked why building maintenance fell under A3120.1. Chief Belardo said it was the salary for the cleaning person who was split between the highway and police departments.

A3120.2 Police Equipment: Chief Belardo said his view of body cameras had changed based interviews he conducted with officers at the Saratoga Police Department. He said the greatest benefits were reduced liability and false allegations against officers. He noted there had been a considerable decrease in the cost. He explained the department had participated in a thirty day trial during the summer for three different camera styles. He said

he was most impressed with the Axon brand of cameras which ranged in price from \$38,000.00 to \$61,000.00 depending on style, storage and warranty. One concern he had was the amount of data that could potentially be collected would take extra time to review. C. Swartz asked how many cameras would be purchased. Chief Belardo said fifteen. C. Kenney asked if an additional employee would be needed to review. Chief Belardo said it would require overtime but eventually would get easier. C. Bult said, in the past, the primary concern was the cost to store any data collected. Chief Belardo said it had become more affordable. C. Bult asked if there was a policy in place for body cameras. The Chief said yes. C. Kenney asked what the startup cost was for the cameras and the life expectancy. Chief Belardo explained, depending on the service, the basic plan would cost \$23,746.00 and the advanced plan would cost \$28,354.00 with a life expectancy and warranty of five years. He added, under his recommendation, the basic plan would suit the needs of the town. C. Bult asked if the police reserve could be used to cover the annual cost in the following years. P. Harter said the reserve could only be utilized for vehicle replacement, but reminded the board that funds set aside each year for the reserve could be used elsewhere instead. He noted the reserve was currently at \$228,000.00. The Chief asked if federal forfeiture could be used to cover the cost. P. Harter said yes. C. Bult recommended the \$45,000.00 for a new car be removed from the budget and utilize the reserve for a 2019 car purchase. C. Kenney felt that was not necessary. He suggested only budgeting \$6,000.00 to cover the \$4,000.00 annual cost for the body cameras and \$2,000.00 to cover any other necessary equipment purchases. The remainder of the startup cost could be taken from forfeiture. **Determination: It was the consensus of the board to removed \$24,000.00 from A3120.2.**

A3120.4 Police Contractual: C. Swartz asked what was classified under Operations Equipment. Chief Belardo said items such as ammunition, targets, ear muffs and cleaning of the service weapons.

Library Services

P. Harter explained he had met with all three libraries regarding their budget requests. He said he felt the requested increases for Castleton and Nassau were justified; however, he had an issue with the increase for East Greenbush. Upon review, he noticed that over sixty-five percent of their total budget was for salaries. He said he also had an issue with the usage presented at the board meeting. He noted that he was confused why, out of thirty-six percent of users from Schodack, only seventeen percent were card holders. He explained that thirty-eight percent of users from Rensselaer County were allowed to use all the library services without those communities contributing funds due to each having their own libraries. It seemed Schodack was subsidizing for the other Rensselaer County use as only East Greenbush and Schodack contribute to the budget. C. Bult asked what the percentage of increase was being requested for East Greenbush. P. Harter said it was 2.5 percent for 2019; however, the increase for the past four years was 19.4 percent. He suggested changing Castleton Library's charter to allow for the town to create their own library. C. Kenney said then Schodack residents would be allowed to use East Greenbush Library for free. C. Swartz asked if the process was easy to change the charter. P. Harter said no. He mentioned it had been discussed about creating a satellite library on the second floor of the town all but was not sure there would be enough room. C. Swartz asked

if the old middle school library could be used for the satellite. C. Kenney suggested moving the Castleton Library to the middle school instead. P. Harter said it would end up costing more than they currently pay for the use of all three libraries. C. Rex asked if there was an increase in the use of East Greenbush's library by town residents. P. Harter said there may be but the numbers did not match. He noted the funding for East Greenbush consisted of 8.8 percent of the total budget for the A-Fund and was concerned about their growing fund balance. C. Kenney warned that creating a library district for the town, would create an added tax on the residents. He said the town currently had a few options. They could either pay the requested increase or offer the same amount of \$303,720.00 as funded in 2018. He recommended the Supervisor discuss the option with the director of East Greenbush and propose implementing an agreement to set increases for the future. He noted, in the event they were not willing to take the funding, that amount could be distributed to Nassau and Castleton to increase their inventory and services. P. Harter said, under Chapter 90.3 of the Public Libraries Law, everyone is entitled to use any library but services could be limited depending where they reside. In the event the town did not provide funding for East Greenbush, residents could borrow materials from them using inter-library loan from Castleton or Nassau. C. Swartz suggested waiting until 2020 to decide about removing funding from East Greenbush. C. Bult and Rex recommended offering the \$303,720.00 and giving the ultimatum. All Board members agreed. **Determination: The funding for East Greenbush Library (A7410) was decreased by \$7,593.00.**

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business before the Board, C. Swartz made a motion to adjourn the 10/18/2018 Town Board meeting at 9:39 p.m., seconded by C. Bult, with all voting in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra L. Curtis
Schodack Town Clerk