

DATE: OCTOBER 15, 2015

KIND OF MEETING: BUDGET

WHERE HELD: SCHODACK TOWN HALL

CLERK:

PRESIDING OFFICER: DENNIS DOWDS

MEMBERS PRESENT: FRANCIS CURTIS
MICHAEL KENNEY
JAMES E. BULT
SCOTT SWARTZ

MEMBERS ABSENT:

ATTORNEY:

COMPTROLLER: PAUL HARTER

OTHERS: LAURA PALMER, ASSISTANT COMPTROLLER

S. Dowds called the October 15, 2015 Budget Meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and dispensed with roll call. All present as noted above.

S. Dowds explained that the purpose of this budget meeting was to review the 2016 tentative budgets for the Water/Sewer Departments, Salaries and any other departments.

Budget Review

Water & Sewer (all): The Assistant Comptroller, Laura Palmer, presented information regarding the current 2015 rates and proposed 2016 rates for each water and sewer district. The only rate increases being recommended at this time are for Sewer District 5 (East Schodack) and for out-of-district users for Consolidated Water District 101 (currently, this only impacts two users). Ms. Palmer explained that it is preferable to have everyone in the district, so when they do an extension they try to include anyone who is out of district, depending on the geographic location of the parcel. Board discussion ensued regarding the financial burden for the people in Sewer District No. 5 and the difficulties associated with giving them any relief. The discussion continued regarding the Intermunicipal Sewer Agreement with the Town of East Greenbush and fees charged to the parcels in Schodack, as well as growing the tax base for Consolidated Water District 101.

Elected Officials Salaries: C. Swartz noted that the salary schedule on Page 44 of the budget needs to be reflective of any increases discussed. While the changes appear within the appropriation codes for the departments, they are not properly identified on that schedule. The Budget Officer said those changes will be reflected in the Preliminary Budget.

General Discussion: Board members initiated discussion on the following items:

A1355.4, contractual, Assessor: C. Kenney noted that there was nothing in next year's budget for advisory appraisals. This year that line item was at \$25,000.00 and he wondered if that was a mistake. The Comptroller said there is \$5,000.00 in a line for

commercial appraisals and noted that only \$7800.00 of the \$67,000.00 contractual account has been spent thus far. C. Curtis stated the Board could remove the funding for Digital Towpath because that will be fully funded by the county next year. C. Bult asked if the Assessing Department was still comfortable with selling the Jeep. The Supervisor said he has spoken with the Assessor and he was fine with it. They normally only need it once a month, so it will just be a matter of scheduling with the Building Inspector. The discussion culminated in the Board's decision to add \$10,000.00 to A1355.4, for commercial appraisals and decrease contingency by the same amount.

A1430.1, Personnel: C. Kenney asked why the salary/hours for the HR manager were increased. S. Dowds said, currently, she is working 20 hours one week and 15 hours the following week for a total of 35 hrs./bimonthly. He proposed increasing the hours for that position to 25 hrs./week for a total of 50 hrs./bimonthly. He proposed this because he felt the extra hours were needed to process her work. The Comptroller added that they would like her cross-trained in the payroll function. Currently, his accountant is doing that and with no in-house backup, it makes it extremely difficult for her to take any time off. C. Kenney asked the Comptroller's opinion of the efficiency of the payroll process. He responded that it was his opinion that they are doing a good job in-house, but there are issues with ADP in terms of support. In fact, he is meeting with another payroll processing center, Paychex, to see what they have to offer. The biggest in-house problem with the payroll function is the number of payroll cycles that have to be processed. We have 57 payroll cycles and if we could move people from semi-monthly to bi-weekly we would have 34 payroll cycles, which would make it much more manageable. C. Kenney asked if they thought an electronic payroll system works effectively and efficiently? The Supervisor and Comptroller felt a mechanized system benefitted the town, but they really need to look at another vendor. C. Bult asked if they were going to have the HR manager do the payroll processing. The Supervisor said no. They would just like her cross-trained in the function. The accountant will continue to be the lead person. Board members had some hesitancy in increasing the hours. They said they have never received a monthly report from her so they have no idea how she is spending her time.

A1420.4, Town Attorney: C. Kenney asked why there was an increase in this line for the sewer/water attorney. S. Dowds said it was related to growing the water system and issues related with the sewer agreement with the Town of East Greenbush.

A1680.4, Central Data Processing: Board members asked if there was sufficient funding for the new website and when it was going to be posted. S. Dowds said he estimated the cost of the website to be around \$12,000.00, which should come out of this year's budget. He felt we should have the new website posted on January 1, 2016. There is money in next year's budget for annual support. Board members wanted to be assured that in-house training is included in the costs. All department heads need to know that it is the Board's expectation that they will be held accountable for the information and timely posting of material on the website. The Supervisor said all three vendors they are looking at, include in-house training.

A7410, Library: C. Bult expressed concern how much this budget has increased over the years. He felt the town's population rate hasn't grown to the extent that the East Greenbush Library says the Schodack residents usage has increased. Board discussion ensued. C. Curtis stated that several towns have requested a break-out of the library function on the town tax bill. While it still is being paid for through town taxes, it shows how much of those taxes went to support library services and is a more visual indication of

where their town money is going. Board members felt that was a good idea. C. Curtis said if they wanted to do that, they should put a request into Real Property Tax Services after the budget is adopted so it can be broken out on the January Town & County tax bill.

A8160.2, Landfill/A8189.2, Recycling: C. Bult raised the issue of funding a mower at the Transfer Station. S. Dowds said he believed that would be to purchase the highway's zero-turn mower, if the highway department purchases a new one. Board members noted that a new mower was not in the budget for the highway and placed a call to the Highway Superintendent to confirm. It was reported that the highway department was not considering a new mower next year; therefore, the money to purchase the old one from them will be removed from the landfill and recycling budgets.

To recap the budget discussion, the following changes were made to the Tentative Budget:

It was the decision of the Board to:

Increase A1355.4 (Assessor, contractual) by \$10,000 for commercial appraisals
and decrease A1990, Contingency, by \$10,000.00

Decrease A8160.1 (Landfill Station, personnel) by \$36,609.00
and increase A1990, Contingency by the same amount \$36,609.00

Decrease A8189.1 (Recycling, personnel) by \$12,203.00
And increase A1990, Contingency by the same amount - \$12,203.00

Decrease A8160.2 (Landfill, equipment) by \$2,500.00
and increase A1990, Contingency by the same amount \$2,500.00

Decrease A8189.2 (Recycling, equipment) by \$2,500.00
and increase A1990, Contingency by the same amount \$2,500.00

The net effect of A1990, Contingency is an increase of \$43,812.00 for the above noted changes.

S. Dowds called for a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss salaries for specific personnel.

J. Jensis asked why salaries were an executive session discussion. The Supervisor said salaries and appointments are covered as exemption under the open meetings law. The public will have an opportunity to comment on personnel (.1) funding at the Preliminary Budget Hearing on November 5th.

Executive Session

C. Swartz made a motion at 8:47 p.m. to enter into Executive Session to discuss matters relating to salaries for specific personnel. Seconded by C. Bult.

5 Ayes 0 Noes. **MOTION CARRIED.** Ayes – F. Curtis, J. Bult, M. Kenney, S. Swartz, D. Dowds. Noes – 0.

C. Bult made a motion at 10:25 p.m. to adjourn the Executive Session, seconded by C. Swartz.

The Comptroller said he will provide the changes discussed to the Town Clerk within a few days.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business before the Board, C. Curtis made a motion to adjourn the 10/15/2015 Town Board meeting at 10:26 p.m., seconded by C. Kenney, with all voting in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna L. Conlin
Schodack Town Clerk/RMC/CMC
(As transcribed from Audio Recording)