

DATE: OCTOBER 15, 2014

KIND OF MEETING: BUDGET

WHERE HELD: SCHODACK TOWN HALL

CLERK: DONNA L. CONLIN

PRESIDING OFFICER: DENNIS DOWDS

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

ATTORNEY:

COMPTROLLER: JENNIFER MULLIGAN

OTHERS: BERNHARD PETER, CHIEF OF POLICE

S. Dowds called the October 15, 2014 Budget Meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. and dispensed with roll call. All present as stated above.

Budget Review

A3120, Police: During this review, one of the major issues discussed was officer staffing. Advocating for an additional officer, Chief Peter noted that a new hire mitigates officer issues and provides more hours of service for the community. He said the Board should take into consideration that he has an aging department and that a new position was budgeted for in 2014. A new hire would bring the department back up to the previously approved staffing levels. The Board reviewed the 2014 overtime and part-time budget. The Comptroller said she was comfortable that enough funding was in the budget to cover either scenario (9th officer or more overtime costs). The Chief stated that he has very little control over the overtime as the contract specifies how part-time officers can be used for shift coverage and offered more specific information regarding the use of part-time officers according to the contract. The Supervisor said the amount of money it would cost to change the language in the contract would be cost prohibitive. Still discussing the personnel line (.1), Board members asked if the Chief was aware of any officer who was considering retirement in the near future. The Chief responded that there was a possibility of one person retiring next year, which is yet another reason he wants the 9th officer position filled. C. Kenney asked the Chief if, barring a major event (retirement and/or extended medical issue), the Board fills the position, would he be able to stay within the overtime budget? The Chief said, barring the unknown, he will make every effort to live within that figure. The Board also reviewed some of the requested (.2) equipment items – storage shed, computers and new vehicles. The Chief explained that the State is at a point that the monitoring of the police station site is complete and the State will be cleaning it up (prior environmental pollution issue that occurred when it was the State Police Barracks). Therefore, the sheds they have on the property will be removed and an area of the site will

be excavated and blacktopped, which is where he would like to place the shed. He said they would use it to store the speed trailer and other equipment. He would like to keep the garage available for seized cars. Discussion ensued regarding storing the equipment off-site and the size of the shed selected. The Chief responded that he didn't think other options were really available. He would measure the area where the shed will be placed to ensure that it is properly sized. Also discussed were gas and energy costs. C. Swartz inquired about the policy for allowing the officers to take their vehicles home after their shift. The Chief said the officers that bring the cars home are usually the older cars so they are not putting mileage on the newer cars. Another advantage is that the officers are in service as soon as they leave their homes. He thinks this type of policy actually adds to the longevity of the vehicles. The Chief said there are only about 3 officers that take the vehicles home. C. Bult explained that he was more concerned about the public perception that the officers have their own personal police car. The Board then reviewed the police vehicle replacement schedule in conjunction with the funding for the department. With regard to several other items, the Chief noted that the department will be getting new vests this year through a grant, with minimal Town funding. The Board discussed the computer replacement policy. The Supervisor and Town Clerk explained that they rely on the expertise of their IT consultant who takes a very conservative approach to the ever-changing technology. Chief Peter said Officer Tom Jones in his department is the person who makes the recommendations for his department. **No changes were made to this fund.**

A3410, Fire Protection: The Board discussed the membership of the Fire Investigation Unit. C. Bult requested a listing of current members broken down by the level of training they have – fully certified, partially certified or needs training. They want to ensure that the town's legal liability exposure is mitigated as fully as possible. C. Bult asked if there was sufficient funding in the budget to cover additional training costs, if needed. The Comptroller said depending on the number of people that need to be trained, if they were short, it would be funded from contingency. Chief Peter said he would ask Officer Morgan to forward the information requested about the membership to the Board. **No changes were made to this fund.**

A7310, Youth & Recreation: The Supervisor asked the Board's consideration in changing how the fees are charged for the summer program. Currently, the town charges \$100.00/child or \$250.00 for 3 or more children. He explained that the counselors handle a lot of money and he and the Comptroller would like to propose changes so that counselors no longer have that responsibility. They would like to have the registration fee include all activities. While there have not been any problems, the Comptroller said it was a very weak policy in terms of internal controls. She gave a brief overview of some of the changes that have occurred over the past few years to strengthen the internal controls by having the Town Clerk's office handle the registration money and inputting the field trip and freeze pop monies into their computer system, which is a form of checks & balances. If they made the registration fee all inclusive to incorporate these charges, the counselors and the clerk's office would no longer have to handle the additional fees. C. Kenney asked how this would impact those participants whose parents didn't want their children to go on field trips. The Comptroller explained that some counselors always stay on site for kids that don't go on the field trips. The Town Clerk said the only problem she could foresee is having some parents request reimbursement for field trips that their child doesn't attend. The Comptroller said after analyzing the additional fees, she proposed that they increase the registration cost by

\$25.00/child so one child would be \$125.00 and 3 or more children would be \$325.00. In reality, it is not a program increase, just a redistribution of how the costs are paid. While it will appear as a registration increase, it should be noted that the town hasn't increased that fee in many years. The Comptroller explained that the summer youth program is largely subsidized by the taxpayers so the fees paid by the participants are fairly minimal in relation to the cost of the program. The Board supported the proposed change. They agreed that it was really more of a redistribution of how the fees are paid. It was also noted that there would still be a charge if a "special" field trip, i.e. – a trip to the Six Flags, Great Escape, etc. **No changes were made to this fund.**

C. Curtis said he is unable to make the October 22nd meeting and would like it rescheduled. After a brief discussion, the Board resolved to cancel the meeting scheduled for October 22nd and convene at 6:00 p.m. on October 23rd, prior to the regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Town Clerk will post the changes.

All changes are subject to further review and possible amendment. The Preliminary Budget may not necessarily reflect what is noted above.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business before the Board, C. Bult made a motion to adjourn the 10/15/2014 Town Board meeting at 7:45 p.m., seconded by C. Curtis, with all voting in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna L. Conlin
Schodack Town Clerk/RMC/CMC

This page intentionally left blank.