

DATE: OCTOBER 18, 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, ASSISTANT TO THE SUPERVISOR
RYAN MULLAHY, TOWN JUSTICE
PERRY NATALE, SCHODACK POLICE CHIEF

Supervisor Peter called the October 18, 2023 Budget Meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance and dispensed with roll call. All present as noted above.

Justice Court

A1110.2 Justice Court Equipment: Judge Mullahy stated that no equipment had been budgeted as they were seeking a grant from the Court System. If awarded, the grant funds could be used for the purchase of a copier, furniture, computers, metal detectors and wands. If they were not awarded the grant, any equipment purchases would be above the budget as they were not built in.

A1110.4 Justice Court Contractual: S. Peter noticed that there were decreases in the budget lines for Curtis Printing and postage. Judge Mullahy noted that the decreases were more in line with the actuals, as well as more defendants were requesting to receive notifications via email or text messages, rather than traditional mail. He added that there was a significant decrease in Safeguard as the office transitioned from handwritten receipts to electronic.

A1110.1 Justice Court Salary: Judge Mullahy discussed a restructuring of the Justice Court salaries to include a part-time clerk, rather than a third full-time clerk. This would allow for an increase in pay for the two full-time clerks to compensate them for the added workload. He explained that the duties of the part-time clerk would be to cover civil nights, conduct bank runs, assist customers at the window and answer the telephone. He said that the two clerks were currently managing the office; however, they were very busy. He noted that he was unsure if one of the clerks was planning to stay on for much longer, which could have a serious impact on the office.

C. Swartz expressed concern regarding the amount spent on bank runs, not only with the Justice Court, but with other departments. He asked why the town switched from

KeyBank to Pioneer Bank. P. Harter said KeyBank was charging the town an exorbitant amount in fees and giving little interest. He noted that Pioneer Bank gave departments the option of check readers; however, any cash received would need to be brought to the bank. C. Swartz felt the bank runs were taking too much time out of the office for an employee and wondered if KeyBank could be used to deposit the cash, which would then be transferred to Pioneer Bank. P. Harter said it may be an option but cautioned that there would most likely be a transfer fee. C. Swartz asked Mr. Harter to investigate the option and report back to the board.

Executive Session #1

C. Swartz made a motion to enter into an Executive Session at 6:28 p.m. to discuss appointments and proposed salary structures under the 2024 Tentative Budget. Seconded by C. Kenney.

5 Ayes 0 Noes. **MOTION CARRIED.** Ayes –J. Bult, M. Kenney, S. Swartz, T. Rex, C. Peter. Noes – 0.

C. Kenney made a motion to adjourn the Executive Session at 6:45 p.m., seconded by C. Rex.

5 Ayes 0 Noes. **MOTION CARRIED.** Ayes –J. Bult, M. Kenney, S. Swartz, T. Rex, C. Peter. Noes – 0.

Police

A3120.1 Police Salary: S. Peter mentioned that the increase in salaries was due to the contract structure; however, the position of part-time Assistant Chief had not been included. C. Rex asked if the contract would continue to affect the salaries each year. S. Peter said yes. He added that negotiations for a School Resource Officer (SRO) were moving forward. In the contract, the SRO would be on duty for eight hours during the school day, with an average of 100 hours of overtime. The total hours annually would be 1,920 hours (1,540 hours at Schodack Central School District (SCSD) plus 380 hours at the Town) with cost savings for the town of \$110,000.00 to \$120,000.00. C. Bult asked if the town would pay the salary of the SRO and be reimbursed, via revenue, by SCSD. S. Peter said yes. C. Bult followed by asking about the SRO having access to a police car. S. Peter said it would be negotiable. A discussion would be needed between all involved parties to determine if a car would be taken off patrol duty and if the car could be left at the bus garage while not in use. If authorized, the car would need to be equipped with a FOB for fuel. C. Swartz asked how the car would be insured, through the town or school district. S. Peter said that would need to be discussed with NYMIR.

C. Kenney noticed the actual totals for overtime in 2023 was significantly lower than the budgeted amount and wondered if the line could be decreased. Chief Natale said that due to low staffing for 2023, he had denied training but he anticipated more training in 2024 once they were fully staffed. S. Peter noted a decrease in the budgeted amount for part-time officers which better reflected the actuals.

S. Peter noted, with N. Thomas retiring from her cleaning position at the Police Department and Highway Department, there would be a need to manage the cleaning at each department. He gave a recommendation of hiring a cleaning service to do a weekly cleaning

of the buildings and have the daily task of emptying the garbage conducted by a town employee. C. Swartz was in favor of hiring a service. S. Peter said an added advantage of the service versus hiring an employee for the cleaning was that the town saved on benefit costs.

A3120.2 Police Equipment: Chief Natale explained that the bulletproof vests would be outdated in 2024. The department currently had fourteen vests; however, he recommended that twenty be purchased to accommodate the projected increase in the police force. He said he would seek a grant to cover most, if not all, the cost.

S. Peter highlighted the remainder of equipment requests for 2024, including building renovations (installation of a fence and window bars), body cameras, speed signs and two new police cars. He asked how much was currently in the reserve fund for the police. P. Harter said \$321,606.50.

A3120.4 Police Contractual: C. Swartz questioned the amount budgeted for uniforms (\$10,000.00) as the actuals for 2022 and 2023 were considerably less. S. Peter said there were several officers that retired in 2021 and they anticipated spending close to the budget for new officers that were anticipated to be hired.

S. Peter noted a few increases under A3120.4, including training through the Shared Services Response Team (SSRT) and IT maintenance. He mentioned that the phone system at the police station needed replacement. It had been discussed to upgrade the system to a cloud-based system which would allow a telephone to be taken home and used for town business rather than using a personal phone. They would also have the ability to transfer calls.

C. Bult questioned the amount that was budgeted for National Grid (\$7,500.00). He wondered if a decrease could be made to better reflect the actuals. P. Harter said he anticipated an increase in energy costs as the economy was changing. Chief Natale mentioned that he was attempting to save energy by reminding officers to turn off lights and set the central air conditioning to 71 degrees for the summer.

A3410 Fire Investigation: S. Peter explained that, as there were no trained members within the Schodack Fire Investigation Team and in the event of a trial, a case would not hold up in court, he proposed removing all funding for A3410. He said the town would still have access to Rensselaer County Fire Investigation as needed. C. Bult asked what would be done with the fire investigation truck. S. Peter said that Rensselaer County had expressed interest in using it during town investigations. The town would maintain the truck and it would be reclassified as a general town vehicle for insurance purposes. C. Bult asked if the truck needed any maintenance. S. Peter said it needed brakes and tires. C. Swartz questioned if it was worth the cost of maintaining the truck. S. Peter agreed. He said he would speak to Rensselaer County and determine if it was at the end of life for use. **Determination: It was the consensus of the board to remove \$5,000.00 from A3410.1 and \$3,100.00 from A3410.4.**

Open Discussion

A1680.2 Central Data Equipment: The Town Clerk explained that the server was approaching the end of life. She had budgeted for a replacement server as well as an

extended warranty with the hope that one more year of warranty could be obtained; however, she also wanted to be prepared to replace the unit if needed.

A5182 Street Lighting: C. Rex asked the feasibility of expanding street lighting within the town. S. Peter said he had received calls requesting lighting in Byers Estates and by Nassau Lake; however, a minimum of fifty percent of the residents within the proposed district would need to agree to the district creation. D. Kelly noted that currently there was town wide street lighting on main roads and intersections.

A7110.2 Parks Equipment: S. Peter noted that K. Konig, Director of Buildings and Grounds, had budgeted for four picnic tables. C. Kenney asked if the tables could be purchased with parkland funds. P. Harter said yes. S. Peter mentioned that the side-by-side ATV was aging and felt it would be advisable to purchase a replacement. P. Harter said parkland funds could also be used for the purchase. **Determination: It was the consensus of the board to remove \$1,500.00 from A7110.2 and utilize parkland funds instead.**

A7110.4 Parks Contractual: S. Peter highlighted increases in the budget for fuel, hardware and mulch for the playground. P. Harter mentioned that parkland funds could be used for the purchase of the mulch as well.

A7110.1 Parks Salary: P. Harter stated that K. Konig was a full-time employee who earned compensation time but he felt that he was working too many hours. He suggested that the board hire another attendant and recommend Mr. Konig utilize his attendants more often. C. Bult mentioned that a plan was needed for oversight of the Farmers Market for 2024.

A7410.4 Libraries: C. Kenney noticed that an error had been made for the funding request for the East Greenbush Library. **Determination: \$10,000.00 was removed from A7410.4 due to a typographical error.**

A8389.4 Water Misc. Contractual: P. Harter reminded the board that the town is still under a court order for supplying water to J. Stollsteimer and the former Thoma Tire due to the salt issue at the Highway Garage.

B1420.4 Town Attorney Contractual: C. Kenney asked if the actuals for 2023 were correct. P. Harter said no. To date, no funds had been expended.

B8010.1 Zoning Salary/ B8020.1 Planning Salary: S. Peter noted that the salary for the Director of Planning and Zoning had been left in the budget for 2024. He said he was working with K. Joiner, Human Resources Manager, and civil service regarding a new job title for Ms. Knights.

SM Ambulance: S. Peter said he had a meeting with representatives from Castleton Ambulance and he had requested a copy of their full budget, including their projected revenue. To date, he had not received it. He added that their funding request for 2024 did not include the cost of Advanced Life Support (ALS) for the town. At the meeting, he was informed that the annual cost for ALS would be \$144,000.00 for eight hours only (12:00 AM

to 8:00 AM). C. Bult felt there was no data to justify the cost for ALS.

Executive Session

C. Kenney made a motion to enter into an Executive Session at 8:53 p.m. to discuss appointments and proposed salary structures under the 2024 Tentative Budget. Seconded by C. Rex.

5 Ayes 0 Noes. **MOTION CARRIED.** Ayes –J. Bult, M. Kenney, S. Swartz, T. Rex, C. Peter. Noes – 0.

C. Kenney made a motion to adjourn the Executive Session at 9:02 p.m., seconded by C. Swartz.

5 Ayes 0 Noes. **MOTION CARRIED.** Ayes –J. Bult, M. Kenney, S. Swartz, T. Rex, C. Peter. Noes – 0.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business before the Board, C. Kenney made a motion to adjourn the 10/18/2023 Town Board meeting at 9:02 p.m., seconded by C. Rex, with all voting in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra L. Curtis
Schodack Town Clerk

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