

November 8, 2018

Budget Public Hearing & Special Town Board Meeting

Present: Supervisor Edward Bender, Councilman Paul Aubertine, Councilman Dan Wiley, Councilman Alan Wood and approximately 50 residents.

Absent: Councilman Marty Mason

Supervisor Bender opened the Budget Public Hearing at 6:30pm with the pledge of allegiance.

Supervisor Bender called for comments from the audience regarding the 2019 Budget. No one wished to speak.

Supervisor Bender said that the town worked hard on the budget to stay under the tax cap. He explained that the town needs to replace a truck, and that to keep the tax rate down the board decided not to make the purchase this year.

Councilman Aubertine made the motion to close the public hearing and open the special meeting at 6:33pm, seconded by Councilman Wood. All members present voted AYE.

Resolution #50

Resolution #50 was moved by Councilman Wiley, seconded by Councilman Aubertine. Resolution #50 is to accept the 2019 Preliminary Budget with salaries.

There was no discussion. All members present voted AYE.

Resolution #51

Resolution #51 was moved by Councilman Wood, seconded by Councilman Wiley. Resolution #51 is the appointment of Rebecca Trudell as the Sole Assessor and agrees to a 16 hour work week and the salary will be \$25,594 for the remainder of the term.

There was no discussion. All members present voted AYE.

Resolution #52

Resolution #52 was moved by Councilman Aubertine, seconded by Councilman Wood. Resolution #52 is to authorize the Supervisor to pay Jefferson County the amount of \$16,804.80 from A1989.4 for tax map maintenance.

There was no discussion. All members present voted AYE.

Councilman Aubertine made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session at 6:35pm for the purpose of land acquisition, seconded by Councilman Wood. All members present voted AYE.

Councilman Aubertine made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 6:42pm, seconded by Councilman Wood.

Supervisor Bender said that the board had discussed the purchase of properties on Club Street and that they need to have the properties surveyed.

Councilman Wiley made a motion to hire LaFave, White & McGivern to do a survey on parcel 39.81-1-65.1, and to pay a fee not to exceed \$2,000.00 for the survey, seconded by Councilman Wood. All members present voted AYE.

Supervisor Bender addressed the meeting attendees. He said that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss ambulance coverage and the town board's desire to set up a committee to seek information and to come up with a plan to take care of the situation regarding the lack of coverage. Supervisor Bender told everyone that he will not allow for bantering back and forth from the crowd, and he will not allow "pot shots" either. He said the purpose is to move forward and have a plan to help Cape Vincent. Supervisor Bender called for comments.

Ron Jacobs – Ron said that he would like to inform everyone that at the last Ambulance Board of Directors meeting, it was decided to discontinue operation of service by the end of the year. He said that he is ready to assist the Fire Department to set up the 1st responders program. Supervisor Bender asked him if the ambulance squad was going to continue service until January and Ron said that they would operate until the end of December.

Supervisor Bender said that he would like residents, who wish to serve, to come forward to serve on the committee. The following residents put their names forward:

Sam (Loretta) DeLong

Dave Macintyre

Tim White

Joe Wood

Gerry Armani

Geoff Caulkin

Rick Martin

Craig Stevenson

Councilman Wiley said that he does not know what this task will consist of, but he would like to see the committee explore all avenues. He said that right now TIERS is covering Cape Vincent at tax payer's expense. He said that he would like them to look at all the options and he stressed that he feels this is going to be a costly fix. Councilman Wiley said that he wants the committee to take public comments, he does not know how long it will take for the committee to prepare a report or if the committee needs to continue on after they make their recommendations.

Supervisor Bender said that there will not be a quick fix. He said that the CON held by the ambulance can be transferred.

Sam DeLong – Sam asked what date the board has picked to start the process and Supervisor Bender said they want it started ASAP.

Councilman Wiley said that he would like to have the committee formed at the next town board meeting, November 15.

Donna Essigian – Donna asked the board if they have had conversation with other smaller towns to find out how they are handling this situation.

Supervisor Bender said that this is a State wide problem for all volunteer based ambulance squads.

Joe Wood – Joe asked if the committee would be starting from scratch and Supervisor Bender told him it would be.

Bob Ewing, Village Trustee – Bob said that the Village will work with the town for a solution and he wished the committee luck with their endeavor.

Councilman Aubertine said that he wants the committee to start from scratch and take the approach that nothing is off the table.

Harold Wiley – Harold asked if a CPR class for the youth could be given at the school. He said that the youth need to know how important it is to know this.

Tishina Dyer – Tishina said that you have to be careful with the youths because of NYS Labor Laws. She said you have to be careful and not target them.

Andy White – Andy asked if the board has looked into the cost of having TIERS or Guilfoyle take over the service. The board told him that it would be too costly.

Bud Baril, TIERS – Bud said that TIERS makes calls to the Correctional Facility and that they can bill for the call. He said that the type of call it is determines the bill, inmate calls or staff calls.

Andy White – Andy asked if there could be a satellite service to cover the prison and Councilman Wiley said that there are not enough calls to warrant satellite coverage. He said that this needs to be addressed by a higher government and the County Legislators should get involved.

Bruce Wright, Guilfoyle – Bruce said that with regard to the Correctional Facility they are paid \$97.00 which is just barely above Medicare rate. He said that if it is a call for a guard or a staff member, they need to call the nearest ambulance. He explained that the problem is with the State's insurance payment and the hurdle of what they can bill the insurance company. He talked about the insurance and those who do not have coverage at all. Bruce said that the ambulance staffs the appropriate numbers for the population.

Councilman Wiley said that a thought he has was to offer town and village employees a little extra money, and have them serve.

Gary Hall – Gary said that the ambulance is a 2005, it is rusted underneath and he feels that it has lived its life. He said that it would be \$150,000 to \$160,000 to purchase a new one.

Don Mason – Don said that he feels they should start with the prison and have Politicians get involved. He said he thinks the prison should pay up. Councilman Wiley said that they could put pressure on the prison, and Don said that workers need the coverage too.

George Sperry – George said that he felt those people who gave their names should step forward and meet after the meeting to pick a date to get things started. Supervisor Bender said that the town board would like to pick their 5 candidates first.

Bud Baril and Bruce Wright – they said that looking hard at the prison for an answer is not the solution, but they could look for a portion of the funding from them.

Jessica Ewing – Jessica said that there is grant funding available from Federal agencies for Governments that would help with this situation. The funding could be used for satellite ambulance centers.

Bud Baril – Bud said that the town needs to keep in mind that there are not a lot of calls to Cape Vincent. They have to remember there is a difference between “fish hook” type calls and emergency calls.

Councilman Wiley said that he would like to build a facility for TIERS or Guilfoyle to sit in.

Bud Baril – Bud said that he would like to stress upon the town board that they have to look at what the community can do. He said that they need to consider that this service will be placing a big burden on the taxpayer. He said that they also have to remember it is taxing on the volunteers as they are committed to a 3 hour minimum when they are serving. He said that he feels the best idea would be to start a 1st responders program.

Bruce Wright – Bruce said that there is a need for more than one ambulance coverage for the Cape Vincent/ Three Mile Bay area because of the layout. He said that Three Mile Bay has strong dedicated personnel. He said that it is tough on volunteers because they have to work, people have to work. He said that in many cases now, the employer says pick one or the other. Bruce said that he would like the committee to consider Cape Vincent as a whole. There are many large events held in Cape Vincent where coverage is needed. Bruce said that it is not fair to the community to have a seasonal ambulance.

Tom Martilotta, Chief – Tom asked what it will cost for coverage, and Bud Baril said that they need to do the math. He said it is an EMT’s salary, driver’s salary and the ambulance itself need to be considered. Bud also said that they need to keep in mind what the NYS law is. He explained that what might seem like a good idea to them, may differ from the law.

Supervisor Bender said that the committee needs to gather this information and they should seek guidance from Bud and Bruce to help them. Supervisor Bender called for any other comments. There were none.

Councilman Wood made a motion to adjourn at 7:25pm.

Michelle Bouchard, RMC – Town Clerk