

May 28, 2020

Special Town Board Work Session/Meeting - Budget

Present: Supervisor Edward Bender, Councilman Paul Aubertine, Councilman Dan Wiley, Councilman Marty Mason, Councilman Alan Wood, Highway Superintendent Bill Pond, Keith Brass, Tina Maloney, Tim White

Supervisor Bender called the meeting to order at 10am with the pledge of allegiance. Supervisor Bender said that he wanted the board to meet to review the budget and discuss ways to cut some of the funding because the town is expecting less revenue partly because of the expected shortfall in sales tax revenue.

Tina Maloney told the board that worst case scenario would be a loss of \$481,000.00 in sales tax revenue. She suggested that the board stop all projects until the third quarter reports are in. Tina said that the General Fund has received two sales tax checks and the next one to come in will go to the highway fund.

Councilman Wood said that the sales tax revenue is divided 47% to the County, 21% to the City and the remainder goes to the towns.

Councilman Wiley said that the town should prepare for the worst and hope for the best.

Councilman Aubertine said that he agrees, essential town business should be done, but put all else on hold.

Councilman Mason agreed as well. He stated that Scott Burto should just work on current projects and not go after new grants. Councilman Aubertine said that he feels Scott should be told today not to go after new projects. Councilman Wiley said that he will talk with Scott.

Tina Maloney said that she would like the board to review the budget and lines with possible cuts. She said that Recreation Park has \$5,000.00 in the equipment line that can come out because spending has been cut.

Councilman Wiley said that the Chamber of Commerce has sent out a letter and they have cancelled all events. He suggested the town furlough Shelley Higgins. Tina told him that unemployment would cost the town more money than her salary.

Councilman Aubertine asked Tim White how the ambulance stands. Tim said that the calls are down, so the expenses are down. Tim said that the income is also down and he is worried as more is going out than coming in. Councilman Aubertine asked Tim if he thought the ambulance would be ok if the town cut some of the funding they have budgeted for the ambulance. Tim said they are close to being out of money. He said that they have \$150,000.00 in labor costs alone. He will prepare a budget for the board. It was decided to revisit cutting the ambulance fund after Tim provides the new budget figures.

The board discussed the grants for the pickle ball, playgrounds and the police car garage. These grant funds have not been received yet.

Supervisor Bender said that the town is paying \$750.00 per month to Samaritan for the clinic. He said that he feels this is another place the town could cut funds as the clinic is closed and has been closed for three months because of the pandemic. Supervisor Bender will call Samaritan to discuss this monthly payment with them.

Tina Maloney said that one area that would save the general fund is to move Keith Brass and John Lawrence's pay from being split between the general fund and water to all water. Keith agreed with this because Recreation Park is currently closed.

Councilman Wood made a motion that Keith Brass and John Lawrence's pay and benefits be paid from the water account for the remainder of the year, seconded by Councilman Mason. All members voted AYE.

Councilman Wiley said that he feels the owner of the Clinic building should be approached to see if she would allow the town to bow out of the monthly payments. The town discussed the monthly fee which is divided up between the town, village and Samaritan. Councilman Wiley said that the town did not close the clinic, and he feels that Samaritan should pay the fees because they closed it. After further discussion, it was decided that Supervisor Bender will contact Samaritan and Councilman Mason will contact Cynthia Niles, the owner of the clinic building.

Bill Pond told the board that he budgeted \$500.00 to replace doors and windows, but he will take this out and not do the project this year.

Because the Chamber of Commerce has cancelled their events, the board agreed to send a letter to them to let them know that the money the town had budgeted for their advertising of events will be removed.

The board also discussed budget lines for youth coaches and uniforms which will save the town \$6,000.00. Councilman Wiley suggested a letter be sent to them too.

The board also removed budgeted funds for the Improvement League, French Festival, Arts Council, Christmas Committee, Knights of Columbus, and Chopin. A letter will be mailed to these organizations

Councilman Aubertine said that if the town is asking Scott not to go after more grants, then why should the town pay him.

Councilman Mason said that the town should have him continue to work on the grants that he has already started.

Councilman Wood said that he feels the town should not pay Scott for the months of June and July, just until the town knows how the quarter will look.

Councilman Wiley disagrees stating the Scott needs to continue with the work he is doing. He said that he hates to have him pause and stand still. He said he feels it is important to keep him going.

After discussion the board agreed to continue to pay Scott, and that he will be told not to go after any new projects at this time.

Councilman Aubertine said that grants disbursement agreements can be pulled at any time. Councilman Wiley said that if we stop working on them, we will lose the money.

Tim White talked about the Club Street project. He said that the contract should be in place before they act on tearing down the house. He said that he expects to hear real soon that the grant disbursement is in place. He said that he wants to utilize in-kind services, which will reduce the out of pocket expenses.

Tim White provided the board with a spread sheet on the grants and projects that Scott Burto has been working on. He reviewed his salary and Scott's salary. He reviewed the grants that Scott has written and said that the projects are not close to being complete.

Tina asked Tim if Scott's pay could be reimbursed from the Club Street grant and Tim told her it is not eligible. She suggested that his pay come from the BAN.

Tim White said that Supervisor Bender has the right to call DASNY at any time to get updates and the grant disbursements.

The Deputy Zoning Enforcement Officer's pay was discussed and it was decided to cut the \$1,000.00 for the position from the budget this year.

The board discussed installing water at the Transfer Site. They would like to get this done as soon as possible. The board talked about what fund should be used to pay for the water installation. Tina said that there is \$2,600.00 in the equipment line and Bill Pond said that he would not want it to come from that line as it will be needed.

Councilman Wood made a motion to have water installed at the transfer site by June 30, 2020 and that the cost, \$3,000.00 comes from the general fund, seconded by Councilman Wiley. All members voted AYE.

Tina asked the board how they would like to pay Nina Buskell for her vacation time. She said that Nina told her the board agreed to pay her the time because she isn't able to take vacation because of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Bill Pond said that she volunteered to work her vacation days because the highway crew is not able to fill in for her at this time and she wants to cut down on exposure.

Councilman Aubertine made a motion to pay the transfer site operator, Nina Buskell, for her vacation days that she is working, until Sept. 1 and after that the board will review, seconded by Councilman Wiley. All members voted AYE.

The board discussed cuts in the highway budget. Tina told the board that the highway will need the sales tax revenue and Bill said that he has been told that the CHIPS money will be held up. Bill discussed that he will not be doing any County road work, and he has cut from his budget the funds for road work because the board had asked him to cut spending. He told the board that he had already placed the order for the new dump truck before the pandemic hit and he will have to pay for it. He said he will use money from his reserve account and if he gets any CHIPS funding, this will help to pay for it too. Tina told the board that Bill has already cut \$80,000.00 from his budget. Bill said that if it is an easy winter,

that will help and he said that he budgeted \$44,000.00 for a new pickup truck that he has removed from his budget line.

Councilman Aubertine asked about the radios. Bill said that he has them, but has not been billed yet. He said that there have been changes made, and the radios he has now won't work. Bill said that is \$20,000.00 he will not need to spend. Bill told the board he has told his crew that they are on a spending freeze and he is trying to save as much as he can.

Councilman Wood said that he feels it is time that Cody Higgins and Deb Wood come back to work in the office.

Councilman Aubertine said that he would like to discuss water district 7. He said that he feels the town can mandate how the vote is run. He said that board needs to make it clear to everyone in the district how the vote will be run. Councilman Aubertine stated that the he feels a super majority rule should be how the votes are tallied.

Councilman Wood said that he does not feel this way; he said the vote should be 50% plus one, and not a super majority vote.

Councilman Aubertine said that he wants to make sure the people in the district know that the town is doing this for them, not to them. He said if the vote is close and passes the board has to come to a decision.

Keith Brass told the board that he needs to spray for bees at Recreation Park. He also told them that he has a meeting on June 2 with NYS Dept. of Transportation regarding the water line near the Correctional Facility. He said that they are looking for a permit from them to put the water line in. Keith said that he has located the paperwork.

Councilman Aubertine made a motion to adjourn at 12:05pm.

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Michelle Bouchard, RMC – Town Clerk