

Public Hearing – Continuation of Garrison Fire Dissolution / Formation of District  
September 9, 2015

The Town Board of the Town of Philipstown continued the Public Hearing on the above date at 7:00 p.m., at the Garrison Fire Department, 1616 Route 9, Garrison, New York. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to hear comments for/against the Town Board considering the establishment of a fire district upon the dissolution of the Garrison Fire Protection District of the Town of Philipstown.

PRESENT

Richard Shea	Supervisor
Nancy Montgomery	Councilwoman
John Van Tassel	Councilman
Michael Leonard	Councilman
Robert Flaherty	Councilman

Supervisor Shea opened the meeting with the Salute to the Flag.

Supervisor Shea stated that this is the continuation of the Public Hearing on the Dissolution / Formation of the Garrison Fire Protection District.

Clarence Bartow asked what the benefit is to the community with this proposed change? Supervisor Shea responded saying that it would allow the community to have direct involvement in all aspects of the fire department. Mr. Bartow then asked how? Supervisor Shea stated that the community would be voting on any large expenditure. It was explained that the first board of commissioners would be appointed by the Town Board, after that the residents of the district would vote for that board.

Mr. Bartow then questioned the proposed budget and the large increase. Councilman Van Tassel interjected that the budget submission was not the budget, but a laundry list of the department needs.

One resident stated that he would rather have the elections held at the General Election rather than in the middle of December. He was told that New York State sets the election dates.

A resident expressed his desire to have Joe Regele appointed as a fire commissioner, as he will best represent the populous of Garrison. The Town Board responded saying that anyone that is appointed will do the best for the residents.

The proposed budget was discussed at length, but it was noted for the record, that this hearing is not on the budget, but rather the issue of the dissolution/formation of a fire district.

Mr. Regele then discussed the possibility of forming the district in January, giving the fire commissioners additional time to prepare and review a budget.

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Supervisor Shea responded saying that the Town Board would assist the commissioners in this year's budget. Mr. Regele again interjected that it would be prudent to form the district in January, which would then give the commissioners a full ten months to review and prepare a budget for the district.

Stan Freilich then brought up the discussion with regard to the deeds, etc. Councilman Van Tassel stated that it is complicated, however, this is done throughout the state. The norm is that the Fire Department owns the buildings and the Fire District leases from them.

Supervisor Shea then described the role that the Town Board takes on and has for many years negotiating the budget with the Garrison Fire Department. He noted that the Town Board has interviewed qualified applicants for the board of fire commissioners and is confident that whom ever is appointed will have the best interest of the taxpayers at hand.

He further explained that there are many other items that need attention by the Town Board, such as the Town Hall infrastructure, and roads within the town.

Councilman Van Tassel added that the role of the commissioners is identical to that of this Town Board. He explained that their meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Law; nothing gets done behind the scenes. He also stated that the commissioners will have a better overview of the budget throughout the year, this task is very difficult for the Town Board to take on.

Delmar Karlen asked for clarification with regard to the Power Point presentation by Mr. Butler slide 5, and 6 that addressed "no contract." Councilman Van Tassel responded saying that he was referring to the fact that the Garrison Fire Department will no longer enter into an agreement with the Town of Philipstown for fire services.

Leasing options were explained once again, at which time, Supervisor Shea and Councilman Van Tassel referenced Mr. Butler's comments during the last public hearing.

Jim Erickson read a letter thanking all the members of the Garrison Fire Company who serve this community. Lee Erickson thanked the Town Board and stated that he would like to see this change move forward. He also invited the public to visit the firehouse and get acquainted with the operations of the firehouse.

Many of the comments from the audience were already addressed and answered during the first Public Hearing on this matter.

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There being no further comments from the public, Councilwoman Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Councilman Flaherty and unanimously carried to close the Public Hearing at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Tina M. Merando, Town Clerk