

The Town Board of the Town of Philipstown held a Public Hearing on the above date at 7:45 p.m. at the Town Hall, 238 Main Street, Cold Spring, New York. The purpose of the hearing is to hear comments for/against the proposed 2015 General Budget.

**PRESENT:**

Richard Shea	Supervisor
Nancy Montgomery	Councilwoman
John Van Tassel	Councilman
David Merandy	Councilman
Michael Leonard	Councilman

Town Clerk Merando read the Public Notice.

Supervisor Shea reviewed the proposed budget for fiscal year 2015, explaining that the Town is being held at a 1.56% cap. He also noted that the Town has a carry over from last year of about \$97,000, which will be used to offset the proposed increases in this budget.

The Town Justice line reflects an increase of approximately 11%, which is for the prosecutor's position that generates additional revenue for the Town. Town Justice Steiner introduced this policy, having proved to be beneficial to the Town's revenue line. In the past, without the prosecutor, traffic tickets weren't processed, as law enforcement didn't always show in court.

Supervisor Shea continued to explain each line item, noting that the Town has met with the Philipstown Ambulance Corp and will continue to discuss how they are going to purchase a much-needed ambulance. Councilman Van Tassel is in receipt of various funding opportunities for financing the ambulance and will pass this to the members of the Town Board for further review of the options. Supervisor Shea thanked the corps for taking the time to review and help the board to understand what exactly they are up against.

The Highway Department sat down with the Town Board for an in-depth review of the budget, realizing a 0% increase.

The Town Board will sit down again with the Garrison Volunteer Ambulance Corp to review the salary for the paid EMT, but foresees a surplus in that line in an amount of approximately \$30,000. Supervisor Shea was reminded that there are fees that will come due in the beginning of January, therefore, that amount of surplus may not be accurate. Supervisor Shea suggested that the Town might opt to make a payment to the Ambulance Corp early or split the payment in two. He is not comfortable with having a constant rolling surplus. Derek Tudor noted that these costs are the hourly rates for the EMT's. Councilman Van Tassel interjected that the EMT wasn't hired until June, therefore, there is a surplus. Mr. Tudor is concerned that this would reflect a \$30,000 cutback in the proposed budget. Supervisor Shea responded saying that the Town is not looking to cut back that amount, it will average out to be a 0% increase. The Town, however, does want to know what those monies will be used for. Mr. Tudor further explained that monies would have to be allocated to pay for the extra shifts for Thanksgiving Day, as well as Christmas Day.

When reviewing Programs for the Aging, Supervisor Shea stated he would like to bump that up a little bit if possible. Further review is warranted.

Reviewing the Recreation Department, Supervisor Shea noted that the account clerk has resigned effective November 14<sup>th</sup>, so that position will be empty for at least six weeks. When filled there will be a salary freeze, thereby a 0% increase will be seen. The salaries that are projected in the Preliminary Budget are yet to be determined. Amber Stickle, Director of the Recreation Department, has increased the projected revenues for 2015. Supervisor Shea, however, would like to further discuss this increase as they are hard pressed to reach the revenue goal for this year. There have been some discussions with regard to new programming for next year. The Town Board will review this matter further.

Supervisor Shea stated that he is going to increase the cemetery line to \$7,500.00. Councilman Leonard stated that within the last two weeks we have had to cut down two trees that were posing a danger. It is the responsibility of the Town to maintain these cemeteries, therefore the increase is a necessity. Supervisor Shea was not remised in honoring the stewardship of the cemeteries by Betty Budney and stated that we must keep up the work she tirelessly performed for all those years.

It was noted that the medical insurance has decreased by 1% due to employee contributions, and all new hires will be contributing more towards their benefits.

Supervisor Shea stated that the Dahlia House Debt Service will be paid off in 2016. However, he believes that if the VFW is sold, the Town should review whether or not to pay off that debt. The replacement of the roof at Recreation is going out until 2022. This year is the final payment for the recreation alarm system, giving the town some relief.

The Town will probably establish a Statutory Installment Bond for the boiler at Recreation, so in essence, the monies seen in paying off the alarm system will be used for the boiler. The boiler financing will continue until 2023. Joe Regele asked how much was the cost, Supervisor Shea responded saying it was \$550,000. He explained that it was a complete renovation of the boiler system. New lines were installed, asbestos abatement had to be completed, it was a large project. He also noted that the 10,000 gallon fuel tank had to be removed, thus 150 – 200 yards of contaminated materials had to be removed. He thanked Councilman Merandy for the oversight during that project. He also noted for the record that that project was off set by a \$200,000 grant that he and Town Clerk Merando had worked on, and have since, received the monies.

Supervisor Shea then reviewed the revenues projected for 2015. The court fees have already surpassed the projected amount for 2014, and the Town anticipates leaving that amount in the budget for 2015. The mortgage tax rebate was \$353,000 last year. Two Hundred Ninety Thousand (\$290,000) was projected for 2014, and will probably receive \$280,000, so the Town will see a small short fall with that revenue.

The matter of cable television revenue fees was briefly discussed. Supervisor Shea noted that the Town is now in negotiations with Cablevision and hopes that there will be a small increase in that item. He went on to say that there has been some discussion with Cablevision and a group advocating discounts for seniors and veterans, and it is hoped that something positive will result in these talks. One possibility is getting some free Internet access points at the senior complex.

Supervisor Shea noted that he would like the Board to sit down with Code Enforcement to further review his proposed budget. The safety inspection fees have again increased by \$10,000, another reason to meet with Kevin Donohue to confirm those revenues.

Emergency Services were reviewed noting that Continental Village Fire has come in at 1.56% cap. Supervisor Shea thanked the fire company for presenting a clear budget submission and for their services. Cold Spring Fire Department has a 1% increase for the portion outside the village that they cover.

Supervisor Shea stated that Garrison Fire Department would continue to have budget workshops with the Board. One of the items that will be discussed is the LOSAP numbers and trying to get that funded.

North Highlands Fire is a district and the Town has no control over that line item.

Garrison Landing Water District cannot be increased. However, \$18,000 barely covers the cost of maintenance.

Finally, Supervisor Shea reported that the rate would increase 2.6%.

Stan Freilich asked about the service award in the amount of \$75,000 for Garrison Fire. Supervisor Shea responded saying that was the amount submitted by John Svirsky. However, that amount has been modified to approximately \$65,684. Mr. Freilich explained that as memory serves, the amount was \$55,000 last year and he was surprised to see such an increase. Supervisor Shea explained that the contribution last year was in the neighborhood of \$32,500 when the referendum passed. It virtually doubled. Councilman Van Tassel interjected that there was an increase of ten new members to the program. Joe Regele added that the published estimate was a \$21,000 increase. It was noted that the ten new members are vested with five years of service. Mr. Regele also pointed out that there was an overpayment in the amount of \$10,000. Supervisor Shea concurred and stated that the Board is looking at that, as there were overages for 2012, 2013 and 2014, totaling a possible \$22,000. Bottom line is that Garrison Fire is within the cap.

Joe Regele submitted the Garrison Fire budget that he had received on November 3, 2014, and had worked the numbers. It was noted that the budget had been revised and submitted to the Town on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Regele referenced a meeting that was held in September in which the budget format was discussed. Once again, the budget only list expenses and doesn't show revenues. He went on to discuss year-to-date data, stating that the Town Board doesn't know what has been spent. Mr. Regele stated that all figures show that there will be a \$40,000

surplus for 2014. Past surpluses have been spent on a Chief's truck, boat, and a fire tower without the Board being aware of it. Mr. Regele touched on the amount allocated for painting lines in the parking lot for 2015 of which he doesn't believe that should be a priority.

Discussion continued reviewing the proposed budget for the fire company and their truck schedule. Supervisor Shea then laid out what the Town Board is expecting from the fire company next week, such as an accurate financial statement, a revenue side of the budget, and plans for future purchases. He stated that the Board has to figure out how to stay within the cap while dealing with double the LOSAP. "Mr. Regele interjected that they approved a number that was based on the fact that there were a bunch of guys that were there for four years and not one, when they were putting the numbers together, thought that they vest after five years, maybe we should add that in. The very first year the plan comes due, and what a surprise, there are more members."

Supervisor Shea addressed a couple of points, saying that when you look at the fire companies, the equipment is inherently expensive and throwing around a couple million dollar figures. Any emergency providers deal in large numbers, they are purchasing fire trucks to put out fires and rescue people from car accidents, they are buying ambulances to take people to hospitals, they are not buying luxury cars. All of these mentioned, are necessary expenses. There is a bottom line cost and it's not 25% less. He reminded everyone that several years ago, the Town Board cut their budget by 26%, followed by another 1% cut the next year. Councilman Van Tassel stated that their budget is 18% lower than in 2011 and running two firehouses verses one. The operation of the second firehouse benefits the residents in that area and should be reflected in their homeowners insurance.

Supervisor Shea stated that he appreciated Mr. Regele's comments and has brought a lot to the floor. Councilman Merandy stated that the Board has been asking the same questions that Mr. Regele has put forth. A conversation ensued with regard to the pros and cons to the state mandated cap.

Councilwoman Montgomery questioned the planning increase under contractual. It was explained that those cost are for legal fees, planners and engineers.

There being no further comments from the public, Councilwoman Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Councilman Merandy to close the Public Hearing at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Tina M. Merando  
Town Clerk