

Minutes of the Special Meeting/Budget Workshop of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Lake George, NY, held on Monday, March 1, 2021 at 1:08 p.m. This meeting was held during the COVID-19 virus outbreak and public attendance was prohibited. The public was allowed access via Zoom teleconferencing which was publicized on the Village's web site.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert M. Blais, Mayor
Ray Perry, Trustee

MEMBERS VIA ZOOM: Joseph Mastrodomenico, Trustee
John Root, Trustee

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Earl, Deputy Mayor

Also present were: Clerk Debra McKinney, Superintendent Keith Lanfear, Operator Tim Shudt, Treasurer Danna Bock and others via Zoom.

At 1:00 p.m. Mayor Blais opened the meeting and began by saying that the last draft budget had to be revised as there was a figure in it that needed to be changed. It was the number for the estimated revenue from the Town for the billing for their share of the Caldwell Sewer District. This billing is always one year behind, so that the increased revenue from new plant expenditures will not come to the Village until the 2022/23 budget year. However, we will have a debt payment due and increased new plant expenditures in the 2021/22 budget. Removing that revenue without adding other revenue would increase our tax rate substantially. The Village Board was caught off guard with the estimated cost to operate the new plant, with a majority of the increase being accounted for with increased electricity costs. Mayor Blais noted that he has been researching the impact of that increased tax rate on the residential and business tax payers. The other factor was the Town did a re-evaluation recently, and it is effecting our next year's budget. The re-evaluation is affecting the Village's taxes in a wide variety of ways, some up, some down. Between the re-evaluation of the assessments and the new plant, figuring the budget has been difficult this year. If there were no re-evaluation and just the increased expenses from the new plant, the budget would only go up by .01/\$1,000.

Mayor Blais reported that the easiest way to keep the taxes in line, would be to increase the revenue with one major change. He suggested that would be to increase the parking meter fees. The parking lots are already \$2./hour, if the rest of the Village parking was increased to \$2./hour, it would take care of our budget issues for this year. He has been researching parking fees in other resorts. He read a list of parking meter rates in other communities; they ranged from \$1.50 per hour to \$5.00 per hour. Also, he suggested amending the local law so that all parking meters and pay stations shall be in operation and enforced from April 1st to October 31st. This would cover our September events, including Americade which is planned for September this year. By increasing the parking from \$1. to \$2. an hour, it would generate about \$336,000. and cover the shortage in the budget. Based on a new tax rate with the meter revenues and the new assessed values, Mayor Blais checked several properties and estimated their tax. Also, with this draft budget as he has proposed, we would be under the tax cap. He opened the topic up to discussion by the Board and commented that we can look at it as a partnership of the taxpayers and the visitors helping to support the Village. He also proposed the purchase of six more pay and display stations, as well. These machine are more convenient and more user friendly.

Trustee Root commented that he appreciated all of the work done on the budget and the great effort to bring it to where it is. He was in agreement with raising the rates and noted that there

would still be free parking on the non-metered streets behind Ottawa Street. Trustee Perry agreed and mentioned that we offer free concerts, free fireworks, and musical entertainment. Increasing the parking rates will keep the taxpayers cost down. Mayor Blais commented that the improvements to the Waste Water Treatment Plant are there to protect the lake, but an added expense and burden to the taxpayers. Many communities are charging at least \$2./ hour and many do not offer what we have with the two public restrooms, fireworks free concerts in the Park and the Beach. The Board was in agreement, and Mayor Blais noted that Trustee Earl could not attend today, but he spoke to him on the phone, and he is in agreement as well. He continued and said as long as the Board agrees with the concept, we will move forward with amending the local law and set a public hearing for Proposed Local Law No. 2 for March 15 at the Regular Village Board meeting. Mayor Blais noted that we will plan a Public Hearing on the budget for April 5th at the Annual Meeting. Mayor Blais noted that the 22/23 budget will be easier as we will have the Town's increased contribution to put in as a revenue.

Mayor Blais reported that new employee Greg Moon at the WWTP has given notice effective February 26. His former employer offered him a more competitive salary. So this position will be advertised.

Mayor Blais noted that he had taken a poll of the Board in regards to sharing the cost with the Town for Upstate Appraisal Services to get an appraisal of the Sky Harbor property. The Village share would be \$1,200. After the appraisal is completed, a decision can be made as to the next step. Mayor Blais likened this to a project similar to the Wood Park Project in size and scope. He noted that the non-for-profits may be interested as well as John Carr will be looking to see if additional parking will be available because it will affect his potential development. No motion was made for a resolution to approve the expenditure, but results are the poll are as follows: Mayor Blais voted Yes, Trustee Perry voted Yes, Trustee Mastrodomenico voted Yes, Trustee Root voted No, and Trustee Earl voted No, for a majority vote of Yes.

Mayor Blais asked for any other business. Mayor Blais noted that he has a Zoom Call at 2:00 p.m. with DEC in regards to Harmful Algae Bloom. He also commented that since we've had some fireworks discussions, he's received a few inquiry calls. Ten regular fireworks shows are in the budget with the intention that they will be sponsored, and he intends on asking the County for Occupancy Tax Funds towards these.

There was a motion by Trustee Perry to adjourn at 1:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra J. McKinney, CPPB
Village Clerk