

Minutes of the Special Budget Workshop of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Lake George, NY, held on Monday, March 6, 2023 at 11:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert M. Blais, Mayor
John Earl, Trustee
Joseph Mastrodomenico, Trustee
Ray Perry, Trustee
John Root, Trustee

Also present were: Clerk Julie Allen, Superintendent Keith Lanfear, and Operator Tim Shudt.

At 11:00 a.m. Mayor Blais opened the meeting and began with explaining that before going any further, the Board first had to decide whether they wanted to go with a budget with the new sewer tax rate or one without. Mayor Blais went on to explain that if they decide to work using the budget with no sewer tax rate, it will result in a discount of about 12% to the taxpayers. Mayor Blais went over what using the budget that had a new sewer tax rate would mean to taxpayers. Mayor Blais handed out a sheet showing different tax rate scenarios if the sewer tax rate were to be set. Mayor Blais said some residential property taxes would go down, some would go up, commercial properties that were open year-round would go up quite a bit, and commercial properties that close in the winter would go down a bit. Mayor Blais said the hardest hit would be apartment houses because it would be based on water usage. Mayor Blais explained his biggest concern with imposing the new rate was that it is still being worked on and that earlier that day they had found more errors in the formula. Mayor Blais went on to explain that if the Board decides to figure the new budget using the new tax rate, there would not be enough time to get it done before the election and the new Board would have to approve the budget without him. Mayor Blais asked the Board for their decision on which budget they would like to go with.

Trustee Perry said he felt that with the errors, and the new sewer utility rate budget being rushed, that the Board should use the standard budget and continue to work on the sewer utility rate budget for next year.

Trustee Root said he felt with a new administration coming in there would be too much going on to ask them to also try to pass a new budget with a sewer utility rate. Trustee Root said he does want to continue to have the sewer rate worked on to be used for next year's budget as it is the fairest way to assess, basing it on water usage.

Trustee Mastrodomenico said that even though he wants to continue to look at the sewer tax rate, there was no date promised, so going with the standard budget this year is his choice.

Trustee Earl agreed to hold off until next year for the sewer utility rate and use the standard budget this year.

Mayor Blais announced that as all agreed, they would go ahead using the standard budget procedure.

Mayor Blais started to review the tentative proposed wages and asked the department heads and clerk to leave the meeting at 11:22 a.m.

At 11:43 a.m. the department heads and clerk returned to the meeting.

Mayor Blais started going through the general fund appropriations starting with the WWTP. Mayor Blais said to Operator Shudt that the payroll request of adding \$2/hour was approved. Trustee Perry corrected that all requests for his employees were approved. Mayor Blais then asked what equipment was included in the \$205K that Operator Shudt was requesting for the WWTP. Operator Shudt responded it was for a new skid steer snowblower, a new Pick-Up truck, the asset management plan, and for paving. Mayor Blais asked if the paving could wait a year. Superintendent Lanfear believes he can get the paving done for \$20K by Brian Rounds. Superintendent Lanfear said he would double check to make sure it can be done for \$20K. The agreement made was to reduce the equipment budget by \$30K. Mayor Blais read that under sanitary sewer they had \$112K, to which all agreed.

Mayor Blais then asked Superintendent Lanfear to go over DPW. Mayor Blais said under streets, all employees were approved with a \$1/hour increase. Mayor Blais asked Superintendent Lanfear to go over the equipment purchases. Superintendent Lanfear said the leased equipment was:

DPW

444 Loader, for \$22K/year

Vac Truck, for \$23.2K/year (which is 40% share)

Backhoe, for \$6.5K/year (which is 50% share)

Water

Vac Truck, for \$16.6K/year (which is 20% share)

Backhoe, for \$6.5K/year (which is 50% share)

WWTP

324 Loader, for \$19K/year

Vac Truck, for 23.2K/year (which is 40% share)

Mayor Blais asked what the other \$55K listed was for and Superintendent Lanfear responded it was to replace the blue Ford Escape. There was discussion on whether the vehicle should be all electric or at least hybrid. It was agreed that due to the higher cost of all electric, Superintendent Lanfear would get pricing for the Hybrid only.

Mayor Blais asked Superintendent Lanfear about the \$50K that was listed under on street parking, and Superintendent Lanfear responded it is for adding more parking meters.

Mayor Blais asked Superintendent Lanfear about the \$50K under buildings for the Visitor Center. Superintendent Lanfear explained it is for painting/cleaning of the Visitor Center. Superintendent Lanfear said he received a quote just this morning and it ended up being about \$19K. Superintendent Lanfear further explained that there was an additional \$20K needed for exterior repairs to the fire house. This means that the Board may adjust the \$50K requested down to \$40K for a savings of about \$10K.

Mayor Blais asked about the storm sewers A8140 totaling \$90K. Superintendent Lanfear said now that they have had KSPE evaluate the culvert repair, it has been determined that only a portion of the culvert needs to be replaced which should be a total cost of \$70K instead of the \$90K for the entire culvert. This means a savings of \$20K.

Mayor Blais questioned Superintendent Lanfear about the parks budget as he felt it was low. Mayor Blais said it had nothing under equipment, so he put in \$10K. Superintendent Lanfear explained that not much should be needed this year as much of their equipment had been replaced within the last few years.

Mayor Blais reviewed the water fund budget and noted that it is was not balanced. Mayor Blais went through the budget and could not find any line items that could be reduced. Superintendent Lanfear said that we need to increase the budget under the F1640.2 (central garage equipment) for a new truck and plow to \$80K which means in increase of \$16K. Mayor Blais asked Clerk Julie Allen to bring Treasurer Danna Bock in to give him the checking balance for the water department. Treasurer Danna Bock joined the meeting at 12:34 p.m. Mayor Blais asked Treasurer Danna Bock what the balance in the checking was for water and she replied that the ending balance as of January 31, 2023 was \$939K. Treasurer Danna Bock went on to say that we are currently spending on average about \$102K per month. If we were to continue this trend it would leave a balance of approximately \$500K. Mayor Blais said although there would be no reserves, the checking balance would be enough to cover the difference in what is needed for the budget. Treasurer Danna Bock said to this we need to increase the revenue. Mayor Blais said that is what we will do, increase the water revenues on F2140 \$206,507. to make up the difference needed.

Mayor Blais asked if the Trustees would like to continue the meeting to try to complete the budget or if they would like to end the meeting. The Trustees agreed to continue the meeting.

The Mayor resumed talking about the general fund budget. Clerk Julie Allen brought up that account A8020.2 needed \$2000 added for a computer for planning and zoning. Mayor Blais continued going through each account. Mayor Blais said he raised the budget for A1420 Law because we ran short this year and their prices have been raised. Mayor Blais asked if there was anything known that would need to be budgeted for engineer A1440. Both Operator Shudt and Superintendent Lanfear said they didn't have anything they knew of at this point. Mayor Blais pointed out the price for the AED's was included in the central garage budget. Mayor Blais went over the A3120 Public Safety Police budget, and Trustee Perry stated he had an update from Jim LaFarr. Trustee Perry said Sheriff LaFarr is very interested in leasing a substation here in Lake George and he is looking into the old hardware store.

Mayor Blais next went over the fire budget, stating that it is up. The biggest increase is in the cost of fire clothing. The fire department has to provide two turnout jackets and pants to each member and the cost has almost doubled. Mayor Blais stated that the Town has now reached its CAP of 80%. The Mayor said that the budget went from \$301K to \$373K.

Mayor Blais said that there is an increase of \$1/hr. put in for Jim Anagnos and that the Board should do everything they can to keep him as he is very good at what he does and is well liked.

Mayor Blais said he increased snow removal as the men's wages have increased which also means that overtime will increase. Mayor Blais asked Superintendent Lanfear what makes up the contractual cost and Superintendent Lanfear explained it was for salt.

Mayor Blais brought up the economic assist budget and Trustee Perry questioned that the pay rate went down. Mayor Blais said he had put in \$17K because there was confusion over the pay rate.

Mayor Blais then questioned Treasurer Danna Bock to see if we had received and money from Pepsi for the vending machines. Mayor Blais said he believes they are about three years behind on paying us. Treasurer Danna Bock will investigate how much they owe us.

Mayor Blais reviewed the itemized list for the occupancy tax account, bands account and celebrations account. Trustee Root questioned what adv. dues stood for on the list and the Mayor explained it was for advertisement and dues.

Mayor Blais questioned Superintendent Lanfear on the \$7K for Gypsy Moth treatment. Superintendent Lanfear explained that Judy Gearwar wants to treat the trees again as she feels it is needed.

Mayor Blais brought up the zoning contractual and asked if all Trustees were in agreement to approve, they responded they were.

Trustee Root questioned if the \$9K for paying the Town was included in the \$24K listed under refuse collection and Mayor Blais responded yes.

Mayor Blais said that that Judy Gearwar requested a \$2K/year raise to which the Mayor and Trustees agreed.

Mayor Blais asked Treasurer Danna Bock why there was a difference in the debt services and she responded it was because we paid off the Fire Truck as well as another debt service.

Mayor Blais went over the reserves and explained the increases were to the Fire Department as well as adding \$10K to street improvements.

Mayor Blais went through the list of anticipated revenues. He said there was a \$100K increase for Occ Tax.

Mayor Blais asked if there was any equipment to sell this year and Superintendent Lanfear responded there is a generator and the old Fire Chiefs vehicle. Mayor Blais suggested that once he gets the new revised numbers from Treasurer Bock, he will get the paperwork together and they can set the Public Hearing.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie K. Allen, Clerk