

THE TOWN OF CHENANGO TOWN BOARD MET WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2015 AT
7:00 P.M. IN THE TOWN OFFICE BUILDING 1529 N.Y. ROUTE 12, BINGHAMTON, N.Y.

PRESENT:

Harold Snopek, Supervisor
Gene Hulbert, Councilperson
Terry Kellogg, Councilperson
Jim DiMascio, Councilperson
Russell Hemedinger, Councilperson

ALSO PRESENT:

Donald G. Walls, Town Attorney

ABSENT:

Rhonda D. Milks, Town Clerk

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Mr. Snopek requested that all present stand and join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mr. Snopek welcomed two young gentlemen from Chenango Forks High School.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. DiMascio moved, seconded by Mr. Hemedinger that the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as prepared and presented. Motion carried.

BID OPENINGS: None

PUBIC HEARINGS:

Preliminary Budget and Special District Assessment Rolls for the Fiscal Year 2016.

Mr. Snopek turned the meeting over to Julie Wyatt, Bookkeeper and Budget Officer for the Town.

Julie Wyatt – As in past years we are under the 2% cap maximum. This year it is the lesser of 2% or the inflation rate. For 2016 it is 0.73, that is what the Town has to operate under. The Town's biggest concern continues to be the rise in the cost of health insurance. The rise for next year should be about a 15% increase. We do not have the final numbers yet. It obviously puts us under some constraints.

Budget Overview:

The total tax levy for the Town is down from \$2,122,877 in 2015 to \$2,101,929 in 2016. A decrease of \$20,948.

In the General Fund, the proposed tax rate increase is \$0.05 per thousand, from \$0.35 to \$0.40 per thousand.

In the Highway Fund, the proposed tax rate increase is \$0.15 per thousand, from \$1.48 to \$1.63 per thousand.

The tax levies for the Special Districts, including all fire protection districts and the light district remained flat as compared to 2015.

Per the Budget resolution passed November 2014, Water and Sewer rates will both be increased by 2% in 2016. The new rates will take effect with the 2nd billing for the year 2016.

Julie asked if anyone had any questions or comments.

Margaret Turna stood and wanted to compliment the Board on the good Budget and keeping the Town in sound financial shape. However, she was very concerned about not giving the allocation to the seniors this coming year. The Town does not have a Parks and Recreation Commission, they simply have a Parks Department and it was the philosophy of the previous Boards and I am not saying it was your philosophy. Just to impart why I'm speaking tonight was that it was thought to be more cost effective to give an allocation to the community associations, which we did for many years, and then we thought the seniors deserved something too. So that the allocations that you give to both of those types of groups- they are managing them and they take care of their own recreation through them. I think it is unfortunate that the Board is not going to allocate anything to them. I've heard different comments about the people are not all from the Town of Chenango. If you check the other Senior Groups you will find Town of Chenango residents in those groups. The Town of Fenton, I believe, has two groups – The North Fenton Seniors and the Town of Fenton Seniors. The Town of Fenton is a small town and

still can see their way clear and give money to both of their groups. That is all she had to say. She is just very disappointed because the Town is in great financial shape. She did not know if there was a percentage of unappropriated funds that we should have as opposed to what the budget amount is. It used to be very low and I am sure now you have to carry a bigger fund balance. In looking through the annual report, I do not think the \$3,500.00 would affect the workings of the Town and like I said if you look at all the other places that have senior centers there are Town of Chenango people there and we also didn't give the Library money. Of course now we pay that through our taxes. That was always the philosophy that we subsidized the groups in our Town and other people can join if they like. Margaret asked if anyone had questions from her or the president of the senior group. She thanked the Board and asked them to reconsider the allocation.

Julie Wyatt- Told Margaret that she was correct in that the fiscal stress monitoring that the State puts us under now. We do have to carry a higher fund balance than what we use to and they do look at it differently in the fund balance that is carried. As Budget Officer, I have presented to the board, for a few years now, to cut the senior funding and it has been a close vote (4 to 1) to cut it. We have made so many cuts in the past 3-4 years since the tax cap has come into effect and they have not been easy cuts.

Margaret Turna – But the idea is that you do have a fund balance.

Julie Wyatt –We do have a fund balance, you are right.

Margaret Turna – I won't mention the percentage because I am not absolutely sure but it use to be like 20% was recommended and that you would be written up if you had more than 20%. The fund balance is over that and that is why I am recommending it. I would never say give the \$3,500.00 to the seniors without saying where it can come from. I think that you can use that out of the fund balance.

Julie Wyatt – In the past weren't the seniors, before this community center was here for them to use, using the funding to pay for a facility elsewhere.

Margaret Turna – No, that was the Town of Chenango Seniors. They met at the Methodist Church. We always allocated two different amounts – The Town of Chenango Seniors got a lot more money because they paid the church for the rental and the clean-up. The Kattelville Seniors, which are the ones here.

Julie Wyatt – Where did they meet before this building was here?

Margaret Turna – They were at the Church further up River Road. At that time they got a lot more money than the \$3,500.00. The Town of Chenango Seniors have disbanded because they could not get people, as I understand it as I am not in either group, but the Town of Chenango Seniors disbanded because they couldn't get people to be officers and they wanted to come up here but they couldn't because they needed storage space because they had a book exchange. That is the history. We use to give them, I don't remember exactly, approximately \$15,000.00 between the two senior groups. I realize that you have to cut down but now with only one – so some of the people from that group joined Kattelville, some of them went to North Fenton, some of them went to Fenton and some of them belong to two or three groups because that is their only activity. As people get older they like to be in a group that has the same interests. This amount certainly does not subsidize everything they do.

Julie Wyatt – Absolutely she agreed. We have seen their budget.

Margaret Turna – Well that's my two cents and I hope you will reconsider.

Hal Snopek – Thanked Mrs. Turna

John Barrett – I have a great objection to my tax payer money going towards trips for seniors. If they want to go on a trip, they should pay for it out of their own pocket. If they have parties at Christmas time, instead of me and my taxes going towards their Christmas party and anything else, as far as I am concerned, they should pay for it themselves.

Norm Lawrence – Asked him to join their club

John Barrett – Replied that he was not interested in joining their club, thank you.

Sam Cohen – Asked July Wyatt, Budget Officer, if money was allocated to the Youth Groups. He is all in favor of that. He use to coach girls softball for year and he is very much in favor of that. It just seems like the seniors are being left behind again. It is bad enough that the insurance companies and the Medicare plans are being taken away more and more from the seniors. It is actually the seniors that seem to need more help than a lot of the youth groups and I would hate to see any money taken from them. Again I would just like the Board to reconsider. I don't think that \$3,500.00 would cut into your budget that much. Just looking at some of the figures – which are running into the thousands and thousands - we are not asking for a lot and that man is entitled to his opinion as we are all entitled to our opinions.

Julie Wyatt – As the Budget Officer, I do take the job very seriously. I am responsible for allocating the tax payer money and I made several recommendations to the Board. Some were approved and some were not. I recommended cutting the civics – youth civics by 10% and that was voted “no”. They voted to keep their levels the same. I recommended that the year before as well. The seniors this year was the one that did get cut.

Sam Cohen – This gentlemen just indicated that if these people want to go on bus trips they should pay for it themselves. A lot of our members are really older people who are still very active but they may not be able to afford to go on these trips and a lot don't because they don't have the money. We pay most of it ourselves. I don't believe that the money for our day trips is the large majority. I just feel that we need a little bit of help and we are not asking for a lot.

Julie Wyatt – This decision was not made lightly. There was a lot of discussion around this. There really was. This probably was the most discussed topic, this and health insurance.

Sam Cohen – We just ask for reconsideration. Thank you.

Mr. Snopek – Asked if anyone else wished to be heard. No one replied and he closed the public hearing.

There were no communications or committee reports.

RESOLUTIONS:

RESOLUTION ADOPTING SECTION 504 OF THE POLICIES AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR THE TOWN OF CHENANGO, was offered by Russell Hemedinger, seconded by Jim DiMascio and carried by the following roll call: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN AS REQUIRED UNDER THE NEW YORK STATE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT-DISASTER RECOVERY (DCBG-DR) PROGRAMS, was offered by Jim DiMascio, seconded by Terry Kellogg and carried by the following roll call: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

RESOLUTION WITH REGARD TO THE TOWN OF CHENANGO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, was offered by Terry Kellogg, seconded by Gene Hulbert and carried by the following roll call: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF CONTRACT RENEWING DENTAL INSURANCE BENEFITS (Excellus BlueCross BlueShield), was offered by Gene Hulbert, seconded by Jim DiMascio and carried by the following roll call: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF CONTRACT FOR HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS (Excellus BlueCross BlueShield), was offered by Russell Hemedinger, seconded by Jim DiMascio and carried by the following roll call: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF CONTRACT FOR MEDICARE AND PLAN BENEFITS (Excellus BlueCross BlueShield/Medicare Blue Enhanced PPO), was offered by Jim DiMascio, seconded by Terry Kellogg and carried by the following roll call: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION – Gordon Grannis- was offered by Terry Kellogg, seconded by Gene Hulbert and carried by the following roll call: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION – Raymond Warren – was offered by Gene Hulbert, seconded by Russell Hemedinger and carried by the following roll call: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ADVANCE OF \$2,977.83 TO THE TOWN JUSTICE'S BAIL ACCOUNT AT TIOGA STATE BANK, offered by Russell Hemedinger, seconded by Jim DiMascio and carried by the following roll call: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

Being that there was no further business to discuss, Mr. DiMascio moved, seconded by Mr. Hulbert to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lizanne M. Tiesi-Korinek, Deputy Town Clerk
Town of Chenango

