

**WESTERLO TOWN BOARD
SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING
&
TOWN BOARD WORKSHOP
OF
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2019**

The Westerlo Town Board held a Special Town Board meeting for the presentation of the 2020 Town of Westerlo Tentative Budget to the Town Board and Workshop meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2019 at the Richard H. Rapp Municipal Building (Westerlo Town Hall), 933 County Route 401, Westerlo. Acting Supervisor Bichteman opened the meeting at 7:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Present were: Acting Supervisor William F. Bichteman, Jr.
Councilman Anthony Sherman
Councilman Richard Filkins
Councilwoman Amie Burnside

Absent: Councilman Joseph Boone

Also attending were: Highway Superintendent Jody Ostrander and Highway Employee Salvatore Spinnato, Zoning Board Chairperson John Sefcik, Planning Board Chairperson Dorothy Verch, Museum Director Mary-Jane Araldi, Town Historian Dennis Fancher, Clerk to the Boards Jennifer Bungay, Deputy Town Clerk Karla Weaver, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Kathleen Spinnato and approximately 15 interested residents.

SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING

Councilwoman Burnside made a motion to open the Special Town Board meeting, seconded by Councilman Filkins, motion carried by those present.

PRESENTATION OF 2020 BUDGET

Acting Supervisor Bichteman provided the Town Board and public with a copy of the 2020 Town of Westerlo Tentative Budget. He gave a presentation on understanding the budget, budget composition and budget coding. Challenges included an increase in health insurance costs and the Library budget increase of approximately 40% over the previous year. He also discussed PILOT revenue generated from three Commercial Solar Energy Systems; Costanza and Shepard Farms 1 & 2. He indicated they will not reach taxable status in 2020 however will be recorded in the 2021 budget. As for the Community Host Agreements for those solar farms, they have each agreed to make a contribution to the Town of Westerlo parks in the amount of \$15,000/ea when they are mechanically complete. Neither Westerlo A nor Medusa A has a PILOT program or Community Host Agreement in place. He also indicated that during the preparation of the 2020 budget, considerable effort was expended to identify savings wherever possible.

With there being no questions from the Town Board, Councilwoman Burnside made a motion to close the Special Town Board meeting at 7:27 PM, seconded by Councilman Sherman, motion carried by those present.

TOWN BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING

Councilman Sherman made a motion to open the Town Board workshop meeting at 7:28 PM, seconded by Councilman Filkins, motion carried by those present.

DISCUSSION OF 2020 TOWN OF WESTERLO BUDGET

Acting Supervisor Bichteman explained that there is no budget spread for Westerlo Lighting and So. Westerlo Lighting as the cost indicated on the cover sheet for those represent direct costs. He reviewed the 2020 Tentative Budget cover page and each account code line by line.

Since the budget was just provided to the Town Board, they will review and will hold further discussion at the Oct. 15th Town Board meeting. The Town Board discussed possible dates to discuss the budget further and mentioned they will decide on a date for an additional workshop meeting at the Town Board meeting on Oct. 15th. If there is any possibility of going above the tax cap, Acting Supervisor Bichteman reminded the Town Board they will need to schedule a public hearing to adopt a local law and should keep that in mind. The deadline is Nov. 20th for the final adopted budget.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A resident asked about the Library's cash reserve since there was an increase in their 2020 budget. Library Board of Trustees members Laura Tenney and Maureen Sikule responded to the residents question explaining why the budget was increased, mentioning that the Library Director retired in July and the position had to be filled. To attract qualified candidates, the Library Board felt they should increase the hours to 30 hours/week which qualified the new director for health insurance benefits. Mrs. Tenney further explained that the cash reserve account is mostly from grant funds and donations and is used for improvements to the building, not for operating costs. In order to qualify for future NYS grant monies, the Library has to maintain a percentage to qualify for potential grants. Mrs. Sikule indicated the Library Board must be in agreement as to how to spend money from the cash reserve. A resident was pleased with the level of detail of the 2020 budget and the information provided; a huge improvement over previous years.

With there being no further public comment, Councilman Filkins made a motion to adjourn the workshop meeting, seconded by Councilwoman Burnside, motion carried by those present. The Town Board Workshop meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Spinnato