

**WESTERLO TOWN BOARD  
WORKSHOP MEETING  
OF  
TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2020**

The Town of Westerlo Town Board held a workshop meeting on July 7, 2020 at the Town Hall located at 933 County Route 401, Westerlo, NY. Zoom ID # 92736169254. Supervisor Bichteman opened the workshop at 7:04 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Attending were: Supervisor William Bichteman Jr.  
Councilwoman Amie L. Burnside  
Councilman Joseph J. Boone  
Councilman Richard Filkins  
Councilman Matthew Kryzak

Also attending were: Planning Board Chairperson Dorothy Verch, Town Attorney Javid Afzali, Deputy Town Clerk Kathleen Spinnato, Acting Town Clerk Karla Weaver and approximately six interested residents.

**TRANSFER STATION FEE SCHEDULE**

The Town Board discussed increasing the cost from \$15 to \$20 each for refrigerators, freezers and air conditioners and for appliances such as washers, dryers and stoves from \$6 to \$10 each. Fees for other items will remain unchanged. (see attached)

To help enforce the Solid Waste Law, Councilmen Filkins and Boone will work with the Highway Superintendent to obtain appropriate signage.

**BUILDING DEPARTMENT APPLICATION FEE SCHEDULE**

Supervisor Bichteman provided the Town Board with proposed changes to application fees for the building department (see attached). Councilman Kryzak suggested adding a \$5.00 filing fee for all residential and \$10.00 for all commercial permit applications.

**DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS #2-18**

The Town Board reviewed proposed resolution # 2-18.

**2020-002 COVID RELATED GENERAL LEDGER/ACCOUNTING CODES**

Supervisor Bichteman advised that account code 1620.60 has already been created for COVID related expenses. To date, the Town has spent a total of \$2,622.71 for COVID related supplies. Mr. Bichteman explained, in order to qualify for FEMA reimbursement, the town must spend \$3,300.00. He also discussed line adjustments and transfers of funds which occur by a Board decision at the end of the year.

**2020-03 BUDGET CUTS REDUCING HOURS OF TOWN SUPERVISOR STAFF**

The proposed resolution suggested eliminating the Supervisor's part-time assistant and reducing the full-time assistant to 32 hours a week which the Supervisor did not believe was an option given their duties. Attorney Afzali advised, under Town Law Section 29, since the position of Supervisor is part-time, he/she is allowed and has a budget for a confidential clerk and bookkeeper. The Town Board is not authorized to remove those line items because they would be disempowering the

Supervisor from fulfilling his own statutory obligations. The only power the Board has is to set reasonable compensation, the hiring/firing is at the discretion of the Supervisor. A resident questioned how the previous clerk was able to do all the work, the Supervisor responded, the work did not get done.

#### **2020-004 BUDGET CUTS OVERTIME FOR HOURLY EMPLOYEES**

Supervisor Bichteman did not believe the Town could make employees take compensatory time in lieu of overtime pay if they work beyond 40 hours. Although he expressed his dislike for compensatory time off, he indicated employees should have the option of overtime or compensatory time if they work beyond 40 hours. Councilman Kryzak advised he was in favor of limiting overtime.

#### **2020-005 BUDGET CUTS TOWN EXPENDITURES**

Councilwoman Burnside indicated this resolution was proposed because a desk and headset were purchased in the Supervisor's office during the pandemic. Councilman Kryzak believed this was a well-intentioned resolution and believed tightening the belt is important.

Supervisor Bichteman indicated that the Library is an Associative Library, as such, they are an entity under themselves; the Town provides them with funds. They have full discretion to hire/fire staff however they are Town employees. He also mentioned the Library pays for all of their supplies. Additionally, he mentioned that the Water Dist. is a bit different because they are self-sufficient and don't receive monies from the Town.

#### **2020-06 BUDGET CUTS WATER DISTRICT**

Councilwoman Burnside indicated this resolution was proposed as an attempt to try to recoup some additional money from the Water Dist. Attorney Afzali advised of the need for input from the Water Dist. regarding renegotiating repayment of money to the Town. Supervisor Bichteman mentioned that the problem with the Bromomethane is still active and needs to be resolved. The Water Dist. currently has approximately \$50,000 in savings for maintenance of the system. He indicated there are some grants available but they are matching fund grants which the grant writer is working on. The Water Dist. has agreed to pay \$3,000/yr until the balance owed to the Town was paid however cautioned, if the Town was to appropriate the money from the Water Dist., it may be challenged. The \$66,000 allegedly owed to the Town may not be a factual number. If the Water Dist. was made to make a \$30,000 payment, the members of the Water Dist. may demand proof that they actually owe the \$66,000.

#### **2020-07 BUDGET CUTS LIBRARY & 2020-08 BUDGET CUTS MUSEUM**

Councilman Filkins and Councilwoman Burnside indicated these should be withdrawn until discussing the 2021 budget.

Councilman Boone asked for clarification between Associative and Municipal libraries since it was brought up earlier in the meeting. Supervisor Bichteman responded that Associative libraries are funded by outside sources and Municipal libraries are funded on their own. The Town of Westerlo Library is funded by the town which means it is an Associative library.

#### **2020-009 BUDGET CUTS CUSTODIAN/HOUSEKEEPING**

Supervisor Bichteman explained that housekeeping is an hourly position of which a portion of the expense is being charged to COVID. He advised that until that is approved for reimbursement, it is still an expense to the Town.

### **2020-0010 BUDGET CUTS BOARD AND SUPERVISOR SALARY SUSPENSION**

Attorney Afzali indicated that although Town Board salaries can be suspended, in order to do so, it needs to be by Local Law, subject to permissive referendum and not by resolution. The Supervisor indicated this is just postponing payment to another year and does not save the town any money. Any one person can still forego their salary if they so choose.

### **2020-011 BUDGET CUTS PLANNING, ZONING AND WATER BOARD CLERKS**

Attorney Afzali advised that the Planning and Zoning Boards have a statutory obligation related to record keeping and the responsibility can't be put on the members of the Board. It is a violation and possibly a conflict of interest to remove the clerk. The proposed resolution was withdrawn.

### **2020-012 BUDGET CHANGE GRANT WRITER**

The Grant Writer has already agreed to continue the rest of the year without pay. Councilman Kryzak thanked Dr. Ambrosio.

### **2020-013 BUDGET CUTS TOWN HISTORIAN**

Supervisor Bichteman offered to speak to the Town Historian Dennis Fancher regarding next year's budget. He indicated Mr. Fancher has worked other years without taking a salary.

### **2020-014 BUDGET CUTS CEMETERY**

Councilwoman Burnside advised this is withdrawn as it has already been paid.

### **2020-015 BUDGET CUTS CELEBRATIONS**

Supervisor Bichteman mentioned there is still some money left but it will probably end up going into the fund balance as there is no real need to spend it this year. Attorney Afzali indicated his only objection was if any funds were obligated, if so they can't pull them out.

### **2020-016 BUDGET CUTS ADULT RECREATION**

Supervisor Bichteman advised that this budget item includes Rensselaerville Senior Bus and Helderberg Seniors. He indicated that the Helderberg Seniors have already received their check for 2020 and have suspended their operations due to COVID for 2020 and can use the 2020 money for 2021. He mentioned money should however still be budgeted for 2021. Councilman Kryzak expressed concern for taking away these services for the seniors in town who are already limited and feeling isolated.

### **2020-017 BUDGET CUTS YOUTH PROGRAM**

The youth program for 2020 has already been cancelled.

### **2020-018 BUDGET CHANGE TOWN PARK**

Councilwoman Burnside indicated that the Town Park fees were recently discussed and addressed.

## **RECOMMENDED BUDGET SAVINGS**

### **HEALTH INSURANCE EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTION**

Supervisor Bichteman advised there was \$42,000 remaining to close the budget gap and to offset that he suggested increasing employees' contribution to their health insurance costs. Currently six employees pay 20% toward their medical insurance the remaining six employees do not pay. His recommendation is to have all employees contribute 25% of their medical insurance costs, which represents a contribution of roughly \$125/wk per employee. He indicated that the town pays the deductibles at no cost to employees. He also mentioned that although employees may not get an actual raise, they are basically getting a 7-10% raise every year for the increase in health insurance costs. For 2021, the town can anticipate the cost to increase by a minimum of 7.5%. He doesn't see any other revenues to fill the gap.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Fund balances in other towns were briefly discussed. Councilwoman Burnside indicated Knox has 42 miles of roads with seven full-time highway employees, Berne has 75 miles with seven full-time highway employees. Councilman Kryzak mentioned that Councilman Filkins and Councilwoman Burnside had also compared office salaries for the hilltowns. He advised that the Westerlo Clerk is the highest and that the Board is reviewing that.

A resident also mentioned looking into business tax rates.

Another resident suggested that before anymore resolutions are proposed by the Board, they should research the law and precedence. The Board should know if it's legal and necessary and what the adverse conditions are if it's approved. He also mentioned many seniors residing in the hilltowns do not have internet access and asked the Board to discuss what can be done to make life better for them.

The Acting Town Clerk expressed concern for proposed staffing cuts to the Town Clerks office and wondered what was going to be expected when the office reopens fully with a reduced staff, reminding the Board that they are there to serve the public. She mentioned concern for being in the middle of the grant for the record room, hunting season was approaching with a new program initiated by DEC, tax collection, budget, the implementation of annual transfer station permits, on top of all other regular duties of the office. She is unsure if all the duties can get done with the reduced staff that is being proposed and recommended that the Board look into the job description and duties of that office and they may find it's unreasonable to make those cuts. She was understanding that cuts had to be made but they should be across all the offices. She was open to reducing a full-time and part-time position to two part-time positions to help save on health insurance costs. Supervisor Bichteman indicated the Town Clerk can hire anyone she can afford to hire.

Deputy Town Clerk Kathleen Spinnato advised that on May 19<sup>th</sup> she was informed as then Town Clerk, that cuts had to be made. The very next day, her part-time deputy was furloughed and it was suggested that the full-time deputy be decreased to part time. She indicated it didn't leave much help and she knew she couldn't put in the extra time and that's why she decided to retire. Already working full-time, she couldn't fathom the work that was going to be put on her.

Planning Board Chairperson Verch indicated the Governor has passed a new law that solar citing has now been removed from the jurisdiction of the towns. Attorney Afzali indicated there is a megawatt threshold so small projects still fall within the town's jurisdiction; larger ones go through the Article 10 process. He advised nothing has really changed, the Town will still have input with the larger projects, can zone it out completely.

There being no further business to discuss, Councilman Kryzak made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Boone, motion unanimously carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:34pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karla Weaver  
Acting Town Clerk

**TRANSFER STATION PRICES  
PROPOSED FEE SCHEDULE CHANGES**

REFRIGERATORS, FREEZERS, AIR CONDITIONERS, DEHUMIDIFIERS,  
ETC.....\$20.00 EACH

APPLIANCES (WASHERS, DRYERS, STOVES, HOT WATER HEATERS,  
ETC.)..... 10.00 EACH

SMALL TIRES INCLUDE: CAR & LT TRUCK..... 3.00 EACH

LARGE TIRES: DUMP TRUCK, BUS.....15.00 EACH

CONSTRUCTION EQUIP TIRES: BACKHOE, GRADER.....60.00 EACH

FARM EQUIP TIRES: TRACTOR.....20.00 PER VERTICAL FT EACH

**TOWN OF WESTERLO  
PROPOSED PERMIT APPLICATION FEE  
JULY 2020**

**RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS**

**New**

Up to 1,600 sq. ft..... \$150.00

1,601 to 3,000 sq. ft. in floor area.... \$20.00 per 100 sq. ft. (or fraction thereof)

\*Over 3,000 sq. ft. in floor area..... \$600.00 plus \$25.00 per 100 sq. ft. over 3,000 sq. ft. (or fraction thereof)

\*Unfinished basements and attics are not included in floor area.

\*Attached garages are included.

**Additions, Alternations, Accessory Buildings & Repairs**

(By total cost of work to be done)

Up to \$1,000.00.....	\$20.00
\$1,001 to \$15,000..... fraction thereof)	\$20.00 plus \$8.00 per additional \$1,000 over \$1,000 (or
\$15,001 to \$50,000..... fraction thereof)	\$132.00 plus \$5.00 per additional \$1,000 over \$15,000 (or
Over \$50,000..... fraction thereof)	\$307.00 plus \$4.00 per additional \$1,000 over \$50,000 (or

**AG BUILDINGS WITH AG EXEMPTION**

Up to 1,000 sq. ft.....	\$100.00
Over 1,000 sq. ft.....	\$200.00

**NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS**

**New and Additions** (for other than warehouse type structure)

Up to 3,000 sq. ft. in floor area.....	\$25.00 per 100 sq. ft. (or fraction thereof)
Over 3,000 sq. ft. in floor area..... fraction thereof)	\$750.00 plus \$22.00 per 100 sq. ft. over 3,000 sq. ft. (or

**New and Additions** (for warehouse type structure)

Up to 3,000 sq. ft. in floor area.....	\$25.00 per 100 sq. ft. (or fraction thereof)
Over 3,000 sq. ft. in floor area..... fraction thereof)	\$750.00 plus \$17.00 per 100 sq. ft. over 3,000 sq. ft. (or

**Alteration, Modifications, Accessory Buildings & Repairs**  
(By total cost of work to be done)

Up to \$1,000.....	\$30.00
\$1,001 to \$50,000..... fraction thereof)	\$30.00 plus \$7.00 per additional \$1,000 over \$1,000 (or
\$50,001 to \$100,000..... fraction thereof)	\$373.00 plus \$5.00 per additional \$1,000 over \$50,000 (or
Over \$100,000..... fraction thereof)	\$623.00 plus \$4.00 per additional \$1,000 over \$100,000 (or

**DEMOLITION RESIDENTIAL/COMMERICAL**

Any size.....	\$30.00
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**CELL TOWER**

New.....	\$2,500
Modification.....	\$1,000 min +
New Ring.....	\$2,000

**BOARD REVIEWS**

(Fees do not include Legal/Engineer expenses as applicable)

Subdivision.....	\$100.00
Lot Line Adjustment/Annexation.....	\$50.00
Lot Fee.....	\$200.00 per lot
Special Use Permit.....	\$100.00
Variance Request.....	\$50.00
Churches/Fire Departments.....	No Fee
Cell Tower     New.....	\$2,500
Modification.....	\$1,000
New Ring.....	\$2,000
Commercial Solar.....	\$2,500

**NOTES:**

- A. Attached garages shall be included in the calculated square footage
- B. When a permit needs renewal, the fee schedule of renewal is as follows:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> year full fee as per calculation applicable according to approved fee schedule
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> year renewal will be 75% of original permit cost
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> year renewal will be 50% of original permit cost
  - 4<sup>th</sup> year renewal if approved by Planning Board, reverts back to original permit fee
- C. If a permit is revoked, application for a new permit is required and the fees will apply
- D. When any combination of the above categories are involved in a single overall project, permits and fees for each individual category are required
- E. Projects started/completed without having applied for a building permit when a permit is required, will be charged twice the amount of the original fee calculation according to the approved fee schedule