

**Town of Westerlo Town Board
Workshop Meeting
of
Tuesday, October 13, 2020**

The Town of Westerlo Town Board held a workshop meeting on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at the Richard Rapp Municipal Building located at 933 County Route 401, Westerlo, NY, Zoom ID # 92655850286. Supervisor Bichteman opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag at 7:11 PM.

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

Absent were: Councilman Richard Filkins (attended via zoom)

Also attending: Highway Superintendent Jody Ostrander, Acting Town Clerk Karla Weaver and one interested resident.

Attending via Zoom: Library Trustee Laura Tenney, Zoning Board Chairman John Sefcik and several interested residents.

Supervisor Bichteman indicated the meeting was strictly intended for budget discussions. He also mentioned that Councilwoman Burnside, Councilman Boone and Councilman Filkins had budget questions. The following items were discussed and addressed in regards to Councilwoman Burnside and Councilman Boones questions:

GENERAL FUND

- Court Mileage is for the Court Clerk to do banking and errands.
- Supervisor Clerk salary per Councilwoman Burnside should be \$41,080 not \$44,850 as budgeted. Supervisor Bichteman advised that the budgeted amount is the intended amount for the Supervisor's clerk for 2021 and was the previous clerk's salary. She was hired at a lower amount on a probationary period and is now eligible for the salary budgeted for that position. He clarified that the clerk is paid hourly and is also eligible for overtime/comp time. Councilwoman Burnside indicated that equates to a raise of \$1.76/hr.
- Supervisor Clerk Assistant will be backup for the Supervisor's Clerk and also serve as assistant to the Code Enforcement Officer and Assessor. Councilwoman Burnside did not believe this was necessary.
- Grant Writer salary was proposed to be reduced by half. Supervisor Bichteman indicated filling out the paperwork for a grant is extensive and a lot of research needs to be done and without a grant writer, that means someone else will have to do the work. It was Councilman Filkins' understanding from Assoc. Of Towns that it was unlikely any grants would be given in the near future. Councilman Kryzak indicated that just because the money is budgeted doesn't mean the Town has to spend it. Councilman Filkins believed it was a waste of money.
- Mileage under the Supervisor's budget is for the Supervisor's clerk to do banking when needed and Mr. Bichteman mentioned he is also eligible to claim mileage for attending meetings outside of town although he has never claimed any mileage.
- Legislative total line on the budget under what was spent in the current year for January-August is incorrect Councilman Boone advised it should actually be \$8,458.
- Town Clerk salary was discussed being increased to match the Clerk to the Supervisor. Supervisor Bichteman advised that the amount budgeted is what the Town Clerk's office

supplied and is an increase of \$4,680 from Deputy Clerk position to Acting Town Clerk position. Councilwoman Burnside believed the Town Clerk and Supervisor's Clerk's salary should be equal. All were in agreement to raise the Town Clerk's salary to \$44,850. Mileage was also discussed and Acting Town Clerk advised that it was for banking and part was to be able to keep serving the So. Westerlo residents during tax season who may want to continue to pay property tax bills in Greenville. She would only need to travel there once a week for collection and it would also serve as a backup in case COVID-19 became more prevalent again causing the Bank of Greene Co. Westerlo branch to close again.

- Buildings -Furniture/Fixtures budget amount is mostly for the anticipation of a new copy machine and also to expand the Town Clerk's office to the Assessor's office.
- Self-Insurance deductible has increased however any unused money stays in the fund.
- Association Dues are less this year. Supervisor Bichteman indicated the Assoc. of Towns sent a bill for the amount budgeted and believed it is based on the budget and population.
- Highway Super Salary was believed to have been reduced. Supervisor Bichteman advised that the Highway Superintendent's salary has not changed, the budget was just reduced.
- Park surveillance was discussed. Supervisor Bichteman met with previous Supervisor Rapp today who indicated that in the past 15 years he can remember four instances of vandalism at the parks. Supervisor Bichteman believed the costs associated with surveillance outweighs the cost of the repairs. He mentioned that Judge Mackey suggested a game camera that works with a cell phone however he has not yet investigated that option. He hoped that if the people who recently vandalized the park were caught, it would help. Councilman Kryzak also suggested having a camera at the Town Hall which could point to the entrance of the park. That would be an inexpensive option as there is already internet here. A dawn to dusk option was also discussed which police can enforce to throw people out after hours; permit holders would be an exception.
- Adult Rec budgeted for the senior bus and car has decreased as there is no bus at this time. Mr. Bichteman believed the service should be better advertised so it can be utilized more often. Helderberg Seniors as listed in the budget is actually Hilltown Seniors and serves about 100 people. The Hilltown Seniors hold activities and monthly meetings and Mr. Bichteman indicated it is a nice service for the town. Councilman Filkins did not believe everyone in town should pay for a service they don't use. Councilman Kryzak understood Mr. Filkins point but also believed it is money well spent. The Youth Program was then discussed. It was suggested that the Youth Program be better advertised and that the Board should look to expand it and provide more services for the town. Councilman Boone will be looking into including the churches and Library to increase the turnout in the future.
- State Retirement has increased even though there are less employees. Mr. Bichteman advised there are new guidelines with the retirement system. Any employee of the Town whether they belong to the retirement system or not, need to be included. The Supervisor's office found that some employees didn't get credited for the proper amount of retirement which means there is a deficit in the amount the Town had provided for those people. To fund the arrears for those people, there is an increase in the budget. He advised, it's a reporting problem. It was clarified this includes the library and anyone who works for the town.

HIGHWAY FUND

- Snow Removal includes both full time and part time employees.

LIBRARY AND WATER FUND

- Disability & Workman's Comp were not broken down and could've been. Mr. Bichteman indicated it can be done as a transfer but should be shone by itself.

MUSEUM

- Internet is necessary for cataloging.

LIGHTING

- Solar/Ambit energy savings will be reviewed at the next meeting.

FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET

- It was suggested the Fire Co. cut some of their budget since cuts were made everywhere else. Andy Joslin from the Fire Co. advised that not all training is free and training is needed in order to be qualified. Councilman Filkins wondered who has keys to the fuel tank. Mr. Joslin indicated there are many times when the three chiefs use their personal vehicles to go directly to the scene to provide apparatus. The little bit of gas they use doesn't cover the wear and tear on their personal vehicles. Mr. Joslin advised that they have the internet because it is needed for online training.

Supervisor Bichteman reviewed some of Councilman Filkins questions as follows:

- \$84,512 budgeted for the Water Dist. is actually paid by the water dist. customers and not by the entire town. The water dist. fund has to be listed in the budget. Bromomethane was briefly discussed.
- Councilman Filkins inquired about the \$50,000 budgeted for part time labor. Mr. Bichteman advised that it was for a part time craftsman and a helper to make the repairs needed to the town hall as indicated in the presentation.
- Hannacroix cemetery budget was discussed. Councilman Filkins believed in supporting all three active cemeteries in town instead of just Hannacroix. Supervisor Bichteman reviewed that if the cemeteries were not able to be self-sufficient, they would fall on to the town. Hannacroix is the only cemetery that needs the town's support at this time. It was suggested to have more volunteers help with maintenance/upkeep.
- It was indicated that the \$5,000 budgeted for housekeeping is higher due to additional cleaning needed during COVID.
- The \$62,000 budgeted under buildings is for replacing doors, lights, a canopy/roof over entryway stairs, concrete to replace the steps; it's not a contract, it's just for the materials. Mr. Bichteman confirmed that anything the town needs to contract out would need to have estimates from three vendors.
- Supervisor Bichteman mentioned there is a provision to switch street lights over to LED which would include purchasing crossarms however it may be premature to do that until the Town knows if they will be eligible for any grant money.
- The \$30,000 increase in the Library budget is due to the fact that some of the expenses such as health insurance used to be under the general fund and not accounted for under the Library. It was just a reallocation of funds back to the Library fund.
- It was mentioned that a phone is necessary at the Museum due to the alarm system and the internet is needed for cataloging. Supervisor Bichteman suggested that at some point an onsite building should be constructed to expand the Museum with items that there is no room to house currently.

REVIEW OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TENTATIVE BUDGET

- After an additional discussion, it was decided to leave the grant writer at the proposed \$10,000 budgeted. It is better to have the budget and not need it. The possibility of paying the grant writer hourly instead of a flat rate can be discussed.
- Pg 2 the total amount under 2nd column (year to date expenditures) should be \$8,458. This is an error in excel

- Pg 3 increase the Town Clerk's salary by \$510 to \$44,850.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment heard.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

With there being no further discussion, Councilman Kryzak made a motion to close the workshop meeting. Councilwoman Burnside seconded; motion carried by those present. Meeting adjourned at 9:19pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karla J. Weaver
Acting Town Clerk