

**Town of Westerlo Town Board
Tentative Budget Workshop Meeting
of
Tuesday, October 13, 2021**

The Town of Westerlo Town Board held a Tentative Budget workshop meeting on Wednesday, October 13, 2021 at the Richard Rapp Municipal Building located at 933 County Route 401, Westerlo, NY. Deputy Supervisor Kryzak opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag at 7:04 PM.

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

Also attending: Highway Superintendent Jody Ostrander, Planning Board Chairperson Dorothy Verch and member Edwin Stevens, Town Clerk Karla Weaver and three interested residents.

Councilwoman Burnside made a motion to open the Town Board Workshop meeting. Councilman Filkins seconded; all in favor motion carried.

2022 TOWN OF WESTERLO TENTATIVE BUDGET

Deputy Supervisor Kryzak reviewed the budget line by line. He explained that the proposed budget is artificially inflated this year at \$1,058,111.00, however the USDA grant is not included in this proposed budget which would make it grow to \$1,687,500.00.

GENERAL FUND

The general fund is up \$636,202 because the Transfer Station has moved back to the general fund instead of the highway fund where it belongs, decreasing the highway fund by \$95,685. \$560,000 of the \$636,202 is from the Tonko grant. Mr. Kryzak indicated the 2022 general fund budget is only up roughly \$2,000.00 over 2021.

Mr. Kryzak advised he was keeping \$11,100 in the Planning and Municipal Development line and \$12,000 under Engineer services although he doesn't plan to use the money.

HIGHWAY FUND

Mr. Kryzak indicated that the 2022 highway budget has decreased from of \$1,477,429 in 2021 to \$1,381,744 for a savings of \$95,685 which is due to the transfer station moving back to the general fund. This savings also includes hiring back people that were let go, the purchase of a new loader and paying off debt.

LIBRARY FUND

Library Trustee Maureen Sikule explained the Library proposed budget line by line.

WATER DISTRICT FUND

Councilman Kryzak reviewed the water district proposed budget explaining that \$57,388 of is American Recovery Act (ARPA) money under "General Gov't Aid". Water district customers currently have to pay a total of \$3,000 a year on a loan owed to the Town of Westerlo. One of the designations that the ARPA money could be used for is infrastructure so Mr. Kryzak transferred \$57,388 of the ARPA money to pay off the loan to the Town relieving the water district customers of that debt. Councilwoman Burnside advised this was run by the Town Attorney. Councilman Kryzak also mentioned the maintenance and repairs line was reduced due to alleviating this debt. The bond payment was added to the Statutory Installment Bond in the budget which will get paid next year.

MUSEUM FUND

There is now a stipend of \$2,500.00 for the Director of the Museum.

LIGHTING FUND

No change on lighting fund from 2021.

VOLUNTEER FIRE CO. FUND

No change on Volunteer Fire Co. budget from 2021.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A resident questioned the drastic raise for the Confidential Administrator in the Supervisor's office who would be paid more than the Highway Superintendent. Deputy Supervisor Kryzak indicated the Highway Superintendent takes advantage of the Town's health insurance which his assistant does not, instead receiving a \$3,000 buyout. He also advised his assistant is also taking on grant writing and does accounting. He does not want to lose a qualified individual. The resident questioned only giving the highway department guys \$1/hr raise when the Supervisor's clerk will be getting approximately a \$7.50/hr raise, although she is wonderful. Mr. Ostrander found out today that the Cost-Of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) was for more than the \$1 raise he had initially budgeted for his department. Discussion ensued regarding using money from the contingency lines in the proposed budget to give better raises for the highway department. Mr. Kryzak didn't want to eliminate the budgeted contingency lines in case something comes up however, the Town is \$23,000 below the cap and he believed more magic could be done with the budget. Planning Board member Edwin Stevens indicated the highway department jobs should be reclassified, for example, employees who drive a truck should be paid different than employees who can drive and fix trucks. Another resident suggested making the Confidential Administrator position salaried; Councilman Kryzak believed he could make that happen.

A resident asked what the plan was for the ambulance building. Mr. Kryzak mentioned that the Fire Co. is looking for a new place for their fire house and the ambulance station is just sitting there with \$100,000 in an account which cannot be given back to the Town. The plan is to have the ambulance station use the \$100,000 to make improvements to the three acres of land. The building can then be turned into an emergency services department for Fire and EMS. He would like to have one full-time EMT on staff to manage all emergency services within the Town. He

also spoke to the Highway Superintendent regarding giving stipends to employees with CDL's to wear pagers in case a driver is needed. This would be a state-of-the-art emergency services building. Mr. Ostrander indicated the Westerlo Ambulance Squad had to reapply for a certificate of need from the State to begin the process.

A resident questioned if the Assessor could change the assessment on homes without owners' knowledge. Councilman Kryzak advised, yes. He indicated the Assessor is trying to go through open building permits to determine what needs to be assessed.

Mrs. Verch would like to see the Planning Board members get a raise. Mr. Kryzak will look into it.

Discussion ensued regarding budgeting money for the cemeteries. The Hannacroix cemetery is currently the only cemetery in Westerlo that gets a budget from the Town.

Councilman Boone commended Mr. Kryzak for his effort with preparing the 2022 Tentative Budget. He suggested pumping the brakes a bit on raises one more year to see how the COVID situation plays out.

The next regular meeting will be on October 19th where Councilman Kryzak intends to move the 2022 Tentative Budget to the proposed 2022 Preliminary Budget. Two public hearings on the 2022 Town of Westerlo Preliminary Budget and 2022 Town of Westerlo Volunteer Fire Co. Preliminary Budget and Special Town Board meeting will be held on October 28th. The Town Board may choose to adopt the budget at the meeting on the 28th or may do so at a Special meeting on November 3rd as originally planned.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

With there being no further discussion, Councilman Filkins made a motion to close the workshop meeting. Councilman Kryzak seconded; all in favor motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:09pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karla J. Weaver
Town Clerk