

Minutes of the Town Board Budget Meeting held by the LaFayette Town Board on September 24, 2007 at 5:30 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the LaFayette Commons Office Building at 2577 Route 11 in the Town of LaFayette.

Present: Gregory Scammell, Supervisor
Thomas Bailey, Councilor
Adrian Shute, Councilor
David Knapp, Councilor
William McConnell, Councilor

Recording Secretary: Mary Jo Kelly, Town Clerk

Others Present: Tom Chartrand, Bookkeeper
Mary Doster, Assessor
Ralph Lamson, CEO
Jim Moore, DCO
Mr. & Mrs. Johnson

Supervisor Scammell opened the Budget Meeting at 5:36 p.m.

- 5:30-5:40**
- **Sr. Citizens (Howard Henderson)**
 - **Receiver of Taxes (Teresa Mech)**
 - **Town Historian (Greg Titus)**
 - **Town Justices (Malcolm Knapp/Maureen Perrin)**
 - **Code Enforcement (Ralph Lamson/Jack Sutton)**
 - **Assessment Grievance Board of Review (Shawn Adam)**
 - **Animal Control (Jim Moore, Doug Scholes)**

Jim Moore said he asked for a 5% increase as he didn't know what the town-rate was. He asked for a new line item under the equipment list for vehicle maintenance of \$300/year. He asked for \$100 to cover travel and expenses for a conference he would like to attend on animal cruelty. He increased the SPCA by \$250. They went up to \$13,044 but after the money is taken in from dog fines, etc. it knocks it back down to \$12,044. This does not include any court fines collected.

Councilor Bailey asked what would justify vehicle maintenance.

Jim said routine tune-ups, oil changes, tires, etc.

Councilor Bailey asked if the 48 cents/mile doesn't cover this.

Jim said it covers the gas.

Tom Chartrand said vehicle maintenance is not a legal town charge for a personal vehicle which is why we use the mileage rate. The Board can make it higher if the appointed employees need more to get the job done.

Supervisor Scammell said the studies he read indicate the mileage doesn't cover routine maintenance.

Jim said the vehicle is getting old and will probably have to be replaced in about a year.

Supervisor Scammell asked if it could be given to him in salary.

Tom Chartrand said yes. He is not sure if you can set different mileage rates for different departments.

5:40-5:50 - Assessors (Mary Doster, Marshall Taylor, James Munnell)

Mary Doster discussed the legal amount at \$2,000.

Tom Chartrand said the Board left them at \$1,000 last year for legal.

Mary thinks \$1,000 should cover it.

Tom said they are reducing their budget by \$1,000 then.

Mary said yes. They are meeting with Tennessee Gas this week which should help the town by possibly being able to come to a settlement without going to court.

Councilor Shute said there is a \$150 increase in the Grievance Board of Review, a decrease in the computer lease, and everything else looks pretty much the same. We are seeing a little decrease in the equipment line.

Councilor Bailey noted the pictometry line is blank. Has the interest been dropped on this?

Mary said they are interested but the Board wasn't so what would be the use of putting it in the budget?

Councilor Bailey said the concept of the pictometry as a whole would allow other departments to benefit from it too.

Supervisor Scammell thinks \$4,000 was what the Board reviewed last year.

Mary said they didn't put anything in for it last year so it must have been the year before.

Councilor Bailey said the opportunity is only available at certain times.

Councilor Shute said last year the Board was advised we need to wait until they do a flyover again.

Councilor Bailey said he will make a note of this so maybe later on we can start setting up something for it. He would be interested in taking another look at it. Maybe the price has come down.

Mary said they haven't heard anything. They can check into it. The assessors will be notified when they are going to do another flyover.

Tom Chartrand said Tully has this and it's \$5,000 the first year and \$2,500 the second year.

The Board returned on the agenda to Code Enforcement.

Ralph Lamson said the software program has a yearly fee.

Councilor Shute confirmed the software was purchased last year and now it's just the maintenance.

Ralph said yes. It's \$450/year for the updates and maintenance.

Tom Chartrand said he will be moving the software support down into the contractual line.

Under Receiver of Taxes Councilor Knapp asked how long the computer lease is for. He said if the computer lease is \$1,300/year, it would seem you could purchase one for that amount.

Tom Chartrand said it's \$61/a month which is \$732/year. He thinks this line could be lowered to \$750.

Councilor Shute confirmed this covers a service agreement too.

Tom said yes. He thinks it's a replacement service.

Councilor Shute noted under the Grievance Board of Review budget it shows a fifth member.

Supervisor Scammell said it's an appointment that needs to be made.

Discussion took place regarding a fifth member.

Tom Chartrand noted this comes out of the assessor's budget. It was noted the members total salary should be \$400 and not \$500. He suggested keeping the Board of Review at \$650 in the assessor's budget so it would cover their training costs.

Councilor Knapp asked if they have listed an official CPI yet.

Councilor Shute said the estimate for the year is 2%.

- Cleaning/Maintenance (Shari Wheatley/Greg Scammell/Herb Salladin)

Tom Chartrand said Shari Wheatley asked for no change from last year.

- Attorney (Kevin Gilligan)

Tom Chartrand said he made some changes on the main budget. He increased the total by \$2,000 but we are already over by \$40,000 this year so the Board may need to look at the litigation portion as well as the salary.

Councilor McConnell said last years retainer was about \$48,000. How do we get to be over on a retainer?

Tom said we are not over on a retainer, we are over on litigation.

Councilor McConnell said that is where our legal fees are somewhat out of our control.

Tom said if the Board chooses not to review something, the costs are not there. If you choose to challenge someone, the litigation fees are probably going to exceed the budget.

Councilor McConnell asked how we compare to other towns of similar size.

Tom said Pompey pays \$26,000 for the Town and ZBA person and \$6,000-\$7,000 for the Planning Board lawyer.

Councilor McConnell if it's the same firm.

Tom said they have two different firms.

Councilor McConnell asked why they opted to do have two firms.

Tom said the Planning Board has the authority to choose their own attorney.

Councilor McConnell said somewhere he read that towns should rebid for engineering and legal every 3 years. He asked Tom if he has seen anything on this.

Tom said in general he has seen that professional services should be bid just to keep everything in order. He has seen accounting entered into this group too.

Councilor McConnell asked if it's too late to do this now.

Tom said you need to have your budget done by Election Day. You could solicit bids based on what's in the budget and if you find another firm for less than that amount, you could use them. You could use the amount in the budget as a cap. If you found firms less than what's in the budget, you would have the amount allocated to cover it.

Councilor McConnell asked if he has seen towns contract with a smaller firm and then hire a larger firm if necessary when entering into litigation.

Tom said the Pompey Planning Board just felt the town attorney didn't have the expertise in planning that they wanted.

Councilor McConnell asked if there is a way to control our costs.

Tom said the only way he has seen it done is by having the committees handle the problem first. He thinks it would be easiest to cut back on the research bills.

Councilor Knapp thinks a better explanation of what's in the retainer would be helpful.

Councilor McConnell said it's very vague.

Councilor Knapp asked if the other towns pay by the hour.

Tom said Tully pays by the hour, Fabius pays \$20,000/year and the guy is their Town, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals attorney.

- Jamesville Fire Dist. (Kevin Carver)

They have requested no change.

Discussion took place regarding fire districts and future contracts for services for Jamesville residents if Jamesville Fire District moves across from the penitentiary.

The Board returned on the agenda to the Justice Department.

Malcolm Knapp was present.

Councilor Knapp asked what they get from Williamson Law Book.

Malcolm said they get updates for all the legal books they have.

Councilor Knapp said the Board got a letter from them stating they are going up 10 %.

Malcolm said they don't get an awful lot from them.

Tom Chartrand said in 2006 the total to them was \$300.

Councilor Knapp asked where we were last year in relation to other towns in the county.

Malcolm said last year we were fourth in the county for total receipts and this year we are sixth. He thinks we are at \$270,000. A lot of this is due to Route 81 and the truckers.

- Information Officer (Pat Keefe)

Tom Chartrand said he increased postage a little here.

- Town Clerk (Mary Jo Kelly)

The computer line was decreased by \$300 to \$1,200.

- Planning Board (Jim Nakas) – Secretary (Mary Jo Kelly)

- Zoning Board (Stephen Beggs) – Secretary (Mary Jo Kelly)

5:50-6:30 - Environmental Board (Rainer Brocke)

Supervisor Scammell said he has advised them for 3 years that the flowers can be donated.

- Safety Officer (Tom Rezsnyak)

- Financial Consultant (Tom Chartrand)

Councilor Knapp asked about the budget part of his budget request.

Tom said it's for compiling and sending out all the budget letters and attending all the budget meetings.

- Town Supervisor (Gregory Scammell)

- Deputy Supervisor (Pete Paul)

- **Ropes Course – Sandy Smith**
- **Economic Development – Bill McConnell**
- **Town Board (David Knapp, Tom Bailey, William McConnell, Adrian Shute)**
- **Recreation Dept.**
- **Review of other Expenses (Building, etc.**

Councilor Shute asked what was used for the town-wide rate.
Tom Chartrand said 4%.

The Budget Meeting closed at 6:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jo Kelly
Town Clerk

Adopted 10/2/07