

Minutes of the Town Board Budget Meeting held by the LaFayette Town Board on September 23, 2008 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
William McConnell, Councilor
Adrian Shute, Councilor

Absent: David Knapp, Councilor

Recording Secretary: Mary Jo Kelly, Town Clerk

Others Present: Leon Cook, Highway Superintendent
Tom Chartrand, Bookkeeper
John Greeley, Dep. Highway Superintendent
John Harper, LFD
Ken Jerome, LFD
Greg Hoxie, LFD
Don Bush, LFD

Supervisor Scammell called the Budget Meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

The Town Clerk took the Roll. Councilor Knapp absent and all else present.

Tom Chartrand gave the Board a list of the exemptions for the town and their totals. Exemptions for the town total 61,418,196. He said the new law was put through saying you have to make the exemptions more transparent for taxpayers and they should be with a line by line item showing how each of these affects your tax rates or as a summary of how it affects your tax rates. This is a summary.

HIGHWAY DEPT.

Leon Cook and John Greeley were present.

Leon Cook reviewed his budget with the Board. He raised maintenance as he would like to paint the ceilings and the old part of the garage has some insulation missing in the ceiling. He increased rubbish by \$20. He raised heating by \$400. All together on the highway building he increased it \$990. He discussed the increased cost of materials and the replacement for the 10 Wheel Dump Truck. The total cost for the new truck would be \$118,000.

Councilor McConnell asked how long he thinks the equipment will last.

Leon said 20 years. The truck wouldn't be purchased until after the first of the year.

Tom Chartrand explained where the money would come from to buy it. We will basically be paying cash for it.

Councilor McConnell said regarding the one more payment on the loader, is that one more month or one more year.

Leon said one more year.

Councilor McConnell said if you put these numbers together, what is the overall amount of the budget this year compared to last year.

Tom Chartrand said it's an increase of \$98,000.

Councilor McConnell asked where the bulk of the increase is.

Tom Chartrand said there's \$6,000 more in payroll. There's \$44,000 more in road repairs. There's \$3,000 more in repairs to equipment. There's an increase of \$6,000 in winter payroll. The contract for salt and sand is an increase of \$22,000.

Councilor McConnell asked how the summer payroll increased by \$6,000.

Leon said because of the 4 % salary raise. He was told it is 6.2% for cost of living and he asked for 4%.

Councilor McConnell asked if a winter payroll is at 4% too.

Leon said yes. Salt went up a little over \$9/ton and sand went up close to \$2/ton. Blacktop went up over 100%. The only thing he uses blacktop for is shimming.

Councilor Bailey asked if the truck purchase is on state bid.

Leon said yes.

Councilor Bailey asked if there is any time constraints.

Leon said Beam Mac is only holding it for a month but Tracey and Stadium have it for another year.

Councilor Bailey asked if he was able to lock into the price at \$118,000.

Leon said yes.

Councilor McConnell asked what the impact would be if he didn't get the truck this year.

Leon said they are having a lot of trouble with the '94. It's starting to burn oil awful. He had it at Cummings as it had no power at all. It was an air cooler for the air the motor takes in. It also has an oil leak.

Councilor McConnell asked what the next oldest truck is after this.

Leon said the plow trucks are '97 and '99. The 6-wheeler is a 2001.

John Greeley said the biggest thing on the 2-10 wheelers is that they use them all year round. One is a backup plow truck. These are the most important pieces of equipment they use. They are used every day.

Leon said and the loader is used a lot too.

John Greeley said the '94 is costing us money to keep repairing it.

LIBRARY

Scott Kushner and Katie Whitney were present.

Scott Kushner said they have requested some pretty modest changes. Non-book materials, books and travel expenses have increased a little. Prices of books and non-book materials are going up.

Supervisor Scammell asked if he foresaw any big changes next year.

Scott Kushner said they are still looking at the possibility of doing some kind of building expansion. Some Library Board Members have been touring other libraries through the county to get different ideas.

Katie Whitney said they have a slide show she could email the Board.

Supervisor Scammell asked her to send it to him. He asked about how many libraries they have toured.

Scott Kushner said there were around 6 that have recently added on to their facilities. Salina, Marcellus and Solvay are three of them.

Katie Whitney said they are looking at a 20' x 30' expansion due to the septic system and cost.

Councilor McConnell asked if 20' x 30' isn't big enough, what are they pursuing.

Katie said they are looking at different ideas.

Councilor McConnell asked what the cost to expand 20' x 30' is.

Scott said a very very very preliminary discussion would be about \$300,000.

Councilor McConnell asked in reality if they had a planned expansion of \$300,000, is there grants available rather than the taxpayers paying for it?

Scott said absolutely there are grants. They are pretty competitive and are matching funds. He hasn't investigated it completely until he knows exactly what they are looking for.

Katie said one positive is the library hasn't applied for a grant before and you have to have half of the funds up front.

Councilor McConnell asked if they had the money, would they consider a separate building.

Katie said she doesn't know. She would like to see what the traffic from the new Health Center is.

Supervisor Scammell asked if the \$300,000 included contents.

Scott thinks it's just for the shell. He talked to the Community Foundation who advised once he gets the building, there is funding for shelves, etc.

Councilor McConnell asked when they are going to get serious about this.

Scott thinks the Board has been a little more proactive on this.

Katie said when they sent out a questionnaire in the Green Sheet, the overall response was positive.

Councilor McConnell asked if the addition would be to supply books, etc. or used as a meeting place.

Scott said they need more room for books. It would be an all-purpose room. Children's Story Hour would be there, etc.

Councilor McConnell asked if their user rate is up.

Scott said yes.

Katie said the computer usage is up too. There is no room to expand this area.

Supervisor Scammell asked how many pc's they have.

Scott said 10 public access pc's. They also have wireless.

Supervisor Scammell asked if they had any sense about what was most in demand when people come to use the pc's.

Scott said it depends. There's a range from résumé's to online courses to social networking. They had some kids using them this summer for online games.

Katie said with the economy the way it is, they have noticed the data base usage has increased as well as the Learning Express. She's sure this is because of the economy. Learning Express is a site where you can take a class for the civil service exams.

Scott said he has been offering computer classes too.

Supervisor Scammell asked about the downloading of audio books.

Scott said it's very popular. They have some MP3 players with the audio books loaded on them that people can take out.

Katie said you can now do it on IPOD's too. The overdrive doesn't take up space on your shelves and it's only 1% of their budget.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

John Harper, Greg Hoxie, Ken Jerome and Don Bush were present.

The had a presentation showing their budget income and expenses over the past 2 years.

Ken Jerome said the presentation shows what they have spent over the past couple of years.

Greg Hoxie said in 2007 the overall budget was \$320,000.

Councilor Shute asked if these numbers are before the insurance and workers compensation is added.

Greg Hoxie said this is the money for the general expenses and the Capitol Reserve.

Councilor McConnell asked where they were at the end of February of that year.

Greg Hoxie said they were over. The presentation is a snapshot of where they were at the end of February. Their fiscal year runs from March 1st to the end of February. They took in \$54,500 in billing for ambulance and they paid out for payroll and to the billing company a total of \$61,000 and \$5,100 for ambulance supplies. For their internal purposes, this is under special funds. The new ambulance cost \$143,000 totally stocked. This is out of the Capitol Reserve. John procured a grant for it. In the long run this will help out on the Capitol Reserve. From 3/01/07 to the end of February 2008, \$195,900 was paid out. Their budget was \$187,700.

Councilor Shute asked if the difference between the \$195,900 and the \$330,000 was the money put in the Capitol Reserve.

Greg Hoxie said yes. He thinks the DeFrancisco grant will help them for a good many years on the overall budget. The current budget they are on now from 3/1/08 through 8/31/08 shows where they are at right now with the current budget. Basically it's a 6-month picture.

Councilor McConnell asked if they look at these figures quarterly.

Ken Jerome said the Board looks at them monthly to see where they are at.

Councilor Bailey asked if the income of \$37,087 is from insurance payments.

Greg said yes.

Ken Jerome said they estimated a 70% return.

Greg Hoxie said a lot of it he thinks is because people are not insured.

Councilor McConnell asked if they keep track of the calls they go out on and how many they are reimbursed for.

Don Bush said they have a record of all their calls and the amount they pay the staff.

Greg Hoxie said they are still averaging a 70% return of what's billed out. A lot of the people are on Medicaid and for some reason Medicaid thinks they can take an automatic discount.

Councilor McConnell asked if he had data on how many calls are for senior citizens.

Greg Hoxie said they might be able to get that information but he doesn't have it right now. He thinks the state compiles those numbers but he hasn't done them.

Councilor McConnell said as people get older their reimbursement will get lower every time.

Greg Hoxie said if the trend continues, yes.

Councilor McConnell said a year ago they said we would be 24-7 with EMS.

Greg Hoxie said there's a problem getting quality people to work.

Councilor McConnell asked quality or trained.

Ken Jerome would say quality trained.

Councilor McConnell asked if they have turned away anyone who was a qualified EMS.

Ken Jerome said yes. They are looking for a person that can work with them in the department as well as provide the service they expect. They turned a couple of people away as they didn't feel they would fit into the department.

Councilor McConnell asked how they are covered when no one is available.

Greg Hoxie said it's covered by the first available responder.

Councilor McConnell said before this year's budget is done, do they estimate being 24-7.

Greg Hoxie said they are typically at 96 hours a month or about 24 hours a week short.

Ken Jerome said they are trying to work with the current staff as much as they can. They are hoping to cover the open slots with the new people. They are still into the process of rotations and different shifts.

John Harper said another problem they have is that people within their department have to travel to Herkimer for some of the training required.

Ken Jerome said right now the only level 4 class offered is in Utica. They have one volunteer firefighter going for the level 4.

Councilor Bailey confirmed the criteria for hiring their EMS is level 3.

Ken Jerome said everything they had except the vehicle fuel which they increased from \$17,000 to \$19,500, the insurance which is increased \$1,000 and the heat and electric which is up \$2,000 each is the same. They are asking for a 3% increase from last year's budget.

Councilor McConnell said that is the \$11,000 increase. He got something this summer from Senator DeFrancisco about a \$100,000 grant to the L.F.D.

Councilor Bailey believes it was for \$50,000.

Councilor McConnell is sure it was for \$100,000.

Greg Hoxie said Councilor Bailey helped John Harper write the grant for the ambulance and they got \$50,000 which is going to the Capitol Reserve.

Councilor McConnell asked why they would ask for the same amount for the Capitol Reserve for this year as they asked for last year when they got \$50,000.

Greg Hoxie said he has been asking for an increase in the Capitol Reserve for years. He said by keeping it the same he is hoping they won't have to come to the Town Board to ask for an increase in this line item over the next few years.

Councilor McConnell asked what they have in their Capitol Reserve.

John Harper said \$133,000.

Councilor McConnell asked what their next purchase will be.

Ken Jerome said in 2012 they will have to purchase a new engine. They have a small situation they have to look into regarding one of their tankers. One of them has been repaired as it leaked. # 22 is showing signs of beginning to leak now. They are looking into getting the tank redone which will be an expense this year. He doesn't think they will touch the Capitol Reserve for this. They are hoping without using the Capitol Reserve, with that \$50,000 in there throughout the years, in 2012 they will be O.K.

Councilor McConnell asked about how much a new engine would cost.

He was advised about \$330,000.

Councilor McConnell said if their next purchase is in 2012 and the anticipated cost of the new engine is about \$330,000 and they put \$105,000 in the Capitol Reserve every year, they will have \$600,000 in the Capitol Reserve in 2012 for this purchase.

Greg Hoxie said it might be suggested that they take money out of the Capitol Reserve to repair the tanker with a polytank. The cab and chassis on both the tankers are pretty immaculate he thinks.

Councilor Bailey asked if there is a program where they could get a tanker from another station if they needed it but didn't need the cab and chassis.

John Harper said another department would probably be in the same situation they are in.

Councilor Bailey asked if it's cost effective to look for a used tanker based on availability.

Ken Jerome thinks this department is pretty fortunate to have the Capitol Reserve rather than having to go out and get a bond when they need new equipment. Some of the other departments are using 20 year old trucks they bonded for and are trying to keep running. He said the used market is just not there.

Supervisor Scammell asked if they would consider an auction.

Ken Jerome said he brought this up to the Board.

Supervisor Scammell said the County now has 24-7 auctions for anything.

Ken Jerome said the last two tankers were sold to a farmer and a construction company. One was sold outright and the other at an auction in Camillus. They were 20-year old tankers. He would personally consider an auction. The truck is an '82 so it's 25 years old and he has it listed at \$15,000 on the website and he hasn't gotten a hit for it yet.

Councilor McConnell said the L.F.D. asked for an \$11,000 increase. What would happen if the Town Board offered less.

John Harper said they would have to go back to their Board.

The Budget Meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jo Kelly
Town Clerk