

Caroline Town Board Agenda Meeting Minutes of November 5, 2018

The Town Board Agenda meeting held on November 5, 2018 at the Caroline Town Hall was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Mark Witmer.

Attendance:

Mark Witmer, Supervisor
John Fracchia, Councilmember
Irene Weiser, Councilmember
Cal Snow, Councilmember
Megan Barber, Councilmember

Recording Secretary:

Marilou Harrington-Lawson, Clerk

Also present were 1 members of the public

Mr. Witmer started the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag at 7:05 p.m.

Public Hearing on Local Law to Override the Tax Levy Limit

Mr. Witmer stated that he doesn't expect to bring the override law forward. He then asked if anyone wished to speak publicly about the Tax Cap Override.

Opened at 7:07p.m.

Closed at 7:10 p.m.

Public Hearing Caroline Town General and Highway Budget

2019 Preliminary Budget

General introduction of the 2019 Preliminary budget. Mr. Witmer started with the Elected Officials wages. They have been posted in the town newspaper, which is required every year. They received a 2% increase as did the rest of the Town Employees.

Next was an explanatory sheet which shows how you get from a tax levy to a tax rate. The town predicts all of the expenses for the upcoming year and all of the revenues and then the difference is what they need to raise in taxes, with the exception of reducing, if possible, by taking reserves that the town might have. Then, the Assessment Office gives the total assessed value of properties in the town. Supervisor Witmer explains that your property value determines how much tax you are responsible for and it is scaled to every \$1,000 assessed value of your home. So, the tax rate is the tax levy divided by the total assessed value of the town, divided by \$1,000 you apply that to every \$1,000 of your home and you will know what your taxes is going to be. This year it is showing that there is \$1.7 million of taxes to be levied and it's also showing the total assessed value is about \$250 million.

Councilmember Cal Snow asked if the total assessed value for the town the total assessed taxable value. Supervisor Witmer said yes. Brief discussion between Town Board and the Town Clerk for clarification.

Supervisor Witmer gave a rundown of what was said earlier regarding the tax cap levy. Further explained how they go through and find out what the appropriations are for the General A fund and the Highway DA fund. Find the revenues and based on the difference they decide an amount to offset with the fund balance is as shown on the preliminary budget. Councilmember Megan Barber asked if that number seemed typical and not high or low. Mr. Witmer stated the reserves look good and although you can only predict what costs will be for the remainder of the year, he felt everything is looking good.

Lastly, Supervisor Witmer stated that because of the change in the levy, the tax rate will go down a little bit.

The highlights of some of the budget are as follow:

Safety Inspection line up 11%

Highway Administration line is also up 11% (due to adding an Assistant to Highway Superintendent)

Health Benefits line is up 21%. That includes Health Insurance and HRA funds. Hopeful that amount will be lowered but unsure at this point.

Highway Equipment line - \$218,000 for new truck plus \$50,000 in reserve.

Fire Protection District

Caroline Fire: Contracts and/or budgets received show nothing unusual. Worker's Comp is for Speedsville Fire is covered by the Town of Caroline and it is up purely because of an error made last year where they were \$736 under budgeted. Councilmember Irene Weiser asked if the funding for re-certification was added to these amounts and Supervisor Witmer said he will investigate it.

Streetlight Fund

The obvious increase was to provide funds for new streetlighting purchasing. The rate for the lighting district and the actual amount of dollars to be spent will be very small.

The Preliminary Budget is approximately \$21,000 greater than the 2018 Levy, that's about a 1.25% difference. And the 2019 Preliminary Budget is around \$53,000 below the 2019 Tax Cap. Part of that amount is due to \$25,000 carry over from the previous year. So, if you compare the 2018 budget to the 2019 budget there is close to no change in taxes.

Public Hearings for the General and Highway Fund Budgets

Public Hearing opened at 7:34p.m.

Resident Barry Goodrich asked where the New York State revenues for state lands is in the budget. He believes is something like \$6.00 an acre in lieu of paying taxes. Supervisor Witmer states that he doesn't believe that's a part of the town budget, has never received monies back

directly from NYS. Town Clerk states that they pay directly to Tompkins County collects the fees and it gets added to the total tax cap and we get a percentage back. Mr. Goodrich would like to see the actual numbers on what the town receives for all the state land here. Mr. Goodrich also had a question for Councilmember Weiser, as she is the liaison for the Speedsville Fire Department. Would like to know how they figure out their Workman's Compensation.

Public Hearing Closed at 7:37

2019 Caroline Fire Protection District Budget

Speedsville Fire Company– raised money by horseshoe events, harescrambles, t-shirts, etc.

Public Hearing on 2019 Caroline Lighting District Budget

Opened at 7:37p.m.

Closed at 7:37p.m.

Committee Reports

John Fracchia, Councilmember – Will send a report for next week's Business Meeting. Sent out a survey this morning regarding questions about a baseline on our town's IT system software. Town Board didn't receive the email, it was discovered it went to junk email. Supervisor Witmer stated that the Computing Center will be coming for a service visit on Tuesday, November 13, 2018.

Cal Snow, Councilmember – Ekroos project is going well. Things are moving along but the project is huge. Worried about all the excessive rain.

Megan Barber, Councilmember – Gave an update on ADHOC Flag Committee. Process of finding a day and time to meet. Lansing has passed a Flag Policy. Supervisor Witmer asked will be on this committee. Kathy Mix, Mike Moran and Bob Spaulding have shown interest. Councilmember Barber has reached out to Rebecca Shilenbeck and will also reach out to Sylvia Short.

Irene Weiser, Councilmember – Update on Aquifer Protection Law. Guy Krogh, the Town Attorney, is still working on the law and she should receive it near Thanksgiving. Gave an update on Emergency Services, Brooke Greenhouse, Town Code Enforcement Officer has met with the Fire Chief's to discuss protocol after a fire, him being on call if needed. There has been some communication between departments about dry hydrants. Difference between the couplings adaptor for the different departments, will need to purchase items depending on what the department needs. Barry Goodrich asked if Speedsville has 2 dry hydrants? The answer from Councilmember Irene Weiser was yes, they have 2 dry hydrants. Town Supervisor Mark Witmer would like to see a map of where and how many dry hydrants are needed.

Discussion of the 2019 Preliminary Budget

Councilmember Irene Weiser discussed recertification for EMS, particularly in Speedsville. The cost is \$800.00. There is question as to how these trainings get paid. Currently, Speedsville Fire District does not have the funds to pay for them to get training/certification. Councilmember Irene Weiser proposed making a reserve training fund of \$1,000 for members of the fire companies who may be in need. Brooktondale and Slaterville manage their own budgets and are independent non-profit. Speedsville is a non-profit fire company that the town contracts with to provide service in Speedsville and part of the Brooktondale area. Caroline is essentially their board of commissioners and approve their budget. Now Speedsville is tapped out and cannot contribute anymore to their budget. There is a member that needs certification and is saying he cannot pay the \$800 to recertify so he is not and that is a huge loss. Asked if we can budget for trainings and certifications to help the Fire Districts. Councilmember John Fracchia agrees that the town should help. Supervisor Witmer will reach out to Speedsville Fire Company and ask for more information regarding their budget and will also send a copy of same to the town board members for their review.

Supervisor Mark Witmer brought forward his earlier discussion of cutting the Deputy Clerk hours to 15 hours per week and 15 hours per week for the Highway Department. He wanted to clarify with the Town Board that everyone is still comfortable with the hours set for the Deputy Clerk position being 20 hours per week, and 10 hours +/- for the Highway Assistant position. With the 20hr/10hr split, the Town Clerk and Highway Superintendent will work together to add or decrease hours depending on need in their office.

Discussion and agenda items for November 14 Town Business Meeting

Supervisor Mark Witmer reached out to the Code Enforcement Officer, Brooke Greenhouse and discussed the proposal from the last budget meeting regarding personnel. It had been suggested that he have assistant to help in his office 10 hours per week. Mr. Greenhouse felt that was too much and felt that 5 hours per week would be sufficient for him now. Adjust the hours for his office assistant to 5 hours per week. Supervisor Witmer stated that Mr. Greenhouse is paid hourly. He is currently working approximately 30 hours per week but has taken on more work that was done in the past. Mr. Greenhouse had suggested to Mr. Witmer for an increase in hours from 30 hours per week to 32-33 hours per week. Supervisor Witmer made the proposal to the Town Board members and agreed that they add a few more hours to the Code Enforcement Officers line, just in case it is needed. He feels that they should be sensitive to the need. Councilmember John Fracchia asked what his current hourly rate is. Mr. Witmer answered \$28 per hour and after he completes his training it will be \$30, which was the amount paid to the previous Code Officer. Councilmember Megan Barber and Councilmember Cal Snow have heard that he has spent excessive time talking at a job site. Supervisor Witmer feels that he is learning/adjusting to the position and feels that in time that will change. In addition, Mr. Witmer stated that Mr. Greenhouse is very efficient and feels he is dedicated to the job. Supervisor Witmer proposes an amendment to the following:

Resolution _____ of 2018

A motion made by Mark Witmer and seconded by Irene Weiser to amend the 2019 Preliminary Budget

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board to make amendments to the following lines of the 2019 Preliminary Budget are as follows:

Reduce line A3620.104 to Code Office Assistant (5 hours per week) from \$7,212 to \$4,007

Increase line A3620.1 to total 32 hours per week for Code Officer, from \$46,800 to \$50,648

Increase line A5010.101 from \$7,212 to \$8,013 from 9 hours per week to 10 hours per week for Highway Assistant

Deputy Clerk and Highway Assistant positions: 20 hours per week for the Clerk's Office and 10 hours per week for the Highway Assistant position. Agreed that those hours will work, and flexibility will be made for either department if and when needed.

Adopted: Witmer: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Weiser: Aye; Snow: Aye; Barber: Aye

The Town Board will vote on the 2019 Budget at the Business Meeting next week. Supervisor Witmer will do the tax cap confirmation with the State. If something comes up and the budget needs to be amended, the board can amend and vote next week. There may be an amendment regarding the EMT line.

ATV Meeting - Town Supervisor Mark Witmer would like to touch base with the ATV group. The trails need to be public trails. It will need to be demonstrated that it is impossible to reach the trailhead other than by roadway. Councilmember John Fracchia wants defined which trails are public or private trails where there is permission for anyone to use them. Supervisor Witmer wants a serious consideration of UTV's, because they are more of a farm use and ATV's need to be made separate from them. Mr. Witmer agrees with the Town Attorney, Guy Krogh that the Town should start with a few roads and not open to all town roads. It was agreed that the town board will follow up with the group.

Lounsbery Farms – Kris West is coming to the Business Meeting to discuss the Lounsbery Farms. R.C. Quick wants to talk with the board but has asked to meet with Supervisor Witmer. Further discussion regarding the previous proposal that was made. Supervisor Witmer asked the Town Clerk to pull the minutes from that previous meeting.

Agenda Items for next week's Business Meeting – Councilmember Irene Weiser will bring forward a Resolution regarding potential trucks from PA to Cayuga Power Plant 25-60 trucks a day which translates to 50-120 truck trips per day. The trucks have been known to tip and the evacuation process is ½ mile radius. An Environmental impact study needs to be done by the DEC.

Planning Board is having a series of community meeting to inform residents of their Comprehensive Plan. The first meeting is Tuesday, November 13th at 7:00 p.m. at the Brooktondale Community Center. The board will be discussing what would make Caroline a Livable Community. There will be 2 more meetings to follow.

Supervisor Witmer has received two proposals for heat pumps for the Historic Town Hall. Mr. Witmer will send them to the board members and will discuss at next week's Business Meeting.

---Adjourn the meeting ---

The meeting adjourned on a motion by Mark Witmer and seconded by Councilmember Irene Weiser at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marilou Harrington-Lawson, Town Clerk
Jessica L. Townsend, Deputy Town Clerk