

Caroline Town Board Budget Workshop #3 Minutes of October 19, 2021

The Caroline Town Board Special Budget Meeting of October 19, 2021, was held in-person and electronically via zoom teleconference at the Caroline Town Hall and was called to order by Supervisor Witmer at 7:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Supervisor Mark Witmer
Councilmember John Fracchia
Councilmember Tim Murray
Councilmember Cal Snow
Councilmember Katherine Goldberg

Recording Secretary:

Jessica L. Townsend, Town Clerk

Also Present: Highway Superintendent (Supt.), Bob Spencer; Judge Barr and 1 member of the public attended via zoom

2022 Tentative Budget Workshop #3

Court - Supr. Witmer shared the tentative budget worksheet and invited Judge Barr to go over the Court lines and make her recommendations. Beginning with the salary lines, the Supr. has budgeted for an 8.5% increase for each Justice and a 4% increase for the Court Clerk. No money was budgeted for a Typist or Equipment because those lines have not been used in recent years, and the line for a Jury Trial stayed flat at \$1,000, as it's been for 10 years or more.

Judge Barr asked that the Jury Trial line increase to \$2,000, which will be the actual cost of a Trial now in 2021 and a Trial will be held in the Caroline Court in November. That change was agreed upon and set at \$2,000. She stated her appreciation for the 8.5% raise but noted they will still be the lowest paid Judges in Tompkins County. There was a brief discussion regarding the difference in the equipment line and the contractual line. Electronic equipment and furnishings are generally provided by the State and therefore those lines stayed flat with no changes.

Highway – Starting at the Traffic Control line (A3310.3) which is set at \$2,500 - Supt. Spencer shared concerns with that because of the increased cost of road signs, safety vests, traffic cones, and more, which all come out of that line. He will be changing signs over to high visibility, one road at a time, as they need replacing. Discussion regarding halting big signage purchases right away because of the inflation spike due to covid. The line was increased to \$5,500. The Highway Clerical line (A5010.101) was set at \$15,000 - Supt. Spencer asked for an increase to \$17,000 which will allow 20 hours per week. The line was increased to \$17,000. Hwy Office CE (A5010.4) set at \$5,000 – Supt. Spencer asked for the line to stay where it was budgeted for 2021 which is \$14,950. \$4,100 has been expended from this line this year but Bob said this is due to trainings that the highway crew has missed the past two years. After discussion, the line was increased from \$5,000 to \$14,950. The Hwy Equipment line (DA5030.2) set for \$142,000 – Supt. Spencer is asking for \$202,000. The Board and Bob had a lengthy discussion regarding future purchases and the need for a capital planning committee. Bob gave a presentation at past meetings outlining his recommended equipment schedule. He recognized that the cost to replace the equipment that's needed is high and can't happen overnight. However, he doesn't believe setting a lower number will benefit the replacement needs, but it would instead be a setback. Clm. Snow recommended increasing the line 50% to \$195,000 and taking the difference from the healthy fund balance. In doing so, this would allow the line to stay lower, bring the fund balance down and keep Bob's purchasing plan on track. Bob has estimated an annual cost for equipment to be \$165,000, if purchases are financed and rotated every 7

years. Clm. Murray proposed that they increase the line to \$165,000 and use fund balance, only if an urgent matter arises in 2022. This would allow time to organize a highway capital planning committee and really assess choices like financing vs. buying, which replacements are of high priority vs. which can be stretched another year or more, and what the expense would be of those options. After board discussion, the line was increased to \$165.00.

Supr. Witmer then went over all the adjustments of the evening and recalculated the levy. These changes put the final budget over the tax cap. To stay below it, he proposed using \$25,000 from the DA fund balance to offset the levy, and stays 0.34% below the tax cap. This will raise the taxes (based on a \$200,000 home) about \$18.00, a 1.11% increase.

Resolution 140 of 2021. Budget Changes

A motion made by Supr. Witmer and seconded by Clm. Fracchia

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board hereby agrees to make the following increases to the 2022 Tentative Budget:

A1110.404	From	\$1,000	to	\$2,000
A3310.3	From	\$2,500	to	\$5,500
A5010.101	From	\$15,000	to	\$17,000
A5010.4	From	\$5,000	to	\$14,950
DA5030.2	From	\$142,000	to	\$165,000

PASSED: Witmer; Aye Fracchia; Aye Snow; Aye Murray; Aye Goldberg; Aye

Resolution 141 of 2021. DA Fund Balance for Tax Levy

A motion made by Supr. Witmer and seconded by Clm. Snow

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board hereby agrees to use \$25,000 of DA Fund Balance to offset the tax levy.

PASSED: Witmer; Aye Fracchia; Aye Snow; Aye Murray; Aye Goldberg; Aye

Resolution 142 of 2021. Adoption of the Preliminary Budget

A motion made by Supr. Witmer and seconded by Clm. Fracchia

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board hereby agrees to adopt the 2022 Preliminary Budget

PASSED: Witmer; Aye Fracchia; Aye Snow; Aye Murray; Aye Goldberg; Aye

Resolution 143 of 2021. Set Public Hearing

A motion made by Supr. Witmer and seconded by Clm. Fracchia

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board hereby sets a Public Hearing on the 2022 Preliminary Budget on Wednesday, November 3rd, 2021, ahead of the Agenda Meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m.

PASSED: Witmer; Aye Fracchia; Aye Snow; Aye Murray; Aye Goldberg; Aye

A motion to adjourn made by Supr. Witmer and seconded by Clm. Murray at 9:13 p.m. and carried unanimously.

----Adjourn the meeting ----

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica L. Townsend, Town Clerk