

Caroline Town Board Budget Meeting Minutes of October 20, 2020

The Town Board Budget Meeting was held electronically via Zoom teleconference on October 15, 2020 beginning at 5:30 p.m. hosted by Supervisor Mark Witmer

Attendance:

Supervisor Mark Witmer
Councilmember John Fracchia
Councilmember Irene Weiser
Councilmember Tim Murray
Councilmember Cal Snow

Recording Secretary:

Jessica L. Townsend, Town Clerk

Also Present: Velvet Lyke, Town Bookkeeper and 1 members of the public

2021 Tentative Budget Discussion

Justices - Supervisor Witmer started the meeting by presenting the 2021 Tentative Budget with modifications to the Justices budget lines to include the requested amounts submitted by the Justices. The town lines discussed were the wage rate lines for both the Justices and the Court Clerk. Supervisor Witmer presented comps from other Tompkins County Court Clerks which included data based on population, hours per week, annual wages, hourly wage and other notes. The average hourly wage for Court Clerk's among the towns is \$17.73/hr. Caroline's Court Clerk is tentatively set for 2021 at \$19.07/hr. He did the same for the Justices but also included estimated case load data. It was noted that these numbers are estimates and approximations only and that the data has been requested from our Judges and has not yet been received. Councilmember Weiser noted that in the absence of the data requested for 2019 and 2020 case load, she doesn't feel in the position to advocate for the increases. Councilmember Fracchia feels that the salaries of our Judges are under the average salaries. Looking at the numbers, he believes they are not at the pay level of other Judges in the County and recommends finding out what other towns do to set these salaries. The Town Board members further discussed estimated hourly rates. They will note vote on this tonight and pleads with the Judges to submit case load reports and other qualitative data in order to have a fair conversation based on accurate analysis.

Planning – Discussion regarding the proposed \$50,000 budgeted for Planning. Supervisor Witmer explained items that will need to be addressed in 2021 such as development guidance and Road Use Law (estimated \$20,000). Councilmember Weiser added engineering costs for the highway building (estimated \$20,000 - \$30,000) also an attorney for Emergency Services coverage (estimated \$15,000 - \$20,000). Supervisor Witmer suggested using fund balance for additional costs when needs arise. Further discussion regarding the tax cap. Supervisor Witmer noted that as the Tentative Budget stands right now, they are below the tax cap. Councilmember Tim Murray feels comfortable leaving the \$50,000 budgeted amount alone assuming they will have fund balance available if needed. He added that proposed changes to Site Plan Review costs will come out of this year's account balance.

Highway – Supervisor Witmer noted that we have a lot of old equipment at the highway department that is in need of replacement. He pulled data from other municipalities highway equipment expenditures, and repair expenditures. The data showed the town has spent over \$1,000,000 in new equipment since 2016 and the average repair costs annually have increased. He spoke to Joel and Laura at the Town of Danby and discussed what they do for their highway equipment. Joel and Laura explained that they have a Lease Purchasing Agreement for their snowplows and that's been working well for them. They purchase the accessories for the plow trucks and lease the trucks. This means the trucks are in a five-year rotation and

all the trucks that are leased are under warranty. Supervisor Witmer plans to meet with Laura and Hwy Supt Bob Spencer to discuss this further and hopefully develop a plan to help our highway needs and the cost to do so. Further discussion regarding safety and other equipment replacement needs aside from snowplow trucks.

The next budget meeting was scheduled for Thursday, November 5th at 7:00 p.m.

----End of Meeting ----

The meeting ended at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica L. Townsend, Town Clerk

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