

November 13, 2014
2015 Budget Hearing
7:00 p.m.

Present: Supervisor Gerald L. Deming, Council Members: Lynn Parnell, David Deuel and Frank Rose Jr.

Absent: Norman Gates

Others: Tom Baldwin (Baldwin Business Services), George Worden Jr. (Highway Supt.), Carl Peter (Zoning & Code Officer), Patricia Gardner, Kirk Richenberg and Henry Fuller

Supervisor Deming opened the Budget Hearing at 7:00 p.m.

PURPOSE

Supervisor Deming stated the purpose of said hearing is to present the 2015 Preliminary Budget and to receive public comment and questions on it. Mr. Deming introduced Tom Baldwin of Baldwin Business Services, the Town's Accounting Firm, to review and hi-lite the main points of the budget.

Mr. Baldwin explained two main objectives of the Board for the 2015 budget year, was to continue with a stable tax rate and remain under the 2% tax cap. Mr. Baldwin stated in order to gauge a budget for the upcoming year, they use three previous year's expenditures. In the General fund, under Fines and Forfeitures account, we determined that those two lines items could be reduced by \$5,000 and \$3,000 respectively, which the budget reflects. Mr. Baldwin stated the savings in the General fund has also been reduced from \$14,700 to \$10,000, to be used for tax relief. Mr. Baldwin added in order to remain under the 2% tax cap, the Board was only able to raise \$18,000 in taxes. With the new assessments in place some homeowners experienced an increase, some a decrease and others remained the same. In the upcoming budget, a property assessed for 114,000 will pay \$484.60 for the town tax rate which is an increase of \$.08 from 2014. Mr. Baldwin stated the Board worked diligently to try and keep the rates constant. Mr. Baldwin added by staying under the tax cap by \$10,000, town residents have already received or will be receiving refund checks from the State, sadly not enough to speak of. Retirement costs have increased by \$2,000 in the General and \$8,000 in the Highway, leaving \$10,000 less to use elsewhere, requiring us to adjust accordingly.

Supervisor Deming reported a 1 1/2 % wage increase has been proposed for most employees. Health insurance costs continue to rise and has a 14% increase slated for the New Year and a 7-8% increase for the following year. Mr. Baldwin commented health insurance is an ongoing battle for all municipalities and businesses to contend with. Mr. Baldwin stated with the second part of the tax cap, in order to qualify, the State wants you to be a part of a shared services program. Highway Departments throughout the County have always assisted one another when needed, many reaping that benefit, but the State wants municipalities to merge departments, which could truly be a problem.

Mr. Deming stated we are confident that we will be able to operate within the 2014 budget figures for the rest of the year, not anticipating anything out of the ordinary to contend with. Mr. Baldwin reported \$10,000 from General and \$28,000 from Highway was used for tax relief for the proposed 2015 budget.

Supervisor Deming elaborated on the State's desire to merge departments and commented they are trying to reduce levels of government.

Mr. Fuller stated he thought we were already part of the shared services program. Mr. Baldwin replied the Town highway departments work very well together. Each Highway Superintendent coordinates their crews to assist surrounding townships on their own, without State assistance. Mr. Baldwin added the State would like the towns to have something in writing, officially outlining merging of departments which could be problematic. Highway departments rally to each other's aid already, combining of departments is not always necessary. Mr. Richenberg asked if the consolidation issue is coming from the State, and is there an incentive or a penalty? Mr. Baldwin replied if a township is not a certain size, the State will probably mandate a consolidation. Mr. Richenberg asked aren't we already doing it? Mr. Baldwin answered no, we have not officially on paper consolidated services. Mr. Richenberg asked if the Town has considered trying to obtain health care in unison with perhaps the County, with greater number of employees and better rates. Mr. Baldwin replied the County has become their own carrier, they are self-insured. Supervisor Deming added due to the existing Teamster's contract, the Town has limited options. Mr. Richenberg asked if there is any flexibility about employee contributions. Mr. Deming answered Yes, in the new contract all employees hired on or after April 1, 2013 are required to pay 25% of their health and dental insurance plans, to be paid through payroll deductions. Supervisor Deming stated in regards to the increasing costs associated with insurance, several years ago many municipalities did not budget enough to cover the ongoing large increases, but we budgeted accordingly. Mr. Baldwin added when the market went down, many took a very large hit, mainly because of poor investments, we were able to sustain.

Mr. Fuller asked if the issue of bank fraud will affect us. Mr. Baldwin replied many factors are involved with bank fraud, but could potentially affect us. We constantly fight the mandates, but to no avail. Supervisor Deming reported if next year we do not make the 4% savings, we will lose the rebate incentive. Mr. Deming stated in order to generate additional revenue, the Town has approached the Town of Leicester about taking over their water system since we are already supplying them with water, which would be a logical fit. It would be revenue for us and a savings for Leicester.

Mr. Richenberg stated he reviewed the financial figures of the Fire contract in the advertised notice and asked why the Town of York's contract is significantly higher than others he viewed. Supervisor Deming replied the Board prepares the fire contract based upon the department's numbers and need, which for 2015 is a 2% increase. The cost of equipment replacement is ongoing and expensive, but the department is already underway in consolidating equipment. More updated equipment, but less of it. Prior to consolidation, which is now the York Fire Department, the town had two fire companies, York Volunteer Fire Company and the Retsof Hose Company, each having their own equipment. Over the years now much of the previously purchased equipment has failed to meet the State requirements. Gear and equipment is required by law to be upgraded, which is a great deal of their budget. Mr. Fuller asked if anything could be traded in? Mr. Peter on behalf of the fire department responded by saying, after 10 years they are

not legally allowed in New York State to trade or sell such equipment. Mr. Richenberg stated he read that the fire contract for Nunda totaled \$80,000. Mr. Baldwin responded there are different variables for each fire department, area of coverage and manpower to name two. Supervisor Deming stated the Town attempted several years ago to do a budget comparison throughout the County, but was very difficult as Mr. Baldwin explained, due to those variables.

Mrs. Gardner asked for clarification as to the Veterans Services and Programs for Aging line items, and usage of those funds. Supervisor Deming replied the funds budgeted for Veteran's services assist our local York VFW Post for flags and other necessary needs. Programs for the Aging funds assist our York/Leicester Seniors organization. Mrs. Gardner stated previously at a regular Town Board Meeting she asked the board to consider possible funding for youth recognition. Mrs. Gardner commented recognizing a worthy individual would not require a great deal of money, but would be a nice way of expressing pride in their accomplishments. Supervisor Deming stated the board has not rendered a decision if they wish to participate at this time due to the continued budgeted funds already in place for the York/Leicester youth programs and the summer recreation programs, which is sponsored by the Town of York and Town & Village of Leicester. Mrs. Gardner also inquired as to the Library line item. Mr. Deming replied in past years the Town has donated to the Geneseo Library because of the number of York residents that would use it, but for 2015 no funds have been allocated.

After no further questions from the public...

RESOLUTION offered by Mrs. Parnell and seconded by Mr. Rose to close the Budget Hearing at 7:28 p.m. Voted on and approved, Yes-4, No-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine M. Harris, Clerk