

September 19, 2017

Notes from the Budget Workshop held Monday, September 19, 2017 at 6:00 PM at the Keene Town Hall. The following Town Board Members were present: Joseph P. Wilson, Supervisor, Paul R. Martin, Robert M. Biesemeyer, Michael J. Buysse and Jerry D. Smith, Members of the Council. Also present were: Scott Smith, interim Highway Superintendent, Craig Holmes, Ryan Hall, Water Superintendent, Susan Whitney, Clerk to the Supervisor and Donna Reed Austin, Acting Secretary.

The Budget Meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM. Mr. Wilson started by asking the Board if they wanted to extend the Cold War Veterans Exemption. After a short discussion it was agreed that the matter would be tabled until clarification could be made for the dates of the Cold War and how many people were affected by this exemption.

Before beginning to go through the first draft of the 2018 Budget, Mr. Wilson informed the Board that a 3% increase was added to all salaries, except for the Supervisor which would be discussed later on.

The Board began at the front of the "first draft" budget. The following items were discussed:

- The salary for the Assessor was questioned and Mr. Biesemeyer said that it was a "fixed salary" and a salary increase was not in the contract. Mrs. Whitney said she would check the contract. Mr. Biesemeyer felt that the other towns (Jay, Lewis and St. Armand) should be contacted to see what they pay her. This budget item was tabled.
- Mr. Wilson said the Town Attorney hasn't had a raise since 2015. Mr. Buysse questioned if the Town Attorney could also be a Justice and do both jobs. He felt this should be checked out with Dan Manning. The Board was in agreement.
- Regarding Public Works, Mr. Wilson indicated that Personal Services was returned to the amount in the previous 2 years. Mrs. Whitney said that Personal Services included sidewalk plowing. The equipment line was increased from \$2,000. to \$36,000. Mr. Wilson explained the equipment is used by Parks, Public Works and Water and needs to be updated. Mr. Hall provided an extensive list of equipment to be sold and a list of 4 items to be bought. There was a lengthy discussion as to the pros and cons of equipment being leased or purchased. Mr. Biesemeyer totaled the price for the new equipment at \$100,000. Mr. Wilson indicated that there were numerous places in the budget where he has found unexpended money that could be applied to this line item. Mr. Wilson felt the new equipment was justified and replace the

old machinery. Mr. Wilson said in the Buildings section, there is a \$3,000. savings from unexpended funds.

- Central Print & Mail showed an increase based on actual spending.
- Under Transportation (Supt. of Highways) – Mr. Hall informed the Board that the shuttle bus passed inspection for another year.
- Hiker/Parking Lot – equipment increased to \$35,500. A 15 passenger new camp/van 1 ton would cost \$34,650. Mr. Wilson said the State contracts are a “good deal” and there is \$15,000. in Capital Reserve. Hiker parking could generate \$30,000. in surplus this year. Mr. Wilson felt the shuttle bus should be kept in “moth balls” if a new shuttle bus is purchased due to the lift which might be needed. (The need for a lift, Mr. Wilson explained, was a “gray area”. Mr. Martin felt if a van was purchased on time, the revenue would take care of the payment. Mr. Wilson agreed that the shuttle generates funds.
- Recreational Facility reduced by \$1,000. for Personal Services. This decrease was due to no maintenance/cleaning of the Community Center.
- Youth Program – Summer Staff – 3% increase. Reduction in Personal Services Rink Staff as skating season ended early.
- Historian’s request for \$30/month increase was denied. A short discussion regarding the Historian moving items back to the library and holding regular hours.
- Adult Recreation – Senior Club – Mr. Wilson felt the entire amount of budget should be dispensed to the Seniors and they use as they see fit. This would alleviate writing of checks.
- Cemetery: contractual expense – Budget money spent on repairing wall, pesticide, grub removal and repair of turf.
- Employee Benefits: State Retirement – figures aren’t broken down by tier. Medical Ins-buy-outs not included in figures. \$12,000. for 3 employees, Total Undistributed \$223,301. Mrs. Whitney provided Estimated Total Contribution sheet and NY Class Summary Statement from August 2017.
- Fines and Forfeitures (actual) do not include August revenue per Mrs. Whitney.
- Improvements: Mr. Wilson indicated the town was eligible for \$56,000. in CHIP money but the town missed a deadline to submit for the funds, but Mr. Wilson was continuing to work on it.
- Highway – machinery: Machinery line set at \$95,000. to make payments on current lease and get a new truck. Mr. Smith provided a Vehicle & Equipment Plan for 2017 – 2021 including model numbers, condition, value and sell or replace. No discussion at this time.
- Local Sources: Real Property Tax figures not available yet.
- Keene Public Library Fund (Personal Services) : Mr. Wilson informed the Board that the current librarian would be retiring the end of March. He felt changing to a half time librarian and eliminate benefits would be the way to go. And then in a few years closing the library. Mr. Biesemeyer said that he would be meeting with the Library Board on October 5<sup>th</sup> and he felt very strongly for keeping the library open as the library “serves the public with a small sector of the community” and “serves the purpose for computer use.”

Mr. Buysse thought a lot of work needed to be done to the building. Mr. Biesemeyer felt the hours could be changed to 29 hrs. which would eliminate benefits and hire a part time grant writer. Mr. Martin said that maybe Mrs. Glass could do the grant writing if the town would donate the \$10,000. requested to the KV Library Capital Campaign. The Board all agreed on \$4,000. for grant writing. This topic was tabled and discussion to continue at the next board meeting.

- Water District #1 – Water bond increase – check with Ellen as to the reason for the increase last year.

Water Superintendent Salary: Mr. Hall discussed with the Board the idea of going to a “salaried” position, rather than hourly. This would be a flat salary for Water District #1, #2 and Public Works. He felt this would help with planning and budgeting. There was further discussion regarding what would happen when he was on vacation, who would take care of water leaks and who would check the water daily. Mr. Biesemeyer asked what he was being paid now and it was estimated at \$52,000. to \$53,000. The topic was tabled and will be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Biesemeyer asked if Mr. Wilson could obtain salaries for employees in other towns so a salary comparison could be done. The list provided didn’t include all elected employees.

Highway Supt. Salary: There was a lengthy discussion regarding the Essex County Salary Report provided. The average salary for Highway Supt. was around \$50,500. Mr. Biesemeyer questioned whether the Supt. should earn less than other employees on the crew and maybe the base amount should be the average of all crew members. Mr. Smith recalled a figure of \$48,000. but felt that \$50,500. would be a good base starting salary. Mr. Biesemeyer said it was important to start out in line with the salary in other towns. Mr. Martin said that “traditionally the Highway Supt. makes a bit more than Supervisor because of plowing, etc.” Mr. Wilson requested more information from Mrs. Whitney. Subject was tabled until the next meeting.

Supervisor Salary: Mr. Wilson proposed a salary increase of \$5,000. or a total of \$52,140. (Breakdown of \$18,300. County, \$33,840. Town). Mr. Biesemeyer said he had no problem with the 3 % cost of living but objected to the \$3,000. raise. He felt it would set a precedent . Mr. Biesemeyer said this years budget brought Mr. Wilson to the level of the former supervisor and the Highway Supt’s salary was dropped from what the former Supt. was making. Mr. Smith suggested waiting until Mrs. Whitney provided further figures. Mr. Martin praised Mr. Wilson on providing reports and data never before given and said he appreciates what Mr. Wilson has done. Mr. Martin made a motion to increase the Supervisor’s salary by \$5,000. a year, bringing it to \$33,840. Mr. Biesemeyer was completely opposed. Topic was tabled and will be discussed at the next meeting.

Resolution 200 – 17 Mr. Smith offered a resolution and moved its adoption. Be it resolved that the Town Board enter into Executive Session to discuss legal issues. This resolution was seconded by Mr. Martin.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Wilson	Yes
Mr. Martin	Yes
Mr. Biesemeyer	Yes
Mr. Buysse	Yes
Mr. Smith	Yes

The following Town Board Members entered into Executive Session at 8:15 PM,

Mr. Wilson, Mr. Martin, Mr. Biesemeyer, Mr. Smith.

Resolution – 201 – 17

Mr. Smith offered a resolution and moved its adoption. Be it resolved that the Town Board reconvene in regular session. This resolution was seconded by Mr. Martin.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Wilson	Yes
Mr. Martin	Yes
Mr. Biesemeyer	Yes
Mr. Buysse	Absent
Mr. Smith	Yes

The Town Board reconvened into regular session at 8:29 PM.

Mr. Wilson said no decisions were reached during the Executive Session.

Resolution 202 – 17

Mr. Smith offered a resolution and moved its adoption. Be it resolved that with all business having been transacted, this meeting be adjourned. This resolution was seconded by Mr. Martin.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ferebee	Yes
Mr. Martin	Yes
Mr. Biesemeyer	Yes
Mr. Buysse	Absent
Mr. Smith	Yes

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Donna Reed Austin, Acting Secretary