

September 15, 2020

Notes from the Budget Workshop held Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 6:00 PM, in the Keene Fire House Meeting Room. The following Town Board Members were present: Joseph P. Wilson, Supervisor, Robert M. Biesemeyer, Teresa Cheetham-Palen and David Deyo, Member of Council. Absent: Jennifer G. Whitney, Member of Council. Also present: Scott Smith, Highway Superintendent, Ryan Hall, Water Superintendent and Ellen Estes, Town Clerk.

The Chairman, Mr. Wilson, called the workshop to order at 6:00 PM.

He said the first order of business does not relate to the Budget.

Ms. Estes explained that the Town was delinquent with a Standard Workday and Reporting Resolution which had been denied by the Retirement System in April 2019. She said the correspondence from them in July of 2019 did not appear to have been received and the follow up correspondence was just being received. She said she is working with the Retirement System to close this case.

Resolution No. 165 – 20

Mr. Deyo offered a resolution and moved its adoption. Be it resolved, that the Town Board approve Resolution No. 165 – 20, a “corrected” Standard Work Day and Reporting Resolution. This resolution, in its entirety, is attached to and made a part of these minutes. This resolution was seconded by Ms. Cheetham-Palen.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Wilson:	Yes
Mr. Biesemeyer:	Yes
Ms. Cheetham-Palen:	Yes
Mr. Deyo:	Yes
Ms. Whitney:	Absent

Mr. Wilson said he had one more item to discuss that is sort of budget, sort of Corona Virus.

He said that the County has been in contact with the Trudeau Institute who is willing to purchase a Rapid Result Covid Test and Flu Testing machine.

He asked the Board how they felt about the Town contributing to this effort.

Mr. Biesemeyer said he felt this was a bad time for the Town to try to contribute anything and said that a \$500 contribution wouldn't make much difference anyhow.

Mr. Wilson stated that if the Town of Keene contributed, that may help pressure other Towns to contribute. He said a machine like this may have prevented the incident at the Essex Center; Mr. Biesemeyer disagreed.

Mr. Wilson stated that if each of the 7 Town's in the region this would cover gave \$500, that would be \$3500.

Ms. Cheetham-Palen said she didn't think this was a bad idea.

Mr. Deyo said it was a good idea in theory, but said after having to close the transfer station to save money it didn't seem like a good time. He said if the Town had a balanced budget he would agree to a contribution.

Mr. Wilson stated that the Town of Keene could set an example; Mr. Biesemeyer suggested the Town Board wait on this.

Mr. Wilson said he would put this back on the Bi-Monthly Agenda for discussion.

The Town Board moved onto the 2021 Budget.

- Mr. Wilson began by saying that the State has announced a 20% reduction which will affect the CHiPs revenue.
- He said with the State skimming off Federal Funds, there would be a lot of uncertainty to FEMA reimbursements and the Town would have to be cautious.
- He stated that the County sales tax collection is down 9% so far this year and said the State may withhold more sales tax next year.

Mr. Wilson said he had some answers to questions that arose at last week's workshop:

- He said on page one, the Assessor Contractual had 3 lines because the Assessor's salary and health care contribution had been moved onto a contractual line.
- He said he had good news. He said that the Town would be getting \$20,000 from Roost from Occupancy Tax. He said this will be put into line 150 and 152 to pay for hiking Stewards and signs.
- Mr. Wilson explained the contractual lines on page 6 for Refuse and Garbage, saying that line 236 is for trash hauling and what is saving that from being over budget is not having bulky days in 2020. He said line 237 which is over budget is for recycling. The third contractual line, which is also over budget is for operations, explaining that is for power, gas, etc. He said this was going to be way over by the end of the year.
- He said on page 8, the Fines and Forfeitures looks low because payments coming back from the State have just started being received.

Mr. Wilson said that catches up all of last week's questions.

The Board then picked up where they left off on the Budget last week with Highway.

- The Contractual Expense/Safety Gear line was left blank in error, when asked what it should be, Scott Smith said it should be the same as last year, \$66,200.
- Mr. Smith said he would work on the numbers for Capital Outlay (CHiPs) saying it is usually \$68,000 per year.
- Mr. Wilson said he has received the information that the increase in next year's health care will be 2.8% saying that the co-pays paid by employees would also be raised.
- Mr. Wilson said interest from CLASS is down, he says this is shown on the interest and earnings lines.
- When asked, Scott Smith said he has some highway items to have declared surplus and sold.

The Board moved on to the Library Budget:

- Mr. Wilson explained that Aaron Miller had gone up \$3,000 on his Personal Service Part-time Clerk and had reduced his operating budget \$3,000 so there was actually no change to the bottom line.
- Ms. Cheetham-Palen questioned the \$6,365 which goes to the Keene Valley Library Association, she said she was just looking for places to cut the budget expenses.

Mr. Wilson said he would like to move onto the Water District #2 Budget, saying that was going to be easier than Water District #1:

- Mr. Wilson said the Cost of Operating is \$89,147
- He said the 2 long term debts totaled \$79,162
- He said the Transfer to Capital is money being raised for repairs, he said that line is \$30,198
- He said the amount for next year's debt would be a little higher than this year and the water bills next year would be changed to again reflect the changes. Ryan Hall stated that the debt for \$18,500 may be done, he said he would check on that tomorrow.

Mr. Wilson moved onto Water District #1, saying this budget would be changing next year:

- He began by saying that lines 434 to 444, totaling \$65,494, was the operating budget.
- He said the current bond payment for WD#1 is \$44,000
- He said that Verizon pays WD#1 \$17,000 per year for their cell phone tower, he said the district is anticipating collecting \$15,050 per year when construction on the AT&T tower begins. He asked the Board if they want to budget the AT&T funds, at full or at half or nothing at all? He said they were scheduled to begin before now, but haven't.

- He went on to briefly discuss the ad valorem tax.
- Mr. Wilson went on to say that this District is in turmoil due to unexpected repairs, etc.
- He said the most cost effective repair with FEMA would be through the Au Sable River Association.
- He said that the General Fund could loan WD#1 funds saying that would be much cheaper than the fees connected to a bond while waiting for FEMA to reimburse the project.
- He said that Phase 1 would need to be done before winter to protect the main from freezing and that Phase 2 would be done next year.
- He explained that the District would try to avoid borrowing funds until 2021 since the funds have to be paid back during the calendar year that they are borrowed in.
- Mr. Wilson said he and Ryan Hall will do some more detailed work.

Mr. Wilson said the Budget could be raised \$50,000 new money and stay under the 2% tax cap.

Ms. Cheetham-Palen questioned the 3% increase in salaries saying she would like to see the amount of change using different percentages.

Mr. Wilson said at 3%. The overall change is \$17,000.

Ms. Cheetham-Palen said to balance the budget, she would like to “pull a little bit here and a little bit there”.

Mr. Biesemeyer said he would like to see BTI cut out, but said in the past that wasn't a very popular solution.

This workshop was adjourned at 7:08 PM.

Ellen S. Estes, Town Clerk
September 24, 2020

Joseph P. Wilson, Supervisor
Robert M. Biesemeyer, Councilman
Teresa Cheetham-Palen, Councilwoman
David R. Deyo, Councilman
Jennifer G. Whitney, Councilwoman