

Budget Hearing meeting held by the Town Board,
Town of Yorktown on December 2, 2010 held at
Yorktown Town Hall, Yorktown Heights, NY

Present: Susan Siegel, Supervisor
Nicholas J. Bianco, Councilman
James J. Martorano, Councilman
Terrence P. Murphy, Councilman
Vishnu V. Patel, Councilman
Alice E. Roker, Town Clerk

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Murphy motioned, seconded by Councilman Martorano, to move into Executive Session to discuss the employment of a particular person.

BUDGET MEETING

Supervisor Susan Siegel called the meeting to order. All Department heads were also present.

Supervisor Siegel made the following announcements:

The Yorktown Museum's Holiday Exhibit opens on Sunday, December 5, 2010. There will be a reception at 1:00PM and a Puppet Program at 2:00PM.

There will be a Hanukkah Lighting at DeVito Field at 5:00PM on Sunday, December 5, 2010.

The Christmas Tree Lighting will take place at DeVito Field on Monday, December 6, 2010.

WIPE OUT UNCOLLECTABLE LIENS

RESOLUTION #539

Upon motion made by Councilman Martorano, seconded by Councilman Bianco,

Whereas, the Town of Yorktown wishes to remove liens on parcels that have been taken off the tax roll, and

Whereas, the Town of Yorktown wishes to remove liens on town owned parcels that have been designated as tax exempt,

Now therefore be it resolved, that the following liens attached hereto are hereby removed.

Siegel, Bianco, Martorano, Murphy, Patel Voting
Resolution adopted.

Councilman Bianco asked Mrs. Goldberg, the Town Comptroller why this happened?

Mrs. Goldberg responded that the new tax system which was recently installed allowed them to identify these as uncollectible liens.

Supervisor Siegel further explained that there are more liens that will have to be wiped from the books.

Councilman Patel introduced Hunter Embury and his identical twin Jamieson who were recently elected President and Vice President of the Student Council at Crompond School.

2011 BUDGET HEARING

Supervisor Siegel called to order a public hearing relating to the preliminary budget of the Town of Yorktown, Westchester County, New York for the fiscal year beginning January 1st, 2011. Affidavits of Posting and Publication were presented by the Town Clerk.

Supervisor Siegel began the discussion with a power point presentation giving an overview of the proposed 2011 Budget, a copy of which is in the budget folder. She also read a prepared statement, a copy of which is in the 2011 Budget file. In it she states that "I have two major concerns with the preliminary budget: 1) the use of \$150,000 of fund balance to bolster the revenue side of the budget in order to lower the tax rate increase and, 2) the absence of setting priorities and long range planning."

The Town Board took the following questions and comments from the audience:

Mr. Don Roberts, representing the United Taxpayers of Yorktown stated that his organization in the past has asked the Town Board to not vote on the budget the same night that it hears comments from the public. He hopes this Board will listen to what is said, adjourn the meeting and vote at a later time. Mr. Roberts further stated that he doesn't believe this budget is realistic. As an example, he pointed out that since 2007, there has been \$200,000 in the contingency line. There is nothing in the contingency line of this budget. Pay raises may be coming, but there is no money in the budget to pay for them. Mr. Roberts questioned the Town Board's decision to give \$90,000 to ten (10) private clubs; three of them are sports clubs. He is not opposed to giving money to athletic and senior clubs, but not on an annual basis. Mr. Roberts also stated that the bill for cell phones is \$35,000. Some of the departments with cell phones never leave the building.

Mr. Barry Liebman, Theatre Director at Yorktown Stage asked that the Board not closed the Yorktown Community and Cultural Center on Sundays. He said \$60,000 of his proceeds for the year come from Sunday performances. Sunday is also the only day that seniors are able to attend the theatre. Mr. Liebman stated that he recently signed a new contract which calls for an increase in fees. He also has to pay additional costs for Saturday performances.

Mr. Keith Kuttruff, President of the Yorktown CSEA stated that he appreciates what the town is going through, times are tough. He stated that he was dismayed with the Supervisor's Budget. He appreciated the fact that the Town Board restored some positions in its Preliminary Budget. But, he says there are still problems. The clerk who has worked in the Tax Office for nine years is losing her job. Mr. Kuttruff also spoke about another member of CSEA, a general foreman who has worked for the Town of Yorktown for 38 years has been asked to take a demotion which would result in an \$8,000 decrease in pay or retire. Mr. Kuttruff stated that his union has been without a contract since January, 2009.

Mr. Larry Eidelman, the Vice President Elect of the PBA stated that his officers stand with the men and women of CSEA. The Police have been without a contract for a year. He further stated that his union was never asked for ways to save money. Mr. Eidelman told the members of the Town Board that before they cut staff in the Police Department, they should know what the police do. In the past, elected officials have ridden with police officers to see what they do. At the end of the day what many have said is "I really didn't know all of what you do."

Mr. Rick Davin, Captain of the Auxiliary Police stood with Mr. Stan Gitner, Deputy Director of Yorktown Civil Defense and an active member of the auxiliary for forty nine (49) years. He read a prepared statement, a copy of which is in the budget file. The letter in part reads: "We are here this evening to express our total frustration and lack of effective communications with the current administration. In your 2011 Preliminary Budget it reflects a 7.2% decrease, but if you calculate the 2010 to 2010 variance properly, with our now corrected "Adjusted 2010 budget", we are actually receiving a 23.4% budget decrease not 7.2%."

Mr. Jason Swart, a taxpayer and member of the Yorktown Police Department spoke in favor of having the Town Board increase its commercial base in the Town of Yorktown. He stated that this is the time to begin thinking about other ways to increase revenue in Yorktown. He also spoke about the reduction in the Police Department's manpower and gave a demonstration that showed how this proposal could affect public safety.

Mr. Don Roberts stated that the Budget is due by December 20, 2010. He again stated that the cell phone bill is \$35,000 and that departments should have to justify their phone calls. He questioned the \$4,000 expenditure for bottle water.

Mr. Barry Liebman stated that the Supervisor said that if the YCCC was closed on Sunday, the Town would save \$14,000. Why am I being asked to pay \$30,000? Mr. Liebman stated that he is only asking that the YCCC be open on Sunday for a total of 25 Sundays; 11 for performances, 11 for rehearsals and 3 for auditions. He asked for an additional \$5,400 to cover those Sundays that the building would remain open.

Mr. Paul Welsch, 2nd Vice President of CSEA stated that he is a 54 year resident of the Town of Yorktown. He is concerned that no money has been placed in the budget for raises. In 2009, there was money for raises. He also stated that the fact that a general foreman has to accept being demoted or retiring is a disgrace.

A member of the Town Board stated that \$300,000 has been placed in the budget for raises.

Mr. Don Roberts asked a series of specific questions regarding the budget.

Page 27 – the last column entitled “Variance” is incorrect.

Mrs. Goldberg acknowledged this and stated that it would be corrected.

Page 36 – 1330.0108 - Lump sum – what is this?

Mrs. Goldberg stated an employee has told the Board that she may retire next year, her time bank will have to be paid out.

Page 35 1315.423 – Training- what is this?

Mrs. Goldberg explained that new equipment will be installed in the Tax Receiver’s Office and personnel will have to be trained on it.

Page 40 – A1410.0103 – Bingo – Mr. Roberts stated that each year we lose money, meaning the fees do not equal the pay. He further stated that he called the Racing and Wagering Board and was told that this was not uncommon. Mr. Roberts asked if we could at least break even.

The Town Clerk who oversees Bingo explained that we are no longer going to all of the games, but that we had to cover at least half of the games. There is no way of telling in advance what the fees for bingo will be so that the cost of the inspector can be offset.

Page 42 – A1420.438 – Legal Research – what is this?

Mrs. Goldberg explained that the new Town Attorney does her legal research online. She doesn’t use the books as the other Town Attorney’s did.

Page 42 - A1420.444 – Filing Fees – why has this line increased?

Mrs. Goldberg explained that the Town Attorney has found many documents that should have been filed, but had not been filed.

Page 46 – 1620.416 – Town Hall Maintenance – there is \$600 for pest control.

Page 47 – 1625.490 – Professional Services – what is this line for?

This line is in the event we need any professional services such as an architect.

Page 51 – The contingency line is zero.

Page 51 – 3121-02 Salaries – Mr. Roberts stated that the New York State Police no longer perform the duties of School Resource Officers. Westchester County Police Officers have taken over those responsibilities. He was told by someone working at the County that the Police Officer in Walter Panas is paid for by the County.

Supervisor Siegel stated that she called Westchester County to find out if that was true when she heard that. It's not.

Councilman Bianco stated that the Westchester County Police Officer at Walter Panas is only there when Rye Play Land is closed.

Page 52 – 3120.201 Equipment – what is this?

Police Chief McMahon stated that part of this line will pay for a voice recorder for the Police Department as well as a radio for fire/EMS, latex gloves dusting powder for finger printing, etc.

Page 53 – 3120.417 – copy maintenance

The Comptroller explained that the Town purchased a copier off the New York State bid list last year and was eligible for a payment plan which we took advantage of.

Page 55 – A3310.431 – pavement marking- why is it under Traffic Control?

The Comptroller explained that under New York State guidelines, this belongs in the General Fund.

Page 59 – 5182.418 – Equipment Maintenance- the code was altered.

Page 65 – 7110.430 – Program Expense- why was this line which spent \$32 this year, increased to \$8,000.

Parks and Recreation Superintendent Jennifer Fava stated that this will cover the cost of software that will enable us to maintain all of our facilities.

Page 71 – 7320.425.001 – Athletic Clubs

Ms. Fava explained that in the past the Town paid for certain items for the athletic clubs; custodial services, umpires, etc. Several years ago, our auditors told us that we should have contracts with these clubs.

Supervisor Siegel asked Ms. Fava what would happen if the clubs did not provide these programs?

Ms. Fava stated that the Town would have to add at least four additional staff members to her department.

Page 71 – 7310-0446 – Custodial Services – what is this?

Ms. Fava explained that the Town's day camps are in public schools. Although she has not been asked to pay for these services, she wants to have a line in the event she is sent a bill.

Page 74 – Senior Clubs – There was discussion between Mr. Roberts and the Town Board about the necessity for annual payments to these clubs.

Page 92 – L7410-0110 – Temp Help – do these people get benefits?

Library Director Patricia Barresi responded no.

Judge Sal Lagonia stated that he was representing his colleague, Judge Gilbert and Isabel Klein, the Court Clerk in this request. Judge Lagonia stated that under the Court's Books and Periodical line, they requested an additional \$1,800 to update their McKinney's Law Book series which is right now useless. Judge Lagonia also stated that the hours listed for both Judges in the Budget Book are incorrect. We both expect to put in at least 1200 hours in 2011.

Mrs. Serafina Mastro stated that the Councilmen are part-time workers, are they eligible for medical insurance from the Town.

The Town Clerk explained that the Town Board in 2010 passed a resolution stating that any board member is eligible for medical insurance.

Mrs. Mastro asked if they do not accept the insurance, are they eligible to take the dollar equivalent of same?

Councilman Bianco responded, yes.

Supervisor Siegel stated that there was an omission in her budget. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation requires the Town to clean out 20% of its catch basins every year. There is some money in the budget for this, but we may need additional funds.

Highway Superintendent Eric DiBartolo explained that the Town of Yorktown has 5600 catch basins. This may not present a problem for his department next year because Westchester County may be lifting its West Nile ban. If they do, we will not have a limited time frame to clean the basins. Our biggest problem is what to do with what is pulled out of the basins. While the Town Engineer has given us permission to dewater the contents of the basins in the organic yard, there are few companies that are licensed to haul these materials away. It may cost as much as \$40,000 - \$60,000.

Acting Town Engineer Sharon Robinson reiterated much of what Mr. DiBartolo had just stated including the price.

Councilman Bianco stated that he has had calls from residents who cannot afford the budget increase to go beyond 2%.

Councilman Martorano thanked the Finance Department and the Supervisor for their work on the budget. He objected to an earlier statement made by the Supervisor and said this budget is personal, its very personal to him because it demonstrates how we treat our employees.

Councilman Patel stated that he is not a fortune teller but one of the leading economist stated that the recession may deepen.

Councilman Murphy thanked everyone for participating in the budget hearing.

All those present having been given the opportunity to be heard and there being no further discussion, upon motion made by Councilman Murphy seconded by Councilman Bianco, the hearing was adjourned.

ADJOURN

Councilman Bianco moved, seconded by Councilman Martorano to adjourn the Town Board meeting.

Alice E. Roker
Town Clerk
Town of Yorktown