

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING (BUDGET WORKSHOP) OF  
THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF NEW LEBANON  
HELD ON OCTOBER 5, 2016**

**Present:** Colleen Teal, Supervisor  
Dan Evans, Councilmember  
Chuck Gerald, Councilmember  
Kevin Smith Sr., Councilmember  
Mark Baumli, Councilmember

**Recording Secretary:** Tistrya Houghtling, Town Clerk

**Others Present:** Cynthia Creech, Deputy Supervisor, Court Clerk,  
Rec. Commission, CAC & ZRC Member  
Ben Wheeler, LVPA  
Ed Godfroy, LVPA  
Bobby Waters, LVPA  
Gregg Gilliland, LVPA  
Jeff Winestock, Highway Superintendent  
Ted Salem, ZBA Member  
Joe Ogilvie, Rec. Commission  
Several members of the public

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Supervisor Teal.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION DISCUSSION:**

Supervisor Teal requested that the Town Board hold a special meeting on Tuesday, October 11 at 6:30pm and enter an executive session to discuss a particular personnel issue. All Town Board members agreed.

**2017 TENTATIVE BUDGET:**

**Chatham Rescue Squad:**

Supervisor Teal stated that there are two piece to Chatham Rescue, looking at their budget request and authorization to execute the chargeback agreement with the County. Their request is for a 2.5% increase over last year's funding. Supervisor Teal stated that they had a joint meeting in Chatham of all of the Town's that are covered by their services and most of the Towns are not doing the full 2.5% increase but are doing between 1.5% and 2%. At the time of this meeting she was advised that we did not give them an increase last year but after looking at the records and speaking with Chatham Rescue she found that did, in fact, give them their increase last year. Whatever we agree to here we subject the County to in their budget and it comes within their 2% tax cap which makes it a little bit more complicated in that we make the determination but it effects their budget.

Councilmember Evans stated that we should not increase them above 2% as that is the tax cap County has to work within. Supervisor Teal stated that we might want to stay as low as 1.5%. Councilmember Smith asked if we know how often they are used and how many calls they have had. Councilmember Baumli stated that he would like to see more detail as to where the numbers are coming from and why some Towns are paying

so much more and some Towns are paying so much less. Councilmember Teal stated that they are working at the County level to try and get all the Towns that contract with Chatham Rescue Squad to come to the table and discuss how the costs get distributed among the Towns. One idea was to go by assessed valuation and look at total assessed valuation the services cover in each Town and divide it up accordingly. Councilmember Baumli would like to see how many calls have been made, how much money has been reimbursed from insurance, etc.

Supervisor Teal asked the Town Board members to email her all of the questions that they have for Chatham Rescue Squad and then we will set a meeting with them and ask them to come prepared to answer these questions. Councilmember Evans asked why there is a \$120,000 difference between the two subtotals. Councilmember Smith stated that the response time is not good and he is wondering if the building in Canaan is staffed at all times. Ed Godfroy stated that the building in Canaan is staffed 24/7 but that Chatham is part of a County wide ambulance service so if Valatie is out, they move a rig from Chatham to the borderline with Valatie and they move the ambulance that is housed in Canaan farther down towards Chatham to cover the Chatham district so they could be another 20-30 minutes away just by County control moving them when other ambulances are out.

Supervisor Teal stated that there is a deadline of November 15 to execute and send back the chargeback agreement which gives us time to figure this out. She added the Chatham Rescue Squad to the October 17<sup>th</sup> budget workshop schedule.

**Tentative Budget Summary:**

Supervisor Teal reviewed the entire 2017 Tentative Budget page by page. Councilmember Baumli asked if there is any County money or grant money available for Highway radios since they are involved in emergency management. Supervisor Teal stated that she hasn't asked that question yet but will look into it.

Supervisor Teal stated that we have half of the cost of a new mower in the parks budget. The plan would be to put the second half in for 2018. Under playground and recreation centers there is \$25,000 for the basketball court and the pavilion. There are two options here, to include it in the budget or to set up a capital reserve for these items.

Councilmember Smith asked why the actual budget in 2013, 2014 and 2015 is higher for retirement than the tentative for 2017. Supervisor Teal stated that it is her understanding that the State had some issues with their investments and there was a time where the retirement costs were higher to make up for these investments. It has now been reversed and the cost is coming back down. She could possibly drop that budget line by \$3,000 - \$5,000 but because it is so unknown, she wasn't comfortable doing that.

Supervisor Teal stated that the Highway budget is about the same as in 2016. The CHIPS line has dropped back down because there was around \$24,000 last year

allocated specifically for paving. We may get additional funding in 2017 also but that would be done with a budget amendment when we find out that we are getting it.

Supervisor Teal stated that she spoke with the LVPA tonight and she will be setting up a meeting with them. Any department that had a request that was not what was put into the tentative budget had a meeting with Supervisor Teal one on one to discuss. She could not do that with the LVPA as many of their board members were out so they have asked to go on the agenda for the 10/17 budget workshop after they have had an opportunity to meet with Supervisor Teal.

Supervisor Teal stated that on the 10/17 budget workshop agenda the Town Board would like to meet with the LVPA and the Chatham Rescue Squad. She asked the Town Board members if there are any other departments that they would like to meet with. There were no other requests.

Councilmember Evans stated that it is a smart budget and there is not anything glaring that jumps out and whenever there is something that is an increase or a decrease it is because Supervisor Teal is here and she is working on different things. A pretty neutral reason for that is the big cut in the LVPA budget line item. Supervisor Teal stated that obviously if we are saving that much in the LVPA line item and we are still having the same amount to be raised by taxes, we are spending more. She stated that \$81,000 is easily defined in large, one shot items such as the basketball court, the pavilion, the mower, the radios, etc. If that money had to be acquired back for the LVPA budget line item in future years, it is not sucked into the budget permanently and it is still available.

Deputy Supervisor Creech asked why there is a line through on the CAC budget line. Supervisor Teal stated that they assigned the wrong account number in prior budget's and if you go above the lined out one, you will see the corrected account number with the CAC's budget line. Supervisor Teal stated that New York State assigns what account numbers must be used for what items and there were a few corrections made to get us in compliance with the State moving forward.

Councilmember Evans asked if the Town Board would be discussing salaries separately or if they could do that now. Supervisor Teal stated that they can do that now. Councilmember Evans stated that the sheet that Supervisor Teal sent out to break down everything is very nice so you can see what everything is going to cost instead of just thinking about percentages. Councilmember Evans stated that one thing that jumps out is the raise to the Supervisor position and that there is no doubt that Supervisor Teal has changed the way that position is run. She is here a lot more and available a lot more and if that is the direction that the community wants to go and this board wants to go and treat it like a yearly raise employee, then that's the board's choice. He just wants to discuss it and make it known that we are doing this intentionally.

Supervisor Teal stated that across the board, our employees are either the lowest or the second lowest paid in the County with one or two few exceptions. Her goal is to create a long term plan to rectify that. For this year she is proposing a percentage that is a COLA that is applied across the positions and then a separate piece being a longevity raise that is not a percentage but rather a cents or dollar amount. If there is a disparity in pay between positions and everything is on percentage, the top paid positions grow quickly and the lower paid positions sneak up very slowly, creating a bigger gap. That was the reasoning behind using a cents or dollar amount for the longevity raises.

Supervisor Teal stated that there are also some positions that she has asked to change significantly. We can't fix everything all at once but the park maintenance staff is significantly underpaid with the park superintendent making \$11.52 per hour and the park maintenance staff making \$10.17 per hour. Her goal is to get the park superintendent position up to \$15.00 per hour and the park maintenance staff up to \$13.50 per hour but she doesn't want to do this all in one year. She has asked for the park maintenance superintendent to be raised to \$13.50 per hour this year with the understanding that it would be raised again next year up to \$15.00 per hour. The park maintenance superintendent does not simply do the maintenance at the park but is also responsible for evaluating and inspecting all the equipment and park facilities. She has asked that the park maintenance staff to be raised to \$12.25 per hour this year with the understanding that it would be raised again next year up to \$13.50 per hour.

Supervisor Teal stated that her goal is not to get us in the top of the County as far as pay goes, but to get us above the bottom or second from the bottom across the board. She has included herself as a full time employee for the longevity raise as she works over 35 hours per week. The proposed longevity raises for this year were calculated by using everyone's hourly wage and the number of hours worked to find the average hourly wage. She then used a 1.4% raise on that average hourly wage which came to a \$0.25 per hour longevity raise for hourly employees. For salaried employees she calculated the \$0.25 per hour by number of hours worked to come up with a \$250/year longevity raise for part time salaried employees and a \$500/year longevity raise for full time salaried employees. Supervisor Teal stated that a \$0.25 per hour raise for a longevity raise is very high. Knowing that we are starting so low, she has proposed this raise structure for this year but it is not a long term raise structure. Eventually she would like the board to adopt a long term plan for raises. This year is more of an initial adjustment to get salaries more on par with the rest of the County.

Councilmember Evans asked if we are legally bound to continue doing these raises every year. Supervisor Teal stated that every year the board reviews it. She stated that she would eventually like to see a long term plan but presently she only has a long term vision for where she would like the park maintenance employees to be. She stated that Town Clerk Houghtling is working on putting together a spreadsheet of all the different towns in Columbia and Greene Counties and what each of their hourly and salaried employees make. If we can get information on all of the towns we will have 36 to work with. If we are only looking at 5 we don't have a very good comparison point but if we can get all or most we can see what a reasonable rate of pay is. We have run into

problems when we are sharing staff with other towns and they are making significantly more money in the other towns for working the same exact positions, which makes it harder for us to get and retain good staff.

Deputy Supervisor Creech stated that when she worked for the Assessor here and in Canaan, the Town of Canaan started her at a higher rate of pay than what she was making here after working here for two years in the exact same position. Supervisor Teal stated that that is not uncommon here and that's why she thinks we need to try to adjust our pay to be more in line with other surrounding towns.

Ted Salem asked if we have set aside any money for the sidewalk pay back if that eventuality hits us. Supervisor Teal stated that she is going to fight that tooth and nail if that eventuality does come so she does not foresee it being an expense in 2017. She has at least a year's worth of fight in her. Councilmember Baumli stated that he agrees that if that eventuality were to come it would not be a quick process. Supervisor Teal stated that we do have surplus if necessary.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion was made by Supervisor Teal and seconded by Councilmember Baumli to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tistrya Houghtling  
New Lebanon Town Clerk