

**VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2013**

In Attendance: Supervisor Schaffer, Board Members Fitzgerald, Milkovich and Majewski  
Absent: Councilman Marnicki

(Councilman Milkovich left at 11:38 AM. – returned at 11:54 am)

Also Attending: Comptroller Laura McKane, Water Superintendent Scott Groats, 1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Town Clerk Kathie Young.

**WORK SESSION** - Supervisor Schaffer convened the meeting at 11:35 AM.

**Sewer/Water Department 2014 Budget Review**

The Board engaged Water Superintendent Scott Groats and Comptroller Laura McKane in review of the proposed 2014 Fire Department Budget. Some of the major topics of discussion included the following:

- Comptroller McKane – The total budget is going up. The rents are coming in higher than were expected however. We are not using any fund balance to balance this budget and will be adding to the reserve fund.
- Water Superintendent Scott Groats - Vehicles will need to be replaced: W-16 a 2001 pickup and W-3 a 2005 small pickup w/4WD. We need to get away from trucks that need ethanol. There is no savings.
- Councilman Majewski – We have talked about having a pilot program which will allow vehicles to be gassed at fuel stations. He noted that the fire department has been using off site fuel services and they are saving a lot of money. He would like the Town to be out of the gas business.
- Water Superintendent Scott Groats believes that having our own pumps is not user friendly but he can keep it monitored and it is backed up by a generator if there is a power outage. Emergency services can get fuel if needed. Other than that he has no problems with using a service station. We will need a system with 24 hour access and has a generator backup if we implement the pilot program.
- Scott - Campus Drive will need a booster building and we may need to acquire land to do it.
- Scott – The postage is down. Most water brochures were emailed. In 2013 we paid \$400 to have them printed - down from \$5,000.
- Laura – The training line has been raised. It is hoped that PERMA may contribute to these costs and we will be able to reduce this line.
- Scott is still waiting to find out about the tower that is to be installed on Andrews Road. He doesn't have any need for the Kopernick tower. He would like to see this project started.
- Supervisor Schaffer – The town attorney is still working on the agreement. He will get Scott the answers.
- Scott – The board needs to be very careful with layoffs. What they think they are cutting dollar-wise may not be actually saving money. The percentage in wages is small compared to the actual reduction to the budget.
- There was discussion concerning eliminating fluoride in the water supply and the money it may save. The public would need to vote on this and decide for themselves if it is worth the cost reduction compared to any positive results. We are trying to save money but they need to decide. People who have wells don't get fluoride.
- Water Superintendent Scott Groats – Main Replacement is going up. Costs of materials are

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increasing. We are trying to continue our updates of our infrastructure.

**Sewer District**

- Comptroller Laura McKane noted that the Binghamton/Johnson City Joint Sewage bill went up substantially - about 40%. We are hoping the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter bill will be adjusted lower. Scott has cut some of the spending but we will probably need more from the fund balance. The plant budget is expected to go down 31% next year. They are finally including us in communications. If we are funding Scott's requests at this time we will need to raise rents. We can cut expenditures as well.
- Water Superintendent Scott Groats – We just raised the rates. Now the plant wants to raise charges again. The fees have gone up \$120,000 per quarter after being told by the City of Binghamton Comptroller to expect little or no increase for 2013. Because of this we are short of what we projected this year. The sewage flow is split at Brady Avenue. Our flow costs to the Village of Endicott Sewage are decreasing. He suggests that the Town get with other outside users to try to reduce charges to the Binghamton Johnson City Joint Sewage Plant. We need some stability and accountability at the Binghamton Johnson City Joint Sewage Plant. We need an outside group to do a study. In 2018 there is a request for capitals to do a feasibility study concerning a sewage plant.
- Laura – We will need to make increases just to keep up with new regulations. We wanted to budget \$300,000 per year with capitals. It needs to go into the operating budget.
- Scott may start looking into the tanks again to see their condition. Dodd Road, Rano, Powderhouse, and Meeker will need to be repaired or replaced. Foster, Doris, Case and Cherry are brand new. They have a 45 year useful life.
- Laura – We will need a local law to increase sewer fees for the new year as well as make a motion for the public hearing for the 2014 budget.
- Laura showed paperwork concerning fund balance projections using the least amount of fund balance to reduce the levy. She also gave them examples of cuts. There are no provisions for operating engineers or police wages. Some people are not taking the buyout next year so those figures need to be adjusted. It is hoped to move the retired employees to Medicare. Fire – The roof was removed from the budget. Non-fire budget will need to be decreased.
- We are in a good place since the sales tax revenue is increasing.

These are the dates for the next Town Board Budget Meetings:

Monday, September 23, 2013 @ 11:30 AM  
Tuesday, September 24, 2013 @ 11:30 AM  
Wednesday, September 25, 2013 @ 11:30 AM  
Thursday, September 26, 2013 @ 11:30 AM

The Work Session was adjourned at 1:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathie Young, 1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Town Clerk