

VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

Board Attendance: Supervisor Schaffer; Board Members: Agneshwar, Messina, Fitzgerald, Majewski

Also Attending: Town Attorney David Berger, Town Engineer Vern Myers, Town Comptroller Laura McKane, Director of Human Resources Nancy Olmstead, Fire Chief David Harrington, Assistant Fire Chiefs Doug Rose and Ron Birdsall, Town Clerk Emil Bielecki and 2 people from the general public.

Supervisor Schaffer convened the Work Session at 6:00 PM.

6:00 PM – Presentation on the Fire District Tanker 32-3 Project.

Assistant Fire Chiefs Doug Rose and Ron Birdsall gave a *PowerPoint* presentation on the Tanker 32-3 Project. The presentation highlighted the following points:

- The current tanker is almost 29 years old. It was manufactured by a company that no longer exists and most replacement parts have to be fabricated.
- There has been a rash of recent problems with the tanker resulting in costly expenses.
- Tankers provide a water supply where no hydrants or water mains are available. That is about 60% of Vestal. Water availability to fight fires affects our ISO rating which in turn affects fire insurance premiums.
- The new tanker will be a safer vehicle and will meet today's more stringent standards. It will be much easier to operate.
- A committee has been set up to write the specs for a new tanker.
- The estimated total cost of a new tanker will be in the range of \$350,000 to \$400,000. The money will come from the capital reserves.
- The expectation is that all aspects of the procurement process will be completed by December and it will take about 1 year to have the vehicle delivered to us.

On another topic, Assistant Fire Chief Doug Rose reminded everyone of two upcoming events that should be publicized and supported:

1. Fire Station 1's Firefighter 5K Challenge being held on October 1, 2017 from 11 AM-2 PM on the Rail Trail.
2. Vestal Fire & Safety Expo 2017 being held on Saturday, October 7th, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM at in Vestal Lowes Parking Lot.

COMMITTEES

7.1 PUBLIC WORKS (FITZGERALD/Majewski)

1. Request from Barney & Dickenson Inc. to obtain a Special Use Permit and Aquifer Permit to install a new fuel storage tank and dispenser at 520 Prentice Road. A public hearing is required. The recommended publication date is October 11, 2017 with the Public Hearing on October 25, 2017.

Town Engineer Vern Myers noted that this will be an above ground tank which will replace an old tank located on an adjacent parcel of land.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

2. Request from Vestal Auto Dealerships, LLC to obtain a Special Use Permit to operate a vehicle service station at 1000 Vestal Parkway East. A public hearing is required. The recommended publication date is October 11, 2017 with the Public Hearing on October 25, 2017.

VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

3. Request from Town Engineer Vern Myers to contract with Gary Dyer Excavating & Tank Services, Inc., the most advantageous bidder, for removal of existing fueling stations at the Water Department and the Highway Garage at a cost of \$21,650.00.

Town Engineer Vern Myers noted that the prices as quoted are the contractor’s base services. Additional costs may be realized by the Town depending on unknown/unforeseen conditions such as the potential for contaminated soils to be encountered during excavation and removal of any of these tanks. This could increase the cost of the project.

Town Comptroller Laura McKane stated in memo to the Board that the fuel tanks were purchased by the water district on water district land but are shared with other departments. Therefore the cost for the water district site (\$10,825) should be split 50/50 between the water fund and the general fund. The cost for the highway garage site (\$10,825) would be paid by that department. If the Board approves the awarding of this contract, the following budget amendment should also be approved:

<u>From Line Item</u>	<u>To Line Item</u>	<u>Amount Requested</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
W9910.9002	W8310.4080	\$ 5,413.00	From health ins
A1990.4322	A1620.4080	\$ 5,413.00	From contingency
A5132.4111	A5132.4080	\$ 3,500.00	From heat
A5132.4110	A5132.4080	\$ 2,000.00	From electric
A1990.4322	A5132.4080	\$ 5,325.00	From contingency

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

4. Request from Water & Wastewater Superintendent Scott Groats to award the bid for Liquid Polymeric Phosphate to Shannon Chemical Corporation, the low bidder, at \$7.47 per gallon.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

7.2 FINANCE (AGNESHWAR/Fitzgerald)

1. Warrants: 2017-37, 2017-37E, 2017-38, 2017-38E

OK – This item will be placed as a ‘Receive and File’ on the Agenda for the next Regular Meeting.

2. Request for Town Supervisor John Schaffer to sign lease agreement between the Town of Vestal (as landlord) and the Vestal Public Library (as tenant). The lease agreement commences on September 1, 2017 and ends on August 31, 2022.

Councilwoman Agneshwar expressed concern that the problem with a blocked fire exit still exists. Town Engineer Vern Myers stated that he is working with the Library and the insurance carrier to resolve this issue. Moreover, he is also working on a plan to separate the utilities.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

3. Request for Town Supervisor John Schaffer to sign an agreement with Lifetime Benefit Solutions for a Dental Plan effective October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2019.

Councilwoman Agneshwar noted that the cost of the dental plan went up significantly but she is told that we have a contractual obligation to offer it to our employees. A low participation rate is the main driver in the cost increases.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

4. Request for Town Supervisor John Schaffer to sign an agreement with MVP Health Plan, Inc. for retiree health insurance effective January 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018.

Town Comptroller Laura McKane noted that the cost of the plan increased by 3.7% for NY residents and by 1% for out of state residents.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

5. Request to pay Town Attorney David Berger \$1075.00 for August 2017 billable hours.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

6. Adopt the Proposed 2018 Fire District Budget.

Each Board member thanked the Fire Department for presenting a good budget and for establishing a solid long term plan for the sustainability of the Fire Department. Supervisor Schaffer noted that if the long range tax rate plan is followed, it will enable us to pay cash for all future capital expenditures. The plan will keep us in the black for the next 20 years.

Comptroller McKane stated that the Proposed 2018 Fire District Budget establishes total appropriations at \$1,311,137. The increase in the tax rate will be finalized at a later date and may change fractionally from the amount targeted by the Board.

R190-17 On a motion by Councilman Majewski, seconded by Councilwoman Messina, the following was

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Agneshwar, Fitzgerald, Majewski, Messina, Schaffer
Nays 0

Resolved the Board adopt the **Proposed 2018 Vestal Fire District Budget** with total appropriations of \$1,311,137.

7.3 **PERSONNEL** (FITZGERALD/Agneshwar)

1. Discuss the open position in the Assessor’s Office.

Human Resources Director Nancy Olmstead noted that the Board gave the Assessor the go-ahead with the process to replace a retiring employee. It was also noted that the current titles in the Assessor’s Office do not reflect the true nature of the jobs. The Deputy Assessor position has been vacant for a long time, although it was a Grade 3 position. Colleen Zube, who is currently an Assessor’s Aide, essentially performs duties more consistent with the Deputy Assessor title. Last week the Board interviewed Victoria Thierfelder to replace the retiring employee. The duties of that position are more

VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

consistent with the duties of an Assessor's Aide. Ms. Thierfelder has worked in the Assessor's office in the past and left to continue her education. She is well qualified for the position. The Assessor is recommending the following actions to replace the retiring employee and to adjust the titles to more closely reflect the duties of these positions:

- Authorization for Mark Minoia, Assessor, to appoint Colleen Zube as Deputy Assessor, CSEA grade 5 at the rate of \$20.05 effective October 9, 2017. This is a title change and not a change to Ms. Zube's grade or rate of pay.
- Authorization for Mark Minoia, Assessor, to appoint Victoria Thierfelder as a provisional Assessor's Aide, CSEA grade 3 at the rate of \$14.51 effective October 9, 2017. This appointment is conditioned on a successful background check and pre-employment drug test.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

2. Request authorization for Water & Wastewater Superintendent Scott Groats to appoint Nicholas Bartholomew to a vacant Laborer position at the Operating Engineer rate of \$14.72 effective October 2, 2017. Appointment is conditional on the successful completion of a background check and pre-employment drug test. This hire will be paid from budget line W8340-1020.

Councilwoman Fitzgerald noted that we usually give new hires several months to get a CDL license. This person took and passed the CDL exam and paid for it by himself before he was offered the job.

Councilman Majewski and Councilwoman Agneshwar asked why the Director of Human Resources was not involved in the hiring process. Ms. Olmstead stated that she cannot get involved in something that she was not told about. She noted that there is a history in some departments of not involving Human Resources in the hiring process and if the Board wants to address the issue, it could be done during the annual job performance evaluations. Supervisor Schaffer agreed that some changes need to be made in the hiring process.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

3. Request from Water & Wastewater Superintendent Scott Groats to post the Water/Wastewater Crew Chief position on October 2, 2017.

Human Resources Director Nancy Olmstead stated that the posting of these positions is contractually required. This is a new title competitive position that does not have a civil service list. It would be a provisional appointment.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

7.4 **PLANNING & ZONING** (MESSINA/Fitzgerald) – no items were brought for consideration.

7.5 **PUBLIC SAFETY** (MAJEWSKI/Messina)

1. Request to advertise for bids on the Tanker 32-3 Project on October 11, 2017 with the bid opening on November 14, 2017 at 2:00 PM in the Town Clerk's office.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

7.6 ADMINISTRATION (MESSINA/Majewski)

1. Request to locate the VINES garden project on the Rail Trail near the Coal House.

In a memo to the Town Board from VINES and Cherese Wiesner-Rosales, it was noted that during a VINES led community meeting, the majority of residents agreed that the ideal spot for the garden would be on the Rail Trail.

Town Engineer Vern Myers pointed out that the location of the proposed garden is in the vicinity of a superfund site and that there are also many utilities buried in that area. Caution should be exercised if there is to be any underground digging.

After a brief discussion, the Board asked the Town Engineer to further investigate the proposed location for the community garden to make sure that there are no problems.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. **Employee Handbook updates**

Human Resources Director Nancy Olmstead stated that she emailed to each Board member a version of the Employee Handbook that included all of the previously discussed changes that the Board has reviewed and agreed to during the last several months. She is requesting that the Board approve the updates made to date at the next Regular Meeting. There are other changes that are being considered but they can be added at a later time, noting that the Employee Handbook is a living document.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Councilman Majewski asked that the following request be approved at the next Regular Meeting:

Request from the Fire Department to accept the Athens Borough Fire Department to use the Fred Singer Training Site on October 8, 2017 at a cost of \$100 per day.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

2. The Public Works Committee has received a request from Parks Superintendent Jim Bukowski to hire Mike Osinski as a seasonal temporary laborer. Mr. Bukowski notes that there are funds remaining in the seasonal labor line. Mike would remain as a seasonal employee as needed until this line is depleted. The flood damage at the Vestal Center and Richards Street Parks has set the Parks Department behind.

Supervisor Schaffer noted that we are lacking supporting information to determine if in fact there is adequate money in the seasonal labor line to pay for this request. If the money is there, we should consider this request. Human Resources Director Nancy Olmstead stated that she would try to get the additional information that is being requested and provide it to the Board prior to the Regular Meeting on Wednesday.

3. Town Comptroller Laura McKane distributed to the Board copies of a budget and background information that will form the basis for the 2018 Tentative Town Budget which will be filed shortly with the Town Clerk. A lot of work has already gone into the preparation of this budget and she expects much more work will be done by the Board during the review process. The Tentative Budget is expected to show an increase in spending and in the tax levy in the range of 3.75%, which

VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

is above the state mandated cap.

Supervisor Schaffer noted that the Board will begin the review process of the 2018 Tentative Budget on October 2nd and will continue to do so in the regularly scheduled Work Sessions and the additional Work Sessions that have been added specifically for that purpose. He further emphasized that every effort will be made to reduce the tax levy below the state mandated cap.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion of Councilman Majewski, seconded by Councilwoman Messina, the following was

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Agneshwar, Fitzgerald, Messina, Majewski, Schaffer
Nays 0

Resolved the Board enter into Executive Session to discuss the following:

- Fire Station purchase contract
- Article 78 appeal (Feinberg)
- Appraisal for a tax certiorari case
- Update on the Hick's legal case

The time was 8:08 PM.

On a motion of Councilman Majewski, seconded by Councilwoman Fitzgerald, the following was

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Agneshwar, Fitzgerald, Messina, Majewski, Schaffer
Nays 0

Resolved the Board leave the Executive Session and **adjourn the meeting. The time was 8:36 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,
Emil Bielecki, Town Clerk