

## VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2018

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

Also Attending: Town Comptroller Laura McKane, Deputy Comptroller Nick Angeline and Town Clerk Emil Bielecki.

Supervisor Schaffer **convened the Work Session at 5:00 PM.**

### **Emergency Repairs to Emerson Place and Jensen Road**

Supervisor Schaffer informed the Board that the Town has an emergency situation on several roads that will require immediate repairs to alleviate the risk to public safety. He has visited the sites and agrees that the damage to the roads and drainage systems caused by the recent storms must be repaired on an emergency basis. An assessment of the problem areas is undergoing. After a brief discussion, the Board gave its approval to proceed with securing a contractor to do the emergency work. The Board will formally vote to approve the declaration of the emergency at the next meeting of the Town Board.

### **Waiver of Training Fees for a new Police Officer**

Councilman Majewski informed the Board that we are looking to hire a police officer who has been working with the Broome County Sheriff's Department for 2 ½ years. If we do hire him, the County has agreed to waive the training reimbursement fee. He is asking the Board for a preliminary approval to hire this new police officer. The consensus of the Board was to proceed with the process to hire this new officer.

### **5:00 PM – Review of 2019 Tentative Town Budget**

Town Comptroller Laura McKane made comments on the following topics related to the review of the 2019 Tentative Budget.

- The final tally of the sales tax receipts for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter has not yet been made available. This number is important for us because it will have a significant impact on our ability to stay below the state mandated property tax levy for 2019.
- The Board is currently reviewing a list of salary increases and adjustments for department heads, deputies, non-union employees and elected officials. The decision on the elected officials must be made by Monday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> so as to give us enough time to do the required publication of the new salaries.
- The Board still needs to make a decision as to where to apply the money that was received from the State for providing fire and police services to Binghamton University. At the last budget review session the Board decided to split the funds evenly between police and fire but did not finalize the details on where to allocate the funds in the budget. This needs to be done.

Councilman Majewski recommended that police get 2/3 (\$100,000) of the funds because the Board has already committed to additional funding for a long range plan for the fire department. Supervisor Schaffer advised against an uneven allocation between fire and police to avoid internal conflicts. If this were to become reoccurring funding, then the allocation formula may need to be revisited.

- The premium for the Workers Compensation Insurance is similar to last year's but the allocation is different. These changes will need to be made for the Preliminary Budget. Although we can shop for a new carrier, we are very satisfied with PERMA, our current carrier. Our past experience with other carriers has not been good. We do have an option with PERMA for a 2 year renewal which would give us a 3% discount on the premium.

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- We are self-insured for our employee health benefits. We develop a premium equivalent which is used as a basis for employee contributions. The rate for this year is remaining the same. The retirees are carved out under a health insurance plan with MVP. The premium for the MVP plan is expected to increase. Our insurance consultant has priced out other comparable plans and recommends that we stay with MVP.

The remainder of this budget session was devoted to the continuing line by line review of the 2019 Tentative Budget with Comptroller McKane and Deputy Comptroller Nick Angeline recording any of the agreed upon modifications. The list of changes to the Tentative Budget will be provided to the Board for final approval and incorporation into the Preliminary Budget.

Supervisor Schaffer stated that at this stage of the budget review process, we do not know whether the 2019 Town Budget can be reduced enough to come in below the State mandated tax levy cap. In view of that, he may ask the Board to consider preemptively adopting a resolution to override the tax levy cap at the Regular Meeting on October 24<sup>th</sup>.

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Emil Bielecki, Town Clerk