

**VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014**

In Attendance: Supervisor Schaffer and Board Members Fitzgerald, Majewski and Messina.

Also Attending: Comptroller Laura McKane, Town Attorney David Berger, Human Resource Officer Nancy Olmstead, Town Clerk Emil Bielecki and 2 members of the community.

**The Work Session was convened by Supervisor Schaffer at 6:00 PM.**

**6:00 Review of 2015 Town Budget with Comptroller Laura McKane.**

Comptroller Laura McKane presented the Board with a list of additional proposed budget adjustments which, if adopted, would reduce appropriations by approximately \$84,000. The proposed budget changes since the last Work Session are primarily in the following areas:

- Reduced raises for non-union employees to a 1.5% increase over 2014.
- Cut Museum hours from 880 hours for two employees to 800 hours for the Director and 400 hours for the clerk (or curator).
- Cut Library budget (staffing, books and other materials) to reflect loss of revenue.
- Increased sales tax revenues as a result of better 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2014 results.
- Increased picnic permit fees.
- Reduced health insurance line for retirees transitioning to the Medicare plan in 2015.
- New item -- Need to change one employee from single health plan to family plan.

With these budget adjustments, the spending increase in the Townwide Funds would drop from 2.2% (Tentative Budget) to 1.7% and the change in the tax rate would drop from an increase of 7.36% (Tentative Budget) to 5.94%. For the Preliminary Budget to meet the state mandated cap, approximately \$46,000 of additional reductions would have to be made.

Town Attorney Berger noted that an article on PressConnects.com states that the County intends to restore the library aid to last year's level. Supervisor Schaffer acknowledged that he has received communication from County Legislator Daniel J. Reynolds that an effort to restore the funding was under way. After some discussion, Supervisor Schaffer recommended that Comptroller McKane apply the restored library aid (\$24,450) to reduce the tax levy for 2015. No one on the Board expressed an objection to that recommendation.

Several Board members (particularly Councilwoman Messina), had a number of questions about the library budget. When it became apparent that all of the questions could not be answered by those present at the meeting, Supervisor Schaffer announced that he would invite the Library Director to come to the next budget review meeting on Monday, October 27<sup>th</sup>.

Comptroller McKane noted that, based on previous discussions, the Board will also need to review the pay increases in the Recreation budget and the filling of the vacant Fire Inspector position in the Code Department.

**UPCOMING PUBLIC HEARING**

October 21, 2014 – 2015 Fire District Budget

**VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014**

**COMMITTEES**

**7.1 PUBLIC WORKS**

**1.** Request from Water & Sewer Department Superintendent Scott Groats to approve a change order for the High Avenue sewer project in the amount of \$1,485.26, as per the invoice from ZMK Construction, Inc. There was additional work needed to complete the project.

Councilman Majewski noted that the additional expenses were the result of a road that sunk from the paving last year and one fusion to the main did not fuse correctly.

Comptroller McKane noted that the total cost of the additional work exceeded the stated amount but that she was not sure if the remainder was covered by a contingency amount built into the project. If there was no contingency, then a budget transfer authorization would also be required as part of this motion. She would check into this and advise the Board accordingly.

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

**7.2 FINANCE**

**1. Warrants:** 2014-42, 2014-42E, 2014-42S

**OK** - These items will be placed on the Agenda as a Receive and File item at the next Regular Meeting.

**2.** Request to pay \$437.50 to Town Attorney David Berger for billable hours for Sept. 2014.

**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 Comptroller Laura McKane to accept a \$400.00 wellness grant from PERMA to be used for Blue4U program with Excellus.

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

**4.** Request from Town Comptroller Laura McKane for the Board to acknowledge that the required annual audit of the records and dockets of the Town Justices was conducted for the calendar year of 2013.

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

**5.** Request to approve Local Law F, "A Local Law to override the tax levy limit established in General Municipal Law 3-C" to be published on October 29, 2014 with the public hearing to be held on November 5, 2014.

Town Attorney Berger noted that this Local Law has to be in place to be in case the Board needs to vote on overriding the state mandated tax levy limit.

**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, OCTOBER 20, 2014**

6. Request to accept from DiRienzo Brothers Bakery a gift of the land parcel known as 561 Vestal Parkway West, Tax Map #173.21-1-4, containing approximately 0.16 acres of land.

At the request of Town Attorney Berger, this item is being held over for additional review.

**7.3 PERSONNEL**

1. Request to authorize Museum Director Ramona Kacyvenski to grant an unpaid internship to Kasia A. Kieca. Ms. Kieca is a graduate student at Binghamton University and will work on a project of organizing the museum collection. She will begin immediately and it is anticipated that she will continue through the end of May 2015.

Human Resource Officer Nancy Olmstead noted that this action is being taken in response to the recommendation made by the Board.

**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**

1. Request from Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity to use the library parking lot on May 16, 2015 for a chicken barbeque fundraiser.

Although this organization is not based in Vestal, Supervisor Schaffer noted that it has members from Vestal and Vestal students are eligible for the scholarships. The organization must sign the Town's Indemnification Agreement.

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

2. Request from Boy Scout Troop 225 to use the library parking lot for the Troop's annual tree sale from November 22, 2014 – December 31, 2014.

Town Attorney Berger: the Town's Indemnification Agreement needs to be signed.

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

**7.5 PUBLIC SAFETY**

1. Request from Police Chief John Butler to authorize the Town Supervisor to sign Joint Police Tactical Team (SWAT) Agreement between the City of Binghamton, the Village of Johnson City and the Town of Vestal.

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

**7.6 ADMINISTRATION**

1. Request from Recreation Planner Sue Jastran to increase the Town Picnic fees for Shelters at Arnold Park for 2015 as follows:

\$30.00 – Resident fee Monday – Thursday  
\$40.00 – Non Resident fee Monday – Thursday  
\$75.00 – Resident Fee Friday – Sunday

**VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014**

\$85.00 – Non Resident fee Friday - Sunday  
\$50.00 - Alcohol – any day

As recommended by Councilman Majewski, the Board increased the proposed fee for non-residents on Monday thru Thursday from \$40 to **\$50** and the fee for non-residents on Friday thru Sunday from \$85 to **\$95**.

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

**NEW BUSINESS**

Noting the large utility bills incurred by the Town, Supervisor Schaffer announced that he will be asking the Vestal Conservation Advisory Committee (CAC) to explore the feasibility of using alternative energy sources to meet some of the Town's energy needs.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**1. Kopernik Tower**

A meeting with representatives from the Town, the County and Kopernik Observatory was held on October 15, 2014. Broome County Emergency Services Director Brett Chellis indicated a willingness to proceed with the construction of a tower at the Kopernik Observatory location if an agreement can be reached with the Town concerning the construction of a new tower at the Andrew Road location. The funding for the project is in place. The Town is to submit to the County information about the users of the existing tower at Andrews Road so that bid specs could be prepared for the construction of a new tower at that location.

**2. Replacement of Fire Station 4**

The Board has asked the Fire Department to look at alternative designs that are scaled down to reduce costs. **10/20/14 update:** The Supervisor and the Comptroller indicated that they have had some communication with the Fire Department concerning this issue.

**3. Purchase of Town land by Vestal Veterinary Hospital**

In a letter dated 9/9/14, the Vestal Veterinary Hospital has submitted a formal bid of \$5,000. The bid is under review. **10/20/14 update:** Supervisor Schaffer asked that the Town Attorney make it clear to the prospective buyer that as a condition of any sale, they must agree to pay all of the costs associated with moving this transaction through the regulatory approval process and the closing.

**4. Medical Services**

The Board is continuing to review proposals for services from Lourdes and UHS. **10/20/14 update:** Human Resource Officer Nancy Olmstead gave the Board the cost comparisons for the various services. On balance, there did not seem to be a significant difference between the two providers. By consensus, the Board expressed a preference for going with Lourdes. The appropriate language for the resolution will be provided.

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

**5. Gateway Sign application at 912 Vestal Parkway East.**

The Town is waiting to receive the 239 L and M review from the County at which time the Board will

**VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014**

determine if it wants to ask the ZBA and/or the Planning Board for input on the application prior to making a decision. **10/20/14 update:** Supervisor Schaffer stated that he has received communication from the County indicating that they will recommend against this application.

**6. Request from Walmart for a special permit to place up to 8 ‘sea box’ type trailers of on the west side of the building for temporary storage of merchandise for the holidays.**

The Board placed this request on hold on 11/6/14 to get additional information.

**10/20/14 update:** Supervisor Schaffer stated that upon further review, there doesn’t seem to be a problem in approving the special permit as requested in the original application.

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

**7. Awarding of bids for generators at Murray Hill and Lyndale Dr. (opened on 10/2/14)**

Water and Sewer Superintendent Scott Groats has recommended that the bids for the stand-by generators be awarded to the low bidder, Matco Electric at \$39,149.00 for Lyndale Drive and \$56,000.00 for Murray Hill Road.

**10/20/14 update:** The Board expressed a willingness to approve the awarding of this bid. Comptroller McKane noted that a budget transfer may also be required for this project. She will check and advise the Board accordingly.

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

**SUPERVISOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**1.** Public Hearing – October 21, 2014 on the 2015 Fire District Budget

**2.** Leaf Pick Up – until snow falls. Place leaves along the curb but **AWAY FROM STORM DRAINS!** No yard waste or branches. For more information contact Highway Department 607-785-4616.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On a motion of Councilwoman Messina, seconded by Councilwoman Fitzgerald, the following was **ADOPTED** Ayes 4 Fitzgerald, Majewski, Messina, Schaffer  
Nays 0

Resolved the Board enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing labor negotiations concerning the three open contracts (PBA, Police Supervisors, Operating Engineers). The time was 7:25 PM.

On a motion of Councilwoman Fitzgerald, seconded by Councilwoman Messina, the following was **ADOPTED** Ayes 4 Fitzgerald, Messina, Majewski, Schaffer  
Nays 0

Resolved the Board leave Executive Session and **adjourn the Work Session. The time was 7:58 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Emil Bielecki, Town Clerk