

**PUBLIC HEARING**  
**“2017 PRELIMINARY BUDGET”**  
**TOWN OF STEPHENTOWN**  
**OCTOBER 24, 2016**

The Public Hearing of the Town Board, Town of Stephentown was called to order by *Lawrence Eckhardt* at **7:05 PM** at the Town Hall.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

*( X ) Supervisor Lawrence Eckhardt*  
*( ) Councilman Chris Demick*  
*( X ) Councilman William Jennings*  
*( X ) Councilman Philip Roder*  
*( ) Councilman Gerald Robinson*  
*( X ) Town Clerk Stephanie Wagar*

*( X ) Highway Superintendent Alden Goodermote*  
*( X ) Assessor, Jennifer Van Deusen*  
*( X ) Bookkeeper to the Supervisor, Maureen Seel*

A quorum  was  wasn't established.

5 from the Public were present

**THIS MEETING IS CALLED TO ORDER TO DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING:**

- **TO FURTHER DISCUSS THE 2017 BUDGET**

**REPORT FROM THE BOARD AND THE PUBLIC:**

*L. Eckhardt:* last meeting we got the budget down to a 3.3% increase on taxes from last year, the \$258,568,464 tax base on the summary sheet is incorrect believes this is including the \$18 million in exemptions, the tax base should be \$240,308,085. We used the incorrect number last year.

*J. Van Deusen:* homes are selling for a lot more now so it is increasing.

*L. Eckhardt:* that's a \$0.40 increase from last year, correct?

*M. Seel:* it's about \$0.12 from last year if we use the \$240million

*L. Eckhardt:* if we stay with the same health care CDPHP it will increase by 11.24% in March. Mike from the Union Rep. with the county sent some information on different options. Health insurance is killing us a family plan is looking like \$1,730/month. We only have 4 employees currently, but if we go with a full-time Clerk it might be different.

*J. Van Deusen:* do you have a high deductible?

*L. Eckhardt:* No think it's at \$500. Does anyone have anything that jump out at anyone?

*T. Quimby:* nothing that really jumps out but there was a question about the 2% for the Library, heard there was a question on the 2%, it's only \$800 which we are grateful for, the increase in minimum wage is about \$1,800 total so we aren't getting rich off the 2%, we are grateful for it.

*P. Roder:* there was a question on what and how much in your total budget is actual payroll. Perfect example why a 2% tax cap doesn't work, because they raise minimum wage

*L. Eckhardt:* 70 cents

*P. Roder:* and the 2% can't even cover the raise, then the State pulls back the money they do give us and still puts the liability on you so the State isn't giving anybody any justice.

*T. Quimby:* Minimum wage increase was about a 10% hit because they were at \$9 something and now they are at \$10 something because that's what it is.

*L. Eckhardt:* not only from a small-town library even take some of the state parks that are paying their lifeguards and summer counselors all of that escalates the guy that's standing next to you, when you have a 14 year old intern and you are paying him \$9.00 and you're only paying the guy you hired on last year \$9.50

*P. Roder:* one thing that jumped out on the budget was the unexpended balance each what we use is going lower and lower, because the budget is actually balanced. This year we have only budgeted \$10k total, whereas last year we budgeted for \$35k, so we aren't tapping into our savings as much when I first got on we were budgeting for almost \$75 - \$80k.

*L. Eckhardt:* so we aren't stealing from our savings account in a sense to buy groceries.

*P. Roder:* if we plug in last years unexpended balance we wouldn't even be near the 2%

*L. Eckhardt:* right because last year we took about \$11,500 from the unexpended balance from each account.

*M. Seel:* this year it's not even at 2%, your amount is at \$7,120.00.

*P. Roder:* think that's what everyone is doing across the board

*L. Eckhardt:* the cost of fuel, tar, and asphalt, is the cost can change almost instantly, and it's completely out of our control, all it takes is two people in the middle east not liking each other and the price of fuel can sky rocket on us instantly. The electric cost has declined from 2014, the service charge hasn't gone down but the energy costs have gone down. Request from the bookkeeper for an increase from \$9,193 in the 2016 budget to \$10,000 in the 2017 budget to be competitive with the other Town's that she works for, we get our monies worth out of this lady, and discussion with Maureen on this? I'd like to go to a 4 if we could Maureen would that be satisfying if we went to a 4% increase?

*M. Seel:* it'd be better, it's hard because competitively even \$10k isn't even competitive to where I am at with other Towns.

*L. Eckhardt:* understood

*B. Jennings:* we have to understand that we need to make it competitive because soon other Towns will be after her services.

*L. Eckhardt:* and they already are that's part of my application.

*P. Roder:* personally, after thinking about it after the past couple of weeks the Town Board and the Supervisor hasn't had a raise in 6 years so you can take those probable raises and justify it for me.

*L. Eckhardt:* so you want to go to the \$10k?

*P. Roder:* I have no problem with it.

*L. Eckhardt:* Bill?

*B. Jennings:* think in between is a good start, I have no problems with \$10k but believe it will stand out and visible think 4% more pliable.

*L. Eckhardt:* okay, Maureen can you make that adjustment.

*M. Seel:* yes

*L. Eckhardt:* and if it's wrong we wouldn't know, right?

*B. Jennings:* in the end, she's gonna cuts her own check anyway.

*L. Eckhardt:* I sign all the checks and I look at them. Aldie will tell you the Highway guys know what they are supposed to get each week and when they don't get the right amount they are right on the phone to me. If they got a little extra there's no phone call.

*P. Roder:* Maureen what's the total percent if you went to \$10k?

*M. Seel:* 8.8%

*L. Eckhardt:* that would be a big jump.

*B. Jennings:* yes, it is, 4% gets us started, to become more competitive.

*M. Seel:* Okay, well the goal is \$17,000.00.

*L. Eckhardt:* \$17,000, that's on the biggest town you work for, right? Pittstown?

*M. Seel:* Yup

*L. Eckhardt:* what's their budget compared to ours?

*M. Seel:* honestly off the top of my head I don't know.

*L. Eckhardt:* are they at \$2.5 million? Double what ours is?

*M. Seel:* probably

*L. Eckhardt:* even the Town of New Lebanon is \$2.2 million I think.

*B. Jennings:* they have few people than we have

*L. Eckhardt:* with a higher budget.

*B. Jennings:* higher property values.

*M. Seel:* all just numbers, at that point it's a number game.

*B. Jennings:* this is a public hearing we are here to listen to you folks.

*A. Goodermote:* when we get down to the other end Larry we need to change the payroll, on the other side.

*L. Eckhardt:* okay, so payroll because we didn't increase

*M. Seel:* before we go there health insurance, before we lose sight of that, are we happy with that? We have added \$500 on the A side.

*B. Jennings:* we went from \$8,500 to \$9,000 on the A side

*L. Eckhardt:* for the Highway Superintendent

*M. Seel:* went increased almost 6%, do you think we can do it with 6%?

*L. Eckhardt:* \$574 a month, what's that come out to?

*M. Seel:* \$6,888.00, do you want to move retirees to the general fund?

*L. Eckhardt:* where do other Town's take their retirees from?

*M. Seel:* they take them wherever they got paid out of, but that's where they budgeted for it too.

*L. Eckhardt:* I think we should budget for the retirees on the Highway side if that's where they retire from, Aldie if you retire and we were paying for your insurance you will come out of the A side.

*A. Goodermote:* I think you over budgeted for medical insurance

*L. Eckhardt:* I think we did because we stayed level by changing plans instead of staying with the current plan with the increase. Can you check what we spent this year?

*S. Wagar:* we will come close on the General Side for Aldie, but we are good on the Highway side this year.

*M. Seel:* okay, I want to just make sure because on the general side we put 11% increase but on the highway side we didn't put any increase. At this point we haven't spent...

A. Goodermote: you still have two months left to pay

B. Jennings: that was mine question, let's go back to health care again

A. Goodermote: still have two months, think it's around \$3,900 something

M. Seel: that puts us at \$46k, what else comes out of there?

S. Wagar: their co-pay reimbursement at the end of the year a max of \$750.

A. Goodermoter: their boot allowance?

S. Wagar: that comes from the 5010 line.

B. Jennings: why are we only at \$28k now?

S. Wagar: because we thought we were going to get a huge increase last year.

B. Jennings: so we way over budgeted, I knew we over budgeted but maybe we should correct some of that now.

S. Wagar: and we weren't sure if we were going to hire on another person.

B. Jennings: right and the same thing now we might very well do that, once we get to the highway side we should be planning for 5 men. I think that's Aldie's plan if he can find the correct people, but this is for this year, it looks like we have a little too much.

M. Seel: it looks like we have about \$20k more

B. Jennings: which is fine but we should think about what we should do for next year.

L. Eckhardt: Aldie if we take on a new person our contract states we will pay for a single person and anybody on top of that they pay 20% correct?

A. Goodermote: believe so, I can't find my copy of the contract

L. Eckhardt: leave the highway side at \$70k since we already over budgeted. Aldie where are we with pay?

A. Goodermote: budgeted for 100 hours of overtime, and \$10k more for a new guy, you can take the \$2,000 out for training

L. Eckhardt: brings it up to almost a 5% with the increase from the DA5142.1 and DA5010.1 lines.

A. Goodermote: the State is going to cut us mileage so we are going to take a hit eventually.

L. Eckhardt: what is the A1910.4 Allocated Insurance line pay?

M. Seel: Town's insurance

A. Goodermote: Jimmy may not stay all summer but may want to take more from the unexpended balance.

P. Roder: take the \$5k out

A. Goodermote: can take more out of the Repair, knock it back to \$61,500

M. Seel: brings the budget to 3.9% overall, which would be a 14¢ increase. Taking \$11,500 from unexpended would bring us back to where we started.

B. Jennings: put that to \$10k instead, that would be a 3.3% increase.

P. Roder: We still have quite a bit of money left, what about the Gradall purchase?

A. Goodermote: wanted to talk about that we could do \$57k a year for 5 years with the warranty is good up until next year.

*P. Roder:* but we have enough right now to buy it out right?

*A. Goodermote:* yes but think it would be a better idea to do a balloon payment and knock it down to 3 years, we don't have to go out to BID because of the National Joint Powers Alliance.

*B. Jennings:* how many years have we budgeted for the \$61,500, in repairs? Can we take it \$61,500 from last year, \$61,500 from this year and \$61,500 from the reserve fund and then we will have one payment left?

*A. Goodermote:* we can get a trade-in value of \$20,000 for the one we currently have, I think it's the best choice at this point because of the condition

*B. Jennings:* we won't have a problem doing paying it like that, correct?

*L. Eckhardt:* no, the funds are already there.

*A. Goodermote:* we will need a resolution, I am not sure if they will go for that payment plan with the interest but will find out.

*P. Roder:* we could pay it out fully, and then the next 2 years we can dedicate the \$61,500 to the reserve fund.

*A. Goodermote:* don't want the reserve to be too low just in case we do have a wash out and have to replace a bridge.

*B. Jennings:* get it ready by November's Meeting so we can finalize it.

*L. Eckhardt:* Dave you sent me an email regarding the historical society and regarding the funds we took from the acquisition of real property. Bill Zimmerman stated they were grateful for what they get and really didn't need the extra money so we can take the \$1,200 out of that line and keep it at \$6,000. The cemetery on Garfield may be turned over to the Town, we would be required to maintain it, we would be responsible for the mowing. Question is where would the records be kept, not many if at all plots are left, most family plots, we don't have a line for cemeteries.

*M. Seel:* you can have one

*L. Eckhardt:* don't think it's necessary at this point, looks like they are okay at this point, they do a mailing for a fund raiser, the problem is they are only allowed to touch the interest, so funds are running low.

*B. Jennings:* if we are going to knit pick, the Tax Collector has put in \$3,850 in the CE line, do we know what all this is for?

*S. Wagar:* she mentioned getting a new computer, although that should be in the EQ line, the amount in the EQ line should be enough to purchase a desktop, maybe it's for furniture?

*B. Jennings:* should probably get some clarification on what she is looking to do

*P. Roder:* the justices are looking for \$14k in the CE line?

*B. Jennings:* the justices are using the prosecutor a lot more, they are already going to be over budget this year, doing a lot more in that department.

*J. Van Deusen:* you can cut \$1,000 off the Assessor's CE line making it \$3,500, would like to give the Deputy Clerk \$8,500, the balance from the Personal Services to the Assessor.

*B. Jennings:* the Code Enforcement is getting a lot more work I think we will get by now but will have to bite the bullet at some point. Another line would be the Garage looking to knit pick we could probably take \$1,000 to \$2,000 from there, are there any upgrades?

*A. Goodermote:* looking to possibly get another building, looking into a grant, possibly insulate roof. Stephanie and I sent in paperwork.

*S. Wagar:* we needed a project though in order to get anything.

*B. Jennings:* what about going with Propane?

*L. Eckhardt:* Emergency generator, propane all around for water and heat, in Garage and Town Hall.

