

**TOWN OF HECTOR  
SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING  
October 3, 2019**

**Members Present:**

Alvin White, Supervisor  
Jessica Rodgers, Councilwoman  
Justin Boyette, Councilman  
Elizabeth Martin, Councilwoman  
Robert Barton, Councilman

**Others:**

Jane Ike, Clerk  
Mike Hicks, VLH Fire Co.  
Dale Walters, Village of Burdett  
Jason Kelly, Burdett Fire Co.  
Keith Caslin, Burdett Fire Co.  
Rordan Hart, Village of Trumansburg

Absent: William Preston, Councilman

Called to order by Supervisor White at 6:00pm followed by Pledge of Allegiance.

**2020 Tentative Budget Provided to Board**

Budget Review began with Ambulance and Fire Funds

**Trumansburg & Mecklenburg Ambulance Districts:** Rordan Hart, Village of Trumansburg Mayor explained the increase in Ambulance budget caused by over budget expenses of \$111,000 payroll and overtime; long time EMS manager has stepped down; have advertised twice as an administrative position; have not budgeted for all overtime paid already in 2019; have hired and budgeted for new personnel; Bangs Ambulance is also short staffed; must compete for salaries; no budgeting for a new facility;

Discussion of area covered for Trumansburg and Mecklenburg; if other area ambulance corps fail; will Trumansburg need to pick up additional areas due to Certificate of Need; in future may need to have a second paid staff for 2<sup>nd</sup> ambulance.

Supervisor White explained that we do not have reimbursements sitting in fund to lower taxes this year; assuming if there is no loss of other ambulances in the next year; expect that one-time overtime, costs will become more manageable. Rordan Hart explained that fire expenses are very steady 2-4% increase per year; ambulance numbers seem to climb by double digits each year; paid staff has some impact; would like to believe we've plateaued; national health care costs are trending at 8-10% per year; how do we make it a steady single digit increase; use 3-year rolling average of calls which is not particularly relevant to ambulance calls; costs are very different depending on the type of call, mileage, etc.

Mike Hicks, VLH commented that minimum staffing is necessary; Hector responds to Watkins and South Seneca as back up.

Trumansburg is automatic mutual aid to Bangs; can't say no; but what happens when a call comes in for Trumansburg district; more frequently this happens; may require paid staffing of another unit.

Supervisor White and Rordan Hart explained the billing process for ambulance calls; some calls do not get charged if not transported even if ambulance arrived on scene.

**Fire Protection Districts:**

**Village of Trumansburg** Fire: Budget going down for 2020

**Mecklenburg** Fire Budget request includes increases for a new engine and engineering for new fire house; looking for revenue sources; coverage area is 26 square miles in Mecklenburg; mutual aid to Odessa, Burdett, Enfield, Trumansburg which adds 64 additional square miles as automatic mutual aid; Supervisor White explained that the public meeting held last week had approximately 10 people present; request is asking for approximately \$40,000 more this year to help get the process started for new engine and firehouse.

David Poyer asked questions regarding how much of increase is for fire house or equipment. Nate Mayo, Fire Chief reported that USDA will most likely be finance source; looking to drill a well also.

David Poyer commented that people are under the impression that this is a mandate; it is not mandated; have checked other sources; recommendations only; not opposed just want to know how much money this is going to cost; concern with income and revenue versus expenditures.

Nate Mayo reported that an estimated \$2.553 million cost divided by 863 tax parcels equals \$115 per year estimated.

Supervisor White suggested Mecklenburg do an income study of district. Chief Mayo indicated they were told that it must be evaluated by Town of Hector not just Mecklenburg Fire District; median income \$55,000. Keith Caslin suggested they need to get a hardship study of the district; can make a significant difference in interest rates and grant monies. Chief Mayo indicated they would go after every bit of funding they can find; want it to be affordable; need to mitigate risks. David Poyer concerned with fixed income households, etc.

Supervisor White asked if the board was comfortable with allowing a \$40,000 increase to stay in the budget/contract for 2020; tax cap levy increase is approximately \$75,000 allowable; fire budget will take all of it.

**Village of Odessa** Fire: have a current 3-year contract; increase is 0% this year and 1% next year.

**Valois Logan Hector** Fire: Mike Hicks reported they are asking for 2% increase for 2020; still provide a free ambulance service which has covered calls to Beaver Dams, Tyrone, nearly to Geneva, etc. A new ambulance runs into \$185,000 to \$200,000; looking at next ambulance with a loading unit; VLH tax rate will go down for 2020; ambulance costs company \$20-\$25,000 per year; have been saving monies to purchase a new unit; current one is 15 years old. May be asking the Town to begin helping out with ambulance costs; need to look into the future.

**Village of Burdett** Fire: Asking for 8% increase for 2020; would like a 3-year contract; 2021 10% and 2022 10%; need a new pumper in 2020.

Supervisor White – asking for \$16,000 increase for 2020; how do we justify the increase? Last year 11% for boat and fire insurance; we supported your building; people are paying that cost also. Cannot accept 30% increase over 3 years; cannot justify 10% per year; argued history of percentages; cannot accept a 3-year contract at these numbers; still do not have a final cost for the firehouse payment. Increase in assessed values discuss.

Keith Caslin reported they have 11 new members; \$30,000 for gear for those members; plus \$5,000 physicals; need to find money somewhere.

Arguments back and forth; if only one-year contract they have to look at numbers again; explanation of how districts were created and formed; boundaries; volunteer; paid, etc. Life span for personnel gear is 10 years; trucks 20 years; over 25% of our budget is fire protection; unfunded mandates; air packs must be replaced every 10 years. Burdett Firemen stepped outside to discuss options.

Mayor Dale Walter agreed to keep number at 8% for 2020; will be asking again next year.

Councilwoman Rodgers indicated that people do not understand how fire protection works; educating the public is a big job. Mecklenburg Chief Mayo reported that it's the same 15 people doing everything; running much further; nomad population; 6 new members this year.

Board agreed to leave numbers as presented for fire and ambulance. Discussion of increases. Questions asked regarding new Burdett fire house financial numbers and funding sources. Grants from Senator O'Mara \$300,000; another \$200,000 in other grants; \$3.3+ million contract closes 1 year after fire house is occupied.

**Town Justice Position:** Discussion of options at this time. Can appoint someone to fill vacancy; must take classes; then run in 2020 election. Can bring back a previous judge by appointment; or can pass a resolution to eliminate the position subject to permissive referendum.

**RESOLUTION #122** – offered by Martin, seconded by Barton

Resolved to authorize the Supervisor to have Attorney Halpin draft a resolution to eliminate one justice position effective at the end of the unexpired term. Ayes 5, Nays 0

**Assessment Shared Service Agreement:** Supervisor White reviewed the contract; 6-year term runs with Assessor's appointment from 10/1/19-9/30/25.

**RESOLUTION #123** – offered by Martin, seconded by Barton

Resolved to authorize the Supervisor to sign the Assessment Shared Service Agreement with Schuyler County Real Property Tax Office. Discussion: Councilman Boyette indicated we've talked before about having more control or participation of the assessment process. Supervisor White reported that the current discussions with real property tax office are complete re-valuations will be done every 4 years; acknowledge the need for improved communications; scheduling of past public meetings conflicted with Town Board meetings. Ayes 5, Nays 0

**NYGFOA Workshop:** Supervisor White asked for authorization to attend a Nov 14-15 training in Batavia for financial officers; would require a two-night stay.

**RESOLUTION #124** – offered by Martin, seconded by Barton

Resolved to authorize the Supervisor to attend the November 14-15, 2019 NTGFOA training in Batavia for financial officers. Ayes 5, Nays 0

**Overall Budget review:** Supervisor White reviewed the tax rate increases 15%; reviewed cents per 1,000 rates; covered some of the items impacting the numbers; study shows 5% of Highway guys in spent in general town-wide; added some monies to A for highway salaries; \$25,000 building reserve; full time Smith Park manager; presidential election, registration, primary, early voting; preliminary engineering buildings; park equipment docks for swimming and boat launch; park office improvements; general part-town LWRP and Zoning Commission expenses. Highway negative fund balance in DA; \$25,000 to equipment reserves. Water District - \$45,000 for new truck; \$40,000 for well & pump equipment from reserves. Fire Districts: \$40,000 Mecklenburg for engineering; \$13,800 Burdett. Ambulance: \$15,000 Mecklenburg; \$6,000 Trumansburg.

Next budget meeting: October 10, 2019 at 1:00pm

**RESOLUTION #125** – offered by Martin, seconded by Barton

Resolved to accept and make the Fire and Ambulance 2020 budget requests preliminary and advertise for Public Hearing on November 7, 2019 at 7:00pm. Ayes 5, Nays 0

Adjourned at 8:30pm on a motion by Councilwoman Martin, seconded by Councilwoman Rodgers.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane M. V. Ike, Clerk