

**TOWN OF HECTOR
BUDGET WORKSHOP
October 20, 2016**

Members Present:

Alvin J. White, Supervisor
Michael Bergen, Councilman
John White, Councilman
Beverly Morley, Councilwoman
Justin Boyette, Councilman
William Preston, Councilman

Others:

Jane M. V. Ike, Clerk
Vicky Flynn, Assessor
Allen McIlroy
Barb Kelley
Tom Bloodgood, Real Property Director
Mike Lausell, Co. Legislator

Called to order at 7:00pm by Supervisor A. White, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Re-valuation process discussed. CAP1 letter of support need to be sent to the State; CAP includes Towns of Hector and Catharine. Tom Bloodgood reported that 3 public meetings were held and well attended; at issue is ratio of sales vs assessments; air to keep at 100% of market value; currently looking like we are at 86% overall; areas appearing to be low are Trumansburg School District, Seneca Lake and vacant lands.

Councilman Boyette asked why this information was not brought to the Town Board prior to the public meetings. Tom thought it had been done. Supervisor A. White reported that Vicky did mention it when she attended our August meeting.

Councilwoman Morley asked what type of vacant land sales; is there still a residual? Tom clarified vacant land classifications.

Councilman J. White asked for definitions to be explained and why is it only Hector and Catharine being re-valued this year; why does July 1st school tax bill say we are at 100%. Tom explained that the 7/1/16 roll used for school tax purposes goes back to 7/1/15; so the information is a year old; state classifies anything above 95% as 100% now. Councilman J. White asked when the field review is done, will someone be coming into every property? Tom responded that they will be looking from the outside; it's up to the owner whether they let them in or not; not unfairly looking at Trumansburg school district; run the same stats on every school district.

Councilman Boyette asked questions regarding lake properties; some are very unique. Tom explained that they try to trend the top & bottom 2.5%; try to look at 30 or more.

Councilwoman Morley asked Legislator Lausell why the Real Property Tax Office does not have more help; they are understaffed. Legislator Lausell reported that with the new hires, their staff will increase by one.

Councilman Boyette voiced his concern with the lack of communication between Real Property, the Assessor and the Town; concerned there is not enough time to complete a full re-valuation properly. Tom reported that they did re-valuations in 5 towns last year; agreed they have limited manpower and resources; they will visit all 4500 parcels for this re-valuation. Tom agreed to make every effort to communicate better; every parcel will get a notice whether their assessment changes or not. Tom proposed sending a status report monthly to the towns.

Councilman J. White asked questions regarding the sales of farm lands that have become bidding wars; skews the value of other properties; how is the County going to assure us that the little ones are going to be protected from that high dollar.

Tom explained the Ag Exemption process; the per acre assessment depends on soil types; the state sets a ceiling on the value per acre; exemption increases or decreases accordingly; do not have a good answer for smaller farm parcels or lake parcels.

Councilman Preston asked for the definition of visited; some parcels cannot be gotten to via public roads. Tom responded that they will get to everything that has access. Councilman Preston also asked why the Finger Lakes National Forest land is assessed at \$1000 per acre and private acreage wholly within the forest is much higher. Tom responded that they do not re-assess parcels that are exempt. Councilman Preston voiced concerns that google earth shows parcel as flat, when there are 5 creeks and gullies on the property in question. Tom responded that the digital GIS layers can now see contours, etc. Five major farms make a living off their land; others should not be penalized because of those sales; understand keeping at 100%; services needs to be shared services; the Town needs to be part of the process.

Supervisor A. White commended Tom for trying to address the issues and concerns; shared service contract should have an over-sight committee; liability suits need to be shared also; Town's pay all the costs; County should share in that expense.

Councilman Boyette – we have to justify need; information could have been communicated to the Board earlier; shared services; work for the Town as well as the County.

Supervisor A. White – everything should be shared; not just parts; unfortunately it would be very expensive for us to go back on our own.

Discussion continued on issues; bidding wars; small family farms; types of land; fully sharing expenses; acting assessor vs appointed assessor; need to look at appointment in December as acting position is only 6 months.

Resolution to support full re-valuation will be addressed at November 10th meeting.

General Fund Budget reviewed:

Supervisor A. White addressed questions from last meeting; modified the PERMA and liability insurance in Water to reflect the correct numbers. Discussed contingent accounts. Discussion of clerical services for Code Enforcement; transferred \$10,000 from A to B budget to cover a portion of the Town Clerk's and Deputy Clerk's salaries for duties with Codes Enforcement.

Supervisor A. White added \$300 to A7510.4 Historian's contractual to provide funding to the Schuyler County Historical Society. Requests from Mercy Flights and Cayuga Lake Watershed not funded for 2017. Monies on History Book line should be in reserves.

Cemeteries – discussion of amount of time to allow for mowing some cemeteries that fall back to Town responsibility; have budgeted 4 weeks of labor (160 hours) to mow 3 times per year. Added \$800 to A8810.4 to cover gas, etc. for mowing.

Revenues and fund balances reviewed; some adjustments made; tax rates reviewed.

RESOLUTION #130 – offered by J. White, seconded by J. Boyette

Resolved to make the 2016 Tentative Budget with changes the 2016 Preliminary Budget and proceed to Public Hearing on November 10, 2016 at 7:00pm. Ayes 6, Nays 0

Respectfully submitted,

Jane M. V. Ike, Clerk