

**Town Board Meeting  
September 27, 2022  
At Tannery Pond and Via Zoom (REVISED 10/6/22) (REVISION 10/17/22)**

In Attendance:           Andrea Hogan - Supervisor                   Jean Comstock – Town Clerk  
                                  Peter Olesheski – Councilman               Justin Gonyo – Councilman  
                                  Gene Arsenault – Councilman (via Zoom)  
                                  Arnold Stevens – Councilman               John Stack – Presenter

Mr. Ernie Dunkley led the Pledge of Allegiance

1. Open Public Hearing at 7:01PM re: Proposed Tax Cap

- Mr. Holt – how far off are we mismatching? Supervisor Hogan – 17% over last year; \$120,000 for the re-val (over 3 years) – total \$360,000.
- Ms. Nettle – in the past I’ve watched the Board tentatively pass the tax cap as they work on the budget; they were able to break if needed and try very hard not to; no harm in making a resolution to break the tax cap; please take all input into consideration.
- Mr. Ordway – I don’t want to see the tax cap broken, I don’t want to pay anymore taxes; I’d like to see others weigh in on it; budget – new positions being created within the tax cap; we need to stop giving money away, when someone buys equipment get the best price; I’m aware of a purchase that was not the right one; I do support the new position.
- Ms. Konis – it’s a little hard to say one way or another, no proposals for costs, estimates, we’re holding on everything else, and it depends on the re-val cost – how can we move forward?
- Ms. Nettle – I wanted to respond to Janet’s comments – when you form a budget you look at prices as they are – health insurance goes up and you budget for that; get an idea for purchases; if you don’t have money in the budget for purchases.
- Supervisor Hogan – I did give proposals amounts for \$250,000 and \$350,000 and we’re not going down the cheaper route again.
- Mr. Holt – can we get budgets from other departments? Supervisor Hogan – some were provided at a previous meeting.
- Ms. Zimmerman – with people facing other additional costs, not a good time to break the tax cap.
- Last call – Supervisor Hogan – closed the Public Hearing at 7:13PM.

2. Regular Town Board Meeting called to order at 7:13PM;

3. Approval of Minutes – Supervisor Hogan asked if all had read the Meeting Minutes of September 6, 2022?

**RESOLUTION # 22-178**

Mr. Gonyo made a Motion to approve and accept the Meeting Minutes from September 6, 2022 and moved its passage with a Second Motion from Mr. Stevens. With the following Board Members present voting in favor the Resolution is carried. Ayes – 5 (Olesheski, Gonyo, Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens); Nays - 0.

4. New/Old Business

- a. Tentative Budget accepted by Town Clerk on 9/12/22/Budget Discussion: New position proposed; 3% to all; \$5,000 to HHHN; it’s a pretty straight forward budget; potential Local Law to break the tax cap; Mr. Gonyo asked about appropriations - \$50,000 land for town garage? I feel we need to axe that. Supervisor Hogan – not necessarily for moving the highway garage, but possibly thinking about a piece of property for sand. Mr. Gonyo – do we have a piece of property in mind? Supervisor Hogan – not at this time; Mr. Gonyo – I just feel we need to cut at this time. Mr. Stevens – if

specifically for moving the town garage I would agree with Mr. Gonyo to cut it; if it's for road material I would say yes; Supervisor Hogan – it's for a property for sand; I reinstated it, it was \$50,000 a few years ago. Mr. Gonyo – realistically it's not enough to get a size property we need; Supervisor Hogan – we need to save as we go along; Mr. Olesheski – this is Highway funds, not General Funds? Mr. Olesheski – Mr. Comstock indicated some other things were reduced that maybe this \$50,000 could be used for; I also agree with no money for the garage move, but leaving it for other deficiencies; Supervisor Hogan – we could not appropriate that much in fund balance; Mr. Stevens – we are looking at selling properties, where would that money go? Could it go toward the purchase of a new property for sand; Supervisor Hogan – those monies were included in the General Fund, we can't spend it twice; Mr. Olesheski – there are more properties that we could sell, these three were just the beginning; possibly land swaps down the road; I think I agree with Mr. Gonyo – but would like to hear from Superintendent Comstock first before we make that decision; Mr. Arsenault – planning for the future, \$50,000 is a modest amount of money, if we have nothing in the budget, creating with this amount would be a good idea at this point; it's not an extraordinary amount; if we're drawing \$450,000 from the fund balance it won't be long before there is no highway fund; while I can see the others points of view, I think we need think about it; Supervisor Hogan - \$25,000? Mr. Arsenault I agree; Mr. Gonyo – I still feel we need to remove at this time; Mr. Gonyo asked about equipment line 5130.2 – pretty large number, is that truly what he was requesting, or is he looking to purchase out of his reserve? Supervisor Hogan – there is enough in there for Superintendent's request, but nothing more; Mr. Arsenault – are we spending the reserve @ \$294,000+? Supervisor Hogan – yes; we are planning to deplete the reserve; Mr. Arsenault – what are we using the money for raising taxes for? Mr. Arsenault – is the reserve in the Budget? Supervisor Hogan – it's in the \$440,000 that's being carried over; the numbers aren't coming together for me; let me think about it; Mr. Gonyo – I think Superintendent Comstock should be part of this discussion as well; Supervisor Hogan – he's looking to spend it for a truck and tractor, \$189,000. Mr. Gonyo asked what is SF? Supervisor Hogan – SF is fire protection; Mr. Gonyo – we're looking at 21/22 numbers where is the 2023 number coming from? Supervisor Hogan – not sure where the \$423,000+ (I'll check with the Bookkeeper); Mr. Ashline – I thought Mr. Comstock stated he wanted to purchase the one they have for \$60,000? Mr. Dunkley indicated that they want to purchase the tractor they are currently renting. Supervisor Hogan – you'll need to talk to Fred about that; this is a process nothing is final, we'll be working on it; I need to go into depth in the new position; Mr. Olesheski – I'll remove myself from this conversation as I may have a personal interest in this new position. There is money in the budget with monies being moved around, occ tax and reducing bussing for seniors – all of this will help; it will include overseeing the Parks, youth programs, winter programs, writing grants, etc.; break up individuals – one would be over buildings with the custodian; other parks people would go under the new position; if we're interested in moving forward with this new position, let's advertise sooner rather than later with ski program coming up, a youth committee reforming, would be an ideal time to bring this on board, the world university games coming up; we're ahead on sales tax revenues; Mr. Gonyo – we have a salary in mind of \$50,000? Mr. Gonyo – how many months of salary for this year? Supervisor Hogan – maybe one month. Mr. Stevens – what happens if we advertise, hire someone, and the budget doesn't pass? Supervisor Hogan – good question? Mr. Gonyo – we'd be on the hook even if the budget doesn't pass; Supervisor Hogan – this is within the tax cap; Mr. Arsenault – I'm fine with reaching out now, it would be helpful; Supervisor Hogan – hope to vote on the budget by 11/1/22; probably won't have an individual by then; Mr. Ordway asked – so two supervisors – one for buildings and one for parks? Supervisor Hogan – yes; Mr. Ordway – that's a waste; Ms. Sabattis – how many kids go to youth program? Maybe getting them all to Minerva at some point; Supervisor Hogan – are we supportive with this position? I'd need a resolution to move toward this position

## **RESOLUTION # 22 – 179**

Mr. Arsenault made a Motion to approve advertising for the new position and moved its passage with a Second Motion from Mr. Stevens, with the caveat that we make no decision until the budget is passed. With the following Board Members present voting in favor the Resolution is carried. Ayes – 4 (Gonyo, Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens); Nays – 0; Mr. Olesheski – abstained from the vote.

Mr. Olesheski was called back into meeting; establishing the local law to break the tax cap – where are we on this? Mr. Stevens – short answer – not in favor of breaking it; Mr. Arsenault – with all the challenges the community is faced with – I would not be in favor of exceeding the tax cap; Mr. Gonyo – I'm torn in my decision, I voted for it last year, in the tentative budget what the public is feeling the Town will feel it as well – increase in property and school taxes; I would really like to hear from the public re: the 17%, it is a lot; I was going to vote in favor tonight – what I'm hearing from the public at this hearing I'm getting that they don't want to; I'd also vote no to raising the tax cap; Supervisor Hogan – I would typically vote for the local law to exceed the tax cap, I worked very hard on the budget to stay within the tax cap, what we can achieve within the tax cap, I would have to vote no this year; I'd like to hear from Mr. Olesheski and then let the public speak again. Ms. Wood – the new position – not finding it in the Budget; Supervisor Hogan – general personnel line; general fund. Supervisor Hogan – we'll take brief comments at this time; Mr. Konis – thank you for giving us more time, many clarifications, talking about it is very helpful; I regrettably support the increase in the tax cap; the Town Board has done a good job in keeping it in check, highest inflation in over 40 years; Mr. Ashline – I don't support breaking the tax cap, we've already seen a huge increase, but I do feel a re-val has to be done, not necessarily picking the highest bid, we may be able to find a less expensive bid; I feel you're using the re-val to break the tax cap; Mr. Olesheski – given the current circumstances, I am not in favor of breaking the tax cap. **PLEASE NOTE – NO MOTION WAS MADE TO PASS A LAW TO BREAK THE TAX CAP**

- b. Public Hearing for Budget – Supervisor Hogan noted that there will be a Public Hearing on October 18, 2022 for the Preliminary Budget

## **RESOLUTION # 22-180**

Mr. Stevens made a Motion to approve the Public Hearing for the Preliminary Budget for October 18, 2022 and moved its passage with a Second Motion from Mr. Gonyo. With the following Board Members present voting in favor the Resolution is carried. Ayes – 5 (Olesheski, Gonyo, Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens); Nays - 0.

- c. Letter from Ann Dingman – she's willing to run the ski program again; Supervisor Hogan - can we table for now and wait until we see if we hire someone? All in agreement.
- d. Letter from Safety Officer – Mr. Dunkley addressed the public and Board; Town Employees have a reimbursement policy in place - \$700 per person – medical bills, glasses, work boots, clothing, etc., - it's not being used as folks don't have the money out of pocket to spend; some Towns are using a voucher system rather than out of pocket expenses; hardware store is on board; it will still come out of the same line/fund; if we could get that amended or added on it would be a great savings for the employees; Supervisor Hogan – thanks for bringing that to our attention, I wasn't aware of the situation; what I'd like to propose is a list of vendors for Board approval and the best value for the Town; Mr. Olesheski – this makes sense, DPW with Warren County still does this as well; Mr. Olesheski – some of the vendors for the DPW – they sometimes give discounts as well; Mr. Dunkley – tax exempt and discounts for Town employees and first responder as well; Mr. Olesheski – would help clean up the bookkeeping as well; Mr. Dunkley – have it all done by November; Mr. Dunkley – would like to go to the vision centers as well, it won't hurt to ask; Mr. Olesheski – good idea; Supervisor Hogan – get a list together and we'll review in another month.

- e. ORDA/Ski Bowl Easement – Supervisor Hogan noted that the Grant of Easement is to move National Grid poles.

**RESOLUTION # 22-181**

Mr. Gonyo made a Motion to approve/accept the Easement to move the National Grid Poles and moved its passage with a Second Motion from Mr. Olesheski. With the following Board Members present voting in favor the Resolution is carried. Ayes – 5 (Olesheski, Gonyo, Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens); Nays - 0. Mr. Gonyo noted – it’s nice to see this project moving forward.

- f. Water billing – income is not meeting the expense – need to work with engineers to manage hook-up fees that are current, need some software; asking water committee to meet with Maureen.
- g. Senior Center – Office for the Aging – contract with Warren County – Supervisor Hogan noted that it’s the same the previous contract. Looking for Board approval.

**RESOLUTION # 22-182**

Mr. Stevens made a Motion to approve the Contract with Warren County for the Office of the Aging and moved its passage with a Second Motion from Mr. Olesheski. With the following Board Members present voting in favor the Resolution is carried. Ayes – 5 (Olesheski, Gonyo, Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens); Nays - 0.

- h. Youth Board Reimbursement Contract – Supervisor Hogan indicated it’s the same as last year’s Contract and is looking for Town Board approval to execute.

**RESOLUTION # 22-183**

Mr. Arsenault made a Motion to approve the Youth Board Reimbursement Contract and moved its passage with a Second Motion from Mr. Olesheski. With the following Board Members present voting in favor the Resolution is carried. Ayes – 5 (Olesheski, Gonyo, Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens); Nays - 0.

- i. Sewer Referendum – vote on October 18, 2022 from 2:00PM – 8:00PM; Supervisor Hogan noted that there is an informational meeting with Sewer Commission/EDC tomorrow at 7:00PM via Zoom.

5. Committee Reports

- a. Mr. Gonyo noted that there are some Department of Health issues re: fresh water source at well (behind Basil and Wicks); they want to be connected to the Town Water – looking at grants/funding for this; would the Town support them in this endeavor, non-monetary; championing the grant or if we could put them together with Warren County Planning to assist them as well; Supervisor Hogan – we want all to have drinkable water; it’s similar to what we have with Garnet Lake Association; all OK with helping them out? Supervisor Hogan noted that the Town will help however we can.
- b. Supervisor Hogan indicated that the Historian’s Report is included in the packet.

6. Supervisor’s Report

- a. Supervisor Hogan indicated that the USDA (funding for the sewer) toured the Town; also reviewed Ski Bowl Mitigation project.
- b. Town Hall staff is working with the Auditor who will be around for a couple of months.
- c. Supervisor Hogan indicated that the Assessor training did not exceed amount approved.
- d. Supervisor Hogan – update on the Red Barn – 23 negative asbestos tests– still needs to be treated as asbestos – I’d like to continue to fight this, they will fine us one way or another; Mr. Gonyo – the pile will still be there? Supervisor Hogan – we know it does not contain asbestos, hiring someone to remove it would be costly; Mr. Arsenault – can any political allies help us with this; Supervisor Hogan – I can reach out to someone; Mr. Gonyo – can you just pick up the pile? Supervisor Hogan – yes,



but we'll be fined for it; Mr. Gonyo – violation and willful violation are two different things; Supervisor Hogan indicated that we'll continue to work on this.

### **RESOLUTION # 22-184**

Mr. Gonyo made a Motion to accept the Supervisor's Report and moved its passage with a Second Motion from Mr. Olesheski. With the following Board Members present voting in favor the Resolution is carried. Ayes – 5 (Olesheski, Gonyo, Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens); Nays - 0.

7. Warrants – Supervisor Hogan asked if all had a chance to review the Warrants and if there were any concerns or questions?

### **RESOLUTION # 22-185**

Mr. Stevens made a Motion to accept the Warrants and moved its passage with a Second Motion from Mr. Gonyo. With the following Board Members present voting in favor the Resolution is carried. Ayes – 5 (Olesheski, Gonyo, Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens); Nays - 0.

8. Mr. John Stack – presenter at 8:16PM – he's with NYS Real Property; here to discuss the re-val project that occurred in Town; reviewed handout; gave his background; offered re-val options on several occasions; Boards at the time seemed amenable, but it never moved forward. **Please listen to recording for more specific questions/answers.** Re-val at 100% has never been done in your Town; it explains why everything needed to be done now; re-val should have been done 25 years ago; I'm not going to discuss specifics, you'll need to go to your assessor; I won't answer any unrelated or allow any outbursts; Ms. Wood asked for clarification of statement; Mr. Holt – didn't the assessor go over all of this in her meetings with individuals? Increase in housing prices from 2003-2006, probably the highest we've seen; higher end properties increased in value quicker; this project was started in 2020, re-collected data; Mr. Holt – is 1 acre in one area, the same as in another? Always more neighborhoods than land tables – Mr. Stack; 3,600 sites; 1 parcel might have multiple sites; you need sales within a neighborhood to define a neighborhood. Ms. Wood – what if you have a small vacant lot that isn't usable? Stack – influence it down 25% or so; Mr. Holt – you're teaching us now or is this what happened? Mr. Stack – this is what happened in this Town. This is how I believe the project was done – Stack; Ms. Wood – does an appraiser use the same formula as Real Property? Mr. Stack – no; an appraiser goes in and looks at each home/parcel, etc.; on an average, this was not a bad re-val; some contractors will collect data, some don't, that's a difference in price; would need to decide what type of re-val you want, new data collection, etc.; Ms. Lomax - You did look at the numbers and we're at 95%, here in Johnsbury? Mr. Stack – yes; Ms. Lomax – the assessor can override another contractor's numbers? Mr. Stack – yes. Stack – if you're within 5% of 100, for all intents and purposes you're at 100% equalization rate; Ms. Williams – an assessment year only lasts one year; Ms. Wood – if you're still unhappy with assessment, you can talk to assessor and changes could be made? Mr. Stack - Nothing could be changed until May; I would wait until after October when NYS numbers are out to do that. Ms. Nessle – to be that close to 100% indicates that a great job was done and that the re-val needed to be done; Mr. Stack – you want to do another one in 3 years; Mr. Holt – can there be some help for those who have had land in their families for years and years; Supervisor Hogan – we have a committee that's looked at this; Mr. Stack – Veteran's Exemption, Senior Exemption. Ms. Williams – someone will have to pay the difference when these things are done. Mr. Stack – feel free to send me an email with any additional questions.
9. Privilege of the floor
  - Mr. Ordway – safety issue at Ski Bowl – 3-phase wire only 8" deep; can this be checked on?
  - Mr. Ordway – Senior Bus down to one day a month – we don't do enough for our Seniors as it is; can we do it two days a month? Our Town was made by them and we should take care of them.

- Mr. Ordway – it bothers me that when the Town gives a business/developer breaks, the School Board has to as well; these corporations are rich and they don't need the tax breaks; I'd request that no tax exempt breaks be given to contractors/developers.
- Mr. Ordway – thank you to Ms. Williams and the Town Board for a great job with the re-val process.
- Ms. Wood – it's 77 degrees in here, I think we need to look at the system as we might be wasting money.
- Ms. Wood – what's happening with the water money on Main Street?
- Ms. Wood – thank you for deciding not to break the tax cap;
- Mr. Holt – the County and the State failed us during this re-val process; they should be accountable for funding the next re-val.
- Ms. Nettle – Garnet Lake Association is trying to raise money for their dam; they have a book available, it's for a fundraiser; after 10/15 it goes up to \$50.
- Ms. Nettle – any conversation with ORDA and Town re: poles in the park; maybe consider underground wires instead of poles.
- Ms. Nettle – EDU's seem to be part of the problem; it's based on a chart from the State (JG – from the Federal); put water meters in the district, then EDU's would be known; maybe people within the district would be more comfortable and it might help with the vote;
- Ms. Nettle – yes we split the summer program 30 here and 21 at Minerva; we were allowed 35 slots at Minerva, we can't just send anyone; that's an important thing to realize for next year; ratio of kid to lifeguard.
- Supervisor Hogan – meters - \$1 million to do them; along with all the other tasks for the committee, maybe they could look into this as well; water rents are like property taxes, values need to be divided by the number of people within the district; Mr. Holt – can we do analog meters rather than drive by meters; Ms. Nettle – there would be a more equitable, supportive measure for those within the district; Mr. Ordway – the water district is bigger than the sewer district.

10. Motion to Adjourn

**RESOLUTION # 22-186**

Mr. Gonyo made a Motion to Adjourn the Meeting at 10:39PM and moved its passage with a Second Motion from Mr. Stevens. With the following Board Members present voting in favor the Resolution is carried. Ayes – 5 (Olesheski, Gonyo, Hogan, Arsenault, Stevens); Nays - 0.

Prepared by:



Jean Comstock  
Town Clerk

**PUBLIC HEARING RE: THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET  
OCTOBER 18, 2022 AT 7:00PM AT TANNERY POND AND VIA ZOOM  
NEXT REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING WILL BE HELD ON  
OCTOBER 18, 2022 – IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC HEARING  
AT TANNERY POND AND VIA ZOOM**