

Minutes of the Public Hearing on the 2008 Johnsburg Fire Protection Contracts for the Johnsburg Fire Protection District held on Thursday, November 8, 2007, at 6:00pm, at the Wevertown Community Center, Wevertown, N.Y.

The Public Hearing on the Johnsburg Fire Protection Contracts for the Johnsburg Fire Protection District was called to order at 6:00pm. by Supv. Thomas. The Town Clerk read the legal notice as it appeared in the North Creek News – Enterprise on October 27, 2007.

Roll call showed the following persons present: Supv. / William H. Thomas; Town Councilpersons/ Eugene Arsenault, Sterling Goodspeed, Arnold Stevens, and Alyce VanKeuren; Town Clerk/ William Rawson.

Guests: On attached list.

Supv. Thomas noted that the fire committee (Mr. Arsenault and Mrs. VanKeuren) had met with the fire chiefs and asked for a report on the negotiations. Mr. Arsenault explained that the committee had met with the fire chiefs to discuss the contract and that the chiefs had requested a 5% increase over 2006; the Town Board wanted to keep the increase to 3%. The discussion also included the request from the fire companies to be allowed to purchase heating fuel under the town's bid agreement. Supv. Thomas noted that a 3% increase has been added to the budget and asked the chiefs for their comment. Chief John Donohue of North River explained that the fire chiefs had discussed the issue and as the Town Board had agreed to the previous increases that they would agree to a 3% increase this year, he added however, that a 3% increase amounts to about a \$900.00 increase per company for the year and that this amount would not buy much fire equipment; in future years there will need to be larger increases. Chief Lewis Hitchcock of Bakers Mills-Sodom questioned the payment of \$10,000.00 to the North Creek Fire Company and requested that this amount be divided among the other companies instead of being given to North Creek Fire Company. Supv. Thomas said that he would discuss this with the North Creek Fire District Commissioners.

Supv. Thomas asked about the fire companies' response to the Town Board request for more budget and financial information. Chief Donohue replied that the phrase "adequately trained personnel" is too vague and open to interpretation. Mr. Arsenault answered that the Town Board was not looking to make the wording onerous, but felt that some description of training should be in the wording of the contract. Chief Donohue explained that "in house" training is allowed and that there is some dispute as to whether New York State even requires the "Essentials" course. Chief Hitchcock said that a 5 year plan is difficult to put together and that a single year plan was better. Supv. Thomas said that the Bakers Mills-Sodom Fire Company budget paperwork was the basis used for much of the budget and financial wording changed in the contract. Chief Donohue added that he had discussed the contract with his members and that they wanted to be sure that this was enough in light of the recent problems in the Johnsburg Fire Company. He asked about supplying a budget each 6 months. Chief Hitchcock wanted to be sure that the Town Board would not assume that because a fire company has a sizable reserve fund for building improvements or to purchase a new fire truck that this will be held against them.

Mr. Arsenault explained that the Town Board was not trying to punish anyone by allowing the 3% increase or by requesting more detailed

Supv. Thomas asked Johnsbury Emergency Squad Chairman, James Watsaw, if the Emergency Squad had any comment on their contract. Mr. Watsaw replied that his board had said to sign the contract. Mr. Arsenault added that he was trying to schedule a meeting with Jim Watsaw to discuss the needs of the squad and the town.

Supv. Thomas asked Chief Donohue to raise the issue of more financial reports at the next Chiefs and Officers meeting.

A motion to adjourn the Public Hearing was presented by Mr. Stevens with a second from Mr. Arsenault at 6:25pm. With 5 members voting in favor the motion is declared passed. Ayes-5 (Arsenault, Goodspeed, Stevens, VanKeuren, Thomas) Nays - 0
The Public Hearing was closed at 6:25pm.

Prepared by William E. Rawson, Town Clerk