

Minutes of the Public Hearing on the 2010 Town of Johnsbury Budget held on Thursday November 5, 2009, at 6:30pm, at the Wevertown Community Center, Wevertown, N.Y.

The Public Hearing on the 2010 Town of Johnsbury Budget was called to order at 6:31pm. by Supv. Goodspeed. The Town Clerk read the legal notice as it appeared in the North Creek News – Enterprise on October 31, 2009 and noted that the Town Assessor salary listed in the legal notice was incorrect; the Assessor's salary is not required as the Assessor is appointed not elected.

Roll call showed the following persons present: Supv. Sterling Goodspeed; Town Councilmen/ Eugene Arsenault, Frank Morehouse, Jr., Arnold Stevens, and Ronald Vanselow; Town Clerk/ William Rawson.

Guests: On an attached list

Supv. Goodspeed explained that this was the second budget of his tenure. Supv. Goodspeed noted that overall Town Taxes will be reduced by .01%; he added that the Warren County portion of the January tax bill will increase as will the overall bill as a result. Supv. Goodspeed said that the General Fund of the 2010 Budget had been reduced by 14 percent; the Highway Fund was increased by 8.36 percent and a small increase in the Library Fund. Supv. Goodspeed noted that the budget is an attempt to improve the Highway Department fleet. Supv. Goodspeed said that all revenue lines appear to be down and the budget anticipates this. Supv. Goodspeed said that he is attempting to provide essential services at the least cost to the taxpayer.

Supv. Goodspeed explained that by changing the health insurance policy that the Town will save an estimated sixty thousand dollars while not injuring the employees by using some of the savings to establish a fund to pay the high deductible in the policy. Supv. Goodspeed said that the budget anticipates ending curbside recycling pickup with the loss of one employee position. Supv. Goodspeed explained that the solid waste expenses fail to be offset by the revenue from the trash tickets; rather than raise the revenue by raising taxes he proposes to increase the trash ticket cost to three dollars per ticket.

Supv. Goodspeed explained that Highway Supt. Hitchcock had submitted budget proposals and that there had been meetings to discuss the Highway Fund; these have resulted in a total of about forty-five thousand dollars being added to the summer and winter Highway portions of the budget. Supv. Goodspeed said that there is some concern over the continuation of the Chips program which helps fund vehicle purchases and long term road maintenance.

Supv. Goodspeed noted that the Warren County financial situation is such that he expects a fifteen percent tax increase in the county portion of the tax bill. Supv. Goodspeed said that as a result of expecting the Warren County portion to rise the 2010 Town Budget was a balance between providing essential services and the reality of seeing the number of property owners at the last chance payment meeting trying to save their property. Supv. Goodspeed thanked Accounts Clerk Candace Lomax, Highway

Supt. Hitchcock and Mr. Don Green for their assistance and opened the floor for comment from the public or the Town Board.

Mrs. Michelle San Antonio asked how the cost of the solid waste was determined; Supv. Goodspeed replied that it was a combination of the tipping fee at the burn plant, the hauling rate to the burn plant and the cost of trash and recycling collection. Supv. Goodspeed added that the Town control over the total cost is limited to the collection which was addressed by ending the recycling collection. Supv. Goodspeed said that he hopes that there will be some cost savings next year with the ending of the burn plant contracts. Supv. Goodspeed said that even if there is additional volume generated in trash that there is room available for additional hauling. Mr. Vanselow said that he was willing to see how the ending of curbside recycling collection would affect the recycling program overall; if there is a definite loss of recyclable material, then he will look for a change back to curbside collection. Mr. Arsenault said that it appeared that trash revenues had dropped over the last two or three years; Supv. Goodspeed said that he has serious concerns that there has been defrauding of the system. Supv. Goodspeed also listed legal methods of evading trash costs; people are stuffing trash bags more fully with the 2006 increase to the current two dollar per tag cost and he expects that to continue; and the Transfer Station Cleanup Card has increased in value. Supv. Goodspeed said that he planned to put more pressure on those collecting trash to attempt to reduce the fraud; people cut stickers in half, or use something orange that appears to be a trash ticket and Mr. Peter Heid agreed. Supv. Goodspeed said that there was an untrue rumor of ending curbside trash collection floating around. Mr. Joe Connelly said that the cost of trash was not stable per household; Supv. Goodspeed replied that an increase in the property tax would not include renters or lessees and added that a user tax seemed more appropriate. Mr. Vanselow agreed that having property owners subsidizing those who use the landfill did not seem equitable. Supv. Goodspeed said that revisiting this issue following the expiration of the burn plant contracts seemed reasonable. Mr. Harrison Sangster asked if the calculation on the revenue from the trash ticket increase was based on a one for one exchange or for less; Supv. Goodspeed replied that a smaller number of tickets being sold was expected and taken into account.

Mr. Stevens presented the following motion with a second from Mr. Morehouse to adjourn the Public Hearing on the 2010 Town of Johnsburg Budget at this time. With 5 members voting in favor the resolution is declared carried. Ayes-5 (Arsenault, Morehouse, Stevens, Vanselow, Goodspeed) Nays - 0

The Public Hearing on the 2010 Town of Johnsburg Budget was closed at 7:00pm.