

**Minutes of the Town of Johnsbury Special Board Meeting October 26, 2011
Held at the Ski Bowl Lodge, North Creek, NY**

Minutes of the special meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Johnsbury held on Wednesday, October 26, 2011 at 7:00pm at the Ski Bowl Lodge, North Creek, NY.

Supervisor Goodspeed called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and the pledge to the flag was led by Councilman Arnold Stevens

Roll call showed the following persons present: Supv. Sterling Goodspeed; Town Councilmen/ Eugene Arsenault, Frank Morehouse, Jr., Ronald Vanselow and Arnold Stevens; Confidential Secretary/Cherie Ferguson. (Town Clerk/William Rawson – absent)

Guests: On attached list

Supv. Goodspeed stated the need to call this meeting was based on 2-3 factors pressing in on town and felt that without this opportunity to look at some options, the public hearing would be less productive than it should be. Since the last board meeting things started happening quickly such as a proposed partnership with the Rail Road and issues with Warren County budget that could have a significant impact on retirees and the elderly. Supv. Goodspeed emphasized the need to plan now and make small steps because if the County's proposals go through, he felt it would be a great disservice to our citizens.

Supv. Goodspeed presented a narrative to accompany the budget. There had been minor changes in the budget from how it was presented from the previous two meetings as Tentative and Preliminary and with making additional proposals for compromise; he wanted the public and board to think about it. Supv. Goodspeed said that though he didn't want to shut down public comment, he really just wanted to get the ideas on table because change is coming.

Supv. Goodspeed verbally reviewed the narrative he presented. He said while he understands the concept of the state's 2% tax cap- "to force municipalities to reduce spending", we started off with a 3.8 % increase due to mandates right off the bat and said it was all downhill from there. Health Insurance increased 21%, Warren County Self Insurance was up over 100%, and retirement contributions due to state mandate were up about 10%. Supv. Goodspeed felt it was time to 'circle the wagons' around essential service. In his opinion the Highway Department is one of those essential services. Supv. Goodspeed met with Highway Superintendent Dan Hitchcock on the increases made to the Highway budget. There is a proposed increase of \$5,000 in the summer budget, \$5,000 in the winter budget and \$30,000 in the line for purchasing equipment. Supv. Goodspeed feels the town has made tremendous strides over the last 4 years in tried to rectify problem that started the 1995 fire that destroyed the highway garage and all of the vehicles inside. Usually a fleet would age and could be replaced incrementally, but ours have aged together and were not replace. Goals were set that tried to replace fleet as we could and Supv. Goodspeed agreed that we not quite there yet citing that we still have a couple 95's.

We've made some major purchases from funds in the department and CHIP's funding over recent years.

Supv. Goodspeed went on to label Emergency Services as another one of our essential services – Kelly Nettle on behalf of the Johnsburg Emergency Squad has lobbied for 2 years on this issue of budgetary increases which the Supv. feels is very important. They have budget problems of their own including plans to expand to a new facility and a few years ago were met with a state mandate that they own their fleet of ambulances. When the Town owned them, we insured them. When the mandate came in place, and the ambulances were re-titled to them, they assumed the insurance etc. an almost \$15,000 annual increase in expenses. To that end, the Supv. proposed a \$5,000 toward the increase they wanted. Other changes in the preliminary budget are minor increases to the cemeteries and building maintenance codes.

In Supv. Goodspeed's review of the history of budgets during his tenure, he cited no increases and sometimes a decrease in Town taxes in previous years. He comments that the economic crisis we are end will not to end soon and feels a continued need to protect tax payers not raise taxes unless absolute necessary to protect essential services.

Supv. Goodspeed passed out a document he proposed for a compromise based on discussions on the budget (attached) and explained and discussed each point.

Councilman Arsenault inquired of the status for receipt of sales tax to which Supv. Goodspeed responded that the 3rd quarter was the strongest of the year – this year was about \$340,000 but not anticipate what the annual total may be...maybe a million for a year but cautioned it was easy to misestimate. There is a lot of fluidity. Councilman Arsenault also inquired as to whether the highway signs were included in this budget. Supv. Goodspeed said he had lost track of the status but will check on it and report back. Councilman Arsenault asked if the Senior Citizens Meal site would return to the town if the county proposal passes. Supv. Goodspeed is awaiting reply from the County Attorneys office and would seek immediate lease termination if they stop the program. There is also a question of legality due to state funding; the county may have to continue the program to the end of the term in 2012. If they can cancel the contract, food will still be prepared at the county and shipped out to locations. Supv. Goodspeed would hope to form a rotating volunteer committee who would serve the food at the site.

Mr. Arsenault spoke to his comments of a previous meeting regarding FEMA funding and said he believed state law required it to go to highway budget as it is a reimbursement to that budget for expenses. He proposed Sales tax revenues were in discussion to set aside in his proposal. Mr. Arsenault said he felt there was little or no funding to address issues before town and was not sure we could withstand another year of nothing to be done or little, citing that the amount the Supv. had in for buildings or improvement were modest at best. Regarding FEMA, Mr. Arsenault feels that when the funds come in 2012 from the 2011 events that there is \$367,000 pure income that can offset expenses and make up for the reduction in sales tax. Superintendent

Hitchcock said he would ask board to purchase the tractor and loader the department needs from first round of FEMA funds. Mr. Arsenault's proposal called for reducing the highway's share by \$100,000 of sales tax revenue and replaces it with \$100,000 from FEMA for equipment and felt it was reasonable. With the 2nd wave of FEMA funds anticipated at around \$400,000 he saw an opportunity to accommodate some of the highway's needs and bring over \$100,000 of sales tax to the general fund for specific needs he'd cited before. Mr. Arsenault said there had been a lot of discussion since then and still believes there is nothing illegal about it.

Chuck Martin said the board should give our highway department the money they need to do their work and leave their funds alone.

Jill Broderick asked why pay cash for equipment vs. taking out a loan. Supv. Goodspeed explained there was a time that we were not able to use CHIPs funds for equipment. He had done research and found a way to make purchases through these funds directly instead of borrowing. It does take away from infrastructure improvements so a plan was set in place to fix roads one year and buy equipment the next. Supv. Goodspeed commented on how the town struggled to make up the \$100,000 of debt from last bond which reinforced his reluctance to borrow again.

Ann Morse stated that she would be unable to attend the budget hearing and asked if there was a way to send written comments for consideration. Supv. Goodspeed said she could direct her comments to the Town Clerk and they could be read into the minutes at the hearing.

Roger Mosher asked Supv. Goodspeed to confirm that \$9000 is equal to 1% of the proposed budget, which he said it was about that amount. Mr. Mosher asked if he was then correct in his assumption that if the council members who currently take health insurance from the town vs. their regular fulltime place of employment that the budget could go down. A heated discussion ensued with Mr. Arsenault who stated that he was not going to engage any further in this discussion.

Dave Bulmer asked for clarification regarding the reported 100% increase to worker's compensation insurance. Secretary Cherie Ferguson said she has spoken to Amy Clute, Director of Self Insurance at Warren County in this regard. Ms. Clute said that in previous years the County had a surplus of funds that they had used to offset the increase in premiums. This year there is no surplus to offset the increase.

Amy Cleveland stated that she did not feel it was fair for part time employees (referencing Town Board members) to be able to have the same benefits as full time employees, especially those like her husband, Bruce, who has worked for the highway department full time for 30 years.

Fred Hitchcock asked about the condition of the meal-site roof; whether it could be painted vs. replaced. Mr. Vanselow noted that it is rusting but was unsure if there were leaks that would necessitate a replacement. Mr. Hitchcock suggested the least expensive approach would be to

paint for now that should hold up for about 5 years, and work a replacement into the 3 year plan proposed by Supv. Goodspeed.

Theresa Roeder asked about an apparent \$377,000 surplus in year 2010. Supv. Goodspeed explained that the close out of the financial cycle not occur until the following February and that the process was very fluid. He urged people to talk to the financial office for clarification as some of the funds are encumbered while some are some shown to fund next years budget.

RESOLUTION NO. 213

Mr. Stevens presented the following resolution, and moved its passage with a second from Mr. Vanselow to authorize the Town to form a partnership with Iowa Pacific regarding the use of Tannery Pond Community Center to host mid-day events on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from December 2011 through March 2012 and further agrees to waive the standard space rental fee and 10% of sales contribution. With 5 members voting in favor, the resolution is declared carried. Ayes-5 (Arsenault, Morehouse, Stevens, Vanselow, Goodspeed) Nays - 0

A motion to adjourn the meeting was presented by Mr. Arsenault with a second from Mr. Morehouse at 8:53pm. With 5 members voting in favor the resolution is declared carried. Ayes-5 (Arsenault, Morehouse, Stevens, Vanselow, Goodspeed) Nays – 0

The next regular Town Board meeting will be held at 7:00pm on November 3, 2011 at the Wevertown Community Center, NY. A Public Hearing on the 2012 PRELIMINARY BUDGET will be held at 7:00pm on November 3, 2011 and a Public Hearing on the proposal to ESTABLISH A LOCAL LAW TO OVERRIDE THE TAX CAP will be held at 7:30pm. The regular meeting will follow said hearings.

Respectfully Submitted

Cherie Ferguson, Secretary

MEETING ATTENDANCE SIGN-IN

Meeting Date: Oct 26 2011
 Committee/Board: Ski Bowl Lodge - Budget
Oct 26 2011

Please PRINT your name and address clearly to assure the correct spelling in the minutes of this meeting.

1. KAREN DUNKLEY 3000 State Rte 8
North Creek NY 12853
2. Bruce Dunkley "
3. Jon Alexander Post-Store
4. Susan Hitchcock Bakers Mills, NY 12811
5. Jan Hitchcock " "
6. Frank W. Hitchcock Bakers Mills NY 12814
7. Tommy N. CREEK
8. JUSTINE HAYES No. Creek
9. Charles Mark BAKERS MILLS
10. Amy Cleveland } Bakers Mills
11. Bruce Cleveland }
12. Jim Jones Johnsbury
13. Ross Mosh Johnsbury
14. Dave Burnett NC
15. Arny Morse The Den
16. Mike Bales
17. Vige Besterade North Creek
18. Theresa Roeder Johnsbury
19. _____
20. _____