

Minutes of the Public Hearing on the 2008 Town of Johnsburg Budget held on Thursday November 8, 2007, at 6:30pm, at the Wevertown Community Center, Wevertown, N.Y.

The Public Hearing on the 2008 Town of Johnsburg Budget was called to order at 6:30pm. 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 and Arnold Stevens; Town Clerk/ William Rawson. Councilwoman Alyce VanKeuren was absent.

Guests: On an attached list

Supv. Thomas noted that as a result of the budget increase and a careful and continual review of the Town spending there was no borrowing anticipated for the remainder of 2007. Supv. Thomas outlined the following changes in the 2008 budget compared to the 2007 budget: the 2008 budget includes a 3% increase in employee payroll, an increase of \$20,000.00 in the Town Buildings maintenance account, an increase of \$10,000 to the Johnsburg Emergency Squad, an increase from \$18,970 to \$22,480 resulting from insurance increases, an increase from \$8,344.00 to \$12,094 for the Zoning Enforcement Officer to increase to two days per week for the Zoning Enforcement Officer, the Parks account was decreased by \$20,000 as the 2007 increase had been placed in the budget to allow for a truck purchase; on the revenue side the anticipated income from the mortgage tax will be increased by \$15,000.00 to equal the 2007 level and the N.Y.S. Per Capita funding has been increased by \$2,095.00 as the 2008 level has been received from N.Y.S. The amount of borrowing anticipated in 2008 is being reduced from \$120,000.00 to \$100,000.00. The overall increase in the amount to be raised by taxes is 8.38%. Supv. Thomas then asked for public comment.

Mr. Joel Beaudin inquired about the decrease from \$42,000.00 to \$31,000.00 in Occupancy Tax amounts; Supv. Thomas explained that this was as a result of some of the Occupancy Tax monies were to be used by the Town to offset ongoing Town expenses such as beautification; additionally, there can be a fluctuation in the amounts raised annually and that he is anticipating a lower amount in 2008. Mr. Beaudin also asked about the \$20,000.00 rise in the Buildings maintenance line; Supv. Thomas noted that this is generally associated with heating fuel cost increases and reflects the actual costs from 2007. Mrs. Kelda Nettle asked about the possibility of installing solar panels to eliminate electric costs. Supv. Thomas answered that he knew of this technology and that it was being planned for the Adirondack Park Agency facility in Ray Brook; the estimated time to recoup the initial investment was expected to be nine years in that project. Mrs. Barbara MacNaughton suggested that the initial cost would probably be prohibitive.

Mrs. Kelda Nettle asked for a description of the budget item economic development in the amount of \$1000.00; Supv. Thomas answered that this line item was for advertisements promoting the Town. Mrs. Nettle also asked about the street lighting costs; Supv. Thomas explained that the Town Board has tried to lower that expense by

having streetlights turned off when they were unwanted or unneeded, but due to the contract with the electric company the equipment fees continue and it results in little savings. Mrs. Nettle also asked about the cemetery budget line; Supv. Thomas responded that by N.Y.S. Law the Town is obligated to upkeep cemeteries and mow them several times a year. Mrs. Nettle also asked about the \$10,000.00 in funding for the North Country Ministries; Supv. Thomas answered that North Country Ministries conducted programs which assist the needy of the Town.

Mr. Robert Nettle asked about the Library fees; Supv. Thomas answered that the Library Budget was established by the Library Board of Trustees and that it was not open to change by the Town Board. Mr. Nettle also asked about income from timber sales and the Columbus Day Sale Event at the Ski Bowl Park; Mr. Goodspeed answered that the fees for the Columbus Day Sale had been discussed at two or more meeting and that as time was growing short that and the desire of the Town Board to not have the event dislocated for other local vendors that the cost per day for the event was set. Mr. Nettle suggested a 10% user fee for the site. Mr. Goodspeed said that it seemed unfair to hold this discussion without all of those involved having notice of the discussion. Supv. Thomas noted that such one time events such as timber sales are not a part of the budget as they are not ongoing revenue producers. Mr. Robert Nettle raised the idea of paying the Planning board for their work as the load will increase greatly under the newly adopted Local Land Use Plan. Supv. Thomas agreed that volunteer time is very valuable to the operation of the Town. Mr. Nettle asked about surplus funds; Supv. Thomas answered that there were no anticipated surplus funds in the budget. Mr. Arsenault added that some budget items were under funded such as the Highway equipment purchase line which could reasonably be \$100,000.00 instead of \$50,000.00 as the cost of trucks has gone from \$80,000.00 to \$140,000.00 in six years.

Mr. Walter Hornberger asked about increasing health insurance costs. Mr. Arsenault said that he was worried about the cost of health insurance and that in the past that the Town Board has asked the employees to bear a larger share of the cost through higher co-pays and lowered benefit levels; he added that it is unfair to balance the budget on the backs of the Town employees and is trying to find a way to mitigate the costs to the taxpayer. Mr. Nettle asked that the Town Board drop its coverage; Mr. Arsenault said that health insurance was a part of the payment and that it is warranted. Mr. Goodspeed added that in most towns there is either lower salary with health insurance benefits or higher salaries with no insurance benefits. Mr. Hornberger also commented that municipal building costs would be a problem.

Mr. Goodspeed noted that there are some signs of current success, the purchase of a truck and a backhoe for the Highway Department were made without necessitating any borrowing of funds; Water District and Planning fees were added to shift some costs to the developers and from the taxpayers. Mr. Goodspeed added that these fees do not show up in the budget.

Mr. Stevens presented the following motion with a second from Mr. Goodspeed to adjourn the Public Hearing on the 2008 Town of Johnsbury Budget at this time leaving the comment period open with the Public hearing to be continued on November 20th at the Regular Town Board Meeting to be held at 7:00pm in the Town Hall (Library), North

Creek, NY. With four members voting in favor the motion is declared passed. Ayes-4
(Arsenault, Goodspeed, Stevens, Thomas) Nays - 0

The Public Hearing on the 2008 Town of Johnsbury Budget was adjourned at
7:25pm.

Prepared by William E. Rawson
Town Clerk