

A Public Hearing was held November 8, 2012 at 6:00pm at Town Hall, 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena, New York

PRESENT: Stephen D. Flach, Supervisor
Dawn Rogers, Councilwoman
Thomas A. Boehm, Councilman
Thomas E. Dolan, Councilman
Peter E. Masti, Councilman

ALSO PRESENT: Diane L. Millious, Town Clerk
Albert Deering, Highway Superintendent
Greg Darlington, Chief of Police

Supervisor Flach opened the Public Hearing and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

OPENING COMMENT

Supervisor Flach stated that he had a Public Notice that he wanted to share from R-C-S Central and continued by reading the following:

There is an opportunity to donate nonperishable food items, blankets, warm clothing and basic hygiene items, which will occur on Wednesday, November 7th through November 14th at the R-C-S School District. This is called Stuff the Truck – Sandy Relief. School children are encouraged to bring items to school to leave in drop-off boxes. Capital region residents are encouraged to bring items, boxed and labeled to the R-C-S Middle School parking lot November 10th from 10:00am to 2:00pm and November 12th, 10:00am to 2:00pm. Due to the enormous catastrophe incurred in the Burroughs of Staten Island, all goods received will go to victims in this devastated area. Stuff the Truck – Sandy Relief is working with an organization associated with F.E.M.A. Those interested in volunteering for this event, please contact Suny Swann at 518 588- 3781.

Supervisor Flach stated that he wanted to share the information now because the next Town Board Meeting is on November 13th and continued by asking that Town Clerk Millious read the Notice of Public Hearing.

Town Clerk Millious read the following Notice of Public Hearing.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the Town Board of the Town of Coeymans will meet and hold a Public Hearing at Town Hall, 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena, New York at 6:00pm on Thursday, the 8th day of November 2012 for the purpose of hearing comments on the budget.

Pursuant to Section 108 of Town Law, listed below are the proposed salaries of Elected Officials.

Supervisor	(1)	\$30,000.00
Councilman	(4)	\$12,000.00 each
Justice	(2)	\$17,500.00 each
Highway Supt.	(1)	\$50,000.00
Town Clerk	(1)	\$40,500.00

A copy of the Preliminary Budget will be available at the Town Clerk's Office, 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena, New York, where it may be viewed and a copy can be obtained during regular business hours.

**By the Order of the Town Board
of the Town of Coeymans
Diane L. Millious
Town Clerk**

OPENING COMMENT

Supervisor Flach stated that his Tentative Budget had a 0% tax increase but things changed due to normal costs and operating expenditures and the Board as a whole expressed a desire to keep the two Beautification Department guys. He continued by saying that they found a way to keep them with some Leachate money that they didn't need for next year because they replaced the liner and the fence this year. He added that in the Tentative Budget there were raises for Elected Officials, which was taken out of the Preliminary Budget and for the non-union workers they had a 3% raise, which was asked to be put down to 1% and in turn they found a way to put it at 2%. He went on by saying that the Police Budget went up from the Tentative approximately \$43,000.000, which is so the part-time officers can have the same coverage that they have now and the budget was down a little bit last year because they did not put in to hire a full-timer at \$40,000.00 but there were a couple of things that were up such as Dog Control and some other things in the office that were up a little bit. He continued by saying that one of the major increases was fuel, with diesel being \$4.00 plus a gallon as well as gasoline for the Town vehicles, which is unfortunately rising.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Supervisor Flach invited the public to comment at this time and asked that anyone wishing to speak to sign in, hearing none he asked if any Board Members wished to comment.

Councilman Dolan stated that there are some things that each of them wanted to be higher and some things lower and the Preliminary Budget is a result of the talking back and forth and coming up with the best compromise.

Councilwoman Rogers interjected that they all did a good job on it.

Councilman Boehm stated that one of the components that they will see at the next Town Board Meeting is the purchase of a new police car before the end of the year and in his mind this is part of the budget and it is an important component.

Supervisor Flach asked if there were any additional comments.

Mr. Gary Bogardus inquired as to the percent of the increase in the budget.

Supervisor Flach apologized for not stating it and continued by saying that it is 1.92%.

Mr. Bogardus asked if it is because they reinstated some jobs or because they are buying equipment that they don't need.

Supervisor Flach stated that they had found that when they reinstated the jobs it kept the budget right around zero up to maybe ¼ of a percent and \$39,000.00 represents what the 2% would have been and in the Police Budget they added \$43,000.00 but they had also taken out the raises for the Elected Officials and it was not all the Police because there were fuel increases.

Mr. Bogardus inquired as to what the \$43,000.00 increase was for.

Supervisor Flach stated that it was mainly for the part-time employees and he had put in the Tentative Budget \$137,000.00 and the Police Department had asked for \$172,000.00, which would cover the cost of the current part-time officers. He continued by saying that they left out \$40,000.00 for a full-time officer that they had lost through attrition and they compromised with the police, whose budget actually went down from last year and it needed to go back in so they would have the same coverage that they have now.

Mr. Bogardus stated that he hates to see people lose their jobs but they should take a look down the road to when someone leaves and they should see about not replacing that person rather than laying people off.

Councilman Dolan stated that they are actually doing that with one of the positions in the Beautification Department where there is a gentleman retiring and they are not replacing him at all.

Councilman Boehm interjected that the Internal Control Officer is also leaving and not being replaced.

Supervisor Flach stated that they actually have had three positions in the last three months that have been vacated with one at the end of the year and another in two weeks and they are positions that they are not replacing. He continued by saying that they did set some seasonal positions up for the Highway Department because they actually lost one of their operators, which was not replaced with a full-time and they left enough money in the budget to have two seasonal for approximately 6 months for snow.

Mr. Bogardus stated that people can do more than one job and when he started out at Lafarge they had loader operators and that's all they did as well as dozer operators who only ran dozers and truck drivers who only drove trucks but when he left there they had one operator who ran light and heavy equipment. He continued by saying that he realizes that it would probably be a union issue but they had a union too and to save jobs they compromised.

Councilman Dolan stated that if he understands it correctly, they are looking to make a similar move in the Highway Department, which may have to be negotiated but his point is well taken.

Mr. Bogardus stated that if there is no snow plowing but there is a truck that needs new tires, it's not rebuilding a diesel motor or anything and does not take a rocket scientist to do it and going down the road, things are going to get worse every year and they are grabbing for straws to try and save money so there is not a big tax increase and they are going to have to look at being flexible.

Councilman Dolan stated that part of keeping the two Beautification jobs was because of unemployment and the fact that the Town is self-insured so they would not save as much money as you think they might but also one of the conversations that they had as a Board and with that department was that they will need to be flexible in the work that they would do and they agreed to it.

Mr. Bogardus stated that they are on the right track.

Supervisor Flach asked if there were any other comments.

Mr. David Flach stated that he wanted to know why the salaries are so lopsided with Highway Superintendent Deering getting \$50,000.00 a year when he deserves \$60,000.00 and the Chief of Police getting \$90,000.00 and the Town Board gets \$12,000.00 a year. He then asked how many days the Town Board actually puts in as Council.

Councilwoman Rogers inquired as to if it includes telephone calls.

Councilman Dolan stated that it is 7 days a week.

Mr. Flach stated that he didn't care about telephone calls and reiterated that he wanted to know how many days they leave their house and their jobs and come to Town Hall.

Councilwoman Rogers stated that with full-time jobs they cannot make it to Town Hall.

Mr. Flach stated that he does not mean that and asked again how many days they spend at Town Hall in a total of a year.

Councilwoman Rogers and Councilman Boehm collectively stated that it is not just that and the job is not coming to Town Hall.

Councilwoman Rogers stated that their jobs are out there bringing things to the Supervisor that they hear and sometimes they are on the phone for 3 hours a night.

Mr. Flach asked how many got raises this year.

Councilman Dolan stated that basically everyone will except the elected officials and the Chief of Police.

Mr. Flach asked why the Elected Officials did not get a raise if the union people did.

Councilman Dolan stated that they had a certain amount of money and this is how they agreed to split it up.

Mr. Flach stated that years ago he asked a politician what he was going to do with a deficit of \$250,000.00 and his reply was that he was going to raise his taxes, which he didn't like. He continued by saying that he doesn't mind paying taxes as long as he can see some results and he pays a lot of taxes because he and his wife own a lot of property and he gets upset because he gets nothing for his tax dollars, no garbage pick up, no sewer or water, no street lights and this is why he so adamant about saving taxes and he wants them to know where he is coming from. He added that he thinks a lot of the taxpayers in this town that pay a substantial amount of taxes are in the same boat, they have a limited income with social security and this is all they have plus their savings that they have saved over the years and the worse thing that happens to them are the school taxes, which is not their fault. He went on by saying that he commends them on a 1 ½ - 2% increase and it is wonderful because the county is looking at 9% and other towns are talking 8-12%. He continued by saying that the Supervisor is his son and he thinks that people who put in a lot of time should get paid for that time and he does not think that there is anyone on the Board or in the room that would do his job for \$30,000.00 a year, which is totally ridiculous and a few years ago he wouldn't get out of bed for that. He added that it is ludicrous and then asked why they are denying him a raise because the vote on the Board is 3-2, always 3-2, which Councilman Dolan had said himself.

Councilman Dolan asked what he said.

Mr. Flach stated that Councilman Dolan had stated that there are 3 against 2 one night when they were talking about something that he didn't appreciate. He continued by saying that even if they give him \$2,000.00 - \$5,000.00 because it was \$45,000.00 but now it is \$30,000.00 and he is full-time and he is at Town Hall at 7:30 in the morning until 5:30 at night when he has said that he can't help him on the farm, which is wrong. He concluded by saying that he commends them for the 2% increase and they know what his feelings are.

Councilman Boehm stated that in commenting about the deficit and in borrowing money for what they don't have, he mentioned the purchase of a police car before the end of year and to borrow money to purchase trucks and police cars he believes is the biggest danger going forward and he agrees with Mr. Flach that they have to put in the budget equipment purchases. He continued by saying that they can't borrow money on everything that they can't afford to put in the budget and they need to pay cash for the police cars and loaders and they can't buy equipment because things wear out and they can't go from budget to budget not replacing the equipment but they can't borrow it, because then they will be in a situation where in 4-5 years the budget will be BAN payments for money that they

borrowed. He concluded by saying that he thinks it is essential that they buy a police car this year and also in going forward, budget for these things so they aren't borrowing money and when he first came on the Town Board the only debt that they had was in the Sewer Fund and now they are gradually creeping debt into everything else, which they need to stop.

Mr. Flach stated that as far as equipment goes, he owns a lot of equipment and as a farmer he has six tractors, which he needs because two of them break down and he needs four and added that you make equipment go as much as you can and you stretch it as much as you can.

Councilman Boehm stated that he would hate the police car with 200,000 miles blow an engine while going up a hill.

Mr. Flach interjected that you can buy a car in a matter of days if you want to and added that another thing with a police car is that they should buy them at Crossroads because they pay taxes here and we have to take care of our own people if we expect to have things done the way that we need to have them done.

Councilman Dolan stated that he believes that the plan is to buy it at Crossroads.

Supervisor Flach stated that he wanted to say something about the 2% and added that there is a formula and certain things in Municipal Government, even though there is a 2% cap, that you can actually go over the cap and he is pretty happy that they kept it under the 2% in every area and he knows that everyone wants a 0% tax increase.

Councilman Boehm interjected that it is not realistic.

Supervisor Flach reiterated that fuel was one of the biggest things that they had this year and it is really putting a hurting on everyone.

Councilman Masti inquired as to if they gave the raises to everyone that were in the initial budget, how much it would increase the budget.

Councilman Dolan stated that it would be at least an additional 1%.

Supervisor Flach stated that at 1.29% there is only \$1,000.00 until you get to the 2% cap and \$39,000.00 was the 2% that the budget could go up this year and 1.92 is \$38,000.00.

Mr. Flach interjected that fuel was \$1.80 and now it is \$4.00 so automatically it raises the percentage immensely and that is only one item and you are talking tires, cars, trucks, etc.

Councilman Masti interjected that everything to keep the vehicles on the road went up.

Councilman Dolan stated that you add to that retirement and health care costs, which are well above the 2% and they would have to cut even more.

Mr. Flach reiterated that he is thankful that they kept it at 2%.

Councilman Masti inquired as to if they can save money from one budget to the next to make major purchases rather than borrow money.

Collectively the Town Board stated that they can and it would be reserve.

Councilman Dolan stated that it would not stay on the same line.

Councilman Masti inquired as to if it would go to the general fund.

Councilman Dolan stated that he's not sure.

Supervisor Flach stated that he's not sure and he should know the answer but he doesn't.

Councilman Dolan stated that it's not like they have to spend it by the end of the year or they lose it.

Councilman Masti stated that it would be like a family when you go to make a purchase and have set so much aside so you don't have to spend a large amount at once and on a \$40,000.00 purchase they could set aside \$20,000.00 from the prior year and combine it with \$20,000.00 from the current year. He continued by asking if the Town Board could do this.

Collectively the Town Board said that they could do this.

Highway Superintendent Deering stated that he had a comment and continued by saying that it was mentioned that the union people get raises but the Elected Officials, who pay a part of their health benefits, get nothing and have not gotten anything in the past five or six years and every time there is an increase they have to pay it but nothing helps their pay check.

Councilman Masti interjected that they are basically losing money instead of getting any kind of pay raise.

Highway Superintendent Deering stated that it is cutting into the paycheck more but the union people get it.

Deputy Highway Superintendent Searles interjected that last year they also got a stipend too.

Mr. Flach interjected that he thinks that the taxpayers would be happy to spend another 1% to give them a decent raise and added that the price of living has gone out of sight.

Highway Superintendent Deering stated that when it comes to paying, they pay and there is not question and they don't hesitate to make them pay for something but they don't get any raises and added that just a little bit would be nice.

Councilman Masti stated that it should be some kind of acknowledgment for his service and added that he agrees.

Mr. Flach stated that it should be at least enough to compensate for the increases that they have to pay in benefits.

Councilman Dolan stated that Councilman Boehm had proposed giving a raise to elected officials in exchange for a lower increase to the non-union employees and it was voted down.

Councilman Masti stated that he didn't recall that.

Supervisor Flach stated that in the original budget he had 3-5% for elected and non-union members but there were things put back in the budget and he could not do both.

Town Clerk Millious stated that as far as a raise for elected officials, this is the second time that everyone has had a raise except the elected officials and she considers herself a full-time employee and has taken on extra work and it is a hardship with different departments because you feel like you are singled out. She continued by saying that it's not like she has a job somewhere else and in being fair she feels as though she should be included with the rest of the employees because she considers herself a full-time employee and not just an elected official. She concluded by saying that she has a lot of duties and reiterated that this is the second time that she has been by-passed and it is disappointing.

Supervisor Flach asked if there were any other comments, hearing none he asked for a motion to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

On motion of Councilwoman Rogers, seconded by Councilman Boehm, the Public Hearing was adjourned.

VOTE – AYES 5 – NAYS 0 – SO MOVED

Time – 6:32pm

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED –

Diane L. Millious, Town Clerk