

MINUTES BOOKTOWN OF COEYMANS
November 9, 2017 – Public Hearing – 6:00pm**

A Public Hearing was held Thursday, November 9, 2017 at 6:00pm at Town Hall, 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena, New York

PRESENT: Philip Crandall, Supervisor
Thomas E. Dolan, Councilman
Kenneth A. Burns, Councilman
George E. Langdon, Councilman

ABSENT: James C. Youmans, Councilman

ALSO PRESENT: Diane L. Millious, Town Clerk

Supervisor Crandall opened the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance, Councilman Burns offered a prayer.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Supervisor Crandall asked that Town Clerk Millious read the 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, NY, at 6:00pm on Thursday, November 9, 2017 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)	\$35,000.00
Councilman	(4)	\$12,000.00 each
Justice	(2)	\$20,000.00 each
Highway Super.	(1)	\$54,833.00
Town Clerk	(1)	\$46,378.00

A copy of the 2018 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 Order of the Town of
Coeymans Town Board
Diane L. Millious
Town Clerk**

Town Clerk Millious stated anyone wishing to speak at the public hearing must sign in and list their name and address for the record.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Supervisor Crandall opened the floor to anyone who would like to comment on the budget.

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Barbara Tanner asked if anyone had an idea on the ending balance for the 2016 budget.

Councilman Dolan responded no, not off the top of his head.

Mrs. Tanner asked if she would be able to find out from somewhere.

Councilman Dolan responded sure.

Mrs. Tanner asked what Central Storage is, it is listed in the budget for \$10,000.

Confidential Secretary Rowzee responded that Central Storeroom is office supplies, ink and toner.

Supervisor Crandall stated that the Central Storeroom is for all Town Departments.

Mrs. Tanner asked if all members of the Police Department have vests.

Supervisor Crandall responded that the Police Department does have vests, but he doesn't know if there is one for every member. That would be a question for the Chief of Police.

Councilman Dolan stated that in the past the Town participated in a vest program, but the Chief of Police chose not to participate in the program any longer stating he had enough vests.

Mrs. Tanner inquired what the life insurance item listed in the budget was for.

Supervisor Crandall responded it is for Town Employees who choose to participate in the program.

Mrs. Tanner asked if the Town pays for that.

Supervisor Crandall responded that the Town pays a certain amount and the employee pays a certain amount.

Mrs. Tanner stated she has never had that offered to her at any job she has had. Mrs. Tanner stated the budget lists Civill, Lafarge and Coeymans Recycling, for P.I.L.O.T. Agreements, what is a P.I.L.O.T. Agreement.

Supervisor Crandall responded a P.I.L.O.T. Agreement is a tax agreement that lowers taxes for a set number of years so the company can build up their business.

Mrs. Tanner stated that she asked this question at the last meeting, but it was a budget question so she understands that it needed to wait until the public hearing. There was a vacant position in the Supervisor's Office, Town Clerk Millious needed another part time clerk position in her office, and it was said that there wasn't enough money. Why couldn't the money for the vacant position be moved to give the Town Clerk's Office another clerk?

Supervisor Crandall responded that he could have done a lot of things, but he chose to do what he felt was best for the Town by cutting back.

Mrs. Tanner responded that isn't cutting back, the money is there.

Supervisor Crandall stated the money wasn't spent.

Mrs. Tanner responded that the Town Board said we could not afford the position, but the money is there so that wasn't true.

Councilman Dolan stated that something being listed in the budget doesn't mean the money is there. They chose not to spend the money because they felt the Town did not have enough money.

Supervisor Crandall stated that cash on hand is entirely different from what you see in a budget.

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Mrs. Tanner asked if the Town Board really feels another clerk is not needed in the Town Clerk's Office.

Councilman Dolan responded that he doesn't know if one is needed or not. If that is what she wants to recommend, that is what they are here for. They are there to hear what residents think.

Mrs. Tanner stated it has been recommended before.

Councilman Dolan responded he knows. This is the budget hearing and if that is what she wants to recommend then please do so.

Mrs. Tanner asked why the Supervisor's clerk isn't paid a salary instead of an hourly wage.

Supervisor Crandall stated they continued the practice that was already in place, but they will take it into consideration.

Councilman Dolan stated that for someone to be a salaried employee they have to be in control of their hours. They would control when to come in and leave. It is state law.

Mrs. Tanner asked so the employer could not specify the hours to be worked.

Councilman Dolan responded that according to NYS Labor Law for an employee to be salaried and exempt from being paid overtime they have to be in control of their own hours.

Mrs. Tanner said she works for NYS and she knows they do not always follow the rules.

Councilman Langdon stated there have been situations in the past, when salaried employees have sued previous employers for overtime after leaving their jobs and this might be why they are changing the rules.

Mrs. Tanner thanked them for answering her question.

Melanie Lekocevic from the Ravena News Herald asked if she was reading it correctly, does the tentative budget say 2.89 million in the General Fund.

Supervisor Crandall confirmed yes that is correct.

Melanie Lekocevic asked how much the increase is this year.

Supervisor Crandall responded it is a 1.58% increase.

Councilman Dolan stated the dollar amount is lower even though there is an increase. The formula for this is not as simple as it seems and he can't explain it because he doesn't totally understand it. You go on the NYS Comptrollers website and enter certain amounts from your budget for the purpose of raising taxes.

Melanie Lekocevic clarified that the increase is in taxes not the budget.

Supervisor Crandall responded yes that is correct.

Melanie Lekocevic asked what accounts for the increase.

Supervisor Crandall responded there are increases for health insurance costs, salaries, the Police Department recently signed their contract so salaries will increase there as well.

Melanie Lekocevic asked if there were any cuts in services.

Supervisor Crandall responded no.

Melanie Lekocevic asked if the Town Board will vote at tonight's meeting on the budget.

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Supervisor Crandall responded no.

Melanie Lekocevic asked what the process is. You hold a public hearing, make any adjustments and the budget has to be adopted by November 20th correct.

Supervisor Crandall responded before November 20th. The Town Board will most likely vote at the Workshop meeting next Thursday, November 16th.

Town Clerk Millious stated she signed in on the sheet and would like to speak. Even though she will not be here next year, she doesn't think it is fair that the Clerk to the Supervisor will be making more than the Town Clerk. The part time position in the Supervisor's Office was kept in the budget even though the position was vacant all year, while the one in her office was cut. She had that extra help for sixteen years. She has fallen behind and is trying to catch up before she leaves. She was told that her office was overstaffed and she feels the Supervisor's Office is overstaffed. Even with computers, there is still a lot of work to be done year round in her office. The part time payroll person in the Supervisor's Office is increasing and this isn't personal towards anyone, but she wanted to say something because she feels her office was singled out. She agrees with saving tax dollars and has always followed the necessary requirements of the spending freeze and other cost saving measures. The Town Clerk's Office anticipated revenues were up almost \$8,000.00 in the fall from the budgeted amount. Her office has had to close several times already due to the shortage in help and she is concerned about what will happen.

Councilman Dolan stated the Town Clerk's salary cannot be changed now, but does she have an amount in mind on what the salary should be.

Town Clerk Millious responded that she has not had a raise in several years, and when she did receive a raise it looked like she was getting a big increase, when really it was just catching up. She has worked in the Town Clerk's Office for 26 years, 10 of them as Deputy Town Clerk, and to see a clerk going almost \$500 past the Town Clerk's salary is upsetting. In the past she has put \$50,000 down as the salary to be considered. Town Clerk Millious stated the seeing the unfair salaries causes turmoil and if the Town Board wants everyone to get along, please look at all the salaries and be fair.

Councilman Langdon stated he wants to comment on some of the things Town Clerk Millious said. He does believe the Supervisor's Office is overstaffed and the Town Clerk's office was shortchanged. When you have someone in there making almost \$50,000, an internal control officer, an accountant at \$15,000.00, a payroll person, plus you pay Paychex \$8,000.00 a year. All these positions total over \$110,000.00, not counting the Supervisor's Office. This cost is just for the Human Resources and the Finance Offices and it seems pretty exorbitant. For the past two years every department has been asked to cut back and the only department where spending increased was in the Supervisor's Office.

Supervisor Crandall responded that the spending in the Supervisor's Office has actually gone down. They did not hire a part time clerk and the employees in the office work together to cover the workload.

Councilman Langdon stated you have a part time position budgeted and you increased that position \$5,000.00.

Supervisor Crandall responded that is for the 2018 budget, not in this year.

Councilman Langdon stated that when you look at the number of people in that office it is an increase from the previous administration, there was one person in there.

Supervisor Crandall responded that is not true.

Town Clerk Millious asked to say something she forgot to say earlier. Again she doesn't mean anything personal with this. The building department has two full time employees, one part time employee plus another person that comes in to do the meeting minutes. That is more help than she has in her office. Sometimes when the Assessor or her clerk is not here she goes out of her way to help the people with what they need. She goes above and beyond for everyone and she is always here.

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Mrs. Tanner asked if the clerk or the secretary does the same amount of work as the Town Clerk to be paid so much.

Supervisor Crandall responded she does a tremendous amount of work.

Councilman Dolan asked if she was referring to the Clerk to the Supervisor as opposed to the Confidential Secretary.

Mrs. Tanner responded yes she is referring to the Clerk to the Supervisor.

Councilman Dolan stated that salary was set by the previous administration.

Mrs. Tanner stated that doesn't matter to her, she isn't asking whose salary is more. She is asking if she does the same amount of work.

Councilman Dolan responded that it is different work and they both work hard. He has never said Town Clerk Millious doesn't work hard. Even when Town Clerk Millious is not at the window she has responsibilities, she oversees her whole department.

Mrs. Tanner responded that is what she is talking about, it doesn't seem as though the Clerk to the Supervisor has as many responsibilities to be paid equal to the Town Clerk.

Councilman Dolan stated, that without a specific recommendation, they agree to look at it and take it into consideration.

Councilman Langdon stated that is his point, his recommendation is that he agrees there should be a full time clerk in that office making basically what the previous administration paid for the position, but the previous administration did not have an accountant.

Councilman Dolan responded they did have an accountant.

Councilman Langdon stated they did not have an internal control officer, a human resource clerk or the extra clerk that is now in the budget.

Supervisor Crandall responded the previous administration did have a human resource clerk.

Councilman Dolan stated he does not want to argue with him, if Councilman Langdon wants to make a recommendation they will look at it. Councilman Dolan asked Councilman Langdon what he is proposing for that office.

Councilman Langdon said he proposes having one person in that office.

Councilman Dolan asked for which position.

Councilman Langdon responded he feels one full time clerk in that office is adequate to run that office.

Melanie Lekocevic asked if staffing is staying the same in both the Town Clerk's Office and the Supervisor's Office in the proposed budget or are there any additions or subtractions.

Supervisor Crandall responded everything will stay the same.

Councilman Langdon stated that isn't true, the Supervisor has \$12,000.00 budgeted for a clerk that does not exist this year.

Supervisor Crandall responded the money is in the budget, but he held back on hiring in attempt to tighten the budget as much as he could to hold the cash on hand. If the Town does not have a fund balance at the end of the year, the Comptroller's office looks at that and uses it to determine the level of fiscal stress. Supervisor Crandall stated he tried to tighten the budget as much as he could all around, every department had to stretch their budget.

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Councilman Langdon responded he understands that. However to say that things did not change from last year, is not true. If you look at last year's budget there was another clerk position in the Town Clerk's Office, then you changed their budget part way through the year. The position was granted and funded going into January, then you pulled the position out. You changed the situation and budgeted for another position in another office. Positions were moved around, they are not set up the same as they were this time last year.

Supervisor Crandall asked Councilman Langdon if he was proposing to put it back into the budget.

Councilman Langdon stated the reporter asked if things have been changed and you said nothing has been changed which is not true. Things have changed.

Supervisor Crandall responded nothing has changed.

Councilman Langdon responded they have changed. The Town Clerk's office does not have a position that was funded in last year's budget.

Melanie Lekocevic asked if the position was eliminated in February.

Town Clerk Millious responded it was budgeted for in 2016, then on January 2nd the \$11,000.00 was moved into contingency. She was budgeted for the position, but this year the position has been taken out.

Supervisor Crandall stated again you are talking about last year's budget not this year's budget.

Councilman Langdon said they are pointing out that things have been changed.

Melanie Lekocevic clarified that the position was eliminated from the 2017 budget.

Town Clerk Millious responded yes.

Melanie Lekocevic asked if the \$12,000.00 budgeted for the position in the Supervisor's Office was in both last year's and this year's budgets.

Supervisor Crandall responded yes.

Melanie Lekocevic clarified that the position is currently vacant.

Supervisor Crandall responded he held off on hiring anyone to hold the funds back.

Melanie Lekocevic asked if the Supervisor plans to hire anyone for that position.

Supervisor Crandall responded yes, if there is a need to fill the position.

Mrs. Tanner asked for clarification on the question and response.

Melanie Lekocevic repeated her question regarding the filling of the vacant position in the Supervisor's Office.

Supervisor Crandall repeated that if there is a need he would fill the position in 2018.

Mrs. Tanner asked why the position would be budgeted for in 2018 if it wasn't used in 2017.

Supervisor Crandall responded that they really need the additional person. The employees in that office are working extra hours that they do not get paid for, to get the work done. It is a necessary item.

Melanie Lekocevic asked when they plan to hire someone.

Supervisor Crandall stated they have not advertised the position yet.

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Mrs. Tanner asked Supervisor Crandall if he was hiring another employee for his office.

Supervisor Crandall responded for the business office.

Mrs. Tanner stated she could not believe what she was hearing.

Councilman Burns stated he wants to say something and he isn't sure of the right way to say it, he doesn't mean for it to sound sarcastic. If the Supervisor's Office was able to get by without filling the position this year and the Town Clerk's office is behind and that office generates money.

Supervisor Crandall responded the Town Clerk's office collects money, they do not generate money. Money is generated through the Town Board levying taxes.

Councilman Langdon responded all the fees are collected in the Town Clerk's Office.

Supervisor Crandall responded yes, but it isn't a generating office.

Councilman Dolan asked if they were proposing anything.

Mrs. Tanner stated she would like to propose the position not be filled as she doesn't feel it is needed.

Councilman Burns stated if they don't fill the position, they could give the money to the Chief of Police and the Ravena Rescue Squad. He would like to propose doing that.

Melanie Lekocevic asked when they were looking to fill the position in 2018, is there a particular month.

Supervisor Crandall responded they did not know.

Virginia Pearson asked what the pay rate is for the part time payroll position with the Town.

Supervisor Crandall responded \$13.10 per hour.

Mrs. Pearson asked how many hours do they work.

Supervisor Crandall responded 17.5 hours per week.

Mrs. Tanner stated she got a FOIL that says \$13.70 an hour.

Supervisor Crandall responded the contractual rate is \$.60 an hour.

Mrs. Pearson stated that is \$12,467.00 a year plus \$8,000.00 a year to Paychex. Paychex does all the work.

Supervisor Crandall responded the clerk enters the payroll.

Councilman Langdon stated there is another clerk they pay \$13,000.00 to feed the information to Paychex.

Mrs. Pearson asked doesn't the information go through a time clock.

The Town Board collectively responded no.

Mrs. Tanner asked how the salary for the Clerk to the Supervisor compares to other Towns.

Supervisor Crandall responded he doesn't know, he hasn't looked into it.

Councilman Burns stated he has said this before regarding the Clerk to the Supervisor position, he feels that the business office gets turned upside down with every new administration. It is always the previous administration's fault for everything that is wrong. Is there a way to make

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that position civil service and permanent, so at least the business office stays constant? The Village keeps their clerk even though they could replace her if the new Mayor wanted and it seems like the Village is in a much more stable position financially then the Town.

Supervisor Crandall stated that is not true, the Town is in a very stable position.

Councilman Dolan responded that a Mayor is allowed to choose who they want in all Villages in NYS. Town law dictates that the Supervisor can nominate his choice for the positions of Clerk to the Supervisor and Confidential Secretary and submit them for the Town Board’s approval. The Town Board cannot, on its own initiative appoint someone who is not the pick of the Supervisor. It is the same procedure for Deputy Town Clerk and Court Clerk. Town law would need to be changed to do that.

Councilman Burns asked if what he is suggesting makes sense to the other Board members.

Supervisor Crandall stated it makes sense to him, but it would cost the Town a lot of money to hire a comptroller. The person would need to be a CPA and they would demand a high salary and benefits.

Councilman Dolan responded that they have talked about it in the past and if Councilman Burns wants to look into it and bring the information back to the Town Board, they will consider it.

Councilman Burns responded that sounds fair.

Supervisor Crandall asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION

On motion of Councilman Dolan, seconded by Councilman Burns, the Public Hearing was adjourned.

VOTE – AYES 4– NAYS 0 – ABSENT – 1 – SO MOVED

Time – 6:33pm

Respectfully Submitted,

APPROVED – As Read November 30, 2017

Diane L. Millious, Town Clerk