

VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES (budget review)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2015

In Attendance: Supervisor Schaffer, Board Members: Fitzgerald, Majewski, Agneshwar and Messina.

Also Attending: Comptroller Laura McKane, Acting Highway Superintendent Rocco Turdo, Parks Superintendent Jim Bukowski, Recreation Planner Sue Jastran and 2 staff members (Mathews, Papa), Library Director Carol Boyce, Library Board Vice-President Gordon Allen, Town Clerk Emil Bielecki and 2 members of the general public.

The Budget Review Work Session was convened by Supervisor Schaffer at 5:00 PM.

CONTINUING REVIEW OF THE 2016 TOWN BUDGET

Comptroller Laura McKane provided the Board with a summary of the Proposed 2016 Fire District Budget, as adopted by the Board on 9/28/15 and a summary of the 2016 Town Budget (Townwide Funds) with changes made through 9/28/15 as follows:

**TOWN OF VESTAL - TAX RATE WORKSHEET
2016 BUDGET AS OF 9-28-15 TOWNWIDE FUNDS**

FUND	2015 Taxes Raised	2015 Tax Rates	2015 Adopted Budget	2016 Initial Budget Appropriations	Estimated Non Real Property Tax Revenue	Appropriated Reserves & Fund Bal Used	Initial Budget Real Property Taxes to be Raised	2016 Tax Rates Per \$1,000 of Assessment	% Change in Tax Rate 2015 to 2016	Increase per \$1,000 of Assessment
General Fund	\$5,182,955	\$2.8637	\$10,732,056	\$10,927,762	\$5,549,729	\$51,714	\$5,326,319	\$2.9335	2.44%	\$0.0699
Library Fund	\$530,630	\$0.2932	\$679,076	\$690,220	\$114,810	\$0	\$575,410	\$0.3169	8.10%	\$0.0237
Highway Fund	\$2,501,312	\$1.3820	\$5,360,380	\$5,449,672	\$2,844,279	\$96,463	\$2,508,930	\$1.3818	-0.01%	-\$0.0002
TOTALS	\$8,214,897	\$4.5389	\$16,771,512	\$17,067,654	\$8,508,818	\$148,177	\$8,410,659	\$4.6323	2.06%	\$0.0934

% Increase in Spending
1.8%

% Increase in Levy
2.4%

Tax Increase for Home with (\$100,000 AV) \$9.34

Full Value 2014 = \$1,813,682,142
Full Value 2015 = \$1,809,900,108
Full Value 2016 = \$1,815,657,536

2016 FIRE DISTRICT - ADOPTED PROPOSED BUDGET

	2015 Taxes Raised	2015 Rates @ Full Value	2015 Adopted Budget	2016 Budget Total Appropriations	Non-RPT Rev. Excluding Approp FB	Appropriated Fund Balance & Reserves	Real Property Taxes to be Raised	2016 Tax Rates	% Change 2015 Final Budget to 2016 Initial	Increase per \$1,000 of Assessment
Fire Gen. Fund	\$1,089,725		\$1,181,018	\$1,200,887	\$10,560	\$60,564	\$1,129,763			
Less Foam Dist	\$20,200		\$20,200	\$32,575			\$32,575			
Fire District Wide	\$1,069,525	0.5738	\$1,160,818	\$1,168,312	\$10,560	\$60,564	\$1,097,188	\$0.5888	2.62%	\$0.0150

% Increase in Spending (excluding Foam District)
0.6%

% Increase in Levy subject to tax cap
3.7%
% Increase in Levy without Foam District
2.6%

Tax Increase Home with a \$100,000 AV \$1.50

2014 AV = \$1,884,431,822
2015 AV = \$1,863,863,577
2016 AV = \$1,863,391,951

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The Board spent approximately ½ hour with each of the invited department heads probing for potential areas in their respective budgets that could be reduced. A highlighted summary of the topics of discussion is as follows:

Highway Department

- There are potential fuel savings in changing the policy of workers returning to the shop for lunch.
- We should be asking for additional money for plowing Tracy Creek Road, a county highway.
- Overtime for mechanics during storm events need to be looked at.
- We are exploring the availability of grants for pesticide use training.
- The Comptroller will review the gas & diesel spending.

Parks Department

- Jim Bukowski- we should be transitioning to a model of maintaining fewer parks, focusing on those that have the largest use.
- We cannot get rid of some of the parks because they are used for drainage.
- The recent sale of some equipment will not necessarily reduce the repair line because most of the sold items were not being used.
- Longer term, the department should be looking to convert to natural gas vehicles.
- The decline in volunteerism is resulting in more work for the Parks Department.
- Supervisor Schaffer- we should stop mowing some of the fields that are not a part of the Park's system.

Recreation Department

- We currently have full-time summer playground programs in in 4 parks and a ½ time program in one park with a total of 14 instructors.
- The sports camps are very popular and staffing is adjusted according to participation.
- The basketball program started as a non-town program and we took it over.
- The Easter Egg Hunt will be cancelled if we cannot secure an outside sponsor.
- The rent formula for school district facilities has been changed and is more favorable to us.
- Supervisor Schaffer- We would still have the Front Street Days if certain groups of Town employees were more willing to flex their time.
- Sue Jastran- we are constantly evaluating programs to determine their financial viability but we will never become totally self-sustaining through fees. We provide programs that improve the quality of life in our Town.

Library

- Comptroller McKane- the tax levy for the Library is up about 45,000. This is mostly due to the lack of fund balance to apply this year. Spending is up by 1.6%.
- Carol Boyce- The maintenance work is budgeted at 12 hours per week. She is not totally satisfied with the current service and is looking for alternatives.
- Library aid from the county is being phased out.
- The combining of the two alarm system is being explored.
- The Town can do the fire inspections to eliminate the cost of an outside service.
- Carol Boyce- the budget for the purchase of books and periodicals has been cut to the bone.

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- We are looking at digital access to some of the periodicals.
- Some of the mediums by which patrons access information may appear to be old technology, but we deliver content in ways which are most in demand.

Comptroller McKane noted that the budget line adjustments which were agreed upon at this meeting amount to a total cut of approximately \$10,000. These adjustments will be incorporated into the 2016 Tentative Budget which will be filed with the Town Clerk on September 30th.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion of Councilwoman Fitzgerald, seconded by Councilwoman Agneshwar, the following was

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Majewski, Agneshwar, Fitzgerald, Messina, Schaffer
 Nays 0

Resolved the Board enter into Executive Session to discuss potential layoffs due to budgetary constraints. The time was 7:44 PM.

On a motion of Councilman Majewski, seconded by Councilwoman Agneshwar, the following was

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Majewski, Agneshwar, Fitzgerald, Messina, Schaffer
 Nays 0

Resolved the Board leave Executive Session and **adjourn the Work Session. The time was 8:16 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,
Emil Bielecki, Town Clerk