

VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2014

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

Also Attending: Comptroller Laura McKane, Town Attorney David Berger, Human Resource Officer Nancy Olmstead, Town Clerk Emil Bielecki and 2 members of the community.

The Work Session was convened by Supervisor Schaffer at 6:00 PM.

UPCOMING PUBLIC HEARING

October 21, 2014 – 2015 Fire District Budget

COMMITTEES

7.1 PUBLIC WORKS

1. Request from Town Engineer to adopt the following resolution:

A resolution authorizing the Town of Vestal to enter into the required subrecipient agreement with the Housing Trust Fund Corporation as required in the implementation of the NY State Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program; and, to authorize the Town Supervisor to sign any and all documents required in the implementation of the program.

Town Attorney Berger noted that action is part of the process to secure the NY Rising funding that the Town was granted for various flood related projects. The Supervisor will sign the documents after some of the specific numbers are provided.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

7.2 FINANCE

1. Warrants: 2014-40, 2014-40E

OK - This item will be placed on the Agenda as a Receive and File item at the next Regular Meeting.

2. Request from Comptroller Laura McKane for the Board to renew the agreement with Penflex, Inc. to provide actuarial and administrative services for the Fire District's Service Award Program (LOSAP).

Councilman Majewski asked if there has been any consideration given to increasing the benefits formula under LOSAP. Comptroller McKane replied that although the investments in the LOSAP program have done very well over the last few years, the Town has correspondingly reduced the annual contributions to the fund. Any consideration to increase the benefits would require Penflex to do an actuarial review. Moreover, she thinks that any change to the benefits formula under LOSAP might be subject to a public referendum.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

3. Discuss scheduling of additional Work Sessions for reviewing the 2015 Budget; October 13 and October 27, 2014.

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The Board agreed to schedule the additional days as recommended by the Supervisor and the Town Clerk was instructed to proceed with the necessary notifications and postings.

7.3 PERSONNEL

1. Request for the Board to authorize to allow employees (union or otherwise) to donate vacation days to an individual of the Highway Department who has experienced multiple serious family issues requiring he take time off from work.

After a brief discussion about the mechanics of implementing this type of initiative, Supervisor Schaffer stated that there has been a significant change in the circumstances surrounding this case. It may mean that the Board need not take any action on this request. Human Resource Officer Olmstead indicated that she would review the new information and advise the Board if this item should still be placed on the agenda for consideration at the next Regular Meeting.

7.4 PLANNING & ZONING

1. Request from Mansfield Road resident Jerry Hlopko to establish a “No Parking 8:00-5:00 Monday through Saturday” zone on Mansfield Road.

Councilman Majewski expressed concern about overreacting to these requests to restrict parking in the vicinity of Binghamton University. This may be setting a bad precedent and may result in simply pushing the problems onto other streets in the neighborhood.

Supervisor Schaffer suggested that the Police Department experiment with the placement of temporary no parking signs in the area and monitor the situation to determine if a more permanent solution is necessary. The Board agreed.

2. Request from Walmart Store Manager Micah Caler for a special permit to place up to 8 ‘sea box’ type trailers of on the west side of the building for temporary storage of merchandise for the holidays.

Supervisor Schaffer noted that he visited the site and has some concerns about the proposed location for the placement of the trailers. The Board agreed that this item should be placed on hold to get additional information concerning the specific dates for the use of the trailers and if the proposed location of the trailers interferes with the fire lane.

3. Request for the Board to grant a Special Permit to operate a martial arts center within an ID zoning at 604 Vestal Parkway West, BCTMP # 173.21-1-3.

Town Attorney Berger suggested that Board review whether the parking situation is adequate to accommodate the needs of this new business. Councilwoman Messina stated that she would speak to the Town Engineer about the parking issue and report back to the Board.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

7.5 PUBLIC SAFETY

1. Request from Police Chief John Butler to spend a total of \$2,055.02 to repair the Department’s license plate reader. The funding will come from the asset forfeiture line (3120-2626R).

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Supervisor Schaffer noted that he would inquire as to how this expensive piece of equipment was damaged in the first place.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

7.6 **ADMINISTRATION** - no items were brought for consideration by the Board

NEW BUSINESS

1. Request from Vestal Fire Company # 1 for approval to hold a 5K run/walk fundraiser on the Vestal Rail Trail on Sunday, November 16, 2014 at 2:00 PM. The event will be partially coordinated by the Vestal Coal House including the customary race insurance. The proceeds will benefit Company # 1 and the Fred Singer Training site.

Town Attorney Berger stated that the approval should be subject to the approval of the insurance certificate by the Town.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

2. Request to purchase a skid steer (bobcat) attachment apparatus in the amount of \$5,164.00 for snow removal on the new section of the Rail Trail in the amount of \$5,164.00.

Supervisor Schaffer noted that this is a money-saving item in that this apparatus can be attached to our existing inventory of 'bobcats' for efficient snow plowing.

Comptroller McKane noted that the money to purchase this apparatus will be transferred from the summer labor line.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Kopernik Tower

A meeting with representatives from the Town, Broome County and Kopernik Observatory has been scheduled for October 15, 2014.

2. Replacement of Fire Station 4

The Board has asked the Fire Department to look into alternative designs (perhaps from other consultants) that are scaled down to reduce costs.

3. Amendments to Employee handbook

The Board members indicated that they have reviewed the changes to the Employees Handbook as presented over several meetings by Human Resource Officer Nancy Olmstead. **The authorization to adopt the revised Employee Handbook incorporating all changes made as of October 6, 2014 will be put on the agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.**

4. Purchase of Town land by Vestal Veterinary Hospital

In a letter dated 9/9/14, the Vestal Veterinary Hospital has submitted a formal bid of \$5,000. The Town Attorney advised that the Board discuss this item in Executive Session.

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5. Medical Services

The Board is continuing to review proposals for services from Lourdes and UHS.

6. Gateway Sign application at 912 Vestal Parkway East.

The Town is waiting to receive the 239 L and M review from the County at which time the Board will determine if it wants to ask the ZBA and/or the Planning Board for input on the application prior to making a decision.

Review of 2015 Budget

Comptroller Laura McKane presented a list of proposed changes to the 2015 Tentative Budget that would result in a reduction of \$40,858.00. These changes, if accepted by the Board, will be applied to the 2015 Preliminary Budget.

CHANGES TO THE TENTATIVE BUDGET AS OF 10-6-14						
General Fund			2015	2015	CHANGE	
DEPT			TENTATIVE	PRELIM		
A1110	4000	Court	Contr. & Prof. Services	\$ 4,400.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ (900.00)
A1320	4000	Audit	Contr. & Prof. Services	\$ 14,600.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ (2,600.00)
A1450	4000	Elections	Contr. & Prof. Services	\$ 68,908.00	\$ 57,536.00	\$ (11,372.00)
A1620	4120	General Town	Water & Sewer	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,700.00	\$ 200.00
A1680	4040	IT	Vehicle Maintenance	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ (1,500.00)
A1910	4070	Unallocated	Insurance	\$ 70,400.00	\$ 66,500.00	\$ (3,900.00)
A3120	4040	Police	Vehicle Maintenance	\$ 42,000.00	\$ 39,000.00	\$ (3,000.00)
A7510	2100	Historian	Operational Equipment	\$ 2,100.00	\$ -	\$ (2,100.00)
A9901	9002	Transfers	Transfer to Health Ins. Fund	\$ 2,102,220.00	\$ 2,090,115.00	\$ (12,105.00)
						\$ (37,277.00)
Library Fund						
L9030	8403		FICA	\$ 30,915.00	\$ 29,800.00	\$ (1,115.00)
Highway Fund						
D9030	8403		FICA	\$ 121,466.00	\$ 119,000.00	\$ (2,466.00)
TOTAL CHANGES TO TENTATIVE AS OF 10-6-14						<u>\$ (40,858.00)</u>

The Board expressed no objections to the proposed changes.

Comptroller McKane also identified several other budgetary items that the Board needs to review as it continues to formulate the 2015 Preliminary Budget. The following items generated some discussion:

- The vacant fire inspector position needs to be reviewed. Candidates have already been interviewed and the Code Department is prepared to make a recommendation to fill the position. Councilwoman Fitzgerald provided some historical data on the number of fire inspections and noted the importance of this work in providing public safety. After a brief discussion, the Board decided to ask **Code Officer Mark Dedrick to attend the budgetary work session on Monday, October 13th**.
- There are a number of seasonal positions, particularly in the Recreation budget, that are showing pay increases to stay proportionately above the new minimum wage. These increases should be reviewed particularly as they apply to seasonal employees across all departments.
- The road materials budget in Highway should be reviewed.
- The County aid to the Vestal library has been reduced by \$25,000. The Library will be asked to recommend budget reductions to fill that gap. The risks of losing charter status needs to be better understood.
- The water department is in good shape on the revenue side and we should be able to fund some capital projects with the cash flow. The sewer budget is less secure but things should improve as the new rates just started to kick in.

Supervisor Schaffer noted that we still far off of our target to reduce the budget down to the state mandated cap.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Fitzgerald, Majewski, Messina, Schaffer
 Nays 0

Resolved the Board enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the following items:
labor negotiations; review of a bid to purchase town land; review of salaries for specific employees.
The time was 7:36 PM.

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

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Fitzgerald, Messina, Majewski, Schaffer
 Nays 0

Resolved the Board leave Executive Session and **adjourn the Work Session. The time was 8:14 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,
Emil Bielecki, Town Clerk