

**Special Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners
Public Hearing - 2017 Fire District Budget
October 18, 2016**

The Special Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Town of Vestal Fire District, County of Broome and the State of New York was held at the Town Hall, 605 Vestal Parkway W, Vestal, NY on October 18, 2016.

PRESENT: **Fire Commissioner John Schaffer**
 Fire Commissioner Patty Fitzgerald
 Fire Commissioner Fran Majewski
 Fire Commissioner Sue Messina
 Fire Commissioner Shoba Agneshwar

ALSO PRESENT:

Town Comptroller Laura McKane, Town Attorney David Berger, Fire Chief David Harrington, Assistant Fire Chiefs Doug Rose, William Stout and John Paffie, Fire District Secretary Emil Bielecki, and approximately 15 members of the general public (mostly Fire Department members).

Fire Commissioner Schaffer convened the meeting at **6:00 PM** and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

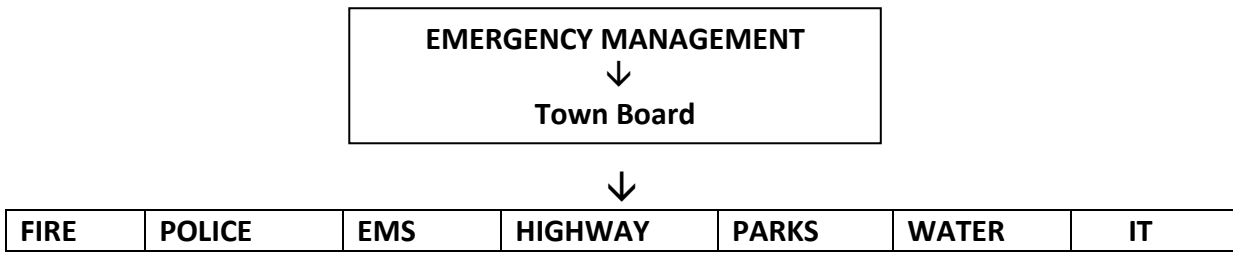
PUBLIC HEARING:

Fire Commissioner Schaffer offered the *Affidavit of Publication* and *Proof of Posting* for the Public Hearing for the **2017 Fire District Budget** and then opened the Public Hearing with a *power point* presentation by Town Comptroller Laura McKane. The presentation is as follows:

TOWN OF VESTAL 2017 FIRE DISTRICT BUDGET

Town Emergency Operations

The Fire District and its volunteers are partners in the overall emergency management and public safety strategy.



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Vestal Volunteer Fire Department

- 136 Members (9 New members this Year)
- 3 Potential new members

Annual Fire Calls – Vestal FD

Year - #	Year - #	Year - #	Year - #
2012 – 794	2013 – 832	2014 – 901	2015 - 986

Current VFD Fleet

- 13 Major Vehicles
 - 4 Engines
 - 2 Tankers
 - 1 Tower
 - 1 Ladder
 - 2 Rescues
 - 1 Foam Pumper
 - 2 Midi Pumpers
- 14 Minor Vehicles
 - 2 Brush Trucks
 - 2 Utility Trucks
 - 2 Boats
 - 1 Command Vehicle
 - 5 Chief Vehicles
 - 1 Training Van
 - 1 ATV
- Misc Trailers

Fire District Financial Goals

- ❖ Financial Strategy
 - ✓ Increase reserves
 - ✓ Reduce dependence on borrowing
- ❖ Annual Operational Budget
 - ✓ Maintain Current Service Level
 - ✓ Limit increases in operating spending to 1 – 2%.
 - ✓ Plan for a modest annual increase in the tax levy to achieve long rang goal.
- ❖ 5 Year Projects / Vehicle Plan – Short Term
- ❖ 6-20 Year Capital Projects / Vehicle Plan – Long Term
 - ✓ Continue to purchase with Capital Reserve, mixed with Bonds
 - ✓ By 2026 Capital Reserve Purchases Increase, Bonds Decrease/End
 - ✓ 2030 Debt Service peaks, then begins dropping

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2016 vs. 2017 Budget

	Fire District Appropriations	Tax Levy	Tax Rate per \$1,000 of AV	Example \$100,000 Home
<u>2017</u>				
Proposed Budget:	\$ 1,179,569	\$ 1,168,403	.6198	\$ 61.98
<u>2016</u>				
Adopted Budget:	\$ 1,178,357	\$ 1,071,233	.5749	\$ 57.49
Change:	\$ 1,212	\$ 97,170	.0449	\$ 4.49
	.1% Increase in Planned Spending			

2017 SPENDING SUMMARY

• Operational Expenses	\$ 230,186
• Vehicle Maintenance	\$ 160,000
• Fire Equipment	\$ 71,670
• Salary & Benefits – Secretary	\$ 65,907
• Building & Grounds, Utilities, Insurance	\$ 147,220
• Workers’ Compensation	\$ 130,000
• Debt Service	\$ 56,386
• Transfer to Length of Svc, Program (LOSAP)	\$ 53,200
• Other Capital & Addition to Capital Reserves	<u>\$ 265,000</u>
Total Expenditures	\$1,179,569

Results of Focus on Goals for 2017

- Held Spending to 2016 Levels
- Over \$126,000 in reductions to department requests by FD Chiefs to achieve this.
- Contributing an additional \$65,000 to reserves for equipment.
- Held tax increase to less than \$5 on a \$100,000 assessment.

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2017 Challenges

Expenditure Increases:

- LOSAP required contributions up \$30,000.
- Desire to increase capital reserve by \$65,000

Funding Decreases:

- Loss of 2016 one time funding sources:
 - SAM Grant (\$36,000)
 - Fund Balance (\$60,564)

Fire District Tax – 10 Year History

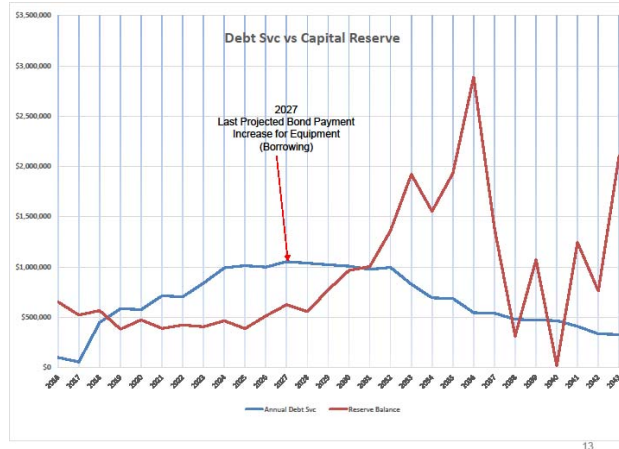
<u>Year</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017 Proposed</u>
Tax	0.5761	0.5761	0.5406	0.5555	0.5551	0.5600	0.5668	0.5738	0.5749	0.6198
\$ INC/DEC	0.0119	0.0000	(0.0355)	0.0149	(0.0004)	0.0049	0.0068	0.0070	0.0011	0.0449
% INC/DEC	0.0211	0.0000	(0.0616)	0.0276	(0.0007)	0.0088	0.0121	0.0124	0.0019	0.0781

5 Year Plan (2017 – 2021)

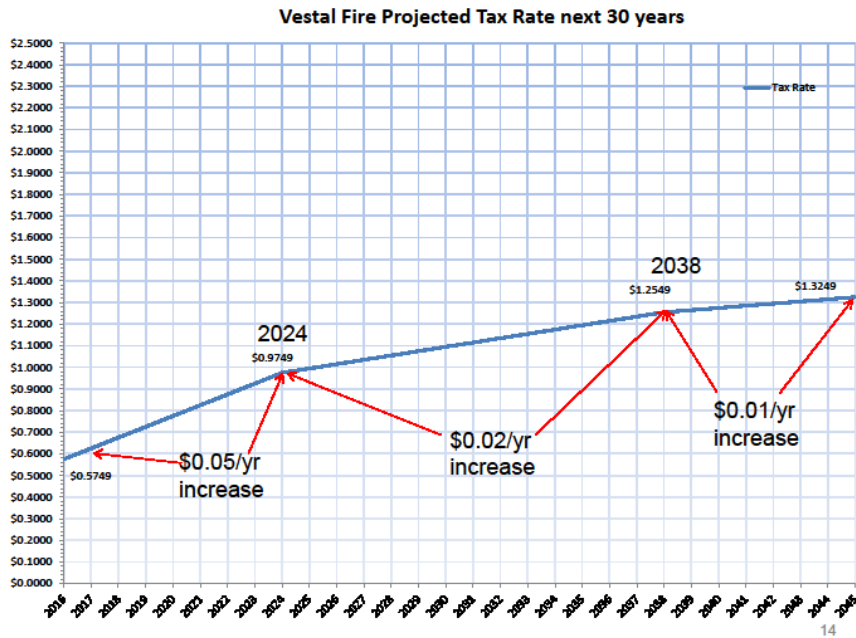
Vehicle ID	Refurb / Purchase Date	Current Age	Replace Year Plan	Replacement Age	Bond / Reserve, Operational	Estimated Cost Replace
Tanker 2	1988	28	2017	29	Reserve	\$ 375,000
Station 4			2017		Bond	\$4,500,000
Ladder	1985	31	2017	32	Bond	\$1,400,000
Tanker 3	1989	27	2018	29	Reserve	\$ 375,000
Engine 4	1998	18	2018	20	Bond	\$ 700,000
Engine 1	1998	18	2018	20	Bond	\$ 700,000
New BC Radio System			2019		Reserve	\$ 150,000
Training Van	1996	20	2019	23	Reserve	\$ 35,000
Engine 2	1998	18	2020	22	Bond	\$ 775,000
Engine 3	1998	18	2020	22	Bond	\$ 775,000
Traffic Trailer	1990	26	2021	31	Reserve	\$ 15,000
Chief 4	2008	8	2021	13	Reserve	\$ 60,000
Chief 2	2008	8	2021	13	Reserve	\$ 60,000

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Debt Svc vs Capital Reserve

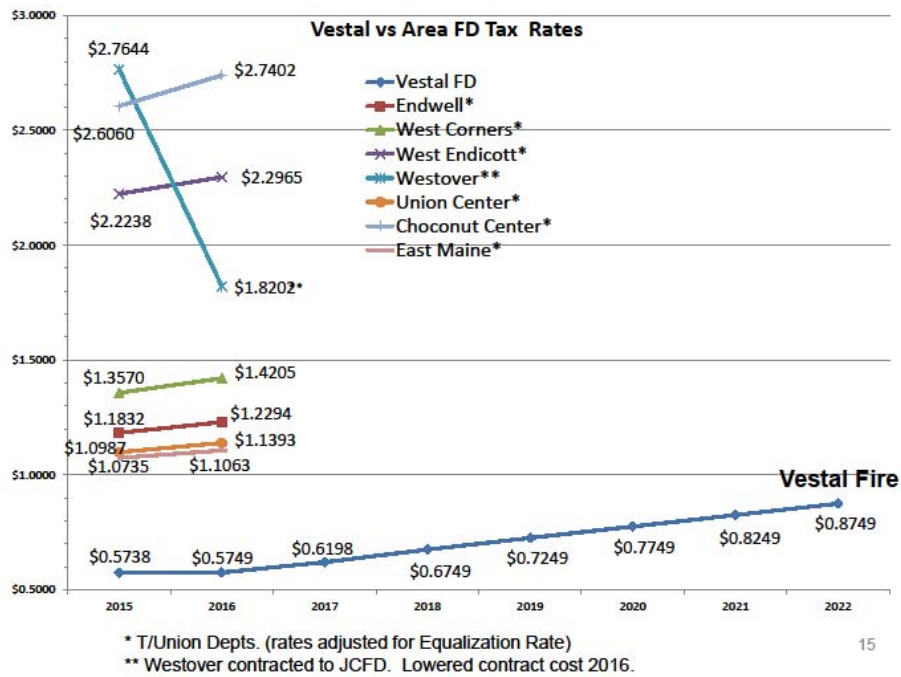


Vestal Fire Projected Tax Rate next 30 years

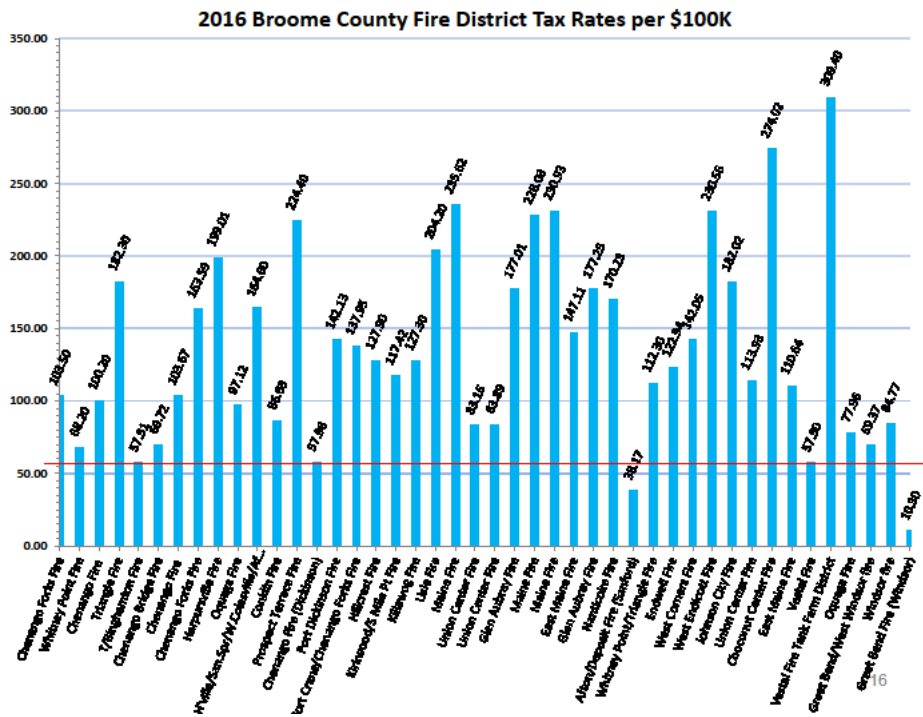


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Vestal vs Area FD Tax Rates



2016 Broome County Fire District Tax Rates per \$100K



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Fire Chief David Harrington thanked everyone for attending and stressed the importance of this year's budget cycle. This year is different in that the focus is not just on the annual operating budget but rather on the approval of a viable 5 year financial plan which is to serve as a baseline for the future. We also provide a 20 year plan to give us a perspective on the long term needs of the department. It appears that the current Board of Fire Commissioners 'gets it' and it will be important that this commitment is carried through to future leaders in the Fire Department and on the Board of Fire Commissioners. The Fire Department provides a very important service at a cost that amounts to a tiny fraction of the Vestal tax dollar. We have a responsibility to make sure that the public understands the value of our services and continues to support us.

A speaker noted that it is important to keep our fire vehicle fleet updated so as to retain a favorable ISO rating. It is better to invest in equipment than to lose that money through paying higher insurance rates.

A speaker reminded the Board that when the Fire Department purchased the 4 engines there was also a long range plan in place but it disappeared. It is the responsibility of the Fire Commissioners to make sure we stay on plan in the future.

Fire Commissioner Messina praised the work of the Fire Department and stated that she is committed to the 5 year plan.

Fire Commissioner Majewski stated that he is 100% committed to the 5 year plan but stressed the importance of getting that commitment from new members to the Board.

Fire Commissioner Agneshwar stated that she is committed to the 5 year plan but questioned whether we can realistically keep the operating budget increases in the 1%-2% range in the face of rising costs. She is particularly concerned about the need to respond to the rising population density.

In response to Commissioner Agneshwar's question about whether there is a cap on the amount that can be put into a capital reserve fund, Comptroller McKane stated that she was not aware of any cap.

Fire Commissioner Fitzgerald noted that she comes from a family of fire fighters and she understands and appreciates that work of the Fire Department. We pay less for fire protection services than most of our neighboring communities. She praises the Fire Department for keeping the operating budget under control and fully supports the 5 year plan.

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Fire Commissioner Schaffer stated that he has had the privilege of working with 3 Fire Chiefs and has learned a lot in the process. He is most proud of his success in establishing and funding the capital reserve fund and is committed to making it grow. He supports the 5 year plan and is committed to passing the plan down to new Board members. He thanked everyone for their hard work on the preparation of this budget.

Hearing or seeing no one else wishing to speak, Fire Commissioner Schaffer closed the Public Hearing.

Adjournment

On a motion of Fire Commissioner Majewski, seconded by Fire Commissioner Messina the **meeting was adjourned at 6:38 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Emil Bielecki, Fire District Secretary