

VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES (budget review)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2016

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

Also Attending: Town Comptroller Laura McKane, Parks Superintendent Jim Bukowski, IT Director Dan Williams, Human Resource Officer Nancy Olmstead, Town Clerk Emil Bielecki and 3 members of the general public.

Supervisor Schaffer **convened the Work Session at 5:30 PM.**

The following topics were discussed as part of the continuing deliberation in formulating the 2017 Town Budget:

Cell Phones

The Board engaged IT Director Dan Williams in a brief discussion concerning cell phone usage and policies. Councilman Majewski stated that our cell phone policies appear to be disjointed and asked why we use so many smart phones. IT Director Williams stated that the industry is migrating toward smart phones. For most of our users, smart phones enhance productivity. We coordinated the usage of data and texting services to control costs and meet regularly with a representative from our phone carrier to review usage.

Software Support

In response to questions about the increases in the budget for software support, IT Director Dan Williams identified the major reasons to be the full implementation of our data recovery system located at the Library and the upgrade of our MUNIS financial software. If our network goes down, we can now recover quickly and lose only a few seconds of data.

Parks Department Staffing

The Board engaged Parks Superintendent Jim Bukowski in a lengthy discussion about his request to hire two full-time Park Technicians, upgrade one Park Technician to a foreman and hire 6 seasonal summer employees. Mr. Bukowski reminded the Board that he has not been able to replace several full-time employees even though the work load of the Parks Department is increasing. His goal is to do more maintenance on the ball fields and the playgrounds and to complete capital projects in a timely manner. The upgrade of a technician to foreman is needed to relieve the mechanic of some duties that are taking him away from his mechanical work in the shop. We are falling behind because we did not replace the workers that left and we took on more work, especially with the maintenance of flood properties. The consensus of the Board was to allow the hiring of one new full time park technician and six seasonal summer employees and to reject the promotion of a park technician to foreman.

Councilwoman Agneshwar stated that the Town should negotiate an agreement for the School District to mow the fields at the Willow Point and Ross Corner locations.

Parks Superintendent Bukowski stressed the importance of securing a grant writer to assist us in going after outside funding for many of our projects. He will be updating the Parks Master Plan as a necessary step toward securing more grants.

Fuel Usage Lines

Comptroller McKane provided the Board with an analysis of fuel usage in the last 3 years. The analysis shows that there is perhaps some room to reduce the amount currently allocated in the 2017

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tentative budget. She cautioned the Board against being too aggressive in reducing fuel budget in light of the fact that there will be additional uncertainty when the Town migrates to a card payment system with an outside vendor. Additionally, it has historically been very difficult to predict the pricing of fuel from one year to the next. After a brief discussion, the Board directed Comptroller McKane to reduce the overall fuel line by \$30,000 in the 2017 budget. Comptroller McKane is to review the allocation (by department) of the reductions with Supervisor Schaffer.

Salaries of Elected Officials and Full Time Non-Union Employees

Town Comptroller Laura McKane provided the Board with a history of wage increases for full time non-union employees and elected officials. A decision on the wages for the following elected officials has to be made soon because these have to be advertised: Highway Superintendent, Town Clerk, Town Supervisor, Town Board and the Tax Receiver. After a brief discussion, the Board, by consensus, agreed to give a 2% salary increase to the Highway Superintendent, Town Clerk and the Town Supervisor and no increase to the Town Justices, the Town Board and the Tax Receiver.

Human Resource Officer Nancy Olmstead asked the Board to go into Executive Session to discuss the performance reviews of full time non-union employees.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

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

Resolved the Board enter into Executive Session to discuss the performance reviews of full time non-union employees. The time was 7:40 PM.

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

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

Resolved the Board leave the Executive Session and **adjourn the Work Session. The time was 8:54 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,
Emil Bielecki, Town Clerk