

VESTAL TOWNBOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2018

Board Attendance: Supervisor Schaffer; Board Members: Fletcher, Fitzgerald

Absent: Majewski, Messina

Also Attending: Town Comptroller Laura McKane, Town Attorney David Berger, Assistant Fire Chief John Paffie, Fire Dept. Administrative Assistant Sue Bowen, Town Clerk Emil Bielecki and 1 person from the general public.

Supervisor Schaffer **convened the Work Session at 6:00 PM** and noted that Councilman Majewski is absent due to an illness and Councilwoman Messina due to a flight delay.

6:00 PM - Bill Oliver from The Partners Insurance to discuss Fire Insurance

Bill Oliver from The Partners Insurance gave the Board a presentation about the New York State Volunteer Firefighter Cancer Benefit Program. This is a state mandated program effective January 1, 2019 which requires all volunteer fire departments to provide cancer insurance for eligible fire fighters (covers 9 cancer types). At this time there are four companies offering this coverage and he has obtained quotes from all of them. After a thorough review of the plans, he strongly recommends that the Town select the Enhanced Benefit Plan from The Hartford Insurance Company. This plan is endorsed by the NYS Association of Fire Districts and a consortium of five municipal associations. While Hartford did not provide the lowest quote, their plan provides the most comprehensive program and adds lung cancer to the covered list. The approximate annual cost is \$199 per eligible firefighter.

Councilman Fletcher asked how many of our firefighters will be eligible for coverage. Fire Department Administrative Assistant Sue Bowen replied that approximately 90 firefighters will be eligible for coverage. However, it was noted that this figure may be subject to change upon further review of the qualification requirements. Comptroller McKane stated that funding for this program has been budgeted in the 2019 Fire District Budget.

After a brief discussion, the Board agreed with the recommendation to go with the Enhanced Benefit Plan from The Harford. Comptroller McKane will provide the appropriate language for the Board to formally approve the purchase of this insurance.

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

UPCOMING PUBLIC HEARINGS

December 19, 2018 6:00 pm - Public Hearing for Water/Sewer Extension at 325 Costley Road

COMMITTEES

7.1 PUBLIC WORKS (FITZGERALD/Majewski) – no items were brought for consideration.

7.2 FINANCE (MESSINA /Fletcher)

1. Warrants: 2018- 48, 2018-48E, 2018-49, 2018-49E, 2018-50, 2018-50C, 2018-50E

OK – This item will be placed as a ‘Receive and File’ on the Agenda for the next Regular Meeting.

2. Request for the Recreation Department to accept payments by credit card with any associated fees to be paid by the customers.

Comptroller McKane noted that the Recreation Department is evaluating new software for processing

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program applications and payment by credit card is a necessary option.

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

3. Request from Comptroller Laura McKane to discuss rate increases from Sun Life Insurance. The Town's Insurance Consultant Doug Bulman explained that Sun Life Insurance is our carrier for ancillary insurance benefits which includes coverage for short term disability, long term disability and various life insurance plans. The company has informed us that the cost of maintaining the existing coverage will be going up approximately 32% for 2019. The primary driver for this increase is in the cost of the short term disability insurance, the biggest component of the plan. This insurance is experience rated and our experience has been running poorly (weighted incurred loss ratio is approx. 112%). We can look for another carrier but that takes time to prepare and there are other administrative costs in a changeover. We do have some leverage with these carriers and he is now in the process of trying to negotiate a reduction in the proposed rate increase from Sun Life. If the Board approves, he will try to negotiate a continuation of the policy with Sun Life with an increase of 20% rather than the 32% and no contingencies. Given the current situation, we are likely to start preparing early next year for bidding out this component. If we reach an agreement with Sun Life, Comptroller McKane will inform the Board and, if necessary, submit a resolution for the Board to approve at the Regular Meeting on Wednesday.

4. Request from Police Lt. Christopher Streno to pay Saleeby & Son \$201.96 to replace a damaged window in a car while in police department custody.

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

5. Request from Town Comptroller Laura McKane to pass the following resolution:

Whereas the State of New York allocated and paid \$150,000 to the Town of Vestal for expenses related to police and fire services associated with Binghamton University, and

Whereas this is expected to be a nonrecurring funding source, be it

Resolved that \$75,000 be added to the Vestal Fire District capital equipment reserve fund and \$75,000 be allocated to the Vestal Police Department for 2018 uniform costs incurred with hiring a new officer and purchases of equipment or special programs anticipated in early 2019.

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

6. Request from Town Comptroller Laura McKane to make the following budget amendment necessary to set up the funding for FEMA reimbursable expenditures:

Increase expenditure line D5110.4590 - FEMA Disaster Aug 2018 \$169,000

Increase revenue line D4589.4590 - FEMA Disaster \$169,000

Comptroller Laura McKane explained that the Town has been expending funds as a result of flood damage that occurred in August, 2018. These funds are eligible for reimbursement up to 75% of money expended. The balance will be funded either by the State or the Town. Until it is determined whether or not the State will pick up any portion, the funds received as a reimbursement for wages and equipment in 2017 Storm Stella will be used to meet the 25% share.

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

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7. Request to pay \$487.50 to Town Attorney David Berger for November 2018 billable hours.

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

8. Request to pay \$390.00 to the Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce for the 2019 membership.

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

9. Request to pay \$35.00 to Newspaper Publishers, LLC for the 2019 subscription to the Vestal Town Crier.

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

10. Request from Deputy Comptroller Nick Angeline to make budget transfers dated November 13, 2018 – December 13, 2018 as attached to his memo to the Town Board dated 12/13/18.

Supervisor Schaffer stated that some departments are still lax in turning in their vouchers on a timely basis and there are still patterns of money being hidden in certain lines and then transferred for other purposes.

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

7.3 **PERSONNEL** (MAJEWSKI/Fitzgerald) – no items were brought for consideration.

7.4 **PLANNING & ZONING** (FLETCHER/Fitzgerald)

1. Request to waive all building permit fees for the building of the American Legion on Old Vestal Road.

Supervisor Schaffer stated that such fees are at times waived for non-profits. This is an organization that serves our veterans and should be supported. Town Attorney David Berger indicated that he is not aware of any policy or precedent of waiving building permit fees.

Councilwoman Fitzgerald stated that she does not support this request but wants to get more information about it from the Code Department.

7.5 **PUBLIC SAFETY** (MESSINA/Majewski)

1. Request from Fire Chief David Harrington to approve Anthony Pascarella as a new member of the Vestal Fire Department at Company No. 4.

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

7.6 **ADMINISTRATION** (MAJEWSKI/Messina)

1. Request from IT Director Dan Williams for authorization to sign an addendum for Verizon NASPO Value Point wireless services.

In a memo to the Town Board, IT Director Dan Williams states that Verizon is requiring the addendum to be signed in addition to the previous agreement which was approved on 11/7/18 (R254-18). It has

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been reviewed and given the OK by the Town Attorney.

2. Request from Vestal Museum Director Cheresse Weisner-Rosales for \$1,875 to match Cornell’s Internship program to fund a student intern to draw up a plan to revitalize Vestal’s Front Street.

Supervisor Schaffer noted that we do not have a planning department to do this type of work so this would be a good opportunity. We have been trying for years to make some improvements to Front Street. The intern’s design work could be used to apply for grant funding.

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

3. Request from IT Director Dan Williams for authorization to transfer/port one phone number (607-754-2111), used within the Town of Vestal for contacting Vestal Police (non-emergency line), to Broome County.

Supervisor Schaffer stated that we have had some problems with the current set-up. Transferring the number to the County appears to be in the best interest of the Town and the County.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

ADOPTED Ayes 3 Fletcher, Fitzgerald, Schaffer
Nays 0 Absent 2 Messina, Majewski

Resolved the Board enter into Executive Session to discuss the possible settlement of several tax certiorari cases. The time was 7:12 PM.

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

ADOPTED Ayes 3 Fletcher, Fitzgerald, Schaffer
Nays 0 Absent 2 Messina, Majewski

Resolved the Board leave the Executive Session and **adjourn the meeting. The time was 7:32 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,
Emil Bielecki, Town Clerk