

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN BOARD
TOWN OF RICHLAND
1 BRIDGE STREET, PULASKI, NY

DATE: October 17, 2023

KIND OF MEETING: Town Board Budget Meeting

PLACE: Grand Jury Room, H. Douglas Barclay Courthouse Pulaski, NY

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilman Robert North
Councilwoman Sue Haynes
Councilwoman Donna Gilson

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Julie Peterson, Larid Petrie, Tammie Whaley, Kevin Balcom, Mary Yerdon, Tim Crouch, Carl Falk, Larry Atkinson, Eric Pappa, Richard Brodeur, and Cora Wood.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 1 p.m. with Councilwoman Gilson leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilman Gilson asked Julie to explain the IMA's that were being presented to the board for approval. There were 6 machinery and equipment IMA's the Town of Richland had with the surrounding Towns of Sandy Creek, Redfield, Boylston, Williamstown, Mexico, and the Village of Pulaski that expired in 2019 and 2020. The only language that changed from the original IMA's was the term of the agreements. Per the advice of Attorney Seiter, there was no need to put an expiration date on the agreements and that they should continue until one party wishes for the agreement to be terminated. Three other IMA's expired as well. The Broce Broom Agreement with Sandy Creek and Redfield, the Tap Machine Agreement with the Town of Sandy Creek, and the Drum Roller Agreement with the Towns of Sandy Creek, Redfield, Boylston, Williamstown, and Orwell. Again, the only change to the agreements was the termination language. Deputy Highway Superintendent, Kevin Balcom, reviewed and gave his approval for the agreements that were presented. ***A motion was made by Haynes and seconded by North to approve all IMA's as submitted. In a roll call vote members voted as follows: Haynes, "YES"; Gilson, "YES"; and North, "YES."***

Budget Officer, Tammie Whaley, asked the Richland Fire Department to present their budget to the board as their budget has increased considerably compared to prior years. Mr. Brodeur explained that the taxes have not increased over the years as they should have, and the costs of their equipment have gone up significantly. It costs approximately \$6,000 to outfit one

firefighter in their turnout gear, an air pack today is \$9,000, 100' of 5" typical hose is \$900, the building has been neglected for years. There have been no funds put aside for contingency or capital funds for equipment replacement or repairs. In the past the fire company held BINGO and raised a lot of money themselves and gave it back to the taxpayers in lieu of raising the taxes. Unfortunately, they can't do that anymore, they are short on volunteers, and it takes away from their family time. They would like to set up a capital fund to start replacing equipment. Their current tanker is a 1990, the primary attack engine is a 2002, and their second back-up engine is a 2000, and the rescue that was just purchased from Hastings is a 2000. They don't mind using used equipment; however, they are having a difficult time obtaining parts due to the age of the vehicles. The new board of Commissioners has recognized the issues and would like to start a capital fund for a new tanker, and some building funds to renovate and update the firehouse. We have firefighters that we can't send in because they don't have the proper gear. They just want to provide the community with the best service possible. We have a small tax base, and we realize that this will be a pinch on the taxpayers, had it been raised a small percentage every year in the past they would not have had to do such a large increase now. Financial Advisor, Larid Petrie, asked if they have had a public hearing yet and put it out to the voters in their district to establish a capital reserve. Mr. Brodeur stated they have not held a public hearing yet. The board thanked them for presenting their budget.

Councilman North wanted to confirm that the employee handbook has been amended to take out the word engineer in the description for the Water Supervisor. Tammie Whaley does not feel that the employee handbook specified that and that it was listed as contractual appointee. Donna Gilson read the description aloud, there was no mention of the water supervisor position. Tammie does not feel the new write up and description has been approved. Councilwoman Gilson stated that Councilman North is looking for clarity in the minutes regarding the wording for that position, and to ensure it does not include the title of engineering. Councilman North asked for a motion to change the Water Supervisor position to a rate of \$25,000 per year for 20 hours a week, no engineering cost, and no homebound trucks. Councilwoman Haynes agrees with Mr. North. Councilwoman Gilson wanted to clarify that his intention is to take the Water Supervisor position back to a part time position. It was originally a part-time position that paid \$6,000, then it went to \$28, 000, and has gradually increased over the last 4 years to a full-time \$50,000 a year position. How did we get to this, what has happened over the years without any major changes in our water system? Bob Hicks holds the license for the water system, he should be the one to respond to water. Your water operator is on call 24/7 and they need access to their truck at a moment's notice. Councilman North would like to see what other Water Supervisors throughout the County make, especially ones that are of a comparable size as ours. There was some discussion regarding the trucks for the water department. The board feels that Bob's old truck is in bad shape, which would leave us just 2 trucks. The operator license is in Bob's name, Bob should be the first responder, have the new truck, and be the one to take the truck home. ***A motion was made by Councilwoman Haynes and seconded by Councilman North to make the Water Supervisor position 20 hours per week,***

for \$25,000, there is no engineering tied to the position, no insurance, as it's a part time position, Bob Hicks will receive the new truck and the Supervisor will get the other truck, Bob should be the 1st person to respond. In a roll call vote, members voted as follows: Haynes, "YES"; Gilson, "YES"; and North, "YES."

Tammie Whaley received a call from the School District Office and was asked if the Haldane Building could be used during an evacuation emergency for the Academic Center instead of the Haldane Pavilion. The board has no issues with this; however, it should be run by the Haldane Advisory Committee and a formal application needs to be submitted.

After moving \$110,000 to finance the transfer to DB and take that out of fund balance for B, we are \$77 over the tax cap as of right now. We would like to stay at or below the tax cap. Tammie presented the B Fund to the board. 8010.4 was reduced by \$3,000. The next fund that was discussed was the DA Fund, Townwide Highway. Kevin Balcom would like money set aside to purchase a new roadside mower within the next few years. Mr. Petrie stated that even though it is a highway worker doing the mowing at the parks or cemeteries, the labor should be charged to the general fund. The funds used for mowing the cemeteries and parks were figured out and reallocated to the A Fund. Kevin also is requesting funds to purchase a salt shed; he feels that it is desperately needed. There was some discussion regarding the location for a shed. Kevin states that it can be moved once erected, the only thing that would be lost is the footers. A few board members feel that each department needs to develop a 3-5 year plan of wants and needs for the future. This way, we could seek grant opportunities and have a shovel ready plan for the funds, should a grant become available. \$25,000 was put into the General Fund for the purpose of a salt shed. Councilwoman Gilson feels Mr. Balcom should reach out to the Village Planning Board regarding the salt shed and the possibility of it being placed at the Town Barn location. Tammie Whaley reviewed the DB Fund with the board. No changes were made, and everything remained the same. The 2 lighting districts remained the same except for the interest of \$500.

The remaining budget that needed to be reviewed was the water budget. Councilwoman Gilson asked what the actual cost is to produce water. Members in attendance were unsure, Mary Yerdon stated that it was \$3.80 and does not know how the number was derived. Mr. Petrie said that we need to have a full year of collection at this rate to accurately determine the rate. Eric Pappa questioned the \$75,000 that is being set aside from Orwell for the generator and states they may not get those funds from Orwell. Orwell is being told by the State that they missed their deadline, and it is going to be at least 90 more days before they can put it out to bid. If that happens, they may lose their grant. At this time, we are already out the \$10,000 in anticipated revenue from this as well. Mr. Petrie states that the funds are there and ready for them to use, it was moved from the capital reserve to appropriations. We are now \$47,000 below the tax cap. The board decided to table the water department budget to the next meeting.

The board scheduled the Public Hearing for the budget for Thursday, November 9th at 6 p.m. The next Budget Workshop will be held on October 24th at 1 p.m. to adopt the preliminary budget and to adopt the wages and salaries to get them to the Town Clerk.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Haynes and seconded by Councilman North to adjourn the meeting at 4:07 p.m. In a roll call vote, members voted as follows: Haynes, "YES"; Gilson, "YES"; and North, "YES."

Respectfully submitted by,
Julie Peterson
Deputy Town Clerk