

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

DATE: October 1, 2024

KIND OF MEETING: Budget-Town Board Meeting

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Supervisor Robert North (absent)
Councilwoman Donna Gilson
Councilman Larry Atkinson
Councilwoman Sue Haynes
Councilman Eric Pappa

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Budget Officer Tammie Whaley, Financial Consultant, Laird Petrie, Town Resident Tim Crouch and Town Clerk Millie Newcomb

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 3:20 p.m. with Deputy Supervisor Donna Gilson leading in the Pledge of Allegiance.

BLESSING: Done by Councilman Atkinson

Discussion about Constable services with the Village of Pulaski Police Department. The Village significantly raised the pay rate of the Officers that cover court nights for the Town. Supervisor Clerk Tammie Whaley countered the raise and is now waiting to hear back from the Village Mayor Jan Tighe.

Next, is a letter that Councilwoman Gilson did to change the ARPA funding from the County. The Board was asked to look the letter over. The changes include, adding repairs for the Bishop Road tank. Mrs. Whaley received a quarterly questionnaire from Kyle at Oswego County because we only have had one distribution of money from the County for the generator at the well site. It's due on October 14. The location of the 12" line was also in the ARPA funds. That was for \$4000. The Town hasn't put in for reimbursement for that money yet.

The Town of Mexico sent their EDU rates for the 5 parcels that we collect the tax money for and in turn we turn that money over to them. The amount is \$588 for 5 parcels for a total of \$2940 for water district 4. We collect and spend it. The amount to be raised in taxes is \$2940. Next is a letter from Seiter Law. They are raising the per hour rate from \$185 to \$235 effective January 1st.

Questions on the price of sand. Superintendent Balcom feels he has enough sand to get him through 2025 between the Altmar pit and Dry Bridge Road. We are still waiting on the mining permit for the Polic Property.

Discussion: There was a discussion about the rates for Sandy Creek and Orwell, with concerns about making changes without sufficient data. The need for a year of stability was emphasized to avoid budget issues similar to those faced by Sandy Creek. The rate at this time with Sandy Creek is \$4.50 per 1000, \$3.80 for Town of Richland residents, and \$4.00 for Scholler and Fulton Companies. Councilman Atkinson said that maybe the Town could consider lowering the rate if Richland is making money. Mrs. Whaley said that is unknown due to the fact that in 2024 we cut out 1 salary of \$50,000 and a whole bunch of excessive spending that was done. Atkinson's thinking is from Bob's report we are pumping 2-3 million gallons of water each month than we had last year so the volume is going up and if the volume is going up that is going to bring in more revenue. Orwell probably isn't going to be that much water, so we will not make much money there, so if we could lower them to what our commercial people pay. We get EDU's from Schoeller and Fulton but all the water is going through our pipe. It's no more wear and tear on equipment. Mr Atkinson asked Councilman Pappa his opinion. Mr Pappa told the board that he is going to stay out of this due to his affiliation with the Town of Sandy Creek. The decision on the rate for Orwell was determined at a previous meeting. Their rate is \$4.50 per thousand gallons. Per Mrs Whaley, just food for thought, in water districts 3&5 we budgeted, metered water in District 3 of \$73800 to come in. Our first billing only brought in \$25800. We have another bill coming up. We are short \$47900 short of what we budgeted. In water district #5 we budgeted, \$20000 we brought in \$8900 the first billing. We are \$11000 short. In water districts 1 and 2, we are looking, okay. Water 3 and 5 we are not. Water districts 3 and 5 are mostly seasonal people and campers. We typically do 170-180,000 a day all summer. Councilwoman Gilson thinks that we should leave everything alone until we see what happens in the next year. The Town of Sandy Creek was hoping for a \$.50 decrease because of an error in O&M. Sandy Creek would really like \$4.00 per thousand but if we could lock in the \$4.50 for a few years, Mr Pappa said they may be okay with that. Councilwoman Haynes and Gilson just don't want to change things so quickly. The Board just wants to make sure we are fair to Sandy Creek and anyone that we sell water too. This is a work in progress and we will get there. It just needs some time. ***Councilwoman Haynes would like to make a motion to leave the rates for Sandy Creek unchanged for another year to allow for stabilization and better understanding of the situation. This motion was seconded by Councilman Atkinson. In a roll call vote, all were in favor with a vote of "AYE".***

In another motion that was made by Councilman Atkinson to send a letter to Dave Turner about the changes in the ARPA Funds. This motion was seconded by Councilwoman Haynes. In a roll call vote, all were in favor with a vote of "AYE".

Councilman Pappa would like some assurance to the Town of Sandy Creek that the Town of Richland will hold the rate at \$4.50 for the next 2 yrs. Although the Board cannot make any promises, they will try to keep the rate the same and if they can, lower the rate.

On a good note, the Zenner Loan is paid in full.

Mrs. Whaley doesn't have the debt amount yet for Water District #3 and 5 do to the rate hadn't been decided upon until this meeting, and Pam and Warren have been working on the final EDU's per district. They are trying to make it more up to date. Pam is doing a fantastic job. The Water Department really hasn't asked for anything. They lowered many line items. Taxes on land in Altmar and Pulaski School were adjusted a bit. Insurances:, not sure about the rates yet so Tammie went ahead and raised it a bit. Contingent Account:. It went up a little bit. This may be something we can play with. Water Administration: This went down from \$35,000 to \$22,000. This was the difference in payroll from the former clerk. Payroll was increased to \$180,000 due to having to bring someone over to train from Highway. The Water Department purchased a lawn mower to mow the Water Departments well sites and other water sites. This freed up the seasonal person that was mowing all these sites to possibly do more for Highway. Water District 1 there was \$42,250 on the equipment line. The water operators wanted only \$20,000. There was nothing noted on why they didn't need the money. Other money was in WD#2\$26,500, WD3 \$750. Councilman Pappa thinks there was money set aside for new pumps. Water Purification: \$8300 This could have been for Chlorine. Water Transmission: \$20,000. The rest is retirement and other misc.items. The revenue side, the only thing that isn't allocated is metered water. Every other revenue is going to be allocated based upon the same percentages. The only thing that changed was interest. We are making more money. Everything is the same as last year. Brennans will be the only thing that hopefully changes once the Town meets with them.

Discussion about the Haldane Center possibly going back to the Village. It costs the Town about \$28,000 to run it. Plus \$4000 for insurance. We are putting \$25,000 into reserve for a new roof. We already have \$52,400 in reserves for that building. For the time being, this discussion will be tabled until Councilwoman Haynes speaks to the Advisory Board.

This is where we start whittling away at the Budget until we get it below the tax cap. We are losing money in the Court. Summer Rec is very expensive. This is something that is very "used". We are talking about \$65,000.

Discussion about the Town Attorney. The Board discussed Attorney Seiters fees. Maybe try to have Graham come to fewer meetings when the Board doesn't think we would need him.

Recommendations from Laird on where to try to cut. The revenues are very conservative and have dropped expenditures in every one of the funds. We have reduced A Fund. In DA we are slightly higher. In DB we are reducing appropriations \$30,000 on the revenue side we have less revenues coming in. We appropriated \$65,000 in the General Fund. We are almost \$70,000 over in that fund right now. In the water district funds on the revenue side we did appropriate some fund balance in that. Remember if we use fund balance to bring down amounts to be raised in

taxes, next year when we do the budget it throws us off. A lot of the time you tend to move fund balances into reserves. Ideally You try to stay away from balancing your budget with existing fund balance. Because it's what's called a planned deficit. We are trying to maintain a level of unrestricted fund balance and take the balance into reserves. We were trying to put provisions in the budget each year to raise a little bit in taxes to put into reserves. We only did that in the General Funds. The highway really needs to do that for equipment. We have some fairly large figures to play with. Right now we are looking at an increase of 4.7 % the way it is right now. Laird suggested taking a look at cutting back on the contingent, maybe appropriating a small amount, especially some of the surplus from the water. He would really like to sit down with Kevin and work on equipment replacement. It Would be nice to have some reserve money to come up with a plan as to each year how much to put into reserve. There is only \$30000 in DA We did put in \$75,000 of which he hasn't spent this year. That will be going in. The \$75,000 will be used for a gradall next year.

Budget Officer Whaley and laird Petrie will work on this more and the Board will schedule another meeting. Mrs Whaley would also ask that the Board schedule a **Public Hearing on November 6th at 6:00pm**. For the preliminary Budget. The next Budget Meeting will be held on **October 17th at 2:00pm**.

With nothing more to bring before the board ***a motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Pappa and seconded by Councilwoman Haynes. In a roll call vote, all were in favor with a vote of "AYE"***.

NEXT TOWN BOARD MEETING: October 8, 2024 at 6:00pm

MEETING ADJOURNED:

Respectfully submitted by

Millie Newcomb
Town Clerk