

TOWN OF CHATHAM  
488 Route 295  
CHATHAM, NY 12037

REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING  
BUDGET MEETING  
October 16, 2014 ..... 7:00PM

**PRESENT:**

Supervisor Jesse DeGroot, Councilman Henry Swartz, Jr., Councilman Maria Lull, Councilman Jean Rohde, Highway Superintendent Joe Rickert, Recreation Director Shari Franks, Comptroller Deborah Cesternino, Attorney Tal Rappleyea, Town Clerk Beth Anne Rippe

**ABSENT:** Councilman Bob Balcom

Others Present: Citizens Finance Committee; Jeff Lick and Aven Kerr

Supervisor DeGroot called the meeting to order and led the pledge to the flag.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**REPORTS**

A. Highway – report on file. Deck poured on the White Mills Rd. Bridge on Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>. The Albany Tpk. Road survey was completed last week. Once B&L has received the files from the surveyor they'll draft a recommendation report and address the Town's options.

B. Recreation – report on file

C. Code Enforcement/Zoning Enforcement - report on file

D. Animal Control – report on file

E. Environmental –

F. Justice Court – report on file

G. Assessor –

H. Zoning Implementation Committee – The committee is looking for a replacement for JP Henkel. All interested parties can contact Henry Swartz.

I. Supervisor – Supervisor DeGroot has been appointed by the County to a subcommittee to explore matters relating the Columbia Economic Development Committee.

J. Town Comptroller – report on file

K. Town Clerk –

-A Public Hearing on the 2015 Preliminary Budget will be set for November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at 7 p.m.

-Kinder Morgan will hold a public informational meeting on Thursday, October 30<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m., the location is yet to be determined.

**NEW BUSINESS**

A. 2015 Budget

**OLD BUSINESS**

A.

**RESOLUTIONS**

**RES. #112-14** to approve the minutes the September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014 regular town board meeting and the October 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014 special town board meetings. Councilman Rohde offered RES. #112-14 and moved its adoption to approve the minutes the September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014 regular town board meeting and the October 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014 special town board meetings. Councilman Swartz seconded the motion.

VOTE AYES: DeGroot, Swartz, Lull, Balcom, Rohde NAYS: None Resolution adopted

**RES #113-14** to authorize the Town Comptroller to make the amendments to budget appropriations. Councilman Swartz offered RES. #113-14 and moved its adoption to authorize the Town Comptroller to make amendments to budget appropriations as follows:

<b>FROM</b>	<b>TO</b>	
DB97306.4	DB889.4 .....	\$34,492.34
Fr Bond Anticipation Note to Misc. Reserve Highway Equipment		
To increase reserve to purchase a chipper. This will leave a balance of \$7,463.14 to be used towards the purchase of a plow and sander for \$11,312.00		
Councilman Lull seconded the motion.		

**VOTE**

AYES: DeGroot, Swartz, Lull, Balcom, Rohde NAYS: None Resolution adopted

**RES #114-14** to accept the Justice Court Audit, year ended December 31, 2013, as prepared by Town Comptroller, Deborah Cesternino. Councilman Swartz offered RES. #114-14 and moved its adoption to accept the Justice Court Audit, year ended December 31, 2013, as prepared by Town Comptroller, Deborah Cesternino. Councilman Lull seconded the motion.

**VOTE**

AYES: DeGroot, Swartz, Lull, Balcom, Rohde NAYS: None Resolution adopted

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On a motion by Supervisor DeGroot, seconded by Councilman Lull, and carried the Town Board entered executive session at 7:10 PM in accordance with Public Officers Law §105 (1) (d) for discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation.

Motion was made by Supervisor DeGroot, seconded by Councilman Swartz to leave executive session at 7:12 PM. Motion carried.

**BUDGET DISCUSSION - HIGHWAY**

- Highway Super. Joe Rickert calculated that if the new highway hire remains at part time until July there will be a savings of about \$18,500. This year's highway budget was already 14% lower than last year before this cut. Their revenue has been good. The Town has over 100 road miles to maintain, which is not possible if there are further cuts to employees.
- Supervisor DeGroot stated that we also have to keep in mind that as per the union contract negotiated by the Town Board, highway salaries automatically increase by 1% across the board in 2015. Cuts are necessary and by making this \$18,500 cut the Town will be at 3.3% outside the village.
- Councilman Swartz feels that it's not possible to make any other cuts without cutting employees at the highway department.

**BUDGET DISCUSSION – RECREATION**

- Recreation Director Shari Franks noted that there is an ongoing problem with speeding in the Park. Councilman Swartz would like the Sheriff Dept. and State Troopers to patrol there more often. If the Town has to pass a resolution to authorize them to patrol and write tickets maybe we want to investigate that avenue. Shari will contact the Town's attorney and ask about drafting a resolution.
- In the 2015 preliminary budget the Rec. Director salary has been cut in half. Salary comparisons for this position are difficult to find. Shari does not have all the comparison information in yet.
- Shari stated that she totally understands a salary cut but not by half. She has now taken on the duties of the Zoning Board clerk.
- Councilman Swartz felt that these additional responsibilities were added to justify the current \$41K/yr. salary.
- The summer swim/recreation program is basically 4 months long. Two months of prep., including hiring, staff training, inspections, certifications and so on, the six week program and then wrap-up.
- When the Town's financial support of the Crellin Morris Association ended that money was used as the salary for a newly created Recreation Director position. So the Town was not expending any additional money for that position at that time.
- Supervisor DeGroot feels that if it weren't for Shari's efforts there wouldn't be a disc golf course. He

doesn't want to see the recreation program lose any ground. Recreation is a quality of life issue and residents have asked for it. We have park land and a program and we should be dedicated to the Mission.

- Both Councilmen Swartz and Lull are not in favor of the Town taking on any of the maintenance of the disc golf course. It was all supposed to be a strictly volunteer project.

- Councilman Lull asked why the Town is holding 100 acres, the Town shouldn't be land owners and the property should be sold.

- Councilman Lull would like to see other responsibilities that Shari has taken on go to volunteers, such as the Community Garden. Shari explained that at one time it was run by volunteers but as things evolved they needed to bring on paid staff which is paid from a grant.

- Supervisor DeGroot stated that if Shari's salary is cut in half the Town will need to change its Mission. \$30K is an acceptable amount, however if the Board cuts Shari's salary in half he will vote "No" on the 2015 Budget. Who is going to oversee the park pavilion project, we'd have to hire someone.

- Councilman Swartz feels that \$30K is still too much for what he sees.

- Councilman Rohde stated that recreation was one of the things the community wanted as outlined in the Master Plan. It's an important part of life here. As to the Recreation Director 41K/yr. salary, there needs to be a cut. There is more to recreation than just a summer program.

- Councilman Lull would like to ask the community if they want a recreation program or not.

- Supervisor DeGroot asked the Board what they want to see. Councilman Swartz wants an accounting of how Shari spends her time. Sup. DeGroot asked Shari to get that information together for Monday's meeting.

#### Rescue Squad

- The Rescue Squad has shown a loss for the past 5 years. They do not collect enough money from the towns in their coverage area to meet expenses. The amount they do collect seems to be whatever the towns feel they can contribute, there is no formula to figure who should be paying what amount. The Town of Chatham gives them \$120K annually and the Rescue Squad is asking for an additional amount for 2015 but they couldn't say how much. The Board feels that there should be a taxing district based on assessed values which would divide things up more equitably amongst the towns. There are certain towns who contribute very little money while other towns carry a bigger share. The Town has proposed a 3% increase for 2015.

Motion was made by Councilman Swartz, seconded by Councilman Rhode to adjourn at 8:40 PM.

Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Anne Rippel

Town Clerk