

TOWN OF CHATHAM
488 Rte. 295
Chatham, NY 12037
Special Town Board Meeting
2015 Budget
October 9, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Councilman Jean Rohde, Councilman Maria Lull, Councilman Henry Swartz, Councilman Bob Balcom

ABSENT: Supervisor Jesse DeGroot

OTHERS PRESENT: Citizens Finance Committee: David Levow, Jeff Lick and Aven Kerr

Councilman Rohde called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the pledge to the flag.

Topic of discussion: Recreation Budget

- Rec. Director, Shari Franks presented the Board members with a packet of paperwork on the park program. Shari asked what kind of oversight would there be if this position is cut to part time. The Board stated that they will need time to read through all the information Shari has given them. They will not be making any decision on cutting the position to part time this evening. Shari said that she understands the position that the Board is in.
- Councilman Balcom sees other places in the budget which could be adjusted, not just Recreation.
- The Board asked approximately how many hours per week does a Recreation Director work. Its 32hrs/week to whatever Shari stated. Often times she'll work from home or will be down at the park in addition to the hours she works at the Town Hall. The Board asked what happens during those 32 plus hours/week. Does the Board want her in the office?
- Councilman Swartz wants to know how the Town can justify a \$41,000.00/year salary for the Recreation Director for a part time summer program. If the position is truly worth that kind of salary then demonstrate to the Board that it's worth it.
- Councilman Balcom would like reestablish a connection with the Morris Memorial program.
- Councilman Rohde would like to take the "face out of the equation" and discuss the Recreation Director position from that standpoint.
- Aven suggested researching comparable positions/ salaries. From information gathered in the past by board members here are no full time Recreation Director positions in Columbia County to compare this to.
- Shari thought maybe the Town Board may want to look into consolidation of service with neighboring towns.

Councilman Rohde asked if the other Board members had given any thought to the Rescue Squad and their need for additional funding. She feels that the Town could divide up the total assessed value to determine a fair figure, just as the fire companies do for their districts. However, there is not enough information from the Rescue Squad to move forward right now.

The Board felt that the Comptrollers charts were very helpful when looking at revenue for each fund. Councilman Lull wants Supervisor DeGroot and Comptroller Cesternino at the Budget meetings to answer questions on each line in the budget and what exactly makes up that line. Councilman Balcom stated that probably 90% of the revenue is in for the year so he'd like to see revenue projections closer to reality to take the pressure off.

Is state aid forecastable? Yes, for the most part. The trend shows that over the last 5 years state aid has been basically the same.

Further discussion on the Recreation Director position.....

- The current \$41K/year salary is too high for a part time summer recreation program and it has to be addressed. The salary should be cut by half. Even at 21K/year the salary for a part time Recreation Director position would be very generous in comparison to other municipalities with part time Rec. Directors.
- Councilmen Balcom and Swartz had asked for a job description to better understand the duties of the Recreation Director, which, at this point, they do not have.
- Councilman Lull feels that there has been no accountability.
- Councilman Rohde would like to see the position divided into seasons, to better understand what gets done at what time of the year, summer obviously being the busiest. What happens the rest of the year?
- The Rec. Director is also clerk to the Zoning Board. These two positions should be looked at separately in terms of compensation.
- Jeff asked what the Town Board wants to see the Rec. Director do, what would the duties be.
- David stated that the position should have specific “deliverables”.
- What would be the consequence of cutting the Recreation Director position to part time and cutting the salary in half? Is the Town Board willing to take the risk?

Comptroller discussion.....

- Councilman Lull is having a hard time with a \$7K increase for a part time comptroller’s salary.
- The Board agrees that Deb has done a phenomenal job, especially given what she was up against when she first took over.
- Councilman Swartz stated that the job is much more than a part time position. The Comptroller spends on average, 30 plus hours/week in the office doing a full time job with on part time salary.
- Information from the audience indications that the Town’s Comptroller is a bargain compared to salaries of other comptrollers with similar duties and responsibilities.
- Aven thought that maybe a bonus, if it’s allowable, could be a way to compensate Deb for all her hard work. Then perhaps increase the salary gradually over time.

Budget discussions will continue at the next meeting on Thursday, October 16th at 7 p.m. Highway Superintendent Joe Rickert will be in attendance to discuss the highway budget.

Councilman Lull made a motion to adjourn at 7:15 PM, Councilman Swartz seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Anne Rippel

Town Clerk