

TOWN OF CHATHAM
488 Rte. 295, Chatham, NY 12037
Special Town Board Meeting
2016 Budget
October 19, 2015 6:00 PM

PRESENT: Supervisor Jesse DeGroot, Councilman Henry Swartz, Councilman Maria Lull, Councilman Bob Balcom, Councilman Jean Rohde, Town Clerk Beth Anne Rippel and Assessor Clerk Julia Horst

Others Present: Julie Veronazi, Jeanette Linville, Landra Haber

Supervisor DeGroot called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and lead the pledge to the flag.

DeGroot – after the last budget meeting he and Fitzgerald made the changes as per Board discussion: Village rate is \$1.71/thousand down .02 from last year which is .96%, Town rate is .08 increase which is 2.4% after making \$85,000 in cuts.

Floor is open for discussion

Balcom – any word on the “reserve fund” DeGroot said no, Tal’s looking into it. But it doesn’t really affect what we’re doing now.

Lull asked if in the past the budget requests have gone back to the department heads so they could revise their figures. **DeGroot** said that in the past if things seemed out of line he would talk to the department heads. **Lull** suggests that the requests go back to the department heads. We don’t need much of a cut to get under the 2% cap.

Swartz asked if anyone else has looked at the budget requests. **Balcom** said that they went through them the first night. **Swartz** asked if anyone has any recommendations on where to cut. **Lull** said we have to ask the department heads. **Swartz** said that the Board should have some recommendations.

Lull said no, she has nothing specific.

DeGroot asked the Board if there’s a goal? Get to the tax cap number of .73%, or what?

Balcom said to get to the tax cap would be wonderful. If you qualify, the State will pay your tax increase, geared to the middle class. .08/thousand - get the tax cap down it would be \$16.00 on a \$200,000. house. He doesn’t see a great need to get to the cap this year, it’s too low.

DeGroot agrees, we’re already “to the bone” and in some areas we’ve “cut into the bone”.

Balcom we’ll have bigger problems in the future.

DeGroot said that many towns have beaten their reserve to nothing to get to the tax.

Balcom From working in the school district the goal was to get the schools to spend their reserves.

DeGroot said we’re looking at the spending the reserve to buy a loader or we will be looking

at spending money on repairs.

Balcom hoping the reserve was set up as a side fund and not an official reserve fund..... Lease rather than buy which could slow down the big expenses but what's the impact on the other end? Some of the repairs are worked into the highway budget and once they're spent that's it.

DeGroodt we have older highway crew – retirements coming up which will help.

DeGroodt said he is not dissatisfied with the way things are now in terms of numbers.

Assessments went up a bit to make a difference. When you bring highway into it that's where the .08 comes in.

Swartz – only way to cut more is to cut employees which in turn cuts services. The community doesn't want that. We're not extravagant. We can't cut the Park, we already cut there. Highway..... They've already done that. It's wrong to cut either department.

Balcom the alternative is to increase revenue

DeGroodt then you'll hurt yourself next year, it will affect the fund balance you carry over year to year.

Balcom there are other ways, fee increases and such.

Fitzgerald – the fee structure is miniscule and won't affect the bottom line.... Residents want towns to provide services and not waste money.

Swartz we're missing out on dog license penalties. We're not collecting some of the fines that we could collect, we can be doing more. Our building department fees are low, we need to make a penalty a penalty and make it count. These won't mean a lot of money

Lull if fines are increased people won't pick up their dogs.

Swartz we're paying our ACO \$7K, it would be nice if we can get back some of that money in fines, we can ask him what he can do to help. We can meet with him.

Balcom we're ok now but when we get into next year we really need to work on that.

DeGroodt even if we bump revenue up \$10K through fees and fines it would help.

Swartz we have to look at health insurance benefits across the board. We're one of the few towns who pay 100% of the highway guys health insurance. We have to reduce health insurance costs.

Balcom "management must lead", we have to start off with the non-unionized employees

Swartz asked Lull if she had any ideas on where we can cut.

Lull said no, the department heads should know where they can make some cuts

DeGroodt said that as in the past if there was anything unreasonable he would ask them.

Lull this is the first year they've seen the budget requests and that's a good thing.

DeGroodt we have to schedule the public hearing, don't have to adopt the budget until November 20. We've historically waited because things can change during the last couple of weeks.

Balcom would like to have the information on the reserve fund.

RES. #114-15 to schedule the public hearing on the 2016 Preliminary Budget for October 29, 2015 at 6:00 PM at the Town Hall. Councilman Swartz offered RES. #114-15 and moved its adoption to schedule the Public Hearing on the 2016 Preliminary Budget for Thursday, October 29, 2015 at 6 PM at the Town Hall. Councilman Rodhe seconded the motion.

VOTE

Aye: DeGroot, Swartz, Lull, Balcom, Rohde Nay: None Resolution adopted

Swartz asked about Balcom's request for an executive session, what is the reason?

Balcom said it was possible disciplinary action.

On a motion by Councilman Balcom second by Councilman Swartz and carried the Board entered into executive session at 6:30 PM under Public Officers Law §105 (f) the medical, financial, credit r or employment history if a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation

On a motion by Councilman Swartz, second by Councilman Balcom and carried the Board left executive session at 6:40 PM.

Motion was made by Councilman Rohde, seconded by Councilman Balcom and carried to adjourn at 6:45 PM

Respectfully submitted by,
Beth Anne Rippel, RMC
Town Clerk