

Town Board Meeting/Public Hearing Local Law #1
October 5, 2015

The Regular Meeting of the Town of Cambridge duly called and held the 5th day of October 2015 at the Town Hall, the following present:

Supervisor Catherine Fedler
Councilman Douglas Ford
Councilwoman Susan Herrington
Councilman Gerald Skiff
Councilman Robin McMurray

Others present: Heather Greenawalt Town Clerk, MJ Root, Margaret Shaw Clerk to the Supervisor, Eric Shaw Highway Superintendent, Judith Russert, Michael Russert, Kathleen Ward, Tom Jones, Robbie McIntosh, Ron Ford

Supervisor Fedler called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM and immediately led in the Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.

Public Hearing Local Law #1

Supervisor Fedler called the Public Hearing Local Law #1 to override the tax levy limit open at 7:30 PM.

Supervisor Fedler explained that the reason that they needed to pass the Local Law #1 was to override the tax levy cap that Governor Cuomo has put in place. She explained that the beginning of budget time is the best time to pass this Local Law so it is in place if needed. The 2% tax cap is unsustainable this year due to the cost of living increase, rising health insurance and retirement cost. Many Towns are finding it challenging to meet the 2% tax cap. The Supervisor explained that the formula is very complicated. Last year the Town Board spent a lot of time and effort trying to come in under the tax cap. The budget previous years was under the cap so there was a buffer for last year. There is no buffer this year and the 2% is not even 2% it is more like .8% to 1%. This is why the Town Board is proposing Local Law #1 to Override the Tax Cap.

Supervisor Fedler asked if there were any questions from the public. A resident of the Town Kathleen Ward asked why the budget had to go up. The supervisor explained that the 2% raise for the employees and the loss of plowing County Rt. 60 which was contracted with the county approximately 5 years ago, were contributing factors. She also explained how the money from county Rt. 60 was put in the general fund and now they are dependent upon it. With the loss of this road there is a loss of \$23,000 in the budget. The County has been considering a long range plan of Jurisdictional realignment of roads. We almost did not get Cty. Rt. 60 last year. The Supervisor had to beg and plead with the County. We are in the same situation again this year. The 2016 Budget is now at a 6.15% increase, if you take away the fact that we are losing County Rt. 60 then it is 2.38% increase.

Councilman McMurray asked if the road had come before the Transportation Committee yet. The Supervisor reported that so far at the county level Department heads have reported to the committee. Each Department head has put in their wish list, proposed budget. The next part will be to take apart the proposed budget and say yes or no. There is a real challenge at the county level to stay under the tax cap. The Supervisor explained that the Town not reaching the tax cap doesn't affect the rebate for the school and the county. She said the .8% is unattainable for the 2016 budget. She also mentioned that the head of the Highway Dept. for the County is not in favor of hiring out the roads or contracting them to the towns.

Resident Kathleen Ward questioned why the 2% increase for the employees. Supervisor Fedler explained that except the Supervisor, Town Board, Planning Board everyone received a 2% raise. She also explained that she did not do the figures for Highway Dept. Highway Supt. Eric Shaw did these. The total amount in dollars of the raises were: for 13 people in General \$2,237 (supervisor went over some of the individual positions and the increase amounts), the amount for the highway was \$2,735 recommendation for 4 men, Working Highway Supt. was increase of \$1,969 which brought salary to \$39,000. Supervisor Fedler said this is the proposed budget; this is not final budget by any means. Supervisor Fedler went over some of the figures in the budget that had been cut in the past, now she is trying to put money back in gradually. The supervisor said that they were looking out for the future of the Town. Kathleen Ward said that she did not believe that this was the time to be adding things back into the budget. She voiced her opinion that asking to override with the reasons that were given are not reasons enough. Councilman Skiff said that the place to get angry is at the school or the county. Councilman Skiff said that he used his assessment \$160,000 and took the town tax only and putting 6% on that comes to \$22.00. Councilman McMurray asked if the supervisor had any idea of where the county budget is at and if it is under the cap. Supervisor Fedler said that they are trying very hard to stay under the cap. Councilwoman Herrington told public to talk to town highwaymen and Highway Superintendent who work hard because they really feel that they are not supported. She mentioned that people are always chewing them down and a 2% raise is not outrageous. Councilwoman Herrington said that this situation needs to be looked at from both sides and anyone that wants their taxes down needs to go to the County and the State. Councilman Ford said that he believes that highwaymen deserve 2% increase because in his experience unhappy employees will cost the town money. Councilman Ford also addressed the sign that was posted in a local business and that said the Supervisor is tax exempt. He said whoever posted that sign is incorrect. No one is tax exempt. He also mentioned that he has been elected to help run this town and typically this town has been run fiscally responsibly and he would like to keep it that way. A resident of the town asked if this passing of the local law to go over the 2% is for this year. Supervisor Fedler said that this override of this tax cap is strictly for this year only. In order to get all the paperwork done in a timely fashion they are trying to get the law done now.

Councilman McMurray thanked everyone for coming this evening. He felt that he agreed that taking away from the employees was not the answer. He thought that this all hinged on the fact of whether the town gets the county road or not. Resident MJ Root questioned as to when will know if the Town gets County Rt. 60. The town will not know until the budget is done at the county whether they will be plowing County Rt. 60. Then if they put the money back in the budget they will be in the same situation next year. Supervisor Fedler suggested that if the town does get the Cty. Rt. 60 they put the money in places that have been cut the last few years such as the Equipment Reserve. No matter whether they have that money or not the law still needs to be passed so that they can override the cap because as the Supervisor explained before a 2% increase is unsustainable.

Closed Public Hearing on Local Law #1 at 8:42.

Local Law #1 Tax Cap Override

Supervisor Fedler requested a roll call vote of passage of Local Law #1 to override the tax levy limit established in General Municipal Law Section 3-c.

Resolution #46

Roll Call Vote: Councilman McMurray – Noe
Councilman Skiff – Aye
Councilwoman Herrington – Aye
Councilman Ford – Aye
Supervisor Fedler – Aye

There was no motion or second to move the resolution so amendment was made.

Local Law #1 Tax Cap Override

Resolution #47

Councilman Ford motioned, Seconded by Councilman Skiff to approve the Local Law #1 to override the tax levy limit established in General Municipal Law Section 3-c.

Roll Call Vote: Councilman McMurray – Noe
Councilman Skiff – Aye
Councilwoman Herrington – Aye
Councilman Ford – Aye
Supervisor Fedler – Aye

Local Law #1 was passed with a Vote of 4 – Ayes 1 – Noes.

Auditing of the Bills

General	#163 – 174	\$1,358.98
Highway	#139 – 147	\$8,710.37

There was a bill that went through and the Town Board questioned the training for Constance Watkins. Supervisor Fedler said that she would be the new Court Clerk. Constance Watkins is being paid for her training and will start on November 1st as the new Court Clerk. Supervisor Fedler said that a 2% increase was put in for the Court Clerk and could now be removed because of her lack of experience.

Approving of the Minutes

Resolution #48

Councilman Ford motioned, Seconded by Councilman McMurray to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2015 Town Board Meeting as mailed.

Vote: Ayes – 5 Noes – 0

Supervisor's Report

Resolution #50

Councilwoman Herrington motioned, Seconded by Councilman Ford to approve the September 2015 Supervisor's Report.

Vote: Ayes – 5 Noes - 0

Transfer of Money

Resolution #49

Councilman McMurray motioned, Seconded by Councilman Ford to transfer \$750.00 from contingent A1990.4 to Highway Garage, contractual A5132.4.

Vote: Ayes – 5 Noes – 0

Highway Report

Eric Shaw Highway Superintendent reported that the intersection of Oak Hill Road and Stage Road was paved. The brush was cut on Duell Hollow Road and 24 tons of blacktop was used to patch Hopkins Lane. The mowing of the roadsides was completed. The fall grading of roads has been started. 502 gallons of diesel was used for the month of September. Winter maintenance to ready trucks and equipment for the upcoming season has been started. All trucks and equipment will have oil changes. The oil has been purchased at a cost of \$545.88 from Cambridge NAPA. Other prices quotes were \$763 and \$629. The next year's culverts have been replaced on Oak Hill Rd..

Highway Supt. Eric Shaw was notified by DEC that they have accepted the corrections and everything is up to code. The Town Board thanked Eric Shaw the Highway Superintendent for a job well done with the huge challenge that he was faced with bringing everything up to code and the substantial amount of money he saved the town.

Councilman Skiff brought to the Highway Superintendents attention the poles that were in the ditches from Nationalgrid. He said that he spoke to a gentleman from Nationalgrid and it is possible that money will not be available to put these poles in till spring. This would mean that

they would be there all winter and may cause problems; Councilman Skiff will give the Highway Supt. the number to contact Nationalgrid.

Assessor Report

Town Clerk Heather Greenawalt reported in the absence of the assessor. The office will be closed on Wednesday October 7, 2015 due to training seminar. There were a total of 5 corrected tax bills issued. Four of these corrections were because of an exemption not being on file. One was an assessment change that was not reflected on file. Tax freeze checks have been rumored to be sent out. The new checks will not be as high as they were last year. (In case people ask). Exemption renewals should be sent out around end of December or beginning of January. If residents have any questions please call or email the Assessor's office. Deadline for exemptions are March 1st 2016.

Planning Board Report

Heather Greenawalt Planning Board Clerk reported that the Town of Cambridge Planning Board held its regular monthly meeting, Thursday October 1, 2015, 7:30 PM at the Town Hall with 4 members present, secretary and no one from the public.

Chairman Pearson mentioned that this winter the board should be more diligent, if the secretary is not contacted with any business within ten days, the meeting will be postponed. Chairman Pearson mentioned that the Town Board had left it to the discretion of the Planning Board whether they held the meeting or not if there was no business. Secretary Heather Greenawalt mentioned that she would add this to the Monthly notice in the paper for the winter months. It was also discussed whether Planning Board members were up to date on credits needed. Chairman Pearson mentioned that 4 credits were needed yearly. The Board discussed how it was easy to obtain credits when a speaker from the County came to the Town Hall for training. It was mentioned that they would look into this as a possibility again.

It was questioned if Site Plan Review was adopted who would be responsible for enforcing this. The Planning Board? And also would there be Board of Appeals, and if so, who would do this? Next month's meeting will be on November 5th.

Town Board

None of the Board Members had anything to report.

County Report

Supervisor Fedler reported that the county was busy working on the 2016 budget and they are currently looking at a 4-5% increase but they have a lot of work to do yet to get down to the 2% cap.

The Supervisor reported that she had attended the American Legion Dinner.

Unfinished Business

The Supervisor said she received email from Joan Casazza from the NYS Unified Court System with the Appendix on how to complete the Audit for the Court and the complete audit form. Supervisor Fedler said that she could designate two Town Board members to do this audit and they could report back to the Board. The Supervisor designated Councilman McMurray and Councilwoman Herrington. The information would be emailed to the Town Justice and they would choose a time they could all meet.

Communications

A letter was received from the Town Justice requesting that the Town Board consider putting the full amount that was requested for the Justice in the budget due to the new requirements that are mandated by the State. The Town Justice has once again put in the budget for \$5,000.00 for the Judge and \$2500.00 for the Court Clerk. It used to be that the Town Justice could do the arraignment at early hours of the morning. As stated in the article from the Post Star that was submitted with this letter, the Town Justice, the Court Clerk and Assistant District Attorney as well as Public Defender must be present. The time involved in this new mandated procedure will increase the time that both the Judge and Court Clerk will be spending in Court.

New Business

The Town Supervisor mentioned that they are still looking into having the lanes removed from the town highway listing. They will be looking further into the procedure of the abandonment.

Privilege of the Floor

There was a resident of the Town present at the meeting asked if the Dog Control Officer patrolled the town all the time. The Supervisor answered no because the Dog Control Officers do so many towns they only come out when called. The gentleman on Perry Lane said that he had a dangerous dog situation. It was suggested that he called Dog Control or the Sheriff.

2016 Budget Workshop

Supervisor Fedler reviewed the 2016 Budget line for line. When the salary was discussed for the Town Justice the Supervisor said that she did not put in the entire raise requested (5,000) she only did the 2% (\$3443) the same as the other employees. It was suggested that because of the new State mandates that they increase the Town Justice salary slightly more. They decided to go with a 4% increase which would bring the Town Justice salary to \$3511. It was decided because the Town Justice was training a new court clerk they should not include a raise and would leave the Court Clerk's salary at \$1700.

Supervisor Fedler mentioned that she had put some money back in the budget for things that had been cut out in the past. The Budget officer was one of these positions it was put at 0 and was now \$250. She also mentioned that there was an increase for Assessor in equipment for the computer program that she had requested. The Town Board was not sure about this program however Laura Chadwick the Director of Real Property said that she hadn't found anyone that

had a problem with this program. There was discussion about the Town Attorney. Supervisor Fedler said that she increased the amount in the hopes of finding a lawyer that she could depend on. Supervisor Fedler mentioned that she is constantly chasing the current Attorney. It was mentioned that possibly a separate line item for the Bond Lawyer may be needed in the future. Councilman McMurray mentioned that his concern is that they are bloating the fund balances and they don't need to. Supervisor Fedler again explained the fund balances to the Town Board.

When they reviewed the Highway budget they were not sure about the Highway Superintendent's salary being increased by \$1969 which would bring the Highway Superintendent salary to \$39,000, a 5.3% increase. Supervisor Fedler explained again that current Highway Superintendent Eric Shaw did the figures for the highway budget. It was discussed and thought because there would be a newly elected Highway Superintendent that there should not be an increase. Supervisor Fedler said to expect a call from Highway Superintendent Eric Shaw because he thought that the figure for the Highway Superintendent should be increased because the Superintendent should be making more than his crew. The Supervisor recused herself from this issue.

The total amount to be raised by taxes would be \$646,606 with an increase of \$35,665 from last year. Supervisor Fedler mentioned that the set salaries must be posted in the legal notice for the public hearing so a decision must be made for the Highway superintendent Salary. The public hearing was set for Monday, October 26, 2015 at 7:30 PM.

There being no further business before the Town Board, the meeting was moved and carried for adjournment at 11:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Greenawalt
Town Clerk/Town of Cambridge

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