

SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND FALLS

March 3, 2009

A special meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Highland Falls was held in Village Hall, 303 Main Street, Highland Falls, New York on March 3, 2009.

The Meeting was called to order by Mayor D'Onofrio at 6:00 P.M.

Members present were:

Mayor Joseph E. D'Onofrio
Trustee Harold Brown
Trustee Michael Bosch
Trustee June L. Gunza
Trustee Robert Mellon

Also present were:

Village Clerk, Regina M. Taylor
Village Treasurer, Ralph J. Walters
Chief Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator, Joseph Murphy
Police Chief, Peter Miller
Planning Board Members, Joseph McCormick, James DiSalvo
Village Historian, Stella Bailey

Chief Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator, Joseph Murphy, presented his 2009-2010 requested budget to the Board for review. Mr. Murphy reminded the Board that he is looking to retire in June this year and decisions need to be made for staffing in the sewer plant. He said he is willing to work 10-20 hours a pay period after he retires to help in the transition period, however, he does not want to be in charge. He reminded the Board that the Chief Operator must have a grade 3 license and he also recommended if the Maintenance Worker position gets filled, the employee should have a CDL drivers license so a DPW worker does not have to haul sludge.

Ralph Walters, Village Treasurer told the Board that Mr. Murphy's budget request is not much different from last year, with the exception of a vehicle. He has put in \$30,000.00 to replace the current Supervisors vehicle. Mr. Murphy reported the vehicle is 8 years old and has over 100,000 miles on it. Mr. Murphy said the rest of the budget is very similar to the 08-09 budget. He has no control over fuel or chemical costs.

Attached to his budget request, Mr. Murphy had a list of priority projects that DEC has indicated need to be done. He also mentioned that the personnel in the Sewer Plant cut the grass around the plant. Because the Maintenance Worker position has been opened about one year, not much regular maintenance, ie, painting or repairs have been done.

Mr. Walters told the Board that he did not add a Maintenance Worker position in the salary code for next year, however, he did increase the overtime code.

Mr. McCormick, as a Village Resident, thanked Mr. Murphy for the job he has done and for offering to stay on past retirement in order to help during transition.

The Village Board thanked Mr. Murphy for his work on the budget. No action was taken at his time.

Village Historian, Stella Bailey, came before the Board to ask their support in the possibility of the Historical Society moving from the 2nd floor of Village Hall to the space across the street currently being vacated by the Buttermilk Falls General Store. The Mason's own the building and have indicated that they would work with Mrs. Bailey with regard to the rent. Mrs. Bailey has asked the Town for their support and is coming before the Village to ask for their support. She would like both to share in the cost of rent.

Mrs. Bailey said the current location of the office is not conducive to visitors because of the stairs. She herself is finding the stairs harder to deal with. The space on Main Street would guarantee a presence and improve accessibility. Mrs. Bailey said she knows the Board has been generous with other organizations, ie, Vision, Garden Club, the Senior Citizens, and is asking that the Historical Society be given consideration.

The Village Board indicated they are receptive to her idea, however, they would need to know how much the Village's portion of the rent would be. They asked Mrs. Bailey to discuss with the landlord and get back to the Board before the budget workshops are completed.

Mrs. Bailey thanked the Board for their time and said she would look to come back at the March 9th meeting.

Police Chief Peter Miller presented his 2009-2010 requested budget to the Board for review. Chief Miller pointed out that he added 3% for the personal services for the Police and Communications Departments due to the Police Contract expiring as of May 31, 2009. He also added 3% to his salary as he is not under the Police contracts.

The Chief pointed out that he is requesting one vehicle this year, a sedan. The foot/bike patrol budgeted amount is based on the overtime rate for a first year police officer. He believes the foot/bike patrols are good for the community, however, to staff the patrols most often requires use of overtime. This is one area, he believes could possibly be cut. Mr. Walters pointed out that the contractual budget reflects \$7200 for the motorcycle lease. The Chief indicated that he and two other officers are the only ones trained to operate the motorcycles. One officer has indicated a desire to train, however, the Chief has not made any guarantees because the budget is so tight this year. He is not sure how much use the motorcycles will get this year. He indicated that this is an area he is willing to cut.

Discussion was held on the latest report from the Town that they would be pulling out of the Communications Agreement. Mr. Walters reported that he has budgeted for \$136,667.00 in revenue in the 09-10 requested budget. This will be a major impact on the final budget if this much revenue is removed.

The Board asked Chief Miller if he has seen anything on Stimulus Packages that might help the Village. Chief Miller replied that he has applied for a \$12,000.00 grant under a Stimulus Package, for law enforcement agencies, that would be used for a security camera and fingerprinting scan machine. There is a New Cops funding coming out soon that would pay the salary for a new officer for three years, however, after three years the municipality would have to assume the salary of the new employee. He is not sure the Village is looking to do this. The Board concurred that they are not.

After review of the requested budget, Chief Miller said another item in contractual that he could cut is the Interview DVR Equipment for \$2500.00

The Board thanked Chief Miller for his work on the budget. No action was taken at this time.

Mr. McCormick asked the Village Treasurer what the total outstanding debt the Village had. Mr. Walters responded, approximately 4 million as of 6/1/09. Most of these bonds are in the water & sewer funds. Mr. DiSalvo asked what kind of rates were getting and Mr. Walters responded, between 2.32 & 4.10% for bans and 4.87 & 5.50% for long term bonds. The Village's current debt includes \$3,894,000.00 in bans and \$4,619,500 in long term bonds.

The Treasurer pointed out to the Board that the requested budget currently carried a tax rate of 21%. This includes budgeted revenue of \$136,667.00 for Communications which is now questionable. Mr. Walters informed the Board that the requested budget includes a 4% increase for non union personnel, based on what current union contracts have been settled. He did not include increases for the Mayor or the Village Board. The salaries in the DPW are based on a proposed settlement of 1,5,5. He mentioned that the Clerk and Treasurer contractual lines have been increased \$10,000 each based on current expenses and independent audits that are required for the Village next year because of the Village having Federal Funded programs such as Section 8 and the need for an actuary audit due to new audit requirements.

The Attorney line was increased based on annual increase in cost of services that occurs. The Engineer line was decreased because most engineering charges can be taken out any capital project that they work on.

Mr. Walters reported that he would be moving insurance amounts that the Police Chief and the Street Superintendent include in their respective budgets, to the unallocated insurance code. He also mentioned that as of June 1, 2009 all Planning Board members and the Secretary will be paid out of the salary code to comply with labor regulations. W2's will be issued at the end of the calendar year and every member will need to fill out a W4 form for tax purposes.

Finally, Mr. Walters told the Board he believes the requested budgets from all the departments do not have a lot of fat. Many of the increases are contractually driven and uncontrollable by the Board.

The Mayor asked if there may be anything in the Refuse and Garbage code that the Village is paying for that the Town might be responsible for since they do sanitation pick-up for the Village. He would talk with the Street Superintendent. He also informed the Board that the Youth Program monies

would be less than previously received from the
are having to make tough budget decisions.

County. Every municipality and State Departments

The Mayor mentioned that because the Regular Village Board meeting was cancelled this week due to a snowstorm, he would like to take care of a few items from that agenda.

Trustee Mellon motioned to accept the bid of \$50.00 received from Walter Ford for the surplus 1997 Ford Pick-up truck.

The motion was seconded by Trustee Gunza and unanimously carried.

Trustee Mellon motioned to approve the request from the Water Department for Kevin Hurst to attend training school for backflow prevention to be held April 24th and 25th in Peekskill, NY and that all necessary expenses incurred be approved.

The motion was seconded by Trustee Brown and unanimously carried.

A motion was made by Trustee Brown to approve the bills and claims for \$116,991.13 from the following listed funds:

General Fund	\$23,440.44
Community Development	\$54,810.70
Water Fund	\$ 3,248.45
Sewer Fund	\$ 2,037.08
Capital Fund	\$33,454.46

The motion was seconded by Trustee Bosch and unanimously carried.

A motion was made by Trustee Brown to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter. The motion was seconded by Trustee Gunza and unanimously carried.

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:25pm.

The Regular Meeting reconvened at 9:15pm

A motion was made by Trustee Bosch to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Trustee Mellon and unanimously carried.

The meeting closed at 9:15 P.M..

Regina M. Taylor, Village Clerk