

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

April 4, 2011

A Special meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Highland Falls was held in the Highland Falls Library, 298 Main Street, Highland Falls, New York on April 4, 2011.

The Meeting was called to order by Mayor D'Onofrio at 6:30 P.M.

Members present were:

Mayor Joseph E. D'Onofrio  
Trustee Harold Brown  
Trustee James DiSalvo  
Trustee June L. Gunza  
Trustee Joseph McCormick

Also present were:

Village Clerk, Regina M. Taylor  
Village Treasurer, Ralph J. Walters  
News of the Highlands Editor, Mary Jane Pitt  
Police Sargent, Ken Scott  
Fire Captain, John Rush  
Fire Chief, Erik Smith  
Village Street Superintendent, Gary Boyce  
WWTP Operator, John Jones  
Planning Board Chairman, James Ramus  
Town Supervisor, Ed Magryta  
Town Council Members, Merv Livsey  
Approximately 25 community residents

A Public Hearing as duly advertised for the purpose of obtaining public input and comment on the Village Budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 was opened by Mayor D'Onofrio at 6:30 P.M.

The Notice of Hearing of the Tentative Budget, as duly advertised, is appended to these minutes. The Mayor commented that the Tentative Budget, as it stands, is at a 1.79% increase over the 2010-2011 budget. The Mayor turned the presentation of the budget over to the Village Treasurer, Ralph Walters. Mr. Walters explained that after Department Head requests are submitted and reviewed by the Village Board, a Tentative Budget is presented at a public hearing and no changes can be made to this document, until after the public hearing. Mr. Walters explained that it is tax dollars that help pay the General Fund expenses, however, water and sewer fund expenses are paid through the fees established to operate these funds.

The Tentative General Fund Budget for FY 2011-2012 in the amount of \$4,331,673.00 was read by function. The tentative tax rate is \$15.30 per thousand.

The Tentative Water Fund Budget for FY 2011-2012 in the amount of \$801,146.00 was read by function. There is no increase in water rates at this time.

The Sewer Fund Budget for FY 2011-2012 in the amount of \$977,252.00 was read by function. There is no increase in sewer rates at this time.

The Treasurer reported that right now the budget shows an increase of 1.79% over last year's budget.

Before comments were heard, Mayor D'Onofrio reported that another budget workshop will be held on Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm before the regular Board meeting scheduled for 7:00pm.

Laura Milsom, 105 Center Street asked the Board to explain why the Town tax rates are lower than the Villages', and what services are provided by the Village that the Town could not provide. Mrs Milsom asked the Board to put to vote the subject of Village dissolution . The Board responded by pointing out infrastructure differs greatly between the Town & Village, also a part time Town Police Department as opposed to a full time Village department. Trustee DiSalvo pointed out that the Town does not have to support a volunteer Fire Department. Trustee Gunza pointed out that most Village streets have curbs and sidewalks as opposed to the Town. No Board member spoke in favor of dissolution.

Gus Koutsourades, 361 Main Street, West Point Motel, - asked about the Village's debt schedule. The Mayor refreshed the crowd on why the different borrowings were done and then asked anyone to tell him which project should not have been done?

Jay O'Dell, asked if there was a plan to decrease the debt and not add to it. The Mayor and Board members pointed out that every borrowing has a repayment schedule. Trustee Gunza added that if bonding was not done, the only way these projects could get done is to directly increase tax rates.

Mr. Walters pointed out that there is no additional debt in this tentative budget. What people are looking at is the repayment of principle and interest. He also pointed out that water and possibly sewer rates will have to increase

to help pay for borrowings that will be done to paint the water tanks and improve water facilities. The amount is yet to be determined. The amount of water usage for the May billing will help in determining this number.

Mr. Deveraux, 48 Ondaora Park, asked about putting money into the budget for televising meetings, and questioned the Board on health insurance benefits, the mayor's request for a secretary, and if other stipends are hidden in any line items. The Mayor said the televising of meetings will be discussed at the April 18<sup>th</sup> workshop, that he receives a health benefit and that a secretary is needed because the person who previously helped in this area has retired.

The topic of dissolution and consolidation was brought up. Town Councilman Merv Livsey reminded people that dissolving the Village will not solve all the problems. He encouraged people to get all the facts straight before signing any petitions on a topic that they don't have all the information on.

Mr. O'Dell asked if consolidation would lower this budget and Mr. Walters explained that everything must be looked at before a statement can be made.

Trustee McCormick responded that the Town and Village should start by looking at where consolidation can possibly begin. He mentioned already that he, another Village Trustee and some Town Councilmembers have been exploring different possibilities.

Trustee McCormick also answered the question on the Village using the 911 system by explaining that the County will not be ready for the Village until maybe November this year. This topic will be discussed at the April 18<sup>th</sup> workshop.

No further questions or comments from the public, the public hearing closed at 7:30pm on a motion from Trustee McCormick, seconded by Trustee DiSalvo and unanimously carried.

The next order of business was the Annual Reorganization of the Village of Highland Falls.

Mayor D'Onofrio made the following appointments: (see attached).

The Reorganization of the Village ended at 7:40pm.

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Regina M. Taylor, Village Clerk