

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

March 9, 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 9, 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 June L. Gunza
Trustee Robert Mellon

Member Absent was:

Trustee Michael Bosch

Also present were:

Village Clerk, Regina M. Taylor
Village Treasurer, Ralph J. Walters
Planning Board Members, Joseph McCormick, James DiSalvo
News of the Highlands Editor Emeritus, Fred Brennan

Ralph Walters, Village Treasurer told the Board that after the last meeting he decided to move to Unallocated Insurance, the budgeted amount of insurance for the Police Department and the Street Superintendent. In other words, he is not making changes to the bottom line of the requested budget, only moving monies from one code to another. The Department Heads do not have control over these amounts therefore, they will not be in their budget lines.

Mr. Walters said that under the Treasurer's lines he will create a new code specific for auditing expenses. He will also create new codes under the Fire Department for Truck Room Rental and Insurance.

Trustee Gunza asked Mr. Walters that if the requested budget, as presented, remained unchanged, except to take out the revenue budgeted for communications of \$136,667.00, what would the tax rate be? Mr. Walters responded the tax rate would go from proposed of \$15.84 to \$16.60 or a 27% increase over last years budget. If the requested budget stays the same and revenue from communications remains, the current rate increase is approximately 21%.

Mr. Walters recommended the Front End Loader for \$75,000.00 requested by the DPW be cut as well as the \$30,000 vehicle request of the Chief Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator. He also recommends fifteen percent be cut from the requested sewer budget. He recommends that the water & sewer rates remain the same. Mr. Walters said he would like to try and build surplus back up in the sewer & water fund. There is currently no surplus to help.

The Treasurer reminded the Village Board that the requested budget included a 4% increase for all non-union employees, based on current union contracts that had been settled. He mentioned a memo that was handed out to the Village Board signed by the full time office staff in Village Hall that they understand that these are tough times and did not expect a raise. They asked the Board to consider increasing their eyeglass reimbursement by \$200.00 and giving them one additional personal day as was given to the supervisors in their settled contract.

Mr. Walters recommended that the Board consider that these employees and all non-union employees receive a raise as the union employees will, or have been, given. The Board accepted the offer from the full time Village Hall staff, agreeing to the increase in eyeglass reimbursement and the additional personal day and not giving them a raise.

The Treasurer also recommended to the Board that the Attorney bills from January 2008 to the current bills be reviewed with a possibility of charges incurred by the Building Inspector be sent to the Town for reimbursement. They need to look at when the Building Inspector calls the Attorney on a Building Department matter. Should these costs be paid by the Town Building Department of which the Village is under?

The Board directed the Treasurer to make the following changes in the Water Fund in preparing the Tentative budget:

Decrease F8330.2 Equipment -\$4,500.00
 Decrease F8330.4 Contractual - \$5,000.00
 Decrease F8340.2 Equipment - \$25,000.00

Trustee Mellon was also going to check on some maintenance concerns and the need for another storage shed before these items are eliminated. The Board also directed Mr. Walters to issue a memo to the Department Head to reduce his contractual budget request additionally, by 10%.

The Board directed the Treasurer to make the following changes in the Sewer Fund in preparing the Tentative budget:

Decrease G8130.2 Equipment -\$30,000.00

The Board also directed Mr. Walters to issue a memo to the Department Head to reduce his contractual budget request by 10%.

Discussion was held on the Fire Department requested budget. The Truck Room Rental was discussed. The lease for the trucks has not been re-negotiated and the Board decided to increase the rent payment made last year, \$18,225.00, by 4% to \$18,954.00.

Mr. McCormick voiced his displeasure in that decision. He contends that truck room rental includes more than garage space. Training is held in the building also. For many years no rent was charged and increases in costs to maintain the building should justify an increase in the rent received for the space.

The Board directed the Treasurer to make the following changes to the Fire Department requested budget in preparing the Tentative budget:

Decrease A3410.4 Contractual - \$25,000.00 Truck Room Rental.
 Decrease A3410.4 Contractual - \$35,000.00 Workers Compensation
 Increase A3410.41 Contractual - \$18,954.00 Truck Room Rental (new line)
 Increase A3410.42 Contractual - \$35,000.00 Insurance (new line)

The Board also directed Mr. Walters to issue a memo to the Department Head to reduce his contractual budget by 10%, excluding the truck room rental and workers compensation.

The Board directed the Treasurer to make the following changes to the General Fund requested budget in preparing the Tentative budget:

Reduce all salary codes by 4% increase for all non union employees.

Decrease A1410.2 Clerk Equipment -\$1500.00
 Decrease A1325.2 Treasurer Equipment- \$1500.00
 Decrease A1410.4 Clerk Contractual - \$13,000.00
 Decrease A1325.4 Treasurer Contractual - \$13,000.00
 Increase A1325.41 Treasurer Contractual - \$26,000.00 (new line for audits)
 Decrease A5110.2 Street Maintenance Equipment - \$75,000.00 for spreader.
 Decrease A3120.4 Police Contract - \$15,000.00 – (to unallocated ins.)
 Decrease A5010.4 Street Administration - \$13,735.00-(to unallocated ins.)
 Increase A1910.4 Unallocated Insurance - \$28,735.00
 Decrease A7270.4 Band Concerts - \$200.00
 Decrease A7989.4 Senior Recreation (Highlanders) - \$500.00

The Board also directed Mr. Walters to issue a memo to the Police Chief and the Street Superintendent to make reductions of 10% in their budgets and it could come from any code.

The Mayor pointed out to the Board that other areas to consider while preparing this budget include Roe Park Pool that is in need of repairs and the Gazebo in Memorial Park is in need of a new roof. The Historian has requested rental assistance in possibly relocating the Historical Society.

The Board told Mr. Walters to issue the memos requesting 10% cuts and have the information available for the next budget meeting. Because of the time factor involved, the Board decided to cancel the meeting set for Wednesday, March 11th and rescheduled it for Monday, March 16th at 8:30am.

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

The meeting closed at 9:10pm.

 Regina M. Taylor, Village Clerk