

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

February 27, 2021

A special meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Highland Falls was held at the Senior Center, 15 Drew Avenue, Highland Falls, New York on February 27, 2021.

The purpose of the meeting was to hold the second budget meeting for FY21-22.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor D'Onofrio at 9:30A.M.

Members present were:

Mayor Joseph E. D'Onofrio  
Trustee Brian Aylward  
Trustee James DiSalvo  
Trustee Mervin R. Livsey, Jr.  
Trustee James Ramus

Also present were:

Village Clerk, Regina M. Taylor  
Village Treasurer, Ralph Walters  
Interim Street Superintendent, Chief Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator,  
John Jones  
(3) Community residents, Olga Anderson- 78 Ondaora Parkway, Jim & Cindy  
Modlin- 30 Michel Rd.

Mayor D'Onofrio opened the meeting at 9:30A.M. and welcomed the residents to the meeting. Mayor D'Onofrio introduced the Village Treasurer Ralph Walters and commented that the budget workshop would begin with the Wastewater Treatment Plant requested budget for FY 21-22.

The Village Treasurer remarked that the budget lines for the engineer, contingency, sewer administration and benefits are lines that he budgets for, not the department head, and are basically the same as last year. The Treasurer reported that it looks like the borrowing that is in place for the current sewer project won't have to take place because past budgeting of debt service for previous projects has been transferred to the Capital Fund knowing these projects were coming up. Mr. Walters reminded the Board that insurance funds are covering the cost of the repairs needed due to the fire that occurred in the plant a couple of years ago. Mr. Walters commented that the salary lines are based on union contracts and that overtime amounts are a pure guesstimate based on prior year actual amounts and prior budgets.

Mr. Jones reminded the Village Board that someone has to monitor the plant seven days a week and perform daily logs. Mr. Jones commented the weekend and holiday hours are covered under overtime and based on contractual hourly rates.

Mr. Walters reviewed the revenues with the Board and explained that the main revenue comes from the Sewer Rents, which he based on the last billings. Mr. Walters reported that at this time he does not see the need for an increase in sewer rates.

Mr. Jones reviewed the equipment lines and the contractual lines for the Sanitation Sewers with the Village Board. Mr. Jones explained that there are no equipment requests at this time and that the contractual budget has decreased slightly from last year's budget.

Mr. Jones reviewed the equipment lines and the contractual lines for the Sewer Treatment Plant with the Village Board. Mr. Jones explained that there are no equipment requests at this time and that the contractual budget has increased approximately \$20,000 which allows for building repairs.

Trustee Livsey commented that it might be a good idea to look at purchasing a camera to investigate blockages or leaks in the sewer as well as the water department.

Trustee Ramus commented that building maintenance is something to look at moving into the next budget year.

Mayor D'Onofrio reminded everyone that there is a project going on now to put a system in place to change methane to fuel to aid in the heating of the building and the lowering of fuel costs.

Mr. Modlin commented to the Village Board that although the salaries are dictated by contractual agreements, he would like the Village Board to use discretion when it comes to giving any salary increases to non-union employees.

With no further questions or comments, the Village Treasurer introduced Mr. Jones to review the DPW and Central Garage requested budgets for FY 21-22.

The Village Treasurer explained that the Street Superintendent was responsible for the equipment requests and the contractual line items. Mr. Walters reminded everyone the salaries are dictated by union contracts and overtime is the best guestimate based on prior actuals and budgets. Mr. Walters explained it is very hard to predict how many storms will happen in the year. Mr. Walters commented that the contractual lines are reasonable compared to last year's budget, but the equipment requests have increased.

Mr. Walters commented that the salary line in Street Administration has been increased in anticipation of the Public Works Supervisor position being filled.

Discussion was held on the number of current employees and positions in the DPW and what might be needed or wanted in the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Walters remarked that based on the discussion, he would take approximately \$37,000 out of A5110.01 and put it into A5010.01 for the Tentative Budget and that more discussion will be held prior to the adoption of the budget.

Discussion was held on the many large equipment requests. The Mayor recommended that the 1988 air compressor, estimated cost of \$24,000, and the jack tamper, estimated at \$3,000, be purchased out of the current budget as the equipment is needed now. Mayor D'Onofrio agreed that an upgrade to the security camera system is needed.

Treasurer Walters reminded the Village Board that the bond rate for the paving project last fall was .5% and that perhaps the large equipment requests: dump truck, fully loaded (\$110,000) sweeper, (\$270,000), bobcat skid steer, (\$80,000) & wood chipper (\$10,000) be grouped together and have a BAN drawn up to pay down over 5 years. The Treasurer explained that this will take over \$400,000 out of the budget.

Trustee DiSalvo commented that since both DPW dump trucks are the same age (1995) maybe the Board should look at replacing both if bonding is the way to go.

Mr. Walters explained that he would include the second truck making the amount to pull out of the budget approximately \$570,000. Mr. Walters would like the Village Board to think about the bonding option and reminded the Board that this budget is still a work in progress.

Mr. Jones commented to the Board that if the sweeper is bonded, the line item for parts and rental could be reduced approximately \$30,000.00.

**Trustee Aylward motioned to have the Street Superintendent purchase a new air compressor and jumping jack tamper at the approximate cost of \$27,000.00 out of FY 20-21 funds under the Street Maintenance budget.**

**The motion was seconded by Trustee Ramus and unanimously carried.**

Treasurer Walters pointed out that the Requested Budget is currently using approximately \$1 million dollars of general fund surplus to balance the budget. Mr. Walters commented that he would like to see the number to be raised by taxes reduced.

Mr. Walters reminded the Village Board that the next meeting is Saturday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at the Senior Center at 9:30A.M. and that the Police and General Fund Requested Budgets will be reviewed.

Mr. Walters explained that the Tentative Budget must be turned into the Village Clerk by March 20<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Walters reported that the public hearing on the Tentative Budget is scheduled for April 5<sup>th</sup> and that no changes can be made to the Tentative until after the public hearing.

Trustee Livsey motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mayor D'Onofrio and unanimously carried.

The special meeting closed at 11:31A.M.

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Regina M. Taylor, Village Clerk