

TOWN OF WESTERLO TOWN BOARD
PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 2019 WESTERLO RESCUE SQUAD BUDGET
- 2019 WESTERLO VOL. FIRE CO. BUDGET
- 2019 TOWN OF WESTERLO PRELIMINARY BUDGET
- PROPOSED LOCAL LAW #4-2018 - COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY DECOMMISSIONING
- PROPOSED LOCAL LAW #5-2018 - OVERRIDE OF 2 % TAX CAP
(to be held if deemed necessary)

SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING
Proposed Local Law #4-2018 Solar Decommissioning
OF
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2018

The Town of Westerlo Town Board held the above Public Hearings and Special Town Board meeting on November 14, 2018 at the Town Hall located at 933 County Route 401, Westerlo, NY. Supervisor Rapp opened the first of the Public Hearings at 6:45 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ATTENDING WERE: Supervisor Richard H. Rapp
Councilman Anthony W. Sherman
Councilman Richard Filkins
Councilman Joseph J. Boone
Councilwoman Amie L. Burnside

ALSO ATTENDING: Jody Ostrander Highway Superintendent, several Highway employees, John Sefcik Zoning Board member, Dorothy Verch Planning Board Chairwoman and Richard Kurylo Planning Board member, William Bichteman Jr. Water Board Chairman, Kelly Keefe Fire Co. President & Kevin Flensted Fire Co. Chief, Patricia Boice Clerk to the Supervisor, Claire Marshall Clerk to the Assessor, Karla Weaver Deputy Town Clerk II, Kathleen Spinnato Town Clerk/Tax Collector and approximately seven residents.

Councilman Boone announced that the Town Board requests only comments relating to each specific budget will be heard during that hearing. A level of respect and courtesy towards everyone will be expected throughout the evening. He explained that we are all residents and taxpayers and everyone deserves to be heard. Keeping discussions and questions on target will help promote a more clear and defined outcome.

PUBLIC HEARING -2019 WESTERLO RESCUE SQUAD BUDGET

Supervisor Rapp made motion to open the public hearing on Rescue Squad Budget, Councilman Sherman seconded, motion unanimously carried.

The 2019 Budget decreased by \$12,000 this is due to the payoff of one mortgage. A question was raised by a resident why the Westerlo Rescue Squad does not bill insurance companies. Councilman Sherman cannot speak on behalf of the Rescue Squad but thought it was not cost or time effective based on their membership. Discussion ensued regarding soft billing, insurance co. payments and lift assist calls. There being no further public comment, Councilman Sherman made a motion to close the Public Hearing on the Rescue Squad budget, seconded by Supervisor Rapp, motion unanimously carried. The Public Hearing was closed.

PUBLIC HEARING – 2019 WESTERLO VOL. FIRE COMPANY BUDGET

Councilman Sherman made a motion to open the Public Hearing on Westerlo Vol. Fire Co. Budget at 6:57 PM. Supervisor Rapp seconded, motion unanimously carried.

Westerlo Fire Co. President Kelley Keefe reported that Kevin Flensted the Fire Chief of 6 yrs. will not run for re-election this month. She announced that Fire Co. Board members could not attend this meeting due to Operational Drill scheduled for tonight. When the 2019 budget was initially submitted Firefighter Cancer Insurance was an unknown cost factor. They had budgeted for the worst-case scenario. Thankfully, those rates did not come to fruition. Unfortunately, significant numbers of firefighters which they thought would be covered will not be. Currently only 14 interior firefighters qualify for firefighter cancer coverage however, this number will increase each year as some firefighters obtain 5 consecutive years of interior status. Now that regulations have been finalized they have been given a new quote by the insurance carrier and they are able to significantly reduce the budget. The Fire Co. is now able to remove \$11,000 from the total budget which is being proposed to the Town Board tonight.

A resident questioned why only 14 fire co. members qualify. Chief Flensted mentioned there are regulations that must be met for members to qualify for Firefighter Cancer Insurance. Kelley Keefe and Chief Flensted then answered questions pertaining to the Fire Co. budget items that Councilman Filkins and then Councilman Boone had.

The 2019 Westerlo Fire Co. budget will now be \$11,000 less than originally submitted for a total of \$219,303.

The Town Board then discussed the 2018 Fire Co. Budget. Councilman Sherman reported that the Fire Co had agreed in 2017 to reduce the 2018 budget by \$11,000 after that budget had already passed. The Tax Warrant included the \$11,000. The Town of Westerlo held the \$11,000 in an interest earning account. Councilman Sherman proposed that the Supervisor now refund the Fire Co. those monies plus interest earned by end of year 12/31/2018 for a clean start fiscally for 2019. The Town Board discussed authorizing the Supervisor to do so at either the Dec. 4th meeting or at the end of year meeting, no decision was made.

Councilwoman Burnside made motion to close the public hearing, Councilman Filkins seconded, motion unanimously carried.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

Supervisor Rapp announced that Highway Superintendent Jody Ostrander had asked to speak.

Mr. Ostrander reported that his men take on extra duties without any issues. They have also fabricated a door for recyclables because it was less expensive than purchasing one. The Town of Westerlo used to pay to have a generator serviced every yr. approx. \$3,500, they now do that service themselves. They took the initiative to work on the town hall building with Mr. Rupeka's help in conjunction with the Highway Dept. saving a substantial amount vs. hiring a contractor and an engineer to do the renovations. A lot of good has been seen for a large financial savings. We hope to do the same at the Highway garage. Mr. Rupeka can't do the proposed work without the help from the highway dept. and vice versa. Together this can be accomplished for substantial savings to the Town.

Mr. Ostrander mentioned we are all here for the good of the Town and there is a time to cut and a time to reward the men. He indicated they did not receive a raise last year. He mentioned NYSDOT and Albany County are short on plow drivers. You have people here who can work on \$200,000 trucks and keep them on the road. Mr. Ostrander couldn't recall the last time he needed to call the tow company because of his talented crew. He asked the Town Board that his men receive a raise this year.

PUBLIC HEARING 2019 Town of Westerlo Preliminary Budget

Councilman Boone made a motion to open the Public Hearing, seconded by Supervisor Rapp, motion unanimously carried.

The Town Board reviewed the budget and listened to public concerns/comments. Some items regarding the budget are bulleted below:

- a more detailed breakdown the chart of account - A1620.4
- budgeted amount for income fees for proposed commercial solar projects
- Councilman Filkins reviewed adult recreation- A7620.4
- franchise fee income
- start budget process sooner
- tentative budget
- A1320.4 accounting services
- A1010- amount for town board should be reduced as Town Board opted to not receive raise.
- A8010 & A8020 - ZBA & Planning, Zoning Boards & Zoning Administrator reduce personal services \$5,200. It was mentioned later in the meeting that Zoning & Planning Board Clerk personal services is also included in this. Also costs for members attending more training sessions, more public hearing meetings & advertisements have been necessary this year ie; solar, cell tower.
- park salaries
- Raises were discussed for full time employees due to increased health insurance costs.
- Cemetery -8810.4
- employee benefits 9010.8- shows \$0.
- Unemployment - 9050.8 can it be removed?

Councilwoman Burnside advised the Town Board had discussed possibly reducing 9040.8 Workers Comp to \$30,000

- Health Insurance for part-time contracted position of Assessor & Town Attorney

Jody Ostrander mentioned Albany County is looking into a Health Care consortium as has been done in Franklin Co. This may help however, may not occur for several years but the Town has signed up.

- General Fund estimated revenue \$612,059 and appropriated fund balance should be checked
- Westerlo Water Fund \$1,000 appropriated fund balance needs to be removed & total will change.
- 2019 Water bond amount is \$28,000

Water Board Chairman William Bichteman discussed at length the Water District debt amount as determined by NYS OSC. He believed the debt figure they provided needs to be reviewed and could possibly decrease. He also discussed the repayment of the debt, the unfair burden to water district customers and the amount that had been repaid to date to the Town. He mentioned that only repair to hydrant(s) was factored into the 2019 budgeted.

- Salaries/fair compensation of employees

Highway Superintendent Jody Ostrander discussed the need to replace a 17yr. old garbage truck with mileage of 205,000 and a 30 yr. hoist from 1988. He has been looking into prices and has found a 2020 Western Star cab & chassis only for \$112,000 under Oneida County contract which is cheaper than NYS contract. He would like for the Town Board to think about this so he can sign a letter of intent giving him authorization at the next regular Town Board meeting. Another incentive, per his meeting with the Albany County Executive Dan McCoy's office, any purchases made in 2019 showing a \$60,000 savings, New York State will supposedly give the Town back \$30,000.

- highway fund bridges can be removed. It was discussed it was there for culverts
- In Highway Fund 8160-Refuse and Garbage \$0- it is already included in the general fund

Councilman Sherman advised before removing this figure from the Highway Fund it should be checked. In 2018 an expense of \$539.20 appeared for code 8160.4.

There being no further public comment, Councilman Sherman made a motion to close the Public Hearing on the 2019 Preliminary Town Budget. Supervisor Rapp seconded, motion unanimously carried. The Town Board will provide the necessary revisions for inclusion and submission to the accounting firm and review accuracy of the proposed Final Budget. The Town Board will hold a Special Town Board meeting on Monday, Nov. 19th the purpose to adopt the 2019 Town of Westerlo Budget.

PUBLIC HEARING-PROPOSED LOCAL LAW 4-2018 DECOMMISSIONING OF SOLAR

Councilman Sherman made a motion to open the Public Hearing on proposed Local Law No. 4 of 2018, Supervisor Rapp seconded, motion unanimously carried.

Several residents suggested changing the frequency of review of the decommissioning fee suggesting; every 1 to 2 years. It was also suggested by a resident that if there is a significant change to the solar installation impacting the cost of decommissioning the language be modified.

Planning Board Chairwoman Dorothy Verch offered her suggestions concerning redundancy of language for a licensed solar engineer and a definitive assignment of decommissioning costs.

Councilman Sherman responded to her concerns advising the Town Board would need to deem the engineer's work acceptable. Mrs. Verch indicated decommissioning should be done by the Planning Board. Councilman Sherman advised decommissioning permitting would be done by the Planning Board but the amount being negotiated would be determined by the Town Board. Public comment followed regarding bonding rate amount. Councilman Sherman raised his concern pertaining to NYSERDA's involvement.

Since Zoning Administrator Edwin Lawson was not in attendance, Councilman Boone suggested getting his input on the matter.

Councilman Sherman suggested adjourning the public hearing and scheduling a continuation of the public hearing on the proposed law on Dec. 4th prior to the regular Town Board meeting.

Councilman Sherman made the motion to adjourn the Public Hearing, Supervisor Rapp seconded, motion unanimously carried.

SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING

Councilman Sherman made the motion to open the Special Town Board meeting.

Councilman Sherman made a motion to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS: the Town Board requires input from Zoning Administrator Edwin Lawson before finalizing the language for proposed Local Law #4 -2018 - Solar Decommissioning, be it hereby

RESOLVED: the Town Board continues the Public Hearing on the proposed local law on Tuesday, December 4, 2018 @ 7 PM, prior to the regularly scheduled monthly meeting.

Councilwoman Burnside seconded, a vote follows:

AYES: Supervisor Rapp, Councilman Sherman, Councilman Boone, Councilman Filkins and Councilwoman Burnside

NAYS: None

RESOLUTION #58-2018 was thereby duly adopted.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 9:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Spinnato Town Clerk