

**TOWN OF WESTFORD
TOWN BOARD MEETING
September 13, 2021**

At 7:02 p.m. the Westford Town Board Meeting was called to order.

Flag Salute was recited.

Present: Town Supervisor Walter Heinrich, Councilman Zerby, Councilman Feil, Councilman Ritton and Councilman Huntington

Other Town Officials: Highway Superintendent Ritton, Town Assessor Dyn-Gohde, Town Justice Fay, Town Clerk Ten Eyck.

The sign-in sheet is on file with the Town Clerk.

The following corrections were made to the August 2021 minutes:

Under New Business #1 - "APRA" was corrected to "ARPA" funds.
Under the Motion in New Business – "Comprehension Plan" was corrected to "Comprehensive Plan".

Motion by Supervisor Heinrich to accept minutes as corrected, seconded by Councilman Ritton. Unanimous ayes.

COMMITTEES:

Fire: Annual Budget is 47,700.00 (a 3.8% increase for 2022).

Highway: Paving is complete and the Highway Department is assisting other municipalities with their projects.

Superintendent Ritton requested permission to order a John Deere Backhoe for \$108,422.00 (quote provided). A resolution from the town would be required to move forward with purchase. Expected time of delivery would be April/May 2022 and payment would be expected at that time. CHIPS funds would be used for this purchase.

Motion by Councilman Ritton for the purchase of a 2021 John Deere backhoe (Model # 310L) for \$108,422.00, seconded by Councilman Huntington. Unanimous ayes.

The Town of Root has a 2006 Mac 10 wheeler they are selling for \$20,000.00 to \$25,000.00. The truck has wings, front plow and built in sander. Mileage is approximately 117,000.

Motion by Councilman Ritton to approve the purchase of a 2006 Mac Truck from the Town of Root, price not to exceed \$25,000.00, seconded by Councilman Huntington. Unanimous ayes.

A resolution will be completed by the Town Clerk and provided to Superintendent Ritton.

An award letter to Kaiser Sand and Gravel will be sent on 9/16/21 for the sand bid.

Cemeteries: No new report.

OLD BUSINESS:

- 1). Supervisor Heinrich will be opening a new checking account for the ARPA funds per requirements from the State of New York.
- 2). NYS Retirement – there is an issue with Jason Ritton’s retirement not appearing under the Town of Westford in the NYS system. If the Town has not been paying into the system we could owe 18% of Jason’s salary since 2017 (upwards of \$36,000.00). Supervisor Heinrich should know by the next meeting if this is just an error due to Jason’s previous employment with the county and funds being added to that account or a failure to pay into the system. Either way, Supervisor Heinrich is working on getting Jason listed under Westford’s retirement system.
- 3). AUD reports – we will know in December if, for the first time in the town’s history, we will be caught up with our AUD reports. However, the 2020 report will not be submitted until NYS approves the previous years report.
- 4). The food truck has been doing a good business in Westford and has been well received.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1). Dog Control Officer- Jennifer Larrabee is listed under “personal services” on the budget, but has been paid on a contractual basis. Supervisor Heinrich wanted clarification if this should be changed to contractual. Consensus was it should be changed, but Supervisor Heinrich will check with Jenn to make sure this is correct before changing.
- 2). Discussion commenced regarding a stipend for the Highway Department employees. The department received 2 additional holidays last year, which the bookkeeper said is seen as a benefit in the amount of \$380.00. The Board discussed a one time only stipend of \$400.00 in 2021 based on the department not receiving a raise last year. Supervisor Heinrich will compose a letter to the Highway Department expressing appreciation for their hard work and an explanation of the stipend.

Supervisor Heinrich made a motion that in conjunction with the bookkeeper a \$400 stipend will be paid to the 3 Highway Department employees payable the first period of November 2021, seconded by Councilman Huntington. Unanimous ayes.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- 1). State Comptroller's Office- sent a letter indicating that there was 0 activity for the Justice Court for the month of August 2021.
- 2). M & T Bank continues to provide insurance coverage on our bank accounts.
- 3). OEC Connect's request for 0% reduction on their taxes is now a legal proceeding. Town Assessor Pam Dyn-Gohde met with OEC during the grievance process and offered a 40% reduction, but they are insisting on a 0% reduction. OEC is taking all the towns that did not give them their requested reduction to court.
- 4). Notification from the County that the equalization rate for Westford is at 98%.
- 5). Association of Towns sent notification that there will be a \$500 bill for next year (2022).
- 6) SPCA- notification regarding the pick-up of a dog on Williams Road and charged the owner a \$70.00 fee.

TENTATIVE BUDGET:

- 1). The Tentative Budget was made available and attached to the Board Meeting Minutes.
- 2). Per Town Law Superintendent Ritton provided a written request for raises for the Highway Department.
- 3). Tax Cap is 2%
- 4). Raises were put in for all Town Officials
- 5). Discussion regarding a raise for Highway Superintendent Ritton, the Board settled on \$47,300.00 for 2022 annual salary.

Transfer Station: Discussions took place again regarding what to do with the transfer station. It is apparent that the truck is on its last legs and Westford does not have the money for a new truck. Tipping fees average approximately \$31,000.00/year. The board discussed looking into the use of a container (buy/lease), purchasing a compactor (\$15,000.00), bag fees and out-sourcing garbage all together. Councilman Huntington will speak to Bryan Larrabee about pricing and options and this topic will continue to be discussed.

The 2022 budget totaled \$433,573.00 and came in under the tax cap. Supervisor Heinrich looked to the Board for approval to accept the tentative budget with the following changes:

- Salary for Highway Superintendent
- Increase the lighting district
- Combine recreation
- Take out the personal services out for Dog warden and combine with contractual

Motion by Councilman Ritton to adopt the tentative budget as modified, seconded by Councilman Huntington. Unanimous ayes from the rest of the Board, the Town Supervisor abstained

BUDGET MEETING:

General: #354 -#365 \$3,555.94

Highway #331 – #338 \$73,028.56

Motion by Councilman Zerby to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Feil.

9:03 p.m. Meeting adjourned.