Town of Yates Public Hearing, 7:00PM
Workshop Meeting, 6:00PM
8 S. Main St., Lyndonville, NY 14098
November 9, 2020

Present: Jim Simon, Supervisor
Harold Suhr, Councilman, via Zoom
Susan Hrovat, Councilman
John Riggi, Councilman
Jim Whipple, Councilman
Michele Harling, Town Clerk

Excused:

Others: Wes Bradley Linda Fisk Roger Wolfe

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Supervisor Simon called the 2021 Town of Yates Preliminary Budget Public Hearing to order at 7:02PM.

PUBLIC HEARING ON 2021 TOWN OF YATES PRELIMINARY BUDGET

Notice of said Public Hearing was duly published in the Batavia Daily News on October 20, 2020.

The purpose of such Public Hearing is to present the Town of Yates Preliminary Budget for the fiscal year commencing January 1, 2021.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Wes Bradley, Town of Yates, read a prepared statement that outlined his concerns with 5 separate budget lines; A.1420.400-Law Contractual, A.1990.400-Contingent Account, A.4540.400-Ambulance Contractual, B.7550.400-Celebrations Contractual and SF.3410.400-Fire Protection. He asked for the rationale behind the 114.28% increase in budget line A.1420.400 and wondered if the extra money was to be used toward the "It's Our Town" coalition and asked how many other towns have joined the coalition since August. He asked why there was a 75% increase in budget line A.1990.400 and wondered if it was a "back door" to fund the "It's Our Town" coalition. He said that it was nice to see the $4,080 decrease in budget line A.4540.400-Ambulance Contractual. He explained his involvement in the Lyndonville 4th of July Celebration as the Fireworks Fund-Raising Chairman and said that if it was the Town's intention not to contribute toward the annual celebration to please let him know ASAP because it significantly impacts his projected income for 2021 and the Lion's Club has already signed a contract with Young Explosives. He said that as per the 5-year agreement between the Village and the Town for fire protection, the Town is responsible for 80% of the fire budget which equals $123,000 for 2021. He asked why the Town had only budgeted $103,750 in line

SF.3410.400. He asked the Board to make appropriate adjustments before finalizing and approving the Preliminary Budget.

Supervisor Simon responded that they did increase the law contractual in anticipation of the home rule battle and had discussed earlier at the workshop putting a limit on the amount spent to save money for the possibility of future court expenses. They don't want to spend the money if they don't have to. He said that the extra money in budget line A.1990.400 is to help the A reserve and was put there last year and was not spent which helped that reserve. He said that they have 1 more year to go based on the Comptroller's Corrective Action Plan to get the fund healthy and they hope not to spend line A.1990.400 so it can go toward the A reserve at the end of the year. He said that it is a contingency account so it could be spent where it's needed. He said that the ambulance line decrease was nice but interestingly enough, they would like to make a minimum amount per year fee and not base it on rates because this would be to their advantage. He said that they did take out the money for the 4th of July celebrations and they owe the Lion's Club an answer. He said it was only $2,000 which is a small number so they will take another look at that. In terms of the fire budget, the increase this year was sticker shock because none of these numbers were brought up at the Public Safety Meeting. He said that the line to purchase the pumper had already gone up over the past 2 years significantly so he feels that the Board is trying to slow the rate of increase; but are still putting $10,000 toward the Village's pumper reserve. He said that he has had email exchanges with Dan and John and that this is where they stand right now. He said that the fire service is phenomenal and they do not have any gripe at all with the service. He said they saw the actual fire budget the very last day of September and after preparing the Tentative Budget, made the Village and Fire Department aware of what they were looking at. So far, the Board feels that this is the direction that they should go.

Wes Bradley, Town of Yates, commented that the increase going into the reserve for a pumper this year was only $5,000. He said that John Riggi was at the Public Safety Meeting and saw all of the numbers that were presented by the Chief and the total that night came to $141,000; which did not have the increases for insurance yet. He explained that once they have a final budget total, you go by the contract which outlines the 80%-20% split for 2021. He said that the time to argue the total of the fire budget is at the Public Safety Meeting. He mentioned the possibility of the Town having to pay for additional Community College expenses in 2021 and made a mental note to be mindful of this when the Public Safety Committee meets next year to determine the fire budget and perhaps take a year off of adding to the pumper reserve. He said that the Town of Yates has the lowest fire district rate per thousand in the County.

Councilman Riggi said that they never talked about $130,000 at the Public Safety Meeting. He said that the first time the Board saw the actual spreadsheet/final budget was the last day of September. He said when they finally saw the final numbers it was too much for them this year and they needed to slow down the annual increases. He said that the only way to satisfy the amount requested by the Village would be to increase taxes to Town of Yates residents.

Supervisor Simon said that the increase over last year was $5,000 and is up to $30,000 as he understands it. He asked for clarification from Dan. The big jump this year was for the capitol budget reserve. He said that they have another week to sort it all out. He said he agrees with how the contract determines the percentage to be paid by the Town and that it is an 80%-20% split for

2021 but not on the total amount of the budget. He said that the agreement does not say that we will automatically accept any number that comes from the fire department and agree to pay that amount. He reiterated that if the committee had the spreadsheet that goes back 10 years and had presented it and described and justified the increase in reserves, insurance, etc. and other increases that would have been one thing but that did not occur. This was another huge increase in the fire department's budget and it's why there is pushback. He believes that the amount that the Town is providing will not impact operating expenses. In the last 4 years there has been over a 100% increase, the fire budget has doubled. He asks that the increase slow down. He would also like to start the whole process earlier in the year so that they have more time to analyze the numbers.

Roger Wolfe, Highway Superintendent, said that budget line A.3310-Traffic Control had been zeroed out for both labor and materials. He explained that if the Sheriff's Department calls in the middle of the night they don't have any money to operate with, for example, that means that a Stop sign can't even be replaced. He asked that the Board take another look at those lines. He understands where we are with the budget- it's a tough year and he's trying not to spend a lot of money. He thinks that there will be some money coming back as unexpended balances at the end of the year. He said that it's hard when a line is zeroed out to put money back in that line another year. He said it's better to keep money in the line and ask the department head not to spend it and it will zero itself out at the end of the year. He added that just because an auditor comes in and recommends a certain percentage in the reserve accounts, it doesn't mean that's what has to be done. He said that you're not doing anything wrong by having more in the accounts than was recommended. He said that he worked very hard over the years to build a reserve fund so that the Town didn't have to bond any equipment and now we're at the point that it's the only way that we can operate. He added that we are way behind where we should be. He said that he is grateful that they purchased a new tractor because it was needed for many years. He said that we'll be in big trouble if we burn up all of our reserves; it will catch up to us somewhere down the line.

Supervisor Simon said that he will take a look at the traffic control line again and double check it because zeroing it out may not have been prudent. He noted that Roger is being very careful with his budget lines and even held off hiring a new Highway worker for a while when a position became available. He said that the trick is that the A fund is still negative and when it is brought back to healthy; another chunk will be applied to it this year, then the Town will be able to start building up the reserves again. He said that we have ratings that are under pressure because we have to make our A fund healthy.

Wes Bradley, Town of Yates, said that eventually a pumper will be needed at the fire department and it could cost anywhere from $500,000 -$800,000 depending on the bells and whistles and if bonded, 80% of that will be the Town's responsibility as part of the fire budget. He said by increasing the reserve fund incrementally each year they hope to have several thousand dollars to put down as a down payment and decrease the amount of the bond. In other words pay now or pay later.

Councilman Suhr asked how many hours were on the pumpers that the fire department uses right now and he asked how many times this year the pumper was actually used for an event.

Wes Bradley said that he didn't know how many hours were on the pumpers or how many times they were used this year and that this was a question for the fire chief.

Supervisor Simon said that they will continue to try and make it work.

RESOLUTION NO. 93-11/20

RESOLUTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING ON 2021 PRELIMINARY BUDGET

WHEREAS, all persons wishing to submit comments either written or spoken were heard, be it

RESOLVED, to close the Public Hearing at 7:36PM.

Offered by Councilman Riggi, who moved its adoption
Seconded by Councilman Suhr

5 Ayes 0 Nays

Motion: Carried

Respectfully submitted,
Michele L. Harling
Yates Town Clerk