

PUBLIC HEARING FOR TOWN BUDGET 2011
TOWN OF BRIGHTON - FRANKLIN COUNTY, NY
November 4, 2010
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A Public Hearing for the Town 2011 Budget was held on Thursday, November 4, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. at the Brighton Town Garage, 17 County Road 31 (a.k.a. Jones Pond Road) in Paul Smiths, NY, with the following:

CALL TO ORDER:

The Public Hearing was Called to Order by Supervisor John Quenell at 6:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL OF TOWN OFFICERS

PRESENT: Supervisor John Quenell, Council Members: Jeffrey Leavitt, Steve Tucker and Lydia Wright

ABSENT: Council Members Peter Shrope

OTHERS PRESENT: Richard Meagher – Bookkeeper and Elaine Sater - Town Clerk

RESIDENTS: One resident and a representative of the media attended

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING: Notice of this public hearing was posted Thursday, October 22, 2010, on the Town Clerk's Sign Board and at three post offices and businesses in the Town. Notice was published once in the Adirondack Daily Enterprise on Thursday, October 28, 2010.

Supervisor John Quenell turned the hearing over to Richard Meagher, Bookkeeper and Budget Officer, who gave a brief summary of the Budget for 2011.

The Town's 2011 proposed tax levy is \$564,777, an increase of \$11,857 over 2010 or 2.1%. The tax rate per \$1,000 of assessed property value increases by 4 cents per thousand from \$2.84 in 2010 to \$2.88 in 2011.

General Fund Appropriations were reduced by \$24,465. The Superintendent of Highways and Deputy Superintendent of Highways are the only Town Officials getting a 2% pay increase. All other Town Officials' and employees' pay will remain the same as the 2010 level. Town Garage expenses are reduced by \$2,035 and Health Insurance is reduced by \$20,853; the Town is changing health insurance providers.

General Fund Revenues are increasing by \$38,826 due to expected revenue from a special Tax Assessment on the "Over the Hill" property of \$17,676 and fines and forfeited bail are increased by \$17,500 due to expected revenue from the settlement of the Avoidable Alarm Violations lawsuit. Interest on bank accounts has been reduced due to the low interest rates.

Highway Fund Appropriations are reduced by \$13,614 to \$284,199 from removing \$75,000 from capital improvements and adding \$34,466 to Bridges for the White Pine Road Bridge. Machinery is increased by \$37,000 which includes a new pickup truck and \$10,000 toward a new large truck. Highway employees are getting a 2% raise in hourly wage due to union contract negotiations. There is a 2% increase in expense accounts (.4). Health Insurance is reduced by \$12,309 to \$37,691; a new health care provider was also part of the union negotiations.

Highway Revenues are increased by \$3,850 due to expected revenue from the sale of the pickup truck.

Fire Protection Fund appropriations are increasing by 7.5% from \$71,576 to \$76,118 due to errors of \$2,000 by the Fire Department in last year's budget and a 3.5% increase in expenses. The rate per \$1,000 of assessed property value is 38 cents, an increase of 2 cents from the 2010 rate of 36 cents per \$1,000.

Street Lighting District Fund is remaining the same with \$300 of fund balance being used to reduce the tax levy to \$600.00.

Fund Balances of \$25,000 for General Fund and \$27,400 for Highway Fund are being used to offset the total budget.

Lydia Wright asked about the Fire Protection appropriations. She has not seen a budget or contract from the Fire Department.

Jeffrey Leavitt said there is a Public Hearing for the Fire Contract on December 9 at 6:30 p.m. He commented on the lateness of the hearing when the Town was looking at the Budget now.

Richard Meagher said the Town can budget an amount but reduce it after the Public Hearing and just keep the difference in the fund balance.

Supervisor John Quenell provided a copy of a budget to Lydia Wright. He said the Fire Department is proposing a

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3 year contract, but when he questioned the Board about it at a previous meeting they gave him reasons not to have a multi-year contract. The Fire Department will probably propose a one year contract.

Lydia Wright said there was no figures in the budget for last year's Fire Department expenses to compare to this years budget, she would like to be able to explain to people why the increase of \$2,500. She also asked about the Rescue Departments budget for 2011, none was provided by the Village of Saranac Lake.

Supervisor John Quenell said he attended a meeting that discussed the Fire Department's budget that included the Rescue expenses. He did not have a copy to show her. He will sit down with the Rescue Department's bookkeeper when they are independent and go over their budget.

Lydia Wright said she is not comfortable with the \$20,000 increase in fines and forfeitures, she sees this as "counting your chickens before they hatch" since the lawsuit could go either way. If the Town had to pay out money this would double the amount in the budget.

Supervisor John Quenell said there were other lines in the budget that were estimates.

Richard Meagher said there were funds in the contingency to cover any extra expenses.

Jeffrey Leavitt said that since Lydia Wright is an employee of Paul Smith's College she should recuse herself from any discussion of this topic as she has done with other topics in the past.

Lydia Wright said this was a budget hearing and she was discussing the budget as a Council Member not as an employee of Paul Smith's College, she works in the library at the College not the finance department. She said she would discuss her status with him later.

The floor was opened to the public for comments.

There were no comments from the floor.

Motion to Adjourn the Public Hearing at 6:34 p.m. made by Jeffrey Leavitt, Second by Steve Tucker, Aye 4 (Leavitt, Quenell, Tucker, Wright), Nay 0, Absent 1 (Shrope)

Respectfully Submitted,

Elaine Sater
Brighton Town Clerk