

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING - TOWN OF BRIGHTON - FRANKLIN COUNTY, NY

July 26, 2011

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A Special Meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Brighton was held Tuesday, July 26, 2011, at 6:30 p.m. at the Brighton Town Garage, 17 County Road 31, Paul Smiths, NY, with the following:

CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting was Called to Order by Supervisor John Quenell at 6:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS

PRESENT: Supervisor John Quenell

Council Members: Jeffrey Leavitt, Peter Shrope (entered the meeting at 6:38 p.m.), Steve Tucker and Lydia Wright (entered the meeting at 7:11 p.m.)

ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Elaine Sater-Town Clerk

RESIDENTS: There were three residents present

GUESTS: None

NOTICE OF MEETING: Notice of this meeting was faxed to the Adirondack Daily Enterprise on July 20 and posted on the Town Clerk's Sign Board. Notice was also posted on July 21 at the Town's post offices and businesses.

Supervisor John Quenell said he called this meeting to hear ideas from the Board for cutting future budgets.

Jeffrey Leavitt said to dissolve the Town and let the County take over duties of the Town. To cut expenses radically the Board needs to look at "necessary" services versus "luxury" services. The Town Park is an expense of \$20,000 annually. The ball fields are leased from the College. One option would be to return the land to the College; option 2 would be to close it for the winter as it is not used as much.

Discussion was held on how to maintain the park seasonally: Hire a seasonal worker for the weekends, turn off the phone. The expenses are budgeted at \$7,000. The park attendant is the highest paid part-time employee; the salary is \$13,236.00 for 2011, budgeted at 30 hours a week and was \$13,192 for 2010. May be able to save half the salary about \$6,500 and \$1,000 for heat. Park Equipment is at \$1,000 for 2011. Utilities should increase due to the Food Pantry being relocated there. A programmable thermostat could be installed to control the temperature for Food Pantry days.

Jeffery Leavitt said Health Insurance should be done away with completely; offer a Health Care stipend to people and possibly a small HRA. Give a certain amount and anything over that the employee/elected official pays.

Peter Shrope asked if the current policy is to provide Medical Insurance to elected officials and full time employees.

Supervisor John Quenell said this has appeared to be the policy in the past. Total expense is almost \$100,000.

Jeffrey Leavitt said there is an option for Franklin County to collect the taxes for the Town.

Supervisor John Quenell said there is recent legislation that is encouraging it, the County would have to agreed to do this, the expense for tax collection is about \$9,000

Peter Shrope said expense for training is not included and it should be because new elected officials will be coming on in January 2012. He questioned the need to pay \$39,550 for the Rescue Contract now that the Saranac Lake Rescue Services is charging insurance companies for calls. The Town is not legally required to provide it according to the Comptroller's Office and the Association of Towns.

Discussion was held on the ethical obligation to provide the service since the residents are used to it. There are several calls to Paul Smith's College but they do not pay taxes for the service.

Peter Shrope: Non essential services include: "Youth Programs" A7310.4 for \$3,300; \$1,500 is for the Saranac Lake Youth Program, \$1,500 for the Civic Center, and \$300 for Snowmobiles.

Discussion was held on what items were covered for Cemetery: \$1,000.00 for maintenance, flags and markers; revenue is now coming from selling the lots. Highway Equipment, Capital Outlay DA 5130.2 is \$52,000, includes Pick-up truck for \$26,000, \$10,000 for new plow truck, \$2,000 for small machinery, and \$14,000 unaccounted.

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Snow Removal DA5142.4 expenses for \$29,478 unknown. Fire Contract amounts for future budgets were not included because it is a separate fund. Animal control expense is \$4,000.00.

Lydia Wright asked why the amount for Fine and Forfeitures revenue was \$7,500 for 2010 and is now \$15,000 for 2011; does the Town expect to get that much. Traffic Control is quadrupling for new signs. Airport was \$1000.00 and has been increased to \$1500 and then a 2% increase has been added, the Town controls the amount so a 2% increase is not necessary. There are several 2% increases that are not normally increases so they are not necessary. The truck equity keeps increasing by \$20,000 each year. Sales of equipment show \$5,000 for the sale of the current truck and then \$20,000 for the sale of a truck in 2014. This seems to be unrealistic. CHIPS funds should be reduced if the Town is going to abandon roads.

Discussion was held on the Town's policy for purchasing and selling trucks. Discussion was held on abandoning Town roads, such as Riely and Mill Hill. The Fire Department has a dry hydrant at the end of Mill Hill Road and has permission to dig out the mud.

Jeffery Leavitt asked about the Landfill Closure Monitoring expense, how long does the Town pay this. A variance could be requested to reduce expense. State Retirement System shows a 37% increase, the new "Tax Cap" allows more than two percent increase since it is a State mandate. Council A1010.1 salaries \$11,020 should be cut to \$2,000 for each Council member.

Discussion was held that if cuts to salaries are made they should be the same for elected officials and all employees.

Discussion was held on increasing revenues such as adding other contracts for plowing such as Town of Santa Clara.

Supervisor John Quenell said these were all good ideas, but he still thinks Health Insurance is the biggest problem. It is appropriate for full time employees and the Highway Superintendent to keep the benefit. The premiums are increasing 13% for 2012 and the Town will not be able to continue to pay for increases with the 2% tax cap. Specific details will be discussed at the regular Board meeting. If compensation is changed there needs to be a 90-day notice to people who are affected.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn at 7:55 pm made by Jeffrey Leavitt, **second** by Peter Shrope, **Aye 5 (Leavitt, Quenell, Shrope, Tucker, Wright), Nay 0**

Motion made by Lydia Wright, **Second** by Peter Shrope, **to REOPEN the meeting at 7:56 p.m. to hear Citizens' Comments. Aye 5 (Leavitt, Quenell, Shrope, Tucker, Wright), Nay 0**

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Resident #1: Animal Control is needed to keep the dogs under control. Salaries need to be fair. The Superintendent of Highways and Justice have had work load increases over the years without pay increases. The changes should be considered in a sober manner. To say unilaterally that the Board is not going to cut Highway insurance but to cut out all other people is unfair, especially if the Highway employees are not going to pay a share of the increases. The Town should consider making all policies as single and put on a cap and let people make up the difference for the coverage they desire. It would be wise to pay the salaries for competent and experienced people. Benefits were given by the Town. New people, not people who have worked for 20 years, should have salaries cut. The Board should consider a base salary for new people. Training expense should be in the Budget.

There has been money spent outside the budget in the past. It is insulting to know that people who are dedicated to their jobs are taking hits, when large amount of monies have been spent outside the budget. The "Over the Hill" building and lawyer fees are some examples. Now the Board is planning to balance the budget on the backs of the employees. If the Town is going to set a budget they should be obligated to stick to it. The Town Board needs to say "no" to spending over the budget.

Lydia Wright said training is a valuable resource and should be mandatory.

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Resident #2: The Budget is probably the most difficult thing the Board has to do. The some of the cuts are small potatoes. There were some anticipated revenues in the Budget that have not been discussed, are they coming in? How is the Town's assessment, is the Town's value going up or down. Revenues should be looked at. The Board is representative of the residents. If items have to go up they have to go up, taxes can go up. The Board can't just keep cutting. The Town has been very generous to organizations outside the Town, the Board should not take away from the employees; cut other items out of the budget. Employees should be paying a percentage of the benefits.

Supervisor John Quenell said the Town's assessment is going down.

There were no further Citizens' Comments

Motion to Adjourn at 8:13 pm made by Jeffrey Leavitt, **second** by Steve Tucker, **Aye 5 (Leavitt, Quenell, Shrope, Tucker, Wright), Nay 0**

Respectfully Submitted,

Elaine Sater
Brighton Town Clerk