

PUBLIC HEARING (2005 PRELIMINARY BUDGET) -TOWN OF BRIGHTON

NOVEMBER 4, 2004

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A Public Hearing on the 2005 Preliminary Budget was held on Thursday, November 4, 2004, at 7:00 p.m. at the Brighton Town Hall, Paul Smiths, NY, with the following:

PRESENT: Supervisor Robert Tebbutt and Council Members: David Knapp, John Quenell, Steve Tucker and Lydia Wright

ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Elaine Sater - Town Clerk

RESIDENTS: There were two residents and the media present

The Public Hearing was Called to Order by Supervisor Robert Tebbutt at 7:00 p.m. The purpose of the hearing is to hear any person in favor of or against the 2005 Preliminary Budget as compiled or for or against any item or items therein contained.

Notice of the Meeting was faxed to the Adirondack Daily Enterprise on Monday, October 25, 2004, and published on October 28 and November 2, 2004. The notice was also posted on the Town Clerk's Sign Board, at the three post offices and at local businesses in the Town on October 28, 2004.

Supervisor Robert Tebbutt read a statement to the public summarizing the work of the Board to prepare the 2005 Preliminary Budget. The budget reflects a \$1,000 or .02 of 1 percent tax increase over the 2004 Budget. He said he was very proud and happy that the Board worked well together to create this budget that shows such a small increase. He would like the County to do the same with their budget. He thanked John Quenell specifically for being so helpful in preparing the budget.

The floor was opened for comments.

Town Clerk: The Board passed a resolution on October 19, 2004, for Budget Amendment #4 changing the 2004 Budget that is not reflected in the handout for the 2005 Preliminary Budget. The amendment was for \$13,100 from General Fund A1990 Contingency, transferring \$13,000 to the Highway Fund, Medical and Health Insurance DA9060.8 and \$100 to the Assessor Expense A1355.4. The Highway Fund Medical Insurance figure (a percentage increase of the 2004 Budget) used for the 2005 Budget was based on the lower number not the actual number after the amendment. The number for Medical Insurance may not be high enough for the Highway Department.

John Quenell said the payment for the Superintendent of Highways insurance was being paid from the Highway Fund and the amendment was to cover that expense. He will look at the figure to see if it needs adjusting.

Town Clerk: A letter was received from a citizen who could not attend the Public Hearing. Supervisor Robert Tebbutt read the letter as follows:

Letter from Kevan Moss:

“RE: 2005 Proposed Budget

Dear Board Members,

Many organizations and people outside the Town of Brighton borders recognize the architectural and historic importance of our Town Hall—the National Register of Historic Places, Historic Saranac Lake, the New York State Council on the Arts, Senator Betty Little—to name a few. The New York State Council on the Arts and Senator Betty Little have given the Town grants in excess of \$52,000. The Stearns & Crawford report underscores the building's significance and also identifies two major liability issues: the faulty stairs and the leaky furnace. These must be repaired as soon as possible. Now it is time for the Town Board to acknowledge and validate the importance of this building by adding some of our tax dollars to the maintenance and restoration project.

I urge you to match, *dollar for dollar*, all the grant money raised to date for our Town Hall. This would add \$44,500 (\$52,000 less the \$7,500 already matched) to the 2005 Town Budget. Delaying some of the highway equipment purchases (the new truck, new tractor and new brush) will easily cover the \$44,500

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match. I remind you: the Town Hall belongs to *all* of the Brighton taxpayers while approximately two thirds of the taxpayers don't receive any benefits from the Highway Department.

Please validate the need to maintain this building as well as the efforts of all those who have worked and are working to keep it in good shape.

Since I cannot attend the budget hearing on Thursday, I am submitting this letter.

Respectfully yours,
Kevan N. Moss"

Lydia Wright asked what the Board wanted to do about this request.

John Quenell and Robert Tebbutt said they could not discuss the request at this Public Hearing but would discuss it at the next Board meeting.

Tom Willis – Garondah Road:

- a. **Kevan Moss's letter:** He did not see where Kevan Moss gets the idea that not everyone benefits from the Highway Department since everyone drives the highways.
- b. **Salaries:** He said the Board should increase all the salaries to the next nearest dollar to save the Bookkeeper the hassle of dividing up cents. The Council salaries could stay at \$9448.40 since it was divisible by 4. For example the Budget Officer was at \$256.75 and it should go to \$257.
- c. **General Fund - Bookkeeper Equipment A1310.2:** There were two laptops purchased last year. Is the one turned in by the Bookkeeper being used or just sitting somewhere?

The **Town Clerk** has the laptop in the vault and it will be used if the power goes off or if she has to work at home when the furnace goes out during the winter.

- d. **Dry Hydrants A3410.4:** Every year a \$1000 is in the Budget but not used. Can the Fire Department provide a plan for what they are going to do about dry hydrants (new ones or replacement)? This is offset this year buy a general fund appropriation.

Steve Tucker said he would provide a plan at the next Board meeting.

Supervisor Robert Tebbutt said the Fire Chief would be attending the next meeting also.

- e. **Code Enforcement Officer A3620.4:** This was \$5,000 a few years ago; it went to \$7000, now its up to \$14000. Everyone seems to be happy with the way this is working; will this be rethought some time in the future?
- f. **Town Garage A5132.4:** There is a \$4,000 increase for next year, will this be enough to cover the cost of heating two garages during the winter?

Supervisor Robert Tebbutt said the contractor would be heating the new garage until the Town takes it over after January. The extra heating was taken into consideration.

- g. **Town Park Manager A7140.1:** There is a reduction in salary, why is this when salaries went up?

John Quenell said the salary is based on number of hours worked, when it was recalculated the total amount for salary went down.

- h. **Town Park Expenses A7140.4:** This is increased by \$1130; he heard it was for a new water heater.

David Knapp said there is currently no hot water in the Park building and a demand heater will be looked into for the sink. The cost of fuel is also up.

- i. **Cemetery A8810.1 and A8810.4:** The position of cemetery custodian is going out for bid and the same amount is in the Budget from 2004 for \$2100. Is this an error in the 2004 Budget?

John Quenell said the 2004 Budget was correct; the amount was for roof repairs that were not needed.

- j. **Cemetery Equipment A8810.2:** There is \$200 budgeted here, is the Town going to purchase more equipment for the contractor to use?

Supervisor Robert Tebbutt said the amount was for cemetery markers.

- k. **Workers' Compensation A9040.8:** Why is this is reduced by \$1671 from 2004? This cost includes insurance for the Fire Department.

John Quenell said it was based on actual figures from the Franklin County Self Insurance Plan.

- l. **Medical Insurance A9060.8:** This is reduced also, is it based on better figures than 2004? Where is the Superintendent of Highways included?

John Quenell said the amount in 2004 was because there were no rates for the 2004 budget. The Board put \$20,000 from the General Fund balance into Contingency A1990 to cover the increase for 2004. This

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year the Board has actual rates for 2005. The Superintendent of Highways is included in this amount for 2005.

m. Highway Fund – Paving DA5112.2: Why is the budget (\$35,000) higher than what the CHIPS funding (\$23,500) will cover? Why can't we spend only \$23,000 on paving?

Supervisor Robert Tebbutt said the \$35,000 is what the Superintendent of Highways budgeted. He is trying to get all the roads paved according to a plan. After a few years the new paving will be completed. The CHIPS money is requested after the paving is completed.

n. Street Lighting Fund: \$700 is budgeted but only \$350 will come from the Tax Payers; does this reflect the other lights the Town pays for other than Easy Street District?

Supervisor Robert Tebbutt said there is a large balance of \$1700 in the Street Light fund that needs to be used up. It will be used to offset the Street Lighting Fund over a few years instead of all at once. This is only for the lights in the Easy Street Lighting District.

Supervisor Robert Tebbutt said he would like people to compare the County Tax Levy increase to the Town of Brighton Tax Levy overtime so the taxpayers would understand that the large increase in their taxes comes from the County's budget and not the Town's. The Town has tried hard to keep the taxes down and the County is out of control. He asked the media to report this comparison so people would understand the difference.

Tracie Santagate – McColloms: Asked if the Dog Control Officer issue had been looked into.

Lydia Wright said she wrote a letter to the Humane Society asking for an estimate of cost to contract the Animal Control Officer and Shelter Services together. Their Board is meeting next week on Thursday and will discuss the issue. If they agree to contract for Animal Control Officer and Shelter Services for the same amount as the Town of Franklin the Town will save \$1400 by contracting this out.

Tracie Santagate: Asked if the letter from Kevan Moss had been read. (She entered the meeting late.) She said the handicap elevator lift was not working on Election Day and she urged the Board to provide additional funds to get maintenance done on the Town Hall. She supports Kevan Moss's request for additional funding for maintenance of the Town Hall. There is a funding disparity for maintaining the Town Hall compared to the funds spent by the Highway Department. More taxpayers use the Town Hall to vote than drive on Town roads. It shows a lack of commitment to be spending money to pave roads used by only a few taxpayers and not maintaining the Town Hall that everyone uses on Election Day. Many other people not at the hearing also feel this way. It is admirable that the Highway Department is paving all the Town roads but the buildings still need to be maintained.

Supervisor Robert Tebbutt said the Board cannot make any decisions at this hearing about the request from Kevan Moss for more funds for the Town Hall but would discuss it at the next Board meeting.

There were no further comments from the public.

Motion made to Adjourn the Public Hearing at 7:30 p.m. by John Quenell, second by Steve Tucker, Aye 5 (Knapp, Quenell, Tebbutt, Tucker, Wright), Nay 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine W. Sater
Brighton Town Clerk