

Budget Workshop October 12, 2021

The Town Board of the Town of Kingsbury conducted a Budget Workshop on October 12, 2021, at 6 Michigan Street, Hudson Falls.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dana Hogan, Supervisor
Richard Doyle, Councilman
William Haessly, Councilman
Dan Washburn, Councilman

ABSENT: Jane Havens, Councilwoman

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael Graham, Highway Superintendent
Todd Humiston, Enforcement & Dog Control Officer

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm by Supervisor Hogan.
No one from the Library will be able to attend due to a Board Meeting.
The Kingsbury Volunteer Hose Co. Inc. were unable to attend due to a serious rollover.

The Comptroller reported she has minor changes on the tentative budget, the amount reported on the assessment history will be as follows:

Townwide – 767,753,624 to 771,272,490
Highway - 421,531,898 to 421,520,187
Fire Protection - 454,359,132 to 454,347,421
Water District – No change

This will have a minor impact on the tax levy.

Councilman Haessly stated on the waterline project economic recovery funds will be used for additional costs. He does not know what the Town has to do for any further sewer investigation, the last time the Town did sewer work was to identify the manholes, but the pipe sizes were not identified. He suggested any costs spent on the Burgoyne Avenue waterline over the amount of the grant should be bonded and if we need to bond as we go into next year there may be more money coming in the infrastructure package from the federal government. The discussion continued.

Councilman Washburn stated the Town should use the ARPA funds for expenses greater than the grant of \$250,000.00 for the Burgoyne Avenue Waterline Project; if the Town does not use the funds, they will lose them. Councilman Haessly stated the Town has done nothing with the sewers. Councilman Washburn stated the Town does not need to do anything with the sewers because there is an agreement with the Washington County Sewer District, they are taking care of the sewers; they deal with everything. Money is set aside every year to put into capital reserve to pay for anything that is required.

Supervisor Hogan stated he is concerned with the lack of options to spend the American Rescue Funds and feels the Town may struggle to spend that money. Councilman Washburn agreed with the Supervisor. Councilman Doyle asked what kind of strategy the Board would like to take in regard to the budget. If the Board approves the budget proposal, there will be no unexpended money at the end of the year in the whole town fund. The whole town fund has been decreasing the last few years. The Comptroller projected for general fund part town a decrease of \$178, 600.00, but an overall increase if it is considered the highway fund is bringing money back by underspending. The Board could change how they allocate some revenues and instead of using balance from general whole town use some of the surplus from highway part town and charge more taxes on the general fund whole town and stay within the tax cap. There are two revenues on highway part town that traditionally have not been recorded because you are not guaranteed year after year (Pave NY and Extreme Recovery). These revenues equal about \$60,000.00 and

could be recorded as revenue for this year but should be checked each year. The Comptroller would increase the revenue to reflect what we are pretty sure we are going to get, the sixty or seventy thousand, add it to the line item under CHIPS and it would reduce the taxes for highway part town and give the tax that amount to general fund whole town and still remain within the tax cap.

The Comptroller stated we also have sales tax which traditionally has been charged to several different funds and we could do the same thing and not having so much of a burden coming out of the reserves. This solves this year's problem, but it does not solve future problems, we are short every year. One bond of \$83,000.00 will be paid next year and the other bond will drop off in 2025.

Supervisor Hogan stated in 2024 or 2025 money is projected from TDI. The Town has a surplus and should not go over the tax cap.

Councilman Doyle stated there are things that can be done but eventually the Town may have to exceed the tax cap. The Comptroller stated we need to create a policy to set up restricted reserves, at this time they are all unrestricted funds. The State Comptroller's Office wants to see the unrestricted to be between 10 and 12 percent of your expenditures, the rest should be in restricted funds.

Supervisor Hogan stated on paper every request has been documented and it should be up to the Board not the Comptroller to determine which requests are reasonable and feasible and if the Board can honor them.

Supervisor Hogan asked for the steps required by the Town to exceed the tax cap.

The Comptroller stated a Local Law must be passed or a resolution that allows for the tax levy cap to be exceeded. It requires 60% of the vote of the total voting power of the governing body to pass. The vote must precede the adoption of the budget. The Local Law or resolution must contain language that clearly overrides the levy limit. There is no impact on the taxpayers if the tax levy cap is exceeded. (For example, loss of STAR exemption).

The discussion continued. ARPA funds can be used to update the computers in Town Hall and do not have to be added to the budget. The Board also discussed the increase in inflation.

The Comptroller will add PAVE NY and Emergency Weather Recovery Funds to the CHIPS revenue. She will subtract from the revenue on highway fund part town \$30,000.00 of the sales tax revenue. The \$30,000.00 sales tax revenue will go to general fund whole town. The revenue changes will adjust the amount raised by taxes and to balance highway part town will come out of the highway unexpended fund balance, which will offset the amount of unexpended fund balance general fund whole town and ARPA funds will be used for the server and IT upgrades. The changes will make the town equal to the tax cap.

Supervisor Hogan asked if the Board would like to discuss the budget requests received from the Town officials.

Enforcement Officer Humiston and Comptroller Rebecca Pomainville discussed the quotes for software for the Code office.

The salaries of the Council will increase to \$7,000.00 but they will sacrifice the health insurance, excluding the Supervisor. Supervisor Hogan stated he does not want the health insurance and does not want the 2% increase in his salary.

The premium for the health insurance has increased by 3%, the Comptroller has budgeted 60% use of the total potential liability of the deductible reimbursement.

ARPA funds in the amount of \$28,500.00 may be used for the anticipated IT upgrades, for server, and UPC's. The Comptroller thinks we can, if nothing the lost revenue could be used that does not have the strings attached. Some of the lost revenue will be needed to right the general fund part town before the end of this year. The Comptroller has budgeted \$6,000.00 for the annual monitoring service.

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The Board discussed the change of email from Google to Outlook; they will budget \$300.00 for email until Outlook is set up.

Enforcement Officer stated the software for the program he has requested is web-based which will accept the current Lotus program and the Excel program the Comptroller built. The information will be imported into software that is professionally monitored and saved daily. It will be a more secure not a locally produced program with unlimited users because it is web-based. The \$4,500.00 cost includes tech support, upgrades for the life of the program and the subscription fee is not changed.

Councilman Washburn asked what the software would actually do. Officer Humiston stated it will serve Planning, Zoning and Code Enforcement. It will cover everything. There is an online demo for anyone that is interested in viewing. The expense for the software is \$7,500.00.

The Hudson Falls Free Library has requested \$40,000.00, which is \$10,000.00 more than the past and is the first increase they have requested since 2010.

Supervisor Hogan stated the library is part of the Lower Adirondack System and they will deliver any book in the region to the Hudson Falls Library. The Board has no objection budgeting \$40,000.00 for the library.

Highway Superintendent Graham is budgeting for two new vehicles, he would do a cash and carry on a dump box and a sander for the pickup, install themselves which will save approximately \$5,000.00 in labor. The total cost would be approximately \$100,000.00. The trucks they now have would be traded in for approximately \$25,000.00 to \$30,000.00. He would like to go out to bid as soon as possible before any price increases. The discussion continued. The plan is to purchase another truck in 2 years.

Supervisor Hogan stated the Kingsbury Volunteer Hose Co. has requested \$265,832.00, a 2% increase over last year and does not include the revenue lost from not conducting Bingo due to the pandemic, which they have not asked for. The American Resource Recovery Act money can be used to reimburse not-for-profits for the loss of revenue. The Town may want to take this into consideration and assist them when the time comes. The discussion continued; the Comptroller stated the Town will receive \$269,565.28 next summer. The Board agreed upon the request for a 2% increase from the Kingsbury Volunteer Hose Co.

The Comptroller established a capital reserve for water fund for \$30,000.00 for each year due to the retirement of the Water Superintendent. The overall expenses will go down, with the projected user fees versus the projected expenses there will be about \$30,000.00 more in revenues through user fees than expenses. The Water Superintendent has stated it is very important to set up a restricted capital reserve for the water infrastructure. The Comptroller will research what the Board needs to do to set up a restricted capital reserve fund.

Once retired the Water Superintendent will continue to help the Water Department, by working every other weekend to conduct the water readings and work with the incoming Water Superintendent until he is able to work on his own. The Comptroller has budgeted an additional amount to cover for the retired Water Superintendent.

The Town Justice has requested A \$5,000.00 salary increase offset by reducing the hours of the part-time Court Clerk from 20 hours per week to 14 hours per week resulting in a savings of \$7,000.00. The Court savings will be approximately \$2,000.00 per year.

The Town Clerk has requested the part-time deputy at 25 hours per week become full-time at 35 hours per week with an estimated payroll increase of \$5,000.00 per year and a health insurance increase of \$17,000.00 per year.

<https://www.kingsburyny.gov>

The retirement of a full-time confidential secretary in April of 2022 will not be backfilled but instead a proposal to replace with a per diem clerical support for the Comptroller's office not to exceed 300 hours a year and hire a secretary for Planning/Zoning Meetings and minutes at a rate of \$100.00 per meeting with an estimated payroll savings of \$12,600.00 per year and an estimated health insurance of \$17,000.00. The Comptroller stated by not filling the confidential secretary position the thought process is the recreation administration has gone to the school, which has saved a lot of the clerical work done by the previous Comptroller. The Comptroller has also made changes to processes that have made things more efficient but still needs clerical support for maintaining internal controls. The Town Clerk's office will collect the water bill payments; the Comptroller will issue the bills.

Enforcement Officer Humiston asked who would do the secretarial work for the Planning/Zoning Boards. The Comptroller stated it was not much clerical work for 9 to 12 meetings a year. Councilman Haessly suggested the Board hold off on any decision on this portion of the budget and discuss it at a later time. Supervisor Hogan asked if the per-diem part-time clerk hired for the Comptroller's clerical support could do the secretarial work for Planning and Zoning. The Comptroller stated she did not ask for any additional support from the clerk who would be working 300 hours each year. The Board continued to discuss Planning and Zoning Board secretarial and administration duties.

The Comptroller requested comp time when she is working a lot of extra hours and attends late meetings. After discussion the Board approved the request.

The Code Enforcement Officer has requested a salary increase of \$4.00 an hour; 20% estimated cost \$4,000.00 per year. Enforcement Officer Humiston stated Code Enforcement Officer Cortese would like to be paid what the County and Village Code Enforcement Officers are paid. After discussion the Board has no objection to the salary increase.

Enforcement Officer Humiston stated he passed the Civil Service the Board could switch him from Enforcement Officer to Code Enforcement Officer. The Board discussed changing the title of Enforcement Officer for Humiston to Code Enforcement Officer.

The Highway Department is reducing hourly staff through attrition by .5 and increasing all hourly rates by 5% resulting in approximately a \$4,000.00 year's savings. An employee retired last year, and the position has not been filled and a part-time employee went to full-time. Another employee resigned which left the department 1 ½ employees short. After no success in replacing a part-time position, the part-time position has been eliminated which was about \$16,000.00 per year. They plan to hire a full-time employee, the work performed by the previous part-time employee will be spread among the full-time employees; they will be given a 5% increase for the extra work. Councilman Washburn suggested the increase be more than 5%. After discussion the Board agrees to a 5% increase for highway employees for 2022 and consider a 5% increase each year for highway employees.

Supervisor Hogan stated all other salary employees will receive a 2% increase, the Town Supervisor requests no pay increase.

The Comptroller will add the revenue for Pave NY and EWR, which is approximately \$70,000.00, she will shift the sales tax allocated to Highway Fund Part Town to General Fund Whole Town to offset the tax levy. She will adjust the tax levy for Highway Part Town accordingly as the changes she stated. She will make other changes here or there she will adjust the tax rates accordingly and keep everything in the tax cap by using some of the available unrestricted fund balance in Highway Part Town and not use any

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unreserved fund balance in General Fund Whole Town. The Comptroller will make all the adjustments and email the Board by the end of tomorrow.

The workshop was adjourned at 8:32 pm with a motion by Councilman Washburn seconded by Councilman Haessly and carried by a vote of 4 ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Bardin, Town Clerk