



TOWN OF WILLSBORO

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**TOWN OF WILLSBORO
TOWN BOARD PUBLIC HEARING & SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING
WILLSBORO TOWN HALL
OCTOBER 22nd, 2024**

ATTENDEES- Marilyn Strong, Kathy Schoolcraft, Stuart Del Caliz, Kelly Del Caliz, Pete Sowizdrzal, Scott Moran, Greg Cassavaugh, Sadie Mosley, Neil Mosley, John Bauer, Catherine Kaleita

BOARD MEMBERS- Steve Benway, Lorilee Sheehan, Shaun Gilliland, Lane Sayward, Scott Christian

CALLED TO ORDER @ 6:30pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING-

Gilliland explained that this is a meeting to hear the public's view on the proposed Town of Willsboro Local Law of 2024 #1. This would be a local law to allow for the breaking of the tax cap. The tax cap is 2% from the year before. When the legislature sets this requirement in place, it takes time to be able to set a local law. You must have a local law in place before you finalize the budget. If it is not in place, you cannot exceed. This local law has been passed in the past. This local law allows the town board to exceed but does not require it to exceed. The budget is a tentative budget that is produced to the board from the supervisor in the month of September and filed with the Town Clerk by October 1st. A lot of times you do not have all the data that is needed this early in the budget process, health care cost, etc. The next step is for the Town board to consider the supervisors tentative budget and change it or adopt it as the town's preliminary budget. The changed or original budget then goes to public hearing, the public hearing can be no later than the Thursday after election day. The Public hearing on the preliminary budget this year will be on November 7, 2024. The final budget must be approved by the town board by November 20th, 2024. If it is not approved by then the preliminary budget becomes the final budget. This is a 3-step process, the town is in step 2 of this process.

Public Comment-

Stuart DelCaliz

- no comment currently.

Gregg Cassavaugh

-Wanted to know the reasoning behind going over the tax cap. Has concerns of people not being able to afford their taxes with the increase.

Sadie Mosley

-asked how does this affect property taxes? The assessment? Gillilland explained that the Town of Willsboro is at 100% equalization rate, so there is no state penalty. Assessment went up throughout the state, but when the tax levy comes through the charge per \$1000.00 of assessed value will go down. If the taxes are raised the town will get more money in taxes however, some went high, some dropped significantly.

Marilyn Strong

- told that her taxes have gone up the last 3 years in a row, when she came in to grieve them, she was told that they were adjusting them because of the sales from Covid and people were paying a lot for homes. Gillilland stated that the Board of Supervisors went after the state and they were told that because of the bubble of Covid and they take a 7-year average. The county asked them to take the bubble out of the average and the state refused. Gillilland stated that in his opinion that the fiscal house in the state is bad and they are billions of dollars short and they are going to come back to the counties. She asked that if the town goes over the cap that the taxes are going to continue to increase.

John Bauer

- asked that if you override the tax levy, is there a correlation between the tax levy or exceeding the tax levy and the property taxes being assessed. Gillilland stated no, this was not a correlation.

Board Comment-

Christian stated that if you look on the front sheet of the budget, the estimated revenue from taxes is going to be \$1,915,912.00 and last year was \$1,788,691.00. Gillilland stated that the taxes were just a little less for revenue.

Closed public hearing on local law #1 @ 6:40pm.

Open Special Town board meeting

Gillilland reviewed how the tentative budget was put together. The overall tentative budget is approximately a 15 % increase. There were some changes that were made that were not fiscal changes. All employee benefits, health insurance, retirement, workman's comp, and social security were shifted into the general line. This was done to make the account process cleaner cut. There is a bond to be paid back for the salt and sand shed of \$100,000.00. There is a grant for Parks and Recreation to develop a playground and recreational facilities at Hathaway Park for \$177,000.00 and it is a 50% grant and this is \$100,000.00 onetime line. The library was cut down \$10,000.00. Health insurance went up 5% for active and 30% for retirees. Also, negotiations with the union are coming up and a 4% increase was put in the personnel account. Cost share on 2 grants for comprehensive plan and waste water planning to handle overflows. An additional hire was added for DPW for an additional laborer to handle the increased work load that we have from the development of all the parks and recreational facilities. Also add money to hire a contractor to assist in the delivery of meters as they are so far behind and they will be in the middle of a new water treatment plant construction. A few small changes were put in after putting together the tentative budget. A \$35,000.00- \$40,000.00 increase from the Willsboro/Essex EMS. They have decided to pay for this out of their fund balance and that will drop about \$20,000.00 and that money was shifted over to the highway department for repair and snow removal.

Benway made the motion to adopt the preliminary budget with changes recommended by the supervisor. Sheehan seconded the motion.

Discussion-

Christian asked where the 15% increase came from if last year's budget was \$3,531,621.00. Gilliland stated it was from the tax levy portion. That last year's levy for the final budget has the fire district included.

Kathy Schoolcraft

-Stated she was not prepared to ask questions because she only was notified on Friday and asked for information because this was a lot of information to swallow. Gilliland stated there will be another public hearing on November 7th.

Pete Sowizdrzal

-what is the percentage of increase over the 2%. Gilliland stated it is another 15% increase and last year it was 4%. This budget has several one-time expenditures.

Marilyn Strong

-asked what is recreational and what does that entail? Gilliland explained that the state will give \$177,000.00 for the grant and the rest will come from in-kind work and money. This is for a plan that will go out to bid for a multi age playground at Hathaway Park with an adult fitness trail. The pavilion has already been paid for but has not been built yet.

Katherine Kaletia

-asked if the position that was being hired for parks was a position that the town got rid of a few years ago? Gilliland stated that this new position would be parks, building and grounds person and a laborer position.

Pete Sowizdrzal

-asked if the labor of the golf course was in the budget? Gilliland states that the town has not gotten a response from Diddle LLC. And the golf course is not in the budget. The golf course has always been budgeting neutral if they do respond. No public money has ever been put into the golf course.

Marilyn Strong

-asked if the nutrition site was included and Gilliland stated it was included.

Pete Sowizdrzal

- asked why code enforcement went from \$71,000.00 to \$120,000.00. Gilliland stated it is because they had to hire two individuals to do the job that one was doing.

Gilliland stated that if anyone had any questions feel free to call him or reach out to any of the board members.

Katherine Kaletia

-asked if they were going to be notified more than 3 days before the meeting? Sue Thompson stated that it was advertised in the paper and on the bulletin board but for the first time it was put on Facebook and that was 3 days prior to the meeting.

Roll Call- Sayward, Christian, Sheehan, Benway, Gilliland

Ayes-4

Nyes-1 Christian

Travis Crowningshield stated that he was not here last meeting and that the town made a resolution to go to bid for the sand this year, due to the fact that the county had already gone out to bid and Jointa Lime is on the county contract and that he will get the sand for \$2.50 less than county contract. Sayward asked if Jointa Lime has sand because previous discussion stated they did not have sand. Crowningshield has spoken with other towns that have been using the stone

dust and that it is better than sand. Christian stated that he feels that the motion to go out to bid for sand should be removed.

Christian made a motion that the town would not go out to bid for sand and go with the Jointa lime for sand for \$6.00 a ton. Sheehan seconded the motion.

Roll Call- Sayward, Christian, Sheehan, Benway, Gilliland

Ayes-5

Nyes-0

Adjourned @ 6:58 pm

Submitted by Susan Thompson