

PATTERSON TOWN BOARD MEETING
WORK SESSION
PATTERSON TOWN HALL
1142 ROUTE 311
PATTERSON, NEW YORK 12563
September 14, 2015

MINUTES

PRESENT: MICHAEL GRIFFIN, SUPERVISOR
CHARLES W. COOK, DEPUTY SUPERVISOR
PETER DANDREANO, COUNCILMAN
KEVIN BURNS, COUNCILMAN
PATRICIA BROOKS, TOWN COMPTROLLER
ANTOINETTE KOPECK, TOWN CLERK
RICHARD WILLIAMS, TOWN PLANNER
DONALD M. ROSSI, TOWN COUNSEL

ABSENT: SHAWN ROGAN, COUNCILMAN

Salute to the Flag and Roll Call.

Supervisor Griffin called the Patterson Town Board meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. with 1 in attendance.

Mr. Griffin stated I prepared a Tentative Budget message. Do you want me to read this, but I think you already read it. In the budget message, I didn't really speak at length about next year's budget. The one thing I would like to give everyone fair warning on is that the Fire Department, based on our contract requirements with them, is obligated to go to match our fiscal year. Normally, their fiscal year was April to the end of March. Now they will have to go from January to December 31st. Because they are changing it over this year, it saves us substantially. If you look, their budget is four percent plus lower, because we are not paying them the full freight. I'll let Trish explain the whole thing.

Ms. Patricia Brooks, Town Comptroller stated it is a twelve month contract. The contract does state it is calendar year, but they use it in the fiscal year from April to March. We still haven't had a signed contract, so we are trying to get it from 2015 and 2016 for a twenty-one month contract payment, as opposed to a twenty-four month contract. We usually pay them in April when their new fiscal year starts. We will move up their payment to January with the tax levy 50% January 15 and then whenever the levy is satisfied, usually in the beginning of February, but the second fifty percent will be paid in February.

Mr. Dandreano stated so the 2015 contract will be extended until April.

Ms. Brooks stated that is what we are working on.

Mr. Dandreano stated and that would be out of the 2015 budget, that three months.

Ms. Brooks stated the three months, which calculates to about \$300,000.00.

Mr. Burns stated we pretty much established that there was really no give-back from either Putnam or Patterson if we did start taking on a VAC, that there was nothing in the budget that was significantly.....

Mr. Griffin stated Patterson submitted a budget with a 2.8% increase and Putnam Lake didn't submit any budget, so they got a zero. If they do give us a budget between now and November, if it's less than zero, it will reflect. Otherwise, I don't know that I would be willing to give them any more money. Patterson is in the process of buying another ambulance. They feel that they can staff a second ambulance at times and should there be a need for either a mass casualty incident where you need more than one ambulance or what has happened recently is Putnam Lake has farmed their ambulance out to Mahopac and I think Mahopac Falls. When their ambulance was out of service for several weeks they borrowed Putnam Lake's ambulance. The ambulance that Patterson has is a 2005, so they feel it is close to the end of its life expectancy, so they are going to replace it. They are going to keep the 2005 as a back-up.

Mr. Griffin stated I spoke to Trish a little bit on this, the second paragraph; this year has been a difficult budget year due to the number of grievances by the CSEA, on-going lawsuits, tax certs, and code enforcement proceedings. In the past twelve months, we spent more than \$85,000.00. I had in there \$70,000.00, but that was just a typo and I want to have it corrected before we post it on line.

Mr. Burns stated the \$260,000.00 that they are looking for, is that just this year or several years.

Mr. Griffin stated that is per year.

Mr. Burns stated what is that percentagewise equate to of what their current budget is at the Highway Department.

Mr. Griffin stated it's about 6.5% percent for Highway and 7% percent for Sanitation. That is provided that we agree to what their demands are.

Mr. Griffin stated the Tentative Budget is 2.76%, we budgeted \$275,000.00 for EMS. We also budgeted 11% decrease in mortgage taxes and because of that \$185,000.00 will come out of Fund Balance to keep us where we are. I think there are some opportunities to save money, depending on the outcome of the election, but I won't get into that just yet. Personnel Services; Trish and I came to the decision that we wanted to increase the contribution to the medical insurance from 10% to 12%. What we have done is given employees that are making more than \$60,000.00 a year a 1% raise and employees making less than \$60,000.00 a 2% raise. It takes most of the sting out of the increases. Highway budget; 2.8% increase. Russ had originally chosen to not fund the vehicle replacement schedule. Trish and I discussed it and we felt that it was absolutely necessary, so as not to have to borrow vehicles. If you look at last year, we used \$260,000.00 of Fund Balance to pay for the vehicles outright, so there wasn't any cost for borrowing. We put the money back in that, however, in so doing and agreeing to his salt/sand and equipment requests, the only way to keep the budget to a point where we could get under the tax cap, is that we went from twelve employees to eleven. I wrote one Highway employee out of the budget. Sanitation there are not a lot of changes there. The budget shows a .74% increase, but it doesn't reflect any money for the \$70,000.00 in increase salary and benefits that are being sought by the Union. It also does not reflect any money for vehicle replacements for 2016.

Mr. Griffin stated this budget is higher than the State mandated 7.8% tax cap levy. Tentative budget representatives a 1.82% increase in the tax labor from 2014. It would require the use of \$185,000.00 of Fund Balance, \$50,000.00 from General Fund for Highway, as well as \$88,000.00 in previously unused tax cap allowance. Tentative Budget reflects a 4.85% decrease for the Patterson Fire Department, 4.73% decrease for Putnam Lake. I'm pleased to present the budget to the Board today and I would also like to thank and recognize Patricia Brooks, Comptroller for an outstanding job, what I had originally believed to be an impossible budget to reality to keep us within the tax cap. Trish thank you. I couldn't have gotten anywhere close to this without your help. Does anyone have any questions.

Mr. Burns stated I have a question on Highway. At one point, we discussed with Mike Griffin plowing highways was an optimization problem, in terms of how many workers do you have, how many miles do you cover, how many routes do you have and thereby how many trucks. Did he ever look further into truck replacement. It's better to have 10 trucks and replace them every 10 years, than have 12 and replace them every 12 years.

Mr. Griffin stated what we are expecting from Mr. Richardson probably within the next two weeks is the study that we authorized to do a comparative analysis essentially of our department against other departments in the area and places in the state. Unfortunately, a preliminary estimate right now looks like we will be leading in most of the bad categories and at the bottom of most of the good ones. Once we have that full assessment, I think between that and when we open the bids for garbage, we will have a lot of heavy lifting in the next couple of months.

Mr. Burns stated which is when.

Ms. Antoinette Kopeck, Town Clerk stated tomorrow morning at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Griffin stated we will have some better ideas of where we are on things.

Mr. Burns stated if we use \$185,000.00 of Fund Balance based on where we are projecting at the end of this year, where do we end up with Fund Balance at the end of next year, if we were to use it.

Ms. Brooks stated for General Fund.

Mr. Burns stated yes, where would we end up if things were spent as is and whatever falls back to budget as we expect this year, where would we be at the end of 2016, approximately.

Ms. Brooks stated currently, when this was printed it was \$1.14 million, but we just had to take out \$150,000.00 for the ambulance services in General Fund this year from Fund Balance. It will be about one million.

Mr. Burns stated so, if we have one million, then we would be one million less if we spend the full \$185,000.00.

Ms. Brooks stated no, that is with the \$185,000.00.

Mr. Burns stated so at the end of next year.....

Ms. Brooks stated if you look at the back of page 2 it gives a summary.

Mr. Burns stated so, General Fund is \$1.3 and it is projected to be \$1.14 million at the end of 2016.

Ms. Brooks stated that is without the \$150,000.00 coming off.

Mr. Griffin stated Pete and Charlie have talked about the need to put a committee together to make some hard decisions on where we are at with a VAC. One of the things we don't have now is a chiseled in stone budget. Patterson Fire Department is working on creating their own VAC. As of right now they are saving us about \$8,000.00 per month with their personnel doing five nights per week. They have the certificate of need right now. They are in the process of purchasing another ambulance. At some point, the Town Board is going to have to decide if it makes sense to use the Fire Departments scenario or do we create our own and have the Town sponsor it and pay for it. Either way, we don't have a detailed budget of how much this is going to cost. Trish and I picked a number of \$275,000.00. If you do the math, \$21,000.00 per month times 12 months, if Patterson can keep up to five nights a week.

Mr. Burns stated so you are saying we budgeted \$275,000.00.

Mr. Griffin stated for EMS for next year. If they do get the VAC in place and they want a budget of \$350,000.00, there is also a revenue side to that, because now they can actually start billing. With a \$350,000.00 budget, it's my hope that they would be able to bill \$75,000.00 and \$100,000.00 back to people who are using the ambulance, so we came up with a wild guess of \$275,000.00. That is basically where that number generates from.

Mr. Williams stated if Patterson goes ahead and they do the VAC, what are they going to do for the Administrative staff, they are going to need to do all the billing and monitoring of that VAC. There will be a substantial cost with that.

Mr. Griffin stated in the previous discussions with them, they spoke about having some kind of an administrator and paying some sort of a service to do the billing. If you look at their original proposal, I think the number was \$375,000.00 or \$380,000.00, but I'm not sure. It was a little convoluted because it had the extra bodies in it and some other things in it where they wanted to go to the paid Fire Department. I think \$375,000.00 for a VAC is based on what Carmel does. It's probably a fairly accurate number.

Mr. Burns stated what are we buying for \$375,000.00.

Mr. Griffin stated roughly is whatever the debt service on the ambulance is going to be. They are going to continue to operate out of their fire house with limited expense. I don't know if they are going to charge rent. Technically, the Fire Department and the VAC have to be totally separate entities. I would assume \$375,000.00 would get us everything from ambulance to all

the paid staff, the administrator and the billing service. What else after that, I don't know. I had a conversation with Jimmy Lull, he has been very active in the Carmel Ambulance Corp and their budget is around \$200,000.00 with the Town of Carmel. He thinks it will decrease in the future. I don't know. We have been told that the Medicare and Medicaid are going to be changing their billing practices on ambulance reimbursement. The money we think we will make may not be there. I'm hoping the \$275,000.00 will be really close with the ability to bill back.

Mr. Williams stated the difficulty I see with all of this is that we are still under the control of the Patterson Fire Department. We are going to subject ourselves to whatever they feel the cost is going to be. They don't have to put out a lot of this to competitive biddings, so they may not be going with the lowest reasonable price.

Mr. Dandreano stated I don't think we are saying we are going with the Fire Department, we are just using that as an example.

Mr. Griffin stated honestly, I hate to say it, but they are the only game in Town for 2016. For the Town to go out and establish a VAC you would have to go and get a certificate of need, which could take a couple of months. You have to figure out where you will get ambulances. We could certainly use TransCare's personnel and we would have to find someone to be the administrator, officers, etc. Time is not on our side right now.

Conversation ensued.

Mr. Griffin stated I have two more names I can get proposals from. If you want to bring them in for interviews, we can do that. I continue to have conversations with Tony Sutton as to when the County is going to get into the game. I don't know that they ever will. This is a problem that should be solved at the County level. The County has a lot more ability to work on these things than we do. If the County said send us a check for \$100,000.00 in January, we will take over the ambulance service for the entire County, I think it could be done very cost effectively. For whatever reason the County chooses not to get involved. I have no answers for that.

Mr. Burns stated if we pulled the trigger and (inaudible) the Fire Department back for \$375,000.00 and let's say the Highway Department and Sanitation gets half of what they are asking for. That's another \$220,000.00 that we haven't accounted for.

Mr. Griffin stated that's correct. My suggestion on the CSEA would be to impose a legislative imposed contract, zero percent increase and leave it status quo. You could do that from now until the end of time. If you have to do two or three in a row, that's what you do. If you look at their proposal they want to take the personnel policy off the table, which means we have to do a comprehensive rewrite of the contract, which will now turn the contract into a personnel policy. My guess would be somewhere on the order of \$30,000.00 to \$35,000.00 to rewrite their contract, or you would have to negotiate every single thing you were in disagreement with. When you are paying a consultant a \$150.00 per hour, a hearing office up to \$2,000.00 per day, the costs are astronomical. They want to go back to a one percent contribution of salary as opposed to fifteen percent contribution toward medical. They have a whole laundry list they want to take off the table. They want their overtime clause put back in as it was in 2008.

Mr. Cook stated they want shorter work day and a salary increase.

Ms. Brooks stated a four percent increase.

Mr. Griffin stated compounded over three years it comes out to fourteen or fifteen percent. Trish ran the numbers, its \$260,000.00 a year and \$70,000.00 respectively. We are at an impasse. We have a mediator who will be here in October. There doesn't seem to be a lot of give in either direction. We want to consider going to a defined contribution plan for post-retirement benefits.

Mr. Burns stated get rid of longevity.

Mr. Griffin stated it would be similar to what (inaudible) talks about. We have a short window on whether we want to consider reducing the LOSAP length of service award to go back to the \$20.00 per month as opposed to the current \$30.00 per month. Trish ran some numbers. It would represent a substantial savings.

Mr. Burns stated how did it get from \$20.00 to \$30.00.

Mr. Griffin stated it was done by referendum.

Mr. Burns stated how would we get it back to \$20.00.

Mr. Griffin stated we put it on for referendum that we were going to amend the plan to reflect the EEOC issues. It's also not too big a stretch that we are also going to reduce the amount of benefit and then put that out to a vote. The only issue is if we put it on and it passes, then we are fine. If it gets voted down, we voted down the EEOC solutions.

Mr. Burns stated we can't break that down, question one, question two.

Mr. Griffin stated I don't know. I could ask Mike Ligouri.

Mr. Burns stated Trish, is there a number or percentage that you see over the last four or five years, I know we see money that we allot out of General Fund fall back to Fund Balance, but is there any trend where we are saying five or ten percent or does it just depend on the year.

Ms. Brooks stated it depends on the year and where numbers fall, because revenue can be higher then what is projected. Usually expenses could be lower, such as; the Justice Court doesn't higher another part-timer for a little while, so there is cost savings there. That has taken place in several different departments. That money falls to Fund Balance. Medical insurance wasn't as high as what was budgeted. That money will fall unless it is needed somewhere else.

Mr. Cook stated are we paying off any debt service like we did last year.

Ms. Brooks stated the refunding of the bond.

Mr. Cook stated yes, anything like that.

Ms. Brooks stated we can't refund again.

Mr. Griffin stated Highway vehicles would be the only thing that would be next to go off the debt service schedule.

Ms. Brooks stated all the vehicles are off. That is why we have the vehicle replacement money in the Contingency for Highway. We do not have one for refuse, which is something we need to look into.

Mr. Griffin stated I don't think the next thing falls off for another ten years.

Ms. Brooks stated one thing we did do is the court house money was split this year between General Fund and the court house grant money, we moved it all to the grant for 2016.

Mr. Griffin stated I would recommend you do the same thing for 2017 and then 2018 go back to a split, so when the grant money runs out it doesn't hit the budget full force. Next year's budget will be a tough budget as well.

Mr. Cook stated we do not budget for grant money, right.

Mr. Griffin stated the assumption of.

Ms. Brooks stated usually do not. Like CHIPS money, that is not budgeted until they spend it.

Mr. Cook stated or grant money for the salt shed.

Mr. Griffin stated we haven't received the money from DASNY, so we are obligated to pay the full amount of the bonds. As of right now, we haven't budgeted that money

Mr. Dandreano stated is that a reimbursement grant.

Mr. Williams stated they are all reimbursement grants.

Conversation ensued.

Mr. Cook stated on page 1, the Receiver of Taxes School Tax Line, what is that.

Ms. Brooks stated that is the money that gets charged in October. It's a two percent fee for them to pay late.

Mr. Cook stated that is why we don't have anything to date.

Ms. Brooks stated correct.

Mr. Cook stated and we think it will be double that amount from this year.

Ms. Brooks stated in 2014 it was \$12,658.00. That is a projection. The Tax Receiver did leave that the same, the \$6,400.00.

Mr. Cook stated how did it go from \$6,400.00 to \$12,000.00.

Mr. Griffin stated that is what the actual number was.

Mr. Cook stated in 2016.

Ms. Brooks stated that is what we put in.

Mr. Griffin stated the actual number is what came in.

Ms. Brooks stated in 2014. It might be lower or higher, it depends if people pay their taxes late in October, then it will be lower.

Mr. Griffin stated if the economy is doing well and everyone is paying their taxes on time, it will be a little lower. If everyone is struggling and everyone is late, the number will be what we think it is.

Mr. Cook stated page 2, the IMA with Pawling, I will hold that discussion until we have a whole Board. I'll just make the comment that I think that the projected number is a little too low.

Mr. Burns stated we did the two year.

Mr. Griffin stated it is up this year.

Mr. Cook stated page 9, Building Maintenance that is with Paul retiring.

Mr. Griffin stated yes.

Mr. Burns stated is Paul retiring.

Mr. Griffin stated he will retire sometime in February and what I did was turned that into a part-time position without benefits. Depending on how things turn out, I originally reduced the Planning budget considerably, but Trish told me I had to put it back. Before the final budget, you could revisit that and we wouldn't have to use so much Fund Balance.

Mr. Dandreaano stated it says \$10,000.00 for a part-time person. So we are saving money with benefits beside a salary.

Mr. Griffin stated you will save some. Paul is vested, so he will be eligible for some consideration, but we won't be paying a family plan and he will be contributing considerably more. There will be a 65% reduction in the cost of medical benefits. We reduced his salary a small amount.

Mr. Cook stated page 3, the first line, \$31,800.00 what is that.

Ms. Brooks stated it is a maintenance aide from the State.

Mr. Cook stated we get that all the time.

Mr. Williams stated it's not CHIPS.

Mr. Dandreano stated we spoke about grants not being budgeted....

Ms. Brooks stated no, that is something that comes in every year. It's gone down, but then it has been steady for five years.

Mr. Cook stated page 12, the Contingency Account; \$40,000.00. Is that a little low.

Mr. Burns stated what did we spend from it this year.

Ms. Brooks stated \$41,297.00 that is left, but we did use some that is not in here yet, that you just passed for the tax cert for Clover Lake.

Mr. Cook stated this is like an \$11,000,000.00 budget.

Mr. Griffin stated no, General Fund is \$4,000,000.00.

Mr. Cook stated \$40,000.00, you are comfortable with that.

Ms. Brooks stated this is just the money that budgeted in there. The ambulance, I couldn't take it out of Contingency Account, so I took it out of Fund Balance. You have the option to go there. This is if someone needs an extra \$500.00, if something increased in price, this is where we would take it out of.

Mr. Cook stated under Recreation, we are not budgeting any money for conferences or seminars.

Ms. Brooks stated for the last three years there has been nothing on that line. If he wanted to go, he would have to ask for permission from the Town Board.

Mr. Cook stated page 16, the third line on the salaries going from \$30,000.00 to \$33,000.00. Is that 10%.

Mr. Griffin stated that's the ZBA secretary.

Ms. Brooks stated that was the increase that the Board approved.

Mr. Williams stated that was the mid-year increase. She already has that.

Mr. Griffin stated we spoke about a six month review and we all approved it.

Mr. Cook stated we already gave some money.

Mr. Burns stated now is the money.

Ms. Brooks stated you just don't see it in the 2016. I will probably have to adjust the budget at the end of the year. I usually wait until December to see how much is needed.

Mr. Cook stated Highway, we will be going with one less employee.

Mr. Griffin stated if we are to continue to fund the vehicle replacement schedule and give Russ the things that he asked for; increases, increase in salt/sand, we gave him more money for maintenance and repair. He requested about five percent in his budget.

Ms. Brooks stated it was 3%, but he didn't have the vehicle replacement.

Mr. Griffin stated you can generally assume that a Highway employee is about \$100,000.00 in annual cost, give or take. We asked for \$128,000.00 in concessions from the Highway and Sanitation Departments. They chose to come back with \$270,000.00 worth of increases, so we are far apart. The only way to stay under that two percent tax cap is to eliminate one body or taking \$100,000.00 out of his budget elsewhere.

Mr. Burns stated so, you will not be replacing someone.

Mr. Griffin stated we will be laying someone off.

Mr. Burns stated above and beyond the letter you shared today.

Mr. Griffin stated no, not necessarily. You're right. That would not have to be the case. The person who would be leaving Highway would have the opportunity to go to Sanitation. We are in hard times and we will be in hard times for a long time to come. I don't see mortgage tax money making any kind of substantial come back, unless the County gets in the game and helps us out with EMS. I don't see any opportunity to save any money there. These issues aren't going to get any easier. In 1995, we took in \$215,000.00. Last year, and two years ago we took in under \$200,000.00. We almost double or tripled the homes in the Town of Patterson in the last twenty years, and yet we are bringing in less mortgage tax money.

Conversation ensued.

Mr. Cook stated page 3, for Highway; \$50,000.00, this is part of the vehicle replacement.

Ms. Brooks stated that's just the small trucks. Since I've been here, we have given him \$50,000.00 for small trucks or equipment that he purchases throughout the year. If he has to replace his Superintendent truck, which is truck No. 1, that is where he would take it from. The replacement schedule is the large trucks, \$145,000.00 and that schedule is every three years to buy two new large trucks. That is on page 22, Contingent Account.

Mr. Cook stated page 25, Putnam Lake Fire Department under Contingent two years.

Ms. Brooks stated that is a little buffer, so it is not all hit 2017.

Mr. Cook stated so, the buffer is from \$22,000.00 to \$57,000.00.

Ms. Brooks stated we had \$22,000.00 and the ambulance service of \$110,000.00. The ambulance service got moved.

Mr. Cook stated the \$57,000.00 covers what.

Ms. Brooks stated the \$301,000.00 is what we would pay the Fire Department and the \$57,000.00 is going to fall to Fund Balance and then we will pay it in 2017.

Mr. Bruce Majors stated what are you doing about the Assessor's Office.

Mr. Griffin stated in terms of the agreement with Pawling.

Mr. Majors stated yes.

Mr. Cook stated I just said earlier that we will hold that discussion until we have a full Board.

Mr. Griffin stated I proposed raising it from \$41,000.00 to \$44,000.00, then the next year \$45,000.00. Mr. Boryk has requested that we sign a contract that will run concurrent with his term, which is until 2019. Charlie is not satisfied with my proposed increases, so we are going to discuss it as a Board, most likely in Executive Session as to what the numbers should be. I don't want to lose the deal. I have a plan for 2019 that could work out really well, if it comes off.

Mr. Burns stated are we as a Town Board going to get an increase or are we going to be flat again. I see you have budgeted an increase.

Mr. Cook stated leave it in.

Ms. Brooks stated it's one percent.

Mr. Griffin stated you guys will be the only ones getting a raise, because for everyone else it will be a wash because of the medical insurance.

Mr. Williams stated I'm looking for a tentative approval. I would like to bring it up at the next Town Board meeting. There are a couple of other change orders that I need to talk to you about that I need to get authorized quickly. Everything is complete at this point. The cost for the gasket not being the right size and to replace it was an additional \$405.00 and the cost of the new cover would be about \$1,000.00. I talked with the contractor and I was looking for something to replace out there. It's basically a box that you pick up, slide over the top and he will put hafts on so we can lock it. I went with a cheaper alternative. Mike and I had this conversation and he thinks I should be going for one that we don't need to pick up over the top. We only use it once a year and Mike would like to see one with hinges on it at a cost of approximately \$2,500.00.

Mr. Burns stated what was the total cost of doing the whole Sluice Gate.

Mr. Williams stated total cost right now is just under \$90,000.00. The bid came in at \$87,000.00.

Conversation ensued.

Mr. Burns made a **motion** to tentatively approve \$3,000.00 for the above noted.

Seconded Mr. Dandreano. All In Favor: Aye. Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Cook made a **motion** to adjourn the Town Board meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Seconded by Mr. Dandreano. All In Favor: Aye. Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Antoinette Kopeck, Town Clerk