



Town Board

Special Meeting

November 9, 2023

The Town Board of the Town of Chester convened at the Town of Chester Municipal Center, 6307 State Route 9, Chestertown, New York, at 7:00 pm.

Roll Call:

Supervisor Craig Leggett – Present
Councilperson Chris Aiken - Present
Councilperson Karen DuRose – Absent
Councilperson Mike Packer – Present
Councilperson Larry Turcotte – Present
Town Clerk, Mindy Conway – Present

Special Meeting:

Supervisor Leggett **opened** the Special Town Board Meeting at 7:05 pm with Councilperson Turcotte leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Hearing:

Supervisor Leggett **opened** the public hearing on the 2024 Preliminary Budget at 7:06 pm.

Supervisor Leggett asked if anyone would like to speak.

David Betts, Cochair of the North Warren EMS, asked how much the emergency squad was allotted. Supervisor Leggett commented that it is on its own fund now, so it is not within our general budget, and it is set at \$312,000. A 4% increase over last year.

David Betts said that they submitted a budget to the Town, they anticipate a shortfall of \$100,000 this year due to several things. The first thing is that in the past there was an overestimation of what their reimbursement was going to be. They have revised that by going back five (5) years and averaging the last five (5) years. So, there was an overestimation of about \$50,000. They have had to pay their employees more. It is hard to get employees. They have had to offer medical benefits and some other benefits to get them to stay. It is very competitive up here in the north country. They also have a line for equipment now. They are going to buy a new ambulance this year and covid has helped them out with that with the ARPA funding. The two (2) ambulances they have now are 10-12 years old and they are costing them a lot of money to keep them going. This year they will replace one (1) of them and within five (5) years they will need to replace the other one. If not, they will be down to one ambulance. If there is not something else, they can do they may need to cut the hours of service and that is not far to the north country.

David Betts commented that they would like to get together to work together on the budget for 2026.

Supervisor Leggett commented that they did go over the tax cap twice for EMS. Last year was one to form the district. He is deeply sympathetic to the EMS situation. At the county level they have been trying to address this. Supervisor Leggett feels that each individual squad in the county does not want to give up their own administration. He had reached out to Derrick Helms,

our liaison to the EMS, about what the town was going to put in, but had not heard much back from him.

Supervisor Leggett asked what the Town of Horicon ended up doing. David Betts said \$7,000 more. Supervisor Leggett said we are doing \$12,000 more than last year.

Supervisor Leggett said that they broke the tax cap last year and didn't want to do it again. However, there is fund balance that can be used for a one-time purchase or special project.

David Betts said that when they gave you the number for the tax district it was probably not done right and asked what EMS and fire get. Supervisor Leggett said EMS is at 38¢, Chestertown Fire is at 83¢, Pottersville Fire gets \$1.69, and North Creek Fire 78¢. David Betts said that is very low for what they do, and it is staffed seven (7) days a week, twenty-four (24) hours a day.

Councilperson Turcotte asked who the treasurer was now. David Betts replied Cash Jones.

David Betts asked if there was any way to fix the amount in the tax district. Supervisor Leggett said no. Every year we have done the preliminaries for the Local Law to break the tax cap and it would be the will of the Board to bring it up. Right now, they are \$118 under the tax cap. We all know it is a good case. David Betts commented he wants it to continue.

Councilperson Turcotte said that they cannot authorize putting any more money into the budget right now, because they answer to the taxpayers. Obviously, the EMS needs it, he is not saying it doesn't. He would like to see what was spent last year to see what to spend this year. David Betts asked what he could do now, give the town a copy of what was spent after they close their books.

Davis Betts said that they gave their employees a raise, but it was under 3%.

Supervisor Leggett asked if there was anyone else from the public who would like to speak? Anyone on Zoom?

Supervisor Leggett **closed** the public hearing for the 2024 Preliminary Budget at 7:29 pm.

Preliminary Budget:

Supervisor Leggett presented the following spreadsheet:

Tent Town Budget 2024									
Code	Fund	Appropriations	Less Estimated Revenues	Less Unexpended Balance	Amount to be Raised by Taxes 2024	Assessed Value 2024	Estimated Tax Rate 2024	Tax Rate 2023	Difference 2024-2023
A	General	\$2,558,250	\$2,238,150	\$240,100	\$80,000	\$764,990,925	\$0.105	\$0.089	\$0.016
DA	Highway	\$2,390,000	\$1,365,000	\$0	\$1,025,000	\$764,990,925	\$1.340	\$1.299	\$0.041
CD	Cmnty Dev	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$764,990,925	\$0.000	\$0.000	\$0.000
L	Library	\$95,449	\$87,700	\$7,749	\$0	\$764,990,925	\$0.000	\$0.000	\$0.000
V	Debt Service	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$764,990,925	\$0.000	\$0.000	\$0.000
	Subtotal	\$5,043,699	\$3,690,850	\$247,849	\$1,105,000	\$764,990,925	\$1.444	\$1.388	\$0.057
						\$5,944,735			
SPECIAL TOWN DISTRICTS									
SP	Loon Lake Park	\$148,700	\$45,700	\$0	\$103,000	\$247,720,177	\$0.416	\$0.402	\$0.013
CW	Chester Water	\$181,121	\$80,450	\$48,671	\$52,000	\$37,610,429	\$1.383	\$0.532	\$0.851
PW	Pottersville Water	\$66,940	\$30,170	\$13,770	\$23,000	\$10,321,887	\$2.228	\$1.935	\$0.294
SF	Riverside Fire	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$23,015,796	\$1.086	\$1.090	-\$0.004
SF	North Creek Fire	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$46,735,703	\$0.000	\$0.980	-\$0.980
FLAPCD	Friends Lake	\$15,000	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$146,110,200	\$0.103	\$0.234	-\$0.131
EMS	EMS	\$312,000	\$0	\$0	\$312,000	\$819,253,814	\$0.381	\$0.388	-\$0.007
	Subtotal	\$748,761	\$156,320	\$62,441	\$530,000	\$1,330,768,006	\$5.596	\$5.560	\$0.036
	TOTALS	\$5,792,460	\$3,847,170	\$310,290	\$1,635,000		\$7.041	\$6.948	\$0.092
% of Appropriations/Tax					28%				
					\$	1,635,118	Tax Cap 2024		
						\$1,583,000	Tax levy 2023		
						\$52,000	Difference 2024-2023 of tax levy		
						\$52,118	Allowed increase of tax levy		
						-\$118.0	Net Difference over / (under) tax cap		

		Appropriations	Estimated Revenue	Unexpended Fund Balance	Amount to be Raised by Tax
A	GENERAL FUND - TOWNWIDE	\$ 2,558,248.05	2,238,150.00	240,098.05	80,000.00
DA	HIGHWAY - TOWNWIDE FUND	\$ 2,389,999.29	1,365,000.00	-0.71	1,025,000.00
L	PUBLIC LIBRARY FUND	\$ 95,449.00	87,700.00	7,749.00	0.00
	TOTAL TOWN	5,043,696.34	3,690,850.00	247,846.34	1,105,000.00
SPECIAL DISTRICTS					
SF1	RIVERSIDE FIRE PROTECTION	\$ 25,000.00	0.00	0.00	25,000.00
SM	EMS FUND	\$ 312,000.00	0.00	0.00	312,000.00
SP	LOON LAKE PARK DISTRICT	\$ 148,700.00	45,700.00	0.00	103,000.00
SP1	FLAPCD FUND	\$ 15,000.00	0.00	0.00	15,000.00
SW1	CHESTERTOWN WATER DISTRICT	\$ 181,120.00	80,450.00	48,670.00	52,000.00
SW2	POTTERSVILLE WATER DISTRICT	\$ 66,940.00	30,170.00	13,770.00	23,000.00
	TOTAL SPECIAL DISTRICTS	748,760.00	156,320.00	62,440.00	530,000.00
	GRANDTOTAL	\$ 5,792,456.34	3,847,170.00	310,286.34	1,635,000.00

Supervisor Leggett suggested the following preliminary budget revisions to be able to ensure that there is good staffing coming into the next year.

Preliminary Budget Revision

	9-Nov-23		Prelim 2024	Final 2024	\$ Change
Personal Services: Supervisor	A1220.1		\$43,919	\$36,000	-\$7,919
Personal Services: Deputy	A1220.12		\$1,050	\$400	-\$650
Personal Services: Asst Bookkeeper	A1220.13		\$30,000	\$37,500	\$7,500
Personal Services: Confidential Sec.	A1220.14		\$26,780	\$20,500	-\$6,280
			\$101,749	\$94,400	-\$7,349
Personal Services: Assessor Clerk	A1355.11		\$26,780	\$31,200	\$4,420
Personal Services: Z Administrator	A8010.1		\$53,600	\$55,104	\$1,504
Personal Services: ZCEO (was clerk)	A8010.11		\$20,000	\$21,425	\$1,425
			\$100,380	\$107,729	\$7,349
TOTAL NET CHANGE IN FINAL BUDGET			\$202,129	\$202,129	\$0

There would be no net changes in the cost at all. It is just moving around funds between job titles. Reducing the supervisor, the deputy supervisor, and confidential secretary and increasing the assistant bookkeeper, assessor clerk, Zoning Administrator, and the ZCEO. The assistant bookkeeper has been here over a year, and he would like to give her more hours, there may be a transition with the bookkeeper. He reduced the amount for the confidential secretary but kept the line item for the supervisor to still be able to hire one. Increase the assessor clerk's hours from 20 to 24 because of the reval and increase the zoning assistant to 16 hours per week. Increase for the zoning administrator just to keep that in line, if we lose the zoning administrator we are really

out of luck. Johnsbury hasn't had any success filling their position. They could make a resolution to make those changes.

Councilperson Aiken asked if it was the same rate of pay just more hours. Supervisor Leggett said that is correct. Councilperson Aiken asked if the zoning administrator was going to be working more hours. Supervisor Leggett said no that is an increase in pay for the zoning administrator to \$26.50.

Councilperson Turcotte commented that he would like to see the supervisor's pay stay the same. He has been saying since he was elected that it has been too low. He thinks that Supervisor Leggett has been doing a disservice to himself when he does the budget. Supervisor Leggett said that he always counts on the Town Board to make the motion to increase, otherwise it is a little uncomfortable situation saying I'm going to pay myself this.

They don't need to take action tonight, but it does get complicated to make changes after the budget is passed and there is no net changes.

Supervisor Leggett asked if there were any other comments.

On a motion by Supervisor Leggett the Board **enter** into executive session to discuss collective negotiations pursuant to article fourteen of the civil service law and performance of individual(s) at 7:40 pm.

On a motion by Councilperson Aiken, seconded by Councilperson Packer, the Board **exited** executive session at 8:31 pm.

On a motion by Councilperson Turcotte, seconded by Councilperson Packer, meeting adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Town Clerk