

## RED HOOK TOWN BOARD MEETING

November 5, 2010

A special meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Red Hook, Dutchess County, New York was convened in public session at the Town Hall, 7340 South Broadway, Red Hook at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Supervisor Sue Crane  
Councilwoman Micki Strawinski  
Councilman Harry Colgan  
Councilman William O'Neill  
Town Clerk Sue McCann

Absent: Councilman James Ross

Also Present: Deputy Supervisor Robert Latimer  
Business Manager Deborah Marks  
Budget Officer Rose Rider

Supervisor Crane welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. She announced that the meeting was a continuation of the budget workshop. The Board looked at the remainder of the budget they have not looked at to see if there are significant changes that can be made. She summarized the public hearing comments from the November 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. There were 27 speakers in favor of the Red Hook police force, 3 who were concerned about the cost of living increases and perhaps raising taxes, and there were one or two comments about other issues unrelated to the task at hand. Following that meeting they went through the budget and made adjustments to the General A Fund. She suggested moving ahead to the General B Fund.

Councilman Colgan asked to look at the revenues in the General A Fund. He thinks revenue can be added through the cell towers because we have two more leases pending and they were not taken into account.

Supervisor Crane explained they were not taken into account because the leases were not signed. Councilman Colgan knows but this is next year's budget and it would be legitimate to include those things that we expect to happen by next year.

Supervisor Crane commented that would be fine if the contracts were signed but they are not and we don't have any idea about them.

Councilman Colgan proposed adding \$10,000 more in that line which is a modest line.

Councilwoman Strawinski asked how that is different than putting CHIPS money in for revenue.

Highway Superintendent Theresa Burke explained that we never get the go ahead until the budget is passed at the State level. We don't bid out until we know the funds are available.

Supervisor Crane explained from a fiscal point of view for the last twenty years they have not budgeted unknown revenue. It is not a very good way to anticipate the amount of money we have to work with.

Councilman Colgan, Councilman O'Neill and Councilwoman Strawinski want to add the \$10,000 to the revenue line from the cell tower contract.

Supervisor Crane wants to make sure they are aware the funds may not be received.

Councilman Colgan also wants to increase the mortgage tax revenue. He thinks we are likely to get about \$200,000 this year. Every mortgage that gets sold gets taxed and he feels we can legitimately expect more revenue on that line. He thinks we could justify \$20,000 but would go with \$10,000 bringing the line to \$190,000.

The Board moved on to the General B Fund.

Councilman O'Neill said \$15,000 to the Sheriff and \$57,000 to the Village seemed to be agreeable. His reaction to the responses at the public hearing on November 3<sup>rd</sup> is that people of the Town of Red Hook seem to be under the impression that the Village police can belong to them. They want a Town police department. If that is what the community wants they have to understand that it is going to cost them to have a police department. He thinks the citizens of the Town have to be informed of what they can expect as far as police protection. They have the misimpression that police should be available for the Town residents when we don't have a police department.

Councilman Strawinski had a conversation with one of the Captains of the Sheriff's department and asked why the Town residents would have a line in their budget at all for the Sheriffs' department if we are paying for it in our County taxes. Her recommendation is to cut out the cost for the Sheriff's department altogether and add it to the Village of Red Hook police.

Supervisor Crane told the Board that we have had a contract with the Sheriff's Department for years and it would be a shame in her opinion to cancel that contract. She wants to keep that \$15,000 in case we need them for special patrols. She is opposed to cancelling that contract.

Councilman Colgan said we just can't do it. We give a token coverage to the Village. He feels the lines should be left as is.

The Board decided to leave the line as it is in the budget.

Supervisor Crane moved on to the Building Department and said that this department was looked at last year and wrestled with. We invested a lot of money in training for the Building Inspector and Zoning Enforcement Officer and they are good at their jobs. One of their values is because they are good at their job they keep us out of legal action by resolving a lot of problems. Those two people who keep that department responsive deserve what they get in terms of earnings.

They protect the Town and do their job as it should be done.

Councilman O'Neill asked about the overall amount of money spent in the Building Department. Where does Red Hook compare to other Towns. Does our Building Department need more than one person running that department? He thought the discussion last year would reduce the department to one staff member. Why not have just one full time employee? He had many comments and questions and thinks there are things they need to explore.

Supervisor Crane suggested he look at the numbers again. He is adding numbers unrelated to salary in that department.

Councilman O'Neill said that each man in that department gets paid for two different roles.

There are four roles. He thought the Town decided to pay one person to do the job. Cutting off one salary is a start.

Supervisor Crane said the two individuals have two different job descriptions and the present part time individual has no intention of working full time. The other individual is waiting for a certification exam.

Councilman Colgan said that \$12,000 in revenue comes from Tivoli and shared services would be what he is interested in.

Supervisor Crane told Councilman Colgan that he has been Chair of Shared Services and this could be something they can get their arms around and figure what to do about it. Code Enforcement Officer Steve Cole and Building Inspector Bob Fennell have taken over the task in Tivoli and it works smoothly and amicably. We cannot afford to have either of those positions vacant because we need them both for their skills.

Councilman O'Neill feels the issue should be addressed sooner or later.

Councilwoman Strawinski pointed out that there are extra responsibilities every other year for that department. She asked Code Enforcement Steve Cole about those.

Code Enforcement Officer Steve Cole told her those responsibilities are every year not every other year. They have to be done in both Tivoli and in Red Hook.

Councilwoman Strawinski thinks the Building Department is overstaffed. It isn't personal, it is fiscal.

Supervisor Crane asked Councilman O'Neill what he is suggesting.

Councilman O'Neill would not recommend anything now but we should dedicate ourselves to resolving the issue.

The Board continued discussing the lines in the Building Department and then went on with their review of the General B Fund of the budget.

Business Manager Deb Marks explained in the B Fund the revenue exceeds the appropriation so the only recourse is to transfer more to the Highway Dept. which will lower the taxes. She asked the Board what they wanted her to do.

Councilman Colgan wants as close to a similar tax rate in the B and DB Fund as they do in the A Fund.

Business Manager Deb Marks ran the new numbers.

The Board moved on to review the Highway DB Fund with Highway Superintendent Theresa Burke's input.

Highway Superintendent Theresa Burke told the Board about the maintenance schedule for roads.

Business Manager Deb Marks ran the numbers again to see what a salary increase of 2% would create. She brought back the numbers.

Councilman O'Neill asked about the amount of money in the reserve fund.

Deb Marks told him the amounts in each of the funds. No money should be taken from the reserve fund.

Supervisor Crane asked for discussion regarding a 2% increase in salary.

Councilwoman Strawinski is against a 2% salary increase. She said she will vote against the budget.

Councilman Colgan doesn't think the Board is finished with the budget.

Councilwoman Strawinski pointed out lines that she wants cut from the budget.

Supervisor Crane told her the staff did a lot of work so that we don't have a windfall all at once. Planning ahead is a matter of good business sense. You can't run a small business with aging equipment and people handicapped because they can't do their day to day business.

Councilwoman Strawinski insisted on further cutting lines in the budget.

Business Manager Deb Marks told the Board that this is a very good budget which leaves us in a good position at the end of the year and for the beginning of next year to meet our obligations. It gives a good basis to start out to rebuild the fund balance. If they cut the fund balance we will have a real serious problem. She warned that next year is an election year the onus will be on you to keep taxes down and you'll have nowhere to go but up. You are not going to like that and you are not going to have enough cash to operate. This is the lowest our fund balance has ever been.

Budget Officer Rose Rider reminded the Board of a truck purchase and when you bond it out you will see a substantial difference rates if you don't have a good bond rating. When you look at equipment, look at the Highway. Some of their trucks are 20 years old and now there are 4 over 20 years old and they will all need to be replaced.

Councilman O'Neill asked how to explain to the public why they are raising taxes.

Supervisor Crane explained that our revenues have dropped and the assessed values shrunk so we have less money to draw from.

Councilman O'Neill asked what a 2% raise would equate to in the budget.

Business Manager Deb Marks presented the numbers she ran with and without the 2% salary increase.

Supervisor Crane commented that it is a very small amount of increase with or without.

Councilman Colgan said the public hearing continues on November 9<sup>th</sup> and there is nothing more to be done on the budget tonight.

Supervisor Crane said we severely cut last year and we've taken a conservative responsible stance. She explained that she, Budget Office Rose Rider and Business Manager Deb Marks worked on the budget for months and contrary to what some people to heard, Deputy Supervisor Rob Latimer had nothing to do with the preparation of the tentative budget. She asked him to sit in on a budget workshop because last year he was able to bring forward a \$39,000 savings to us in healthcare. The department heads met, committee chairs met, copious notes were taken and we've done a responsible job.

Councilwoman Strawinski wants to learn about bond rating.

Councilman O'Neil said, regarding 2% pay raises, that he cannot abide by it. He would not vote for a raise. The trade off would be no allocation for health coverage.

Deb Marks will run the budget numbers without the 2% pay increase and will have it ready for the Board to pass at the November 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Supervisor Crane said there will be three public hearings on November 9<sup>th</sup>. There will be one for the Tivoli fire contract, one for the Red Hook fire contract and the public hearing for the budget.

On a motion of Councilman Colgan seconded by Councilwoman Strawinski moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Adopted	Ayes 4	Crane, Strawinski, Colgan, O'Neill
	Nays 0	
	Absent 1	Ross

Respectfully submitted,

Sue McCann, Town Clerk