

**RED HOOK TOWN BOARD MEETING**  
**October 6, 2020**

A special budget workshop meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Red Hook, Dutchess County, New York was convened by Zoom Videoconference due to COVID-19 pandemic stay in place rules at the Town Hall, 7340 South Broadway, Red Hook at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Supervisor Robert McKeon  
Councilmember Christine Kane  
Councilmember William Hamel  
Councilmember Jacob Testa  
Councilmember William O'Neill  
Town Clerk Deanna Cochran

Also Present: Ann Conway, Business Manager  
Theresa Burke, Highway Superintendent

Supervisor McKeon called the meeting to order and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. He explained that we can and always do make budget adjustments during the course of the year. It would not be prudent to increase the appropriations beyond what they are at the moment given that some of our revenue expectations have been underperforming even when we adjusted back in May and June.

He referred to the budget which maintains a flat tax rate for the next fiscal year provided that things transpire in the way that the totals add up to be. This means that when we are talking about keeping it flat or slightly lower which is the case for the fifth consecutive year, it means that we are, in fact, increasing the total taxes, and we are increasing the appropriations for the various funds, but we are maintaining the same tax rate. The implication to the average household remains the same. We are just utilizing growth in the expenses based upon the growth in our economy and our total tax roll. He said that there is no proposed change in staffing in any of the departments. From the Comptroller's Office - our risk assessment remains very low. As a municipality, we have implemented minimum wage. Everyone who works here makes \$17/hr. or more.

Within the last year, the Town Hall has been retrofitted with insulation, the HVAC equipment has been updated to air source heat pumps. The community solar project was constructed and went live December 31, 2019. There have been land acquisition projects for rec. parks and trails and have acquired an additional acre on the Town Hall campus. Many of these projects are done with partnerships, grants, employees and volunteers.

We will be modernizing operations for this tax season or hopefully by the following tax season to make it possible for residents to pay their taxes and water bills online, and we are looking at the software upgrade that is necessary to make that possible.

In 2020 and 2021 we are exploring and hope to successfully complete an expansion of shared services in the highway department. We also have a grant-funded court study to see whether or not we can house the joint courts of Village and Town in one facility and provide a better service to our constituents and benefit from some efficiencies of co-locating those two courts.

Supervisor McKeon continued by saying that streetlights continue to be swapped out for more efficient LED fixtures and soon we will be going out for bid for the solar system for the highway's garage that's been partially grant funded.

The Board reviewed the budget focusing on the significant changes beginning with the General A Fund.

Highway Superintendent Burke asked about the Superintendent of Highways Clerical and General lines. She wanted to know if there would be any changes in those two lines. She indicated that regarding the "clerical," we are not able to keep up with the workload and she did indicate that in the "general" she asked for a 16% decrease and instead she got a 56% decrease and that wasn't in line with the rest of the elected officials in the Town as far as their general fund decreases. She wanted to know why that fund was decreased so severely when nothing was spread around to the other general funds for the elected officials.

Supervisor McKeon said that in that line that includes the highways school that happens in the spring each year. The expectation is that it probably would not take place. If it does, they can adjust that budget line.

Highway Superintendent Burke said that's pretty much a discretionary budget line for the person who has access to it and she understands cutting costs, but to just single out one person for 56% and leave everybody else who is an elected official at either 0% or at 20% doesn't seem like this

was fair. I'm in a situation every time that I have to ask for that increase for the amount that I'm asking for. I'm really disappointed that this wasn't even discussed and that I had to bring it up. I would ask that the Board consider doing a 25% reduction instead of a 56% reduction.

Supervisor McKeon said in response to the general lines, there were additional costs associated with mailings related to COVID that went to those other lines. That may explain why there wasn't a commiserate reduction in the other general lines as well. We can revisit those.

They moved on to the A Revenues and next the General B Fund.

Highway Superintendent Burke asked about the traffic control signs stating that they are not just the speed limit signs. She asked that if we extend this funding that you will increase it as needed for the traffic control signs on the roads?

Supervisor McKeon said absolutely.

Supervisor McKeon asked Business Manager Conway if there was an update on the proposed fees for the Building and Zoning Department.

Business Manager Conway said she has not seen a new schedule yet.

Supervisor McKeon talked about recycling and how they are continuing with what they have been doing during COVID, with a roll-off container. They are able to collect the garbage from the residents and charge them a lot less. What's proposed in this budget is that we are going to open up the recycling center to our Town taxpayers and not charge them to use the facility. The plan is to mail a recycling sticker with their tax bills.

They continued on with the B Fund Revenues and DB Fund.

Councilmember Kane had a question about the CHIPS, PAVE NY and EWR - does this fall under the recommendation for 20% less budgeting that you talked about, and do these figures include that 20% reduction?

Supervisor McKeon said that they do.

Highway Superintendent Burke asked a question on the Shared Services/Temporary Help Line - What would the temporary help line look like? Is that per diem?

Supervisor McKeon responded by saying it could be hourly. It could be per diem. He would look to Highway Superintendent Burke to make a proposal to the Board if you know of someone who might be interested in doing some temporary help.

Highway Superintendent Burke was interested in Supervisor McKeon's view because she hadn't requested a temporary help line. Did you have something in mind?

Supervisor McKeon responded by saying that if we need an additional person because someone is out or if an additional person is needed because we have a bad storm and you want to hire someone just for the day or night or have someone on call, similar to what we do with the wing persons, then we would certainly be open to that if that's a preferable way to accomplish any situation where you think we need a little extra help during the storm.

Highway Superintendent Burke asked if that was the short fall between the staffing I had before and the staffing I have now. Is that meant to take that up?

Supervisor McKeon said that it's meant to help bridge the gap if you feel there's a gap as this will be your first year with a crew of 6, so we will learn from that. He mentioned that the Town of Rhinebeck has the same staffing level and the Town of Milan has even less. Each municipality is different, and we will look to see what that staffing level is. We want to ensure that there's a mechanism, whether it's the shared services or temporary help, should we need to fill a void or a gap.

Highway Superintendent Burke also asked if the Town wants to think about what their plan B is going to be if there's coronavirus in the department or people have to quarantine because of coronavirus and the expected resurgence that's to come along. We would be looking to the Town to provide a plan for covering the crew if they were affected. We don't have anything in place and winter is about six weeks away. We need to discuss this at some point, as it might be a budget issue.

Councilmember Kane asked what Theresa meant by having a plan from the Town. She would like more clarification on that.

Supervisor McKeon responded by saying would we look to the Village of Red Hook and Town of Rhinebeck who we have an IMA's with for assistance. He continued by saying it's a good idea to have something written down. At least we have a tentative idea of how we want to respond.

Highway Superintendent Burke said regarding having a plan, there was an email circulated that said all municipalities should have plans in place if COVID comes back. We would fall under the umbrella of the Municipalities Plan. Theresa isn't sure if the email came from the insurance company or the State, but it was encouraging the Town Board to have some guidance for the departments in place if they were hit with COVID.

Supervisor McKeon said that NYS urged us to come up with a reopening plan. There has been an increase in COVID cases and the positivity rate has increased in NYS, especially a little south of us, and he says that Town Hall may not open until sometime in the spring.

Highway Superintendent Burke said she had asked for the capital equipment 10-year plan that was crafted and she hasn't seen it yet.

Supervisor McKeon said he would be highlighting that.

They continued through the SF Fire, SL Consolidated Lighting and SW Water Works O&M lines.

They continued on to the Taxes and Fund Balance Report.

Business Manager Conway shared the 10-Year Capital Plan.

Supervisor McKeon explained the highway inventory list.

Highway Superintendent Burke mentioned that in 2022 they would most likely need a plow truck. By 2022 the plow truck will be 22 years old and will cost more to maintain and it's not going to be safe. She continued to say that you can't rent or buy one, then you're down a truck for the winter and that's not the best case scenario. We have 6 trucks, 6 men and 60 miles. Six routes would be optimum. They would have to start out with five. Eventually, they would like to have six routes again because it's more efficient to plow faster.

Supervisor McKeon said he would add the plow truck on the budget for 2022.

Supervisor McKeon made another change regarding the blacktop paver. If we are going to be doing more paving ourselves and when that would have to be purchased. If it can stay in 2023, that would be preferable because the 2022 request is over \$300,000.

Highway Superintendent Burke said they could contract out blacktopping, but you can't contract out plowing. The plow truck is really critical piece of equipment for next year.

Supervisor McKeon asked Business Manager Conway to remove the Rec. Park tractor from 2021 and moved to 2022. Carpeting for hallways and office removed from 2021 and moved to 2022. The front door barrier will be moved from 2021 to 2022.

There will be a Public Hearing on the 2021 preliminary budget on October 14, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

On a motion of Councilmember O'Neill seconded by Councilmember Kane to approve the preliminary budget as revised.

Adopted	Ayes	5	McKeon, Hamel, O'Neill, Testa, Kane
	Nays	0	

Supervisor McKeon updated all on the request to move the polling site from Town Hall. He hopes to have more news on this in the next couple of days.

Respectfully submitted,

Deanna Cochran, Town Clerk