

**Town of Enfield
Public Hearings and
Special Budget Working Session Minutes
Enfield Community Building
Wednesday, October 30, 2013
6:30 p.m.**

Present: Town Supervisor Ann Rider, Town Councilperson Chris Hern, Town Councilperson Mike Carpenter, Town Councilperson Debbie Teeter, Town Highway Superintendent Barry Rollins, Town Clerk Alice Linton. Absent: Town Councilperson Vera Howe-Strait.

Supervisor Rider opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. by leading the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Public Hearing on Proposed 2% Tax Cap Override Law: Supervisor Rider opened the public hearing at 6:31 p.m. and stated a legal notice of this public hearing was published in the Ithaca Journal on October 15, 2013. Written comments will be accepted by the town clerk at 168 Enfield Main Road, Ithaca, NY or by e-mail at enfieldclerk@hotmail.com until November 4, 2013.

Marnie Kirchgessner of 191 Enfield Main Road stated she is opposed to the proposed law as it sets a bad precedent. Many residents are on a fixed income and if town taxes increase in addition to school taxes, some may be taxed out of their homes.

Beth McGee of 173 Tucker Road stated she understands the need, but feels it is wrong to include any salary increases for elected officials. She feels if residents are still running for the town board, there is no expectation of a salary increase. Services, roads and materials have to be paid for and she feels it is unethical for elected officials to have a pay raise.

Marsha Sundman of 215 Connecticut Hill Road stated she would like to keep the budget within the tax cap and implored the board to be fiscally responsible.

Councilperson Teeter thanked everyone for coming to the public hearing. She stated there continue to be questions as to what is counted in the tax cap and if the town inadvertently goes over the cap, the penalty is significant. She feels even if the board doesn't expect an increase over the cap, she would like to have the law pass.

Supervisor Rider stated this is a precautionary measure.

Councilperson Carpenter stated he agrees board members shouldn't expect a pay increase.

Supervisor Rider closed the public hearing at 6:42 p.m.

Public Hearing on Preliminary Town of Enfield Budget for 2014: Supervisor Rider opened the public hearing at 6:42 p.m. and stated a legal notice of this public hearing was published in the Ithaca Journal on October 16, 2013. Written comments will be accepted by the town clerk at 168 Enfield Main Road, Ithaca, NY or by e-mail at enfieldclerk@hotmail.com until November 4, 2013.

Marnie Kirchgessner of 191 Enfield Main Road thanked the board for holding a working session. She feels salaries, with the exception of the town clerk and highway superintendent, should remain level. She hopes some of her comments from the tentative budget will be addressed. The Beautification

Grant line for expenses has not been in past budgets. She feels it should be handled as in the past with grant funds. She hopes the board will whittle away wherever it can.

Beth McGee of 173 Tucker Road reiterated she feels elected officials should not have salary increases. She questioned why a deputy supervisor would need to be paid a salary and suggested they be paid a set amount for each meeting they chair and have a maximum amount set. She also stated she feels \$600 annually for a website is excessive and feels \$225 for 3 years is possible.

Nancy Spero of 68 North VanDorn Road stated she would like to see the Aquifer Study continue to be funded.

Supervisor Rider stated she felt it was more representative to put Beautification Grant funds in the budget as line items, but will take them out of both the expense and revenue lines in the budget.

Supervisor Rider closed the public hearing at 6:50 p.m.

Special Budget Working Session: Supervisor Rider stated this will be a working session and no action will be taken.

Supervisor Rider stated after she completed the Preliminary Budget she received new information relating to the retirement system and found slight discrepancies that she corrected. There was a slight discrepancy in the highway superintendent's salary. She also learned that Aquifer Study donations should not be included in an expected revenue line item. After checking with the Board of Elections, she feels there are no expected election costs for 2014 so that line can be reduced to 0. There has been a 3.2% increase in the assessed value of town properties which provides a reduction in the fire protection rate. Another budget option has less fund balance carried over and would have a higher tax rate.

Councilperson Teeter stated the fire protection tax counts towards the 2% tax cap, so a negative balance there will help lower the percentage for the overall total bill. She also stated after many years of no increases, the board has been trying to catch up on salaries and a 2% increase would be symbolic as opposed to a large part of the budget. She doesn't want to build a budget on the backs of people who work and serve since it is a very small amount. She agrees there may be a more economical website provider than Digital Towpath. She stated the deputy supervisor signs payroll checks when the supervisor is out of town. This is a position that could be paid by the hour instead of with a salary. The board has been trying for the past 4 years to make salaries equitable with other towns.

Councilperson Hern suggested that line item A1620.4 could be reduced back to last year's budgeted amount of \$45,000, saving \$900.

Supervisor Rider stated the \$1,000 increase in A8160.4 was to reinstate the annual spring clean up days. Supervisor Rider stated the deputy supervisor could be paid by the hour, but she would like to see at least \$800 in that line. If the proposition passes to move from 2 judges to 1 judge in the town, there would be some money saved.

Supervisor Rider stated she received notice from the NYS Retirement System that there would be a \$15,000 increase for the town for 2014. If this expense is pre-paid in December, the town can take \$1,500 from the bill.

Councilperson Teeter stated if \$2,100 is taken from all elected officials salaries, cut the deputy supervisor salary to \$600, rebate for early payment of retirement \$1,500, website savings of \$500, take \$900 from facilities - this would total a savings \$5,600, about .5 percent. That would mean a net 4% increase. The board could look at every \$10,000 taken from the \$150,000 savings as another 1 percent. So another 1 or 2 percent could be dropped by taking more from savings.

Supervisor Rider stated we have employees and we have a responsibility to be good employers and this requires expenditures of money that are decided other than here locally. As good employers we have an obligation. We are not in a period of time where there is an every expanding source of revenues. She mentioned that the state comptroller's office is not putting up with large fund balances. They advised the town that our fund balance was too high several years ago and that some of it should be spent to reduce the tax increase. She will check with the comptroller's office and see what amount they recommend be held as a fund balance.

Superintendent Rollins was asked how much the August flood cost the town. He responded about \$30,000 was spent from the highway fund and the equipment reserve was reduced. About \$60,000 to \$80,000 was estimated to put roads back to the way they were before the flood.

Councilperson Teeter asked if there is any hope to get funding to finish repairs that we can't afford to fix. Highway Superintendent Rollins stated there are some grants coming from the Department of Environmental Conservation for permanent fixes. Most everything being done now is temporary. It should be a good amount of money, but if we qualify it probably won't come through before August of 2014. Tompkins County Soil and Water would write the grant. TG Miller came out to help put together estimates for Harvey Hill Road and Fish Road. The grant would be for clean water so anywhere silt is created when it rains might qualify. If we received the grant, the town would have to do 25% in kind of services or money.

Supervisor Rider will go through revenues and check for gross under-estimates. She will check mortgage tax revenues as they have been higher than estimated.

Highway Supervisor Rollins asked the board to take another look at the line item to save for equipment replacement. He has given the board the ages, hours and recommendations for equipment. A replacement for the 21 year old 10 wheeler would run about \$210,000; replacements for the loader and excavator would run over \$200,000 each. He feels the \$30,000 per year savings toward equipment replacement is insufficient. He realizes not much can be done about it this year, but he would like the board to keep this in mind.

A discussion followed on equipment financing, leasing, and continuing to repair the equipment the town now owns. Superintendent Rollins will look into what other towns do and see if something besides purchasing new would work for Enfield.

Adjournment: Working session adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Linton
Enfield Town Clerk