

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING OF THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF PELHAM HELD ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2019, AT DARONCO TOWN HOUSE COMMENCING AT 7:00 PM.

PRESENT: SUPERVISOR PETER DIPAOLO, DEPUTY TOWN SUPERVISOR DANIEL MCLAUGHLIN, COUNCILMAN BLAKE BELL, COUNCILMAN TIM CASE, COUNCILWOMAN RAE SZYMANSKI AND TOWN COUNSEL TOM KLEINGERGER.

ABSENT: NONE

RECORDING SECRETARY: TOWN CLERK AMY RIOS

OTHERS PRESENT: CONFIDENTIAL SECRETARY TO THE SUPERVISOR RUTHANN DESIMONE, DEPUTY TOWN CLERK FRANCINE CAMPION, AND A FEW MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

CALL TO ORDER: Town Supervisor Peter DiPaola called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00 pm.

1) DISCUSSION OF 2020 BUDGET

- a. Town Supervisor DiPaola asked if there were any questions from the Board on the Preliminary Budget.

Deputy Supervisor Dan McLaughlin discussed how the budget was difficult this year because of additional personal that were requested from multiple offices including the Courts, Library, and the Assessor's office. The Assessor's office conceded that in fact they do not need a part-time employee and a per diem employee would be sufficient during the busy season. The Town budget is \$4 Million. The Town is increasing the budget by 1.98% which is the highest it has been in the last five years. This is still under the CAP.

Councilwoman Rae Szymanski – The part time position in the Courts left and we have added a full-time position. This is necessary due to all of the changes in the laws and the additional responsibilities the Courts will have in the new year.

Deputy Supervisor Dan McLaughlin- There also was an increase of 2% in everyone's salary to match the cost of living increase.

Councilman Blake Bell asked about taking money out of the Contingency Fund.

Supervisor Peter DiPaola responded that no money had come out of the Contingency Fund.

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

Andy Harris
416 Washington Avenue
Pelham, NY 10803

Andy Harris-There was a drop in salary from \$40,000 to \$28,000 – why did that happen?

Answer – Deputy Supervisor Dan McLaughlin – This is a new judge and the salary drop is reflective of that. The Judge that is making \$40,000 has eight years of experience. Eight years ago, the judges started out at \$28,000. The salary has changed to \$33,000 to reflect cost of living increases over the last eight years.

Andy Harris-Is this salary a lock step with experience? Is this a civil position?

Answer – Deputy Supervisor Dan McLaughlin – No, it is the sole responsibility of the Town to determine the salary of the Judges.

Answer – Councilman Blake Bell – This was the practice when the two republican justices started eight years ago.

Andy Harris- Hospitalization appears many times throughout the budget, is that insurance?

Answer - Deputy Supervisor Dan McLaughlin – Yes that is insurance, but not for the Judges. Under the judges that medical is reimbursed. This is the health insurance for the people who work under the judges.

Andy Harris- I could not find any money budgeted to respond the State Audit that occurred. Where is the tech budget coming from since the only line I found was cut?

Answer – Confidential Secretary Ruthann DeSimone – If you look at the Buildings portion of the budget on page 6, line item marked Server A1620.409.1.

Andy Harris-There does not seem to be much money set aside for training. Please talk through that.

Answer – Councilman Blake Bell – Training materials have been drafted. The outside technology consultant will be doing the training, so the money for that is in the other line items that cover technology.

Andy Harris- The fees for the auditor have increased substantially please discuss that.

Answer - Deputy Supervisor Dan McLaughlin – We felt that the past auditing practices were not adequate. We went out to a couple of Towns that we felt had good auditing practices and we interviewed a few firms and we now have a firm that we are comfortable with. O’Conner Davies. They do a lot of libraries and towns locally.

Andy Harris-Tax Consultant has been cut by a little more than half, why is that?

Answer – Confidential Secretary Ruthann DeSimone - We are implementing a new Tax

Receiver software, it was put in the budget last year, but the price has come down so that is the new number.

Andy Harris- The Assessor's salary went down?

Answer – Confidential Secretary Ruthann DeSimone – We have a new Assessor coming on. Our current Assessor has agreed to consult with us throughout the year to get through this period of change.

Andy Harris-Town Clerk's EZ Pass is going up by 50%. Why?

Answer – Confidential Secretary Ruthann DeSimone – We are doing well with that. It is a convenience factor.

Andy Harris-What does the insurance cover?

Answer – Confidential Secretary Ruthann DeSimone – Everything. Liability, our Constables program, our cyber insurance, recreation, it is an umbrella.

Andy Harris- Does this cover Board Members as well?

Answer – Confidential Secretary Ruthann DeSimone – Yes.

Andy Harris- Recreation, there is a new secretary and the superintendent salary has dropped significantly.

Andy Harris-What is going on there?

Answer – Councilman Tim Case – Fred Fiorito who has run our Rec department for the last dozen or so years has retired, and we are replacing him with two guys. They were in the Rec department and they are going directly to full time positions. The salaries dropped because they are new.

Andy Harris- Field maintenance, I noticed there as a drop of \$8,000, why?

Answer – Deputy Supervisor Dan McLaughlin – That is because the field is now turf and we no longer need to put lines down, so that results in the maintenance fee being less.

Supervisor Peter DiPaola – there is no feeding it or watering it.

Andy Harris- Please explain the Senior Citizens Grant Fund

Answer – Deputy Supervisor Dan McLaughlin- The money was received back in the early 1990's. It was held by the seniors in a checking account and now every single one of the original seniors have passed except for one, so the money was given in two checks to be managed by the Town in the Senior Citizen Account.

Andy Harris- Regarding the Library there is a large change in money.

Answer – Confidential Secretary Ruthann DeSimone – You have a budget with the wrong numbers, there were changes made today.

Andy Harris- What is being done in terms of getting grants? Is that something that is an ongoing thing?

Answer – Councilman Blake Bell – Yes that is an ongoing thing. The last major thing that we publicized being a grant was the upgrade and update of the bullet proof vests for the constables via a state organization.

Deputy Supervisor Dan McLaughlin – We currently have two grants for the Library. One for \$250,000 and one for \$500,000, we are just trying to figure out how much money we need to make upgrades to the Library we will be discussing that further in the Legislative Meeting.

Councilman Blake Bell – One of the problems with these grants is that the Town has to have the money to use initially and then the Town is reimbursed. This puts a strain on our tax payer base when the grants are large.

Andy Harris-There is \$80,000 allocated to a contingency fund. What is that for?

Answer - Deputy Supervisor Dan McLaughlin- It could be snow plowing, something that happens to the building, like when the Gazebo was taken down in a storm 4 years ago. Based on a \$4M budget, perhaps \$80,000 is not a large enough fund.

Supervisor Peter DiPaola – part of the Town Hall was upgraded and updated. The lighting is all LED but the fixtures were retrofitted. The rooms upstairs there is a FEMA room, a room for the constables, the historian's room, the bench for the Judges is bullet proof, the speakers, the wiring, all of this was done with grant money. In the past few years we have done 2 million dollars-worth of grants that we don't have to pay back.

Maura Curtin
29 Chestnut
Pelham, Ny 10803

Maura Curtin- Is there any increases in the Recreation salaries?

Answer – Supervisor Peter DiPaola – they received 2%.

Motion to Adjourn the Public Hearing of the Budget at 7:20 pm

Motion by: Councilman Blake Bell
Seconded by: Councilman Tim Case

Vote Taken
Town Supervisor DiPaola – Aye
Deputy Town Supervisor McLaughlin – Aye
Councilman Bell - Aye
Councilman Case – Aye

Councilwoman Szymanski – Aye

Motion carried unanimously

Respectfully Submitted
Amy Rios
Town Clerk