TOWN OF PLATTEKILL

REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING

November 6, 2024

Time – 7:00pm

SALUTE TO THE FLAG:

ROLL CALL:

The following Town Board Members were present:

Supervisor Depew

#### Councilman Fazio

Councilman Hoppenstedt

Councilman O’Flaherty

Councilman Castillo

PUBLIC HEARING: Public Hearing- 2025 Budget

Supervisor DePew made a motion to open the Public Hearing at 7:03PM.

Seconded by Councilman Castillo

On the Vote: All Ayes

Supervisor DePew read the published newspaper notice announcing tonight’s Public Hearing. The Supervisor thanked the Town Board and the staff at the Town Hall. He explained what a Tentative Budget is and what is the responsibilities of each department are. It is a chance for the departments to list their needs/wants and their mandates. He also talked about all the budget meetings where each department meets with the Town Board to go through their budget which are open to the public and our legal requirements to advertise to the residents. The public is encouraged and welcome to come. The Town Board is only responsible for the General A-Fund, DA- Highway Fund, Lighting and drainage districts. The library districts and the different Fire Districts are their own budgets.

1. Tasha- What is the drainage districts? Why is Plattekill Fire district so much higher than the other 2 departments?

Supervisor DePew- They are drainage districts when certain developments are built. The people that live in those areas, pay those taxes. The entire town doesn’t pay for them. Plattekill Fire District wants to start their own paid ambulance service. They do soft billing and they will bill through the insurance companies of the people they are transporting.

1. Mike- Lots of people in this room that aren’t getting raises. Plattekill is a poor town. Why are certain people getting raises and certain people are not?

Supervisor DePew- We as a board chose not to take a raise. The folks that work in this town don’t make the money that you think.

1. Mr. Newkirk- I didn’t understand the soft billing that you were talking about.

Supervisor DePew- That is something you will have to talk about with the fire departments that are actually going to be doing it. They will charge the person/insurance receiving the care.

Councilman Castillo- There is a huge volunteer shortage in the area. This is why Plattekill is looking to do this, we need it in the area.

Supervisor DePew talks about the different percentage between the Tentative Budget and the Preliminary Budget. Plattekill Fire District budget was lowered to 20.53%.

1. Chuck Valenza- Why is the Plattekill budget increase justified? It sounds like they just said they need so much money but they don’t say why it is justified.

Supervisor DePew- We collect the taxes for them and disperse but we have no say in that they do. The anticipation is to go to a paid service but you should contact them directly

Supervisor DePew directs the question to Bobby Jackson, PFD Commissioner.

We are looking to hire a paid EMT crew which is the significant raise. We currently run 1 ambulance but are supposed to have 2. Ambulances go all over the place helping each other and that takes time. If we put paid people on, we are looking to benefit the people in our fire district. All the commissioner meetings are public and everyone has the right to go.

1. Mike- Someone should be here and at the table from Plattekill Fire Dept. They are going to want 20% every year if they are saying it is for a service. Why can’t everyone all go to the same meetings?

Supervisor DePew- We are talking about the general and highway budget. We have nothing to do with the library budgets and fire districts. We collect that tax and write them a check. There are meetings at all 3 fire departments monthly. We don’t have any say in this.

Willie Castillo- I went to a Plattekill Fire District meeting because I wanted to know what is going on. All Town Board members cannot go to the same meeting; that is considered a quorum. The Town is a collection agency for the fire departments.

1. Helene Dembroski- Can the Town board be the information distributor? No one comes out to vote for the fire department budgets. The feeling in the room is that no one knows when the meetings are.

Supervisor DePew- On our website is links to all 3 fire departments and it shows when their public meetings are for the budget.

1. Gentlemen- Can you put a notice in the mail, do mailouts?

Supervisor DePew- Postage is expensive. There is a portion of the budget where we are going to get to the mail in this building, it isn’t cheap. We are trying to establish an email newsletter.

1. Frederico Crispino- We have spoken before about electronic signs. If you get the materials, I will build it. Signs should be by Route 32 and by the park.

Supervisor DePew- They are very expensive. We can talk about it. The most practical and reasonable thing right now is email addresses.

1. Alexander- The Town of Newburgh website lets you enter your phone number and it automatically sends you alerts for the town.
2. Al- You send a tax bill out every year via the mail and everyone gets one. Why can’t you send out something with the tax bills and let everyone know when the budget meetings are. There are a lot of seniors here, we want to know how much more our taxes are going up this year.

Supervisor DePew- We are in the works trying to print something on the envelope that the taxes get mailed in.

Councilman Fazio- We mail tax bills in January; budget meetings start in October.

1. Gina- The special districts and what their budgets are, I wish we would have a special panel to explain all of this and have a representative from each line. Its collectively a large budget with the other budgets. It would be a burden on the town to notify the residents when their budget meetings are.

Supervisor DePew- Everyday is budget day at the Town Hall. We try to do the best we can. It is a constant juggle. There are so many moving parts to this and so many mandates that we are responsible for. The budget is affected by so many things, insurance, litigation, training hours, etc. Oil, Fuel. I think it is very important for the people that work here, get the training and tools they need to do their jobs.

1. Mike- I am not happy with the 6% raises. You passed a law to go above the 2% tax cap last meeting. We all have to work hard and cut corners. What is the general fund?

Supervisor DePew- Tell me what services we can cut? Do you want to stop plowing the town roads? You still utilize public roads. EMS needs to get to your road if you need help, power companies still go to your private road to turn the electric on. Our folks do a lot more money and get a lot less. The general fund is working capital but it is also invested. It is not sitting in the checking account.

1. Mr. Palen- My wife and I saw the sign on Route 32 stating 17%. Where did that figure come from?

Supervisor DePew- That came from the Tentative Budget. Now that we trimmed it through the budget meetings and it becomes the Preliminary Budget.

1. Tasha- What is personal services, some of the percentages are high?

Supervisor Depew- Salaries and benefits fall under that category.

1. Chuck Valenza- At the end of this budget meeting, can we go home with a percentage point that our taxes will go up?

Supervisor DePew- Plattekill Fire District, 6.46%. Modena 3.88% and Clintondale is 3.83%. I would encourage everyone to attend all budget meetings for all areas.

1. Lisa Carlson- Is there a way we can do any research to get more grants?

Councilman O’Flaherty- We are constantly researching for grants and planning for grants in the future.

1. Mr. Crespino- A major problem is school taxes. Does anyone go to the school budget meetings? I go to them but the school taxes are killing us.
2. Bonnie- One of the larger increases on the line items is the Highway budget, is that for a new vehicle? There has been an increase in the tipping fees from Ulster County and that is affecting our garbage. Has there been any interest in alternative ways of disposing, or composting?

Supervisor DePew- We are going to do a budget modification on that. There is an anticipation of purchasing a new truck with a snow plow/sander as well as a chipper. I am going to remove the chipper for $113,000 and purchase it with the ARPA Funds and put that money back in the fund balance. UCRRA has given all the municipalities an opportunity to do some sort of composting or food waste disposal but it all comes at a cost. They are working through it and then the municipalities will have the opportunity. When you get a grant, it also comes with obligations. Employees have to operate, over see and maintain the program.

1. Resident- For the Highway Department, a work crew is 5-6 guys, why are only 2 working and the other 3 are not doing anything?

Supervisor DePew- I advise you to talk to the Highway Superintendent.

1. Mr. Crespino- Do you collect school taxes? You collect library, and fire department taxes. Do you get paid for that? You should

Supervisor DePew- No we don’t.

1. Jeff Badendyck- What percentage assessment are we at, per thousand.

Supervisor DePew- We are not assessed at 100%, I believe it is around 58%. The assessor’s office can pull your bill right up and give you an accurate amount. Your tax will be different than everyone else’s.

1. Mike O’Haloran- Can you elaborate the sources of revenue, what are they?

Supervisor DePew- I will read through them, a lot of them are projections. A lot of them change and they go on the trends and what we believe we will see this year.

1. Rick- Has it even been considered having all 3 fire departments join together? One massive fire department. It would be more economical way to do more. Everything should come together.

Supervisor DePew- Collectively, they all have to work together to do that. The town residents put the pressure on them to make changes. They give us their budgets, but we, the Town Board do not go to their meetings.

Councilman Castillo- Clintondale Fire Department has a contract with New Paltz Ambulance to try and help the volunteer shortage. The people of this town have a say, the people vote on their budgets.

1. Helene Dembroski- Is the engineering line including the Planning Board Engineer?

Supervisor DePew- That is a cumulation with the Towns engineering. You will also see it under Planning Board.

Helene- How many Police Officers do we have?

Supervisor DePew- The number of officers we have change. Generally, 16-18. It is part time. Some work low hours and some work many hours. We also could have 24-25.

1. Resident- What is part time police? Are they only on certain hours, or all the time. If the police department around the clock, 24/7?

Supervisor DePew- They are only allowed to work 1040 hours a year. If we went full time, it would increase the budget by a lot including benefits. If we filled 3 shifts a day/night, we would have to have 4.1 officers to cover. Our law enforcement is supported by other agencies since it is part time. Plattekill is not always covering.

1. Jeff Ashdown- Plattekill Police Department used to be manned around the clock including over nights, and they cut that. The town is over 10,000 residents, doesn’t the state require it to be full time when we are over a certain number of residents? We should look into going full time for our officers.

Supervisor DePew- I don’t know the number that the state mandates we go full time.

1. Resident- Are these officers full time somewhere else? Are they working other places to obtain benefits.

Supervisor DePew- I do not know of anyone that is full time somewhere else. Our police are police all the time. They are scheduled when they are available. When we don’t have a shift that is covered, other agencies help. A majority of these officers are just starting out and waiting to get picked up somewhere ese. We have a few retired guys that come here with a wealth of knowledge and experience. They are good mentors to the younger guys. We don’t have to pay into their retirement. The younger officers coming in, the cost is different.

1. Katherine Beinkafner- When I go to Gardiner, the back of the town hall is rented by the State Police. They don’t have town police. Gardiner does not pay any money to the state police. Why are we paying for Police? What does the Sherriff department do?

Supervisor DePew- I don’t know if we would have that opportunity. The state police used to have their sub-station in the fire house. Possibly Grant money? I don’t know what the opportunity would be to have the state police in every town. They don’t just serve Gardiner, they travel counties. They cover a large area. The Sherriff department cover zones. They may have 1 car that covers 3-4 towns.

1. Tasha- I appreciate the Police. The percentage for their budget is very high. Are they adding another officer, why is it so high?

Supervisor DePew- There is a lot of mandates that are required. We cut a lot of their budget.

1. Mr. Crespino- Do we have a transfer station? Does it cost us money?

Councilman Fazio- You need a permit to access it. It does not totally pay for itself Trash has to go someplace.

1. Helene Dembroski- Do we have a building inspector?

Supervisor DePew- We do have a code enforcement officer. Ed left and we are receiving applications and will be doing interviews soon

1. Mr. Crespino- What permits do you need to build a house?

Supervisor DePew- Driveway permits, Health Department. I would check with the building department.

1. Annette Laskowsky- The programs for the aging, is that the senior trips?

Supervisor DePew- Yes

1. Mike- Is it possible to cap the seniors at a 2% tax raise?

Supervisor DePew- If we capped all the seniors at 2%, the price is still the price for the services in the town. Who will make up that difference of the 3.88%? There are opportunities for exemptions to help with taxes. There are also volunteer firefighter exemptions as well.

1. Bobby Jackson- Is the Highway Union?

Supervisor DePew- They are in negotiations right now. The salary will remain the same as 2024 and then we will adjust if needed too.

MOTION🡪

Highway/Machinery/Equipment

Supervisor DePew made a motion to reduce the $263,000 total, removing the $113,000 chipper. Purchasing that with ARPA Funds.

Seconded by Councilman Castillo

On the Vote: All Ayes

MOTION🡪

Plattekill Fire District Contractual Expense

35%- 20.53%

Supervisor DePew made a motion to adjust from 35% to 20.53% ($776,822 now at $694,871)

Plattekill Fire District adjusted their budget. They have had open meetings to the public.

Seconded by Councilman Hoppenstedt

On the Vote: All Ayes

1. Tasha- Does Plattekill own the library building or is it rented? Are the increases due to salaries?

Supervisor DePew- Roughly 2017/2018 they bought the building. We have no obligations to that building. They do put their budget on the website.

Supervisor DePew- I received an email Monday that we are due to receive a check from Ulster County for sales tax, approximately $181,000. We will receive that as a revenue in the next few weeks.

MOTION 🡪 Highway

Supervisor DePew made a motion to adjust the unexpended fund balance, lowering from $300,000 to $187,000. (removed $113,000 chipper)

Seconded by Councilman Castillo

On the Vote: All ayes

1. Katherine Beinkafner- What is the Celebration fund?

Supervisor DePew- Our Red, White & Blue Celebration, Plattekill Day, etc. Our extra functions we do.

1. Tasha- Pickleball Court at the park?

Supervisor DePew- No sign-up sheets yet for pickleball. We opened it late in the season, we will work out the kinks as we go along. There is a completely new playground there as well as a Gaga pit. The Highway Department landscaped and we had it Hydro-seeded around the playground.

None of the expanse we did at the park is in this budget. It didn’t cost us anything. We did it through a grant through Ulster County and we supported the rest of the funds through the ARPA money. We put about $430,000 in that project and its beautiful. We are going to add 1-2 wheelchair accessible picnic tables. We did replace the golf cart at the park with another utility vehicle. We are going to put a side walk in from the parking lot to pavilion. I want to find a grant to black top the parking lot. I am also getting estimates this week to install 10-12 benches around the park and pickle ball. In the Spring time, we want to fix the bocce court and paint the pavilion.

1. Mark Reynolds- Did It come in at the budget estimate?

Supervisor DePew- I do feel pretty confident that we are a little under budget. We had 2 change orders come in, the concrete under the Gaga pit to get it up out of the mud. A lot of donations came in as well to remove the mulch and get it out of there. The money we saved there, we were able to Hydro seed the grass at the park.

Supervisor DePew Made a motion to close Public Hearing of the Budget at 9:30PM.

Seconded by Councilman Fazio

On the Vote: All Ayes

RESOLUTION #67- Preliminary Budget

Supervisor DePew made a motion to adopt this resolution. The Town Board was presented the Tentative Budget on 10/2/2024. It was re-drafted and now is adopted as the 2025 Preliminary Budget.

Seconded by Councilman Castillo

On the Vote: All Ayes

MINUTES:

* Supervisor DePew made a motion to NOT read the minutes from the October 16, 2024 Town Board Meeting

Seconded by Councilman Fazio.

On the vote: All Ayes

Supervisor DePew made a motion to accept the minutes from the October 16, 2024 Town Board Meeting.

Seconded by Councilman O’Flaherty.

On the Vote: All Ayes

ADDITIONS:

* Pickleball Courts- This was addressed earlier in the meeting
* The Town Board will go into Executive Session at the end of the meeting to discuss Personnel Matters.

REPORTS:

PUBLIC INPUT:

* Supervisor Depew made a motion to open Public Input at 9:35PM.

Seconded by Councilman O’Flaherty

On the vote: All Ayes

1. Katherine Beinkafner- Does the Town Board read the minutes before they approve them? We don’t read the minutes at the town board meetings; I realize it takes a lot of time.

Supervisor DePew- Yes, the Board each gets a copy of the minutes.

1. Jeff Ashdown- Kudos to the Town Board for reducing the budget amount. The Board deserves a round of applause.
2. Mark Reynolds- On Veterans Day, at 2:30PM, at the library, there will be an unveiling of the Boy Scout Eagle Scout Project.

* Supervisor Depew made a motion close public input at 9:37PM.

Seconded by Councilman Fazio On the vote: All Ayes

OLD BUSINESS:

* Veterans Day Ceremonies

Monday, November 11. 1:00PM at our Veterans Park.

11:00AM is a Ceremony at Aloha

2:30Pm- Library, they will have their dedication.

* Relist Backhoe

Previous buyer backed out of purchasing the backhoe. The second and third options were no longer interested as well.

Supervisor DePew advised the Highway Superintendent to relist. Auction will be complete November 19.

NEW BUSINESS

* Ice Control Abrasive Screening Bid

Highway Superintendent requested we advertise bids. Advertise 3 weeks. Bid will be opened on December 2, 2024 at 11:00AM

Supervisor DePew made a motion to move forward on the request from the Highway Superintendent

Seconded by Councilman O’Flaherty

On the Vote: All Ayes

* SWIPP Kitty Lane/Calico Way

Notice of Termination for Storm water discharge authorized under Speeds general permit for construction activity. Kitty Lane Properties, LLC.

Project Kitty Lane Subdivision

Reason for Termination: All disturbed areas have achieved final stabilization in accordance with general permit and SWIPP.

Engineer has signed off and has been approved. MS4 acceptance.

Councilman Hoppenstedt made a motion to allow the Town Supervisor, Dean Depew to sign the notice of determination for Kitty Lane.

Seconded by Councilman Fazio

On the Vote: All Ayes

* New Police Hires

5 New Candidates- Under the advice of the Police Chief, candidates are going from 1st- 2nd phase of the Police academy.

The Town Board has received their resumes and applications.

Supervisor Depew made a motion to hire these applications

Seconded by Councilman Castillo

On the Vote: All Ayes

TRANSFERS: NONE

VOUCHERS:

* Supervisor Depew reviewed the Voucher Detail report Dated November 6, 2024, which includes:

The A-General Fund amount of 19,160.33

The DA-Highway Fund amount of $9,890.94

The H2- Recreation/Playground Equipment ARPA in the amount of……………. $950.00

For a grand total in the amount of **$30,001.27**

Supervisor Depew made a motion to accept the vouchers, recognizing that the Audit Committee has reviewed the claims and found them acceptable for payment.

Seconded by Councilman Castillo

On the vote: All Ayes

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Supervisor DePew made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 9:40PM regarding Personnel Matters.

Seconded by Councilman Castillo

On the Vote: All Ayes

Supervisor DePew made a motion to exit Executive Session at 9:55PM.

Seconded by Councilman Castillo

On the Vote: All Ayes

No decisions were made.

ADJOURNMENT:

Supervisor Depew made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:56 pm.

Seconded by Councilman Fazio

On the Vote: All Ayes