

TOWN OF CONSTANTIA  
**MINUTES –BUDGET MEETING – October 13, 2022**  
4:00 pm Constantia Town Hall

Present: Frank Tomaino - Supervisor  
Ronald Chapman Richard Colesante, Thomas Moran– Council Members  
Clare Haynes – Town Clerk  
Wayne Woolridge – Highway Superintendent  
Nancy Butler – Bookkeeper  
Paul Baxter – Tug Hill Commission

Absent: John Metzger – Council Member

**CALL TO ORDER:**

At 4:00 pm Mr. Tomaino called the meeting to order with the pledge of allegiance.

**2023 PRELIMINARY BUDGET:**

All board members received a copy of the 2023 Preliminary Budget. Ms. Butler made the changes from the October 6<sup>th</sup> budget meeting. After the changes and adding additional general fund balance to the first page the budget is now even with the tax cap. The general fund has the biggest fund balance which was able to make up for the shortfall. The general fund has received a lot of additional money, as explained at the last budget meeting quite a few of the revenue accounts are coming in higher than normal. Of course the Town is conservative when budgeting, you never know if revenues will continue from year to year.

Mr. Chapman asked if the sewer district will cause a problem next year pushing the Town to exceed the tax cap, chances are it will as it is the intention of the board to slowly increase the edu charge until the final number is met. Mrs. Haynes will prepare the necessary local law until the sewer district is funded in full to make sure we are in compliance.

The highway fund is tight, Ms. Butler ran the calculations for the Town to increase its share of the medical insurance premium from 75% to 80%. Ms. Butler took the additional charge out of DB5130.2 Machinery Eq and increased DB9060.8 Medical Insurance. Mr. Woolridge agrees with the change to help the employees, but it is difficult because it is a loss to the total highway budget. Mr. Woolridge switches funds back and forth from paving to equipment each year as needed. Mr. Woolridge understands a significant amount of the increase is due to an employee that does not currently have insurance thru the Town but will require insurance next year.

Mr. Woolridge understands that ARPA monies can be used to purchase equipment, and that the ARPA Funds will be used to offset the decrease in DB5130.2 Machinery Eq in 2023. All board members present agree.

**GENERAL MATTERS:**

ARPA – Mr. Moran would like to keep better track on how the ARPA money is spent. The supervisor's report does not give the normal detail, Ms. Butler agrees. When the ARPA account was set up, Ms. Butler did not order checks as they are quite expensive, this was not the best idea. Ms. Butler will order a small supply for this account. It was also pointed out that this money will need to be allocated in one year or it will need to be returned. Further discussion is needed.

Mrs. Haynes brought up the proposal from Advanced iT. The proposal was approved at the September town board meeting using ARPA funds for the purchase of the new computers for the town hall, installing fire walls at both the town hall and the highway department along with a new phone system. Mrs. Haynes would like approval to move forward with the proposal but use A1620.2 Building EQ (Cap Improvement) for the funding. This line has \$47,900 that is for this type of purchase leaving the ARPA funds for other projects. Mr. Chapman made the motion to move forward with Advanced iT and charge A1620.2, seconded by Mr. Tomaino.

Carried: Chapman – Yes Colesante – Yes Moran – Yes Tomaino – Yes Metzger – Absent

Sewer – Mrs. Haynes wanted the board to know after looking at the edu charges for the sewer district the only amount that would be charged quarterly or bi-annually would be for \$104. Mrs. Haynes thought it was good information for the board to know, helps with the process.

Postcard – Mr. Tomaino spoke to Mr. Powers about a post card for the sewer district informing residents of the annual increase. Mr. Powers will have a draft to the board shortly.

Highway – Mr. Colesante asked Mr. Woolridge about the highway employees' involvement with the sewer district. Mr. Woolridge replied that they understand that they will be needed to help with the district, Mr. Tomaino asked, they will answer calls and help pull grinder pumps, - Mr. Woolridge responded yes. Mr. Woolridge did include that the district will need to hire an additional employee to be dedicated to that department.

**NORTH SHORE AMBULANCE:**

At 5pm Mrs. LaVigne Director of Operations and Mr. Morris, Business and Operations Manager, North Shore Ambulance came in to discuss and answer any questions on the budget they presented. Of note payroll has increased significantly, Mr. Morris explained as he has been appointed the new Business and Operations Manager and Mr. Robbins will not be leaving until December, there is an overlap of payroll. Also, the ambulance is required to pay their employees COVID pay. If one of their employees is exposed they have to pay the employee for 14 days, this has a significant impact.

Calls did decrease last year as people did not want to go to the hospital. The ambulance does respond, once there people do not want to be transported to the hospital but still want to be seen. As the Town of Constantia has a contract, if the ambulance responds they do not charge the resident. Outside the Town if they respond as mentioned above as BLS the patient is charged \$150 if ALS \$300 (IV given).

North Shore has put into place a new policy on ordering supplies. They are now contacting three vendors for supplies, of course like everyone they are running into supply chain issues. They have outsourced their bookkeeping at a cost of \$15,000 a year.

The biggest ambulance has been replaced, the second one will need to be replaced shortly. An employee has applied for a grant to help with this purchase.

With no more questions at 5:13pm Mrs. LaVigne and Mr. Morris left.

A major downfall for the ambulance is the lack of volume. Mr. Colesante believes a 2% increase is reasonable, all board members in attendance agreed to the increase. North Shore did ask for reimbursement for new flooring at their building from the ARPA Funds, Ms. Butler told the board that Laberge Group did look at the paperwork for the flooring and in their opinion they would not suggest reimbursement.

**CONTINUED BUDGET DISCUSSION:**

Both Fire Protection areas are in at 2% - Cleveland Volunteer Fire Department is \$6 more than Constantia, historically these budget lines are the same. After discussion it was decided to leave as they are.

Dog Control - No increase

Code Enforcement – Both received a 3% increase, Mr. Colesante would like to know if they are both making the same hourly. Ms. Butler will verify.

Discussion turned to Ms. Cottet, she is the Deputy Town Clerk, works as clerk for CEO, is backup for Ms. Butler and is the cleaning person. Mr. Tomaino would like to increase her to \$20 an hour, after discussion it was agreed that her hourly rate for all positions will be \$19.

Mr. Moran would like to discuss the extra fund balance that is being carried in the North Shore Water District. Mr. Moran feels this should be looked at and decreased as each year during the budget season the Town budgets for the amount of the loan payment. More discussion will be needed on this topic.

Mr. Woolridge asked if DA5120.4 Bridges was removed from the budget, Ms. Butler responded it has been.

**NEXT MEETING:**

October 20<sup>th</sup> and October 26<sup>th</sup> at 4pm are the next two scheduled budget meetings. At the October 20<sup>th</sup> meeting the board would like to discuss the pay stipend for the Board of Appeals, Planning Board and the Board of Assessment Review.

**ADJOURN:**

At 6:05 pm the meeting adjourned.