

TOWN OF CONSTANTIA
MINUTES –BUDGET MEETING – October 1, 2026
6:00 pm Constantia Town Hall

Present: Ronald Chapman - Supervisor
Michael Donegan, Cory Monore, Thomas Moran, Daniel Poné– Council Members
Clare Haynes – Town Clerk
E. John Whitney – Highway Superintendent
Dillon Kinsey – Deputy Highway Superintendent
Nancy Butler – Bookkeeper
Erin Zehr – Chair, Park and Recreation Commission
Jeff DeRienzo – Park Director

CALL TO ORDER:

At 6:00 pm Mr. Chapman called the meeting to order with the pledge of allegiance. The purpose of this meeting is for budget discussion; public questions will be kept to a minimum.

2027 BUDGET:

On September 24th the Tentative Budget for 2027 was filed in the Town Clerk's office. The board members have all been given a copy prior to this meeting for review. The current budget is under the tax cap as is the goal of the board.

HIGHWAY FUND:

Before discussion started, Mr. Donegan asked to be reminded what the letters following the accounts stand for.

PS – Personal Services (payroll)

CE – Contractional Expense

CO – CHIPS Funding

EQ – Equipment

Mr. Whitney was in to speak on his budget. DB5110.1 PS – was raised as they are back to six full-time people they have been running with 5 for the last few years. The part-time employees are already done as Mr. Whitney does not want to run short in this account. An employee plans on retiring in the second week of January but has not given his final date. Mr. Whitney left the account to cover 6 employees, with the hope to hire another person in the spring.

Contractional (CE's) were increased as the cost of material, fuel and parts have skyrocketed. The cutting edges for the under blades have doubled in price. The town is fortunate as we do 90% of our own maintenance.

DB2300 Services other Gov't after speaking to Mrs. Butler Mr. Whitney would like to decrease this account by \$21,010. The County is changing the snowplow contract this year, they will be paying \$8,000 a mile instead of \$9,000 a mile to get started. The County is trying to make the per mile rate work for all Towns. This is a work-in process but as it is budget time the County needs to get numbers to the Towns. Mr. Whitney shared a letter received from the County explaining some of the changes.

Discussion turned to equipment, the possibility of purchasing a new loader and two new pickup trucks. The tree truck is back in service. It has been in use for the last few days and seems to be running well. Mr. Whitney asked Mr. Chapman to reach out to West Monroe about selling the jointly owned paver, as West Monroe has not used the paver in the last few years, and Constantia has done all the repairs Mr. Whitney thinks maybe 70/30 split on the final sale price would be fair to both towns. Mr. Chapman did reach out to Mr. Mahar but has not heard back yet.

The highway garage building is a general fund expense. When reviewing the general fund at the next budget meeting you will see A5132.2 Garage (Cap. Improvement) has been increased by \$160,000. Mr. Whitney would like to take down the two smaller buildings and replace them with one pole barn, primarily for storage, keep the offices and breakroom where they are now. It will take a few years to get enough funding to eventually apply for grants, it is a common requirement to have matching funds when applying for grants.

With no more discussion, all agreed on the two changes as previously discussed:

DB2300 Services other Gov't will be decreased by \$21,010. to \$171,500 as this is a revenue, account DB9950.9 Transfer to Capital Reserve will be decreased by \$21,010 to cover the shortage.

GENERAL FUND:

Mrs. Zehr and Mr. DeRienzo were in to speak about the park and recreation budget. A7110.1 Parks PS was bumped up to cover the increase in minimum wage. Mr. Chapman told the board that A7020.1 Parks and Recreation Administration, which is the yearly salary for the Park Director, should be \$4,000. This will be changed when the next budget is printed.

Mrs. Zehr has reached out to West Monroe about their participation in our park program for 2027, Mrs. Zehr has not heard back, but they seem to still be onboard.

The program averaged about 85 children per day, and even more for swim lessons which is the whole reason for the program.

There was a problem with algae again this year, and smoke from the wildfires. Mr. Chapman knows that the fire department's coming to cool the kids off was a big hit, maybe try to schedule another day next year.

The playground equipment needs some work, Mrs. Zehr is wondering if some of the money left over from this year's budget can be put into A7110.2 Capital Improvement. After discussion the board asked Mrs. Zehr to get numbers together to come up with an idea of what is needed.

NEXT MEETING:

Mr. Chapman gave the board members the draft of the proposed zoning law for review. Mr. Peck, Chair of the Zoning Commission, will be at the October 8th meeting to give an overview.

ADJOURN:

At 7:10 pm the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:

Clare Haynes
Town Clerk