

Zoom Video Conference Meeting of the Town Board, Town of Yorktown held on Thursday, December 1, 2020 held in Yorktown Heights, New York 10598.

Present: Matthew J. Slater, Supervisor  
Thomas P. Diana, Councilman  
Edward Lachterman, Councilman  
Vishnu Patel, Councilman  
Alice E. Roker, Councilwoman

Also Present: Diana L. Quast, Town Clerk  
David Paganelli, Superintendent of Highways  
Adam Rodriguez, Town Attorney

### TOWN BOARD MEETING

Supervisor Matthew Slater called the meeting to order.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Good evening, Yorktown and welcome to the 2021 Preliminary Budget Public Hearing. If you could all rise and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Supervisor Slater led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### MOMENT OF SILENCE

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Please join me in a moment of silence as we pray for our community, our neighbors, and as we pray for those who are suffering from COVID-19 – hundreds of thousands of Americans who continue to battle COVID, and now millions of Americans. We pray for our front liners, our first responders, and the men and women who are overseas protecting our freedoms at this very moment. Thank you.

We have quite a few people on tonight. We're just going to do introductions and then we're going to go straight to presentations. My name is Matt Slater, Town Supervisor. We have our Town Board with us; we have Councilwoman Alice Roker, we have Councilman Ed Lachterman, Councilman Vishnu Patel, and Councilman Tom Diana. We are also joined by our Town Clerk, Diana Quast, our Town Attorney, Adam Rodriguez, and our Highway Superintendent Dave Paganelli. As you can see, we are joined by nearly all of our department heads who are joining us tonight as part of tonight's preliminary budget public hearing. We are also joined tonight by a very good friend of Yorktown, a Yorktown resident, someone who's been a great partner for the town and, frankly, for me personally has been a good friend, and that's our County Legislator Vedat Gashi. County Legislator Gashi, I know that you wanted to give a very brief presentation on Albanian Flag Day, which I know we had originally talked about doing some special event for, but because of COVID we thought it would be wise to postpone until next year. We still wanted you to come to the Town Board and say hello in honor of the Albanian community.

### PRESENTATION

Albanian Flag Day - Vedat Gashi, Westchester County Legislator

Westchester County Legislator Vedat Gashi:

Thank you. Mirembrema. That's "good evening" in Albanian. I want to thank the Town of Yorktown and Supervisor Slater and the Town Board for inviting me here. We in the County Legislature are going through non-stop budget hearings for the past couple of weeks and is now actually continuing. So I am willing to let this go on as far as possible because I know how excruciating these budget conversations can be! I'm honored to be here and help Albanian Flag Day. Matt was right. Supervisor Slater and I talked about celebrating Flag Day or recognizing Flag Day in a different fashion, but with the realities of COVID this year, we weren't able to do a flag raising and get together and some of the other celebrations like we might have otherwise done, but we will hopefully next year.

A little bit about Flag Day. It falls on November 28 – Albanian Flag Day – it doubles as Albanian National Day. It's the day where people who have Albanian heritage all over the world celebrate

that heritage as represented by the flag. That date is celebrated because in 1912 – 108 years ago – Ismail Qemali raised that flag for the first time as part of the modern Albanian state. That flag's older than 108 years old. It's the same flag that Gjergj Kastrioti flew in Kruje. Gjergj Kastrioti or Skanderbeg or Gjergj Kastrioti – same guy, different names – is perhaps Albania's greatest national hero. He fought and defeated a vastly large force in the Ottoman Empire and is credited by many of stopping the Ottoman invasion into Europe. He was clearly one of the greatest military minds of his time. He flew that flag, and that flag actually has a history older than that – even going back to the Illyrian people – as early as the sixth century, B.C. That's why the Association of Albanian Americans serving in the NYPD today call themselves the Illyrian Society. There's a bunch of other well-known Albanians, perhaps the most well-known was Mother Teresa, St. Teresa of Calcutta. She was born Anjeze Gonxhe Bohaxhiu and made a fantastic contribution not only to Calcutta, but also to the world. We recognize and celebrate her. There are scores of other Albanian notable people from Nobel Prize winners to astronauts to pop stars like Dua Lipa, Rita Ora, and Bebe Rexha, to name just a few names your kids might recognize. All celebrate that flag, and I do, too. It was never a symbol of oppression, but a symbol of identity, of unity, of independence. I'm excited to be here to celebrate it. If you know an Albanian, you probably know them to be independent, hardworking, family-oriented, and valuing above almost all else, integrity. Calling an Albanian a liar counts as fighting words. I found that out the hard way when I was a child. I was watching TV with my mom and a commercial came on for some toy. I said, "Mom, will you buy that for me?" and she said, "Sure." Maybe I did not believe her, so I called her a liar and that did not go well. Albanians watching will recognize how harrowing of a story that is. The fact that I escaped with my life is a testament to something. Integrity means that much to Albanians. Albanians also value hospitality. One of the most heartwarming stories coming out of World War II that only getting attention lately was the history of the Jewish people in Albania during World War II. Albania was the only country in Europe that had more Jewish people in it after the war than before. Not a single Jewish person was turned over to the Nazis during that time. That sort of religious tolerance is, I think for us always, an example of that sort of hospitality; it is the kind of hospitality when I moved to Yorktown 30 years ago in 1990. I was born in Kosovo, but when I was four years old, I moved to the States and 30 years ago we moved to Yorktown. We didn't know any other Albanian American families then in Yorktown – there may have been, but I didn't know. It's hard not to know of Albanian Americans in Yorktown now – you'll see them in the schools. Hard to look at the high school sports pages without seeing a number of Albanian names. You'll see them in the number of businesses, the restaurants from G&G Euro Market to Hudson Valley Steakhouse, to the Gramercy, the Barnwood Grill (known as Mimi's) – I'm going to stop talking because I'm getting hungry – and there's a whole lot of others. We've been a part of this community and it's a large and growing community. It's funny – last year, I became the first Albanian American elected to the Westchester County Legislature, but I always resisted being called that. I always said that I'm not the Albanian American candidate. I'm running as a representative of my community. And my community includes Albanian Americans. We are proud members of this community and I think the recognition that we're getting today is a symbol of that. Thank you, Supervisor Slater. Thank you to the Town of Yorktown. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I look forward to doing this again, hopefully larger and better next year. And we can eat some of that Albanian food from these restaurants and others. Thank you again for this opportunity to speak.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

County Legislator, thank you. That's a great, great presentation. A great reminder of the heritage of some of our neighbors here in Yorktown. In October, we recognized some of our neighbors with Italian heritage and German heritage. Today, we are here recognizing our neighbors with an Albanian heritage and we are very much looking forward to this event next year when we can once again gather and celebrate publicly and do so safely. And it's going to be just a great celebration of the Albanian heritage and culture. Any member of the Board that wants to say a few words?

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

Vedat, is one of those two plaques behind you the Albanian Flag?

Westchester County Legislator Vedat Gashi:

Yes. I was able to buy that flag at G&G Euro Market today. The American Flag had been there, but I decided to give it a partner there in celebration of Albania Flag Day.

Councilman Ed Lachterman:

Vedat, I just wanted to say thank you. That little history lesson about the amount of Jews being more so in Albania is a very, very interesting fact because I don't think some people realize how bad it was where there were villages of a couple of hundred people and after World War II ended, were in the single digits.

Westchester County Legislator Vedat Gashi:

Without going into the history of Albania too much, after the war Albania itself went into a kind of deep and rough communist spirit that didn't celebrate that history. It was only the Israeli state and they are currently going back and recognizing that history and celebrating that history of the actions of the Albanian people. My favorite part of that whole story was when you spoke to the people and there were interviews – the documentaries now are fantastic – and they said congratulations and thank you for the work that you did saving the people. I love the response of the people - it was always like “Yeah, oh, what the hell else were we going to do?” Like there was nothing special about that. This is what we should have done.

Councilman Ed Lachterman:

Unfortunately, there were too many people that turned a blind eye to what was going on. So it definitely was something but it was common sense. It should have been and I'm glad you mentioned George and G&G. I just saw him the other day and had a nice conversation with him. You know we were actually talking about the representation of the Albanian community in the area and how much it has grown over the past couple of years. So, you know, it's great to see a representative that can understand the needs of the community and really help them out. So, thank you.

Councilman Tom Diana:

Thanks for the history lesson, Vedat, it's refreshing to learn a little bit about the flag, and about the culture there and you from actually having been there is very interesting.

Westchester County Legislator Vedat Gashi:

My sincere pleasure and I'm sure there's plenty of others that could do a heck of a lot better job of it. I gave you the thumbnails.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

We do have a resolution that I'm happy to read, which commemorates Albanian Flag Day.

PROCLAMATION – ALBANIAN FLAG DAY  
RESOLUTION #404

Upon motion made by Councilman Diana, seconded by Councilwoman Roker,

WHEREAS, Kole Kristofori was the first Albanian documented to emigrate to the United States in the early 1880s landing in Boston, Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, after World War II the Albanians who emigrated to America were escaping political persecution and in the 1990s many Albanians from places such as Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and the Republic of Macedonia fled to America as refugees of war; and

WHEREAS, the Albanian-American community in New York State and in the Town of Yorktown have exhibited strong entrepreneurial spirit as shown through their successful management of many small businesses; and

WHEREAS, the commitment of the Albanian-Americans to our local community extends to include work in law enforcement, medicine, education, law and other notable professions; and

WHEREAS, Westchester County Legislative District four is represented by Vedat Gashi, a proud Albanian-American; and

WHEREAS, the Albanian-American community also hosts an annual celebration across New York State in recognition of the Albanian Independence Day on November 28, 1912; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Yorktown celebrates the importance and influence the Albanian culture has had on our community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town of Yorktown recognizes the many achievements of Albanian-Americans here in our community and across New York State; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town of Yorktown pauses in its deliberation in recognition of Albanian Flag Day

Slater, Diana, Lachterman, Patel, Roker Voting Aye  
Resolution adopted.

#### 2021 PRELIMINARY BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

Supervisor Matthew Slater convened a public hearing to consider the adoption of the Preliminary Budget for the fiscal year beginning January 2021.

The 2021 Preliminary Proposed General Budget totals \$60,752,538 representing an increase of \$18,842 from the 2019 Adopted Budget.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

We will move on to the agenda tonight, which also now includes the 2021 Preliminary Budget public hearing. I want to ask our Town Clerk to show the notice that was published – thank you. This is a \$60 million budget for 2021 and I really just want to focus on a couple of items. Really, just a superb job our team did; our department heads and our Finance Department, because when COVID hit, as we all know and as this Board knows, budgets were gone – they were thrown out the window, there were no more budgets anymore. We declared a State of Emergency, as everyone remembers. In the spring we froze all non-essential spending and we braced for the financial impact. The revenue hit currently stands at approximately \$7 million, which is pieced together through several categories. As we saw with our town pool, despite the revenue loss, the Town board believed it was critical to maintain key services and amenities. With residents on lockdown, summer vacations delayed or canceled, there was an obvious need to provide some recreational relief during those hot summer days. My office is still hearing from residents who were so thankful for the ability to utilize the town pool at Shrub Oak this summer. Our Parks and Recreation staff were able to provide a COVID safe option for residents to enjoy, and thanks for their incredible efforts we were able to remain open when other municipal pools were closing due to COVID exposures. As I said, we did brace for impact, but we've mitigated the damage and that's what I think this budget shows. Much, much credit goes to our Comptroller, Pat Caporale, and her entire finance team – they deserve an awful, awful amount of credit. We kept seeing in the headlines of layoffs or furloughs or service cuts, but we avoided all of that here for the Town of Yorktown. Now, we can look forward to 2021, and I'm pretty sure some departments here in Town have a countdown going on in their individual offices to get to 2021. But thanks to our ability or collective ability, the teamwork that we showed, we were able to manage this unprecedented time. We were able to protect local taxpayers by proposing a budget that really holds the line on taxes. It's important, I believe, a critically important step for our homeowners and businesses during such challenging times. As I said earlier, it's a real tribute to the team here at Town Hall – our department heads are with us – and this couldn't have happened without a true team effort. It really wasn't easy to achieve. I've mentioned this before – we had the budget ready to roll out I think almost at the end of August – but then, we had \$420,000 by the state clawed back in less than a month. This caused us to go through again line by line to cover the losses without passing on the cost to the local taxpayers. Looking forward, our revenue remains mostly the same as the prior year. More than half of our revenue in the Town of Yorktown comes from local taxpayers. We were concerned in April about tax payments. We worked with the county and state to provide deadline extensions with minimal penalties, and I'm very happy to say that the revenue received from our taxpayers has not significantly faltered. Again, you talk about a team – that team includes the community – and the community responded so incredibly well during these challenges. We are keeping a close eye on state funding for our local roads. That's something we are monitoring very carefully. I know that we have our Highway Superintendent with us; we've committed to supplying Superintendent Paganelli with enough funds to continue his five miles of paving each year, but we are being very conservative with how much help we're going to get from the state. That was one of the areas where the state did pull back nearly \$120,000 of state funding through CHIPS. To offset the projected losses of CHIPS and winter recovery, we increased our local investment by an additional \$50,000. From a high level, that's what the 2021 budget accomplishes. It sets forward, I think it puts us forward on a path to financially plan for more capital improvement

projects, which our infrastructure desperately needs attention. But those are the high level points of the proposed 2021 budget. We did have our hearing with the Town Board and department heads a few weeks back, which I thought went very, very well. We did have some public participation and that was over a two-day stint. Now here we are for the 2021 preliminary budget public hearing. With that being said, if any Board members would like to add anything?

Councilman Ed Lachterman:

Matt, I just wanted to echo your thanks to our department heads and all of our town employees for pulling in and making do with what we had and making sure that we were able to get past with this spring and summer that were really a nightmare. Now we're moving forward and, hopefully, we'll be seeing the vaccine out in a couple of weeks and things will be on the turn around. We couldn't have done it without everyone pulling forward. Thank you.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

I agree with you that our department heads and Matt have led the way to getting us through this year. I think we don't know what's going to happen next year. A vaccine may be on the way, but we don't know when and I think that's really a big point as we move forward – we don't know what we don't know.

Councilman Ed Lachterman:

Yes, plan for the worst. You know, I will also echo, and thank you for pointing out, if it wasn't for the Supervisor's office and leadership Matt showed – you're absolutely right – it was an excellent job, Matthew and your team upstairs; I know it was trying at times, to say the least.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

It was a team effort; we play as a team here. It was all of you who also played a critical role, our entire Town Board, we've been in constant communication throughout the entire ordeal of 2020. This is a forward step for us as we continue to look forward to a healthy and prosperous 2021. I think that this budget accomplishes a lot of the goals that we originally set out for, but also advances new ones.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

And it also does not give any additional burden to the homeowner, which I thought was really important because where we may have survived it we don't know how many of our homeowners did.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

I think that this budget really shows our commitment to trying to protect as many people as we can considering unforeseen and unknown circumstances, to your point. And I think it was produced as a team and is the product of a true team effort, and that includes the entire Town Board and our department heads. Again, I want to personally thank Pat Caporale, who did a masterful job.

Pat Caporale, Town Comptroller:

Thank you. You're welcome.

Councilman Tom Diana:

I just want to thank all the department heads, Matt, your staff – everybody did a great job. I want to put a special shout out to the residents of the town who, I'm sure, Barbara (Korsak) is thanking them for all paying their taxes on time, and so on and so forth. We were very lucky that we have such great residents in this town who really stepped up to the plate.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

No doubt about that, Councilman Diana, no doubt about that. We're going to move forward into the public hearing. I'm going to turn it over to our Town Clerk, Diana Quast, who really has been in so many ways making sure we continue to function as a town by really diving into these Zoom meetings and her organizational skills have been exceptional. Diana, we can give them to you and you let us know who we have coming on – okay?

Diana Quast, Town Clerk:

Okay.

Councilman Vishnu Patel:

Can I say something? This is my 11<sup>th</sup> town budget and this is the first time we are not meeting face to face, where we're using some electronic gizmos. So we don't know really how people will speak and, you know, receive the information. But we used to go line by line item – the entire booklet. I have checked out my last year budget and then this one line by line and there are a few little things here and there. All I want to tell you is really each and every person has done a good job – all the department heads and town board members. So let's see what the people want to hear from us and what they want to tell us. Are we going to go in any kind of order or all be separate? Or just going to go into the general comments?

Supervisor Matt Slater:

I think they were just going to go to general comments. You do have people who have signed up to speak on the budget and if they have specific questions, I'm sure collectively we can try to provide as many answers as we can.

The following members of the public spoke:

Diana Quast, Town Clerk:

And we're going to begin with Mark Lieberman.

Mark Lieberman:

Good evening, everybody and thanks for giving me a chance to ask some questions on the 2021 preliminary budget. I'd like to thank the Supervisor and Council members for supporting science's best practices for fighting COVID by wearing masks and social distancing, as I can see Supervisor Matt Slater wearing his mask. My experience has been with corporate project budgets; I'm not that familiar with municipal budgets, hopefully, you'll excuse me if I use the wrong terminology. I have three questions but each question should have enough content to mitigate any misuse of terminology. Do you want me to go through all three items? Or do you want to go one by one?

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Why don't you do all three and then we'll try the best we can.

Mark Lieberman:

Okay, based on actual numbers that I've confirmed, they are expected to lose \$110 million in sales tax revenue this year and they've predicted a loss of \$80 million in sales tax revenue for next year. Most of the losses they expect in the first half; the second because of the vaccine, they're expecting a better cover. The town budget, however, shows no change from last year in sales tax revenue. I'm asking why you haven't seen a reduction. And if there is a reduction, in actuality, how does it get covered? So that's the first question. Second question is that I know from attending other meetings, that the fund balance is a moving number. But at certain times, when you balance the books and you update or audit the budget, you do have a number at that point in time. Do you expect fund balance to be lower when you close the books on 2020 than it was at the end of 2019? And if so, by how much more? And do you expect it to be lower at the end of 2021 than at the end of 2020? And if so, how much? Especially since you're taking about a million dollars from the fund for revenue. And the third question is, just as a matter of fact, the 2021 preliminary budget lists it's 9.75 as the town tax rate for 2020 on page 16 of your document. However, I looked at my town tax bill for 2020 and it actually has a rate of 168.35, not 169.15 so I believe this error will have an impact in your tax calculations. That was my three questions.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Mr. Lieberman, can you repeat the last question on page 16?

Mark Lieberman:

So you have a tax rate column and for 2020 you show a tax rate of 169.75. When I look at my tax bill for this year, the tax rate for this year was 168.35, not 169.75. So somehow you have an error in the tax table. I'm going back to my actual bill. So those are my three items.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Does our Comptroller have any thoughts on the questions?

Pat Caporale, Town Comptroller:

Regarding the sales tax, we did not reduce it in the 21 budget only because we have budgeted so conservatively in this year's budget. So we feel at this point we will hit that, if not exceed. So that's why we budgeted the same amount for next year. As far as the fund balance for December 31, I am anticipating and hopeful that I will maintain the same fund balance that we have for this year. I won't know until the books are audited and closed, which probably won't be until approximately the end of March '21. And as far as the rates, the rates that we use are based on the assessment at the time the budget is done. The assessment can change by the time the tax bills are actually printed.

Mark Lieberman:

But your tax savings is based on the wrong rate, though.

Pat Caporale:

I don't understand what you mean by my saving was based on the wrong rate.

Mark Lieberman:

You indicated in the very first budget presentation that the residents would receive a tax reduction and based on the actual numbers, there would be no reduction.

Pat Caporale, Town Comptroller:

That is based just on the general highway and library.

Mark Lieberman:

No, no – the town tax.

Pat Caporale, Town Comptroller:

The town tax? I'm quoting on page 8.

Mark Lieberman:

You had something like a .88 tax.

Pat Caporale, Town Comptroller:

Right, that's on page 8. If you refer to that at the top, it's the general highway and library funds, which every resident pays. After that, it depends on where your home is located and what services that you have that determines your tax bill. The town tax incorporates everything on page 8. If you have a copy of the budget and you refer to that, you can see all the different funds. You can belong to a park district; it depends on which sewer district you're in. Some residents don't have water or sewer. There's so many variables on an actual determination, so we always use just general highway and library, which every resident must pay.

Mark Lieberman:

Maybe it's just a nomenclature/terminology issue when you talk about a tax rate deduction for the town tax.

Councilman Vishnu Patel:

The Lakeland School District and Yorktown have different volunteer departments. So, you know, all these things depend on what services you have. Something we call ADL - general highway and the library everybody pays – everything else is "a la carte."

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

Let me ask you a question that I think will probably answer this. What you said was that at the time that we did the budget, we have one assessment, right?

Pat Caporale, Town Comptroller:

Yes.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

Yes, so when it actually goes out there may be a different assessment?

Pat Caporale, Town Comptroller:

Yes.

Mark Lieberman:

That's a forecasted tax rate savings, but it's bait. Since you know the actual for 2020, I think you should change the table to the actual; I don't think you should base the 2020 number on a forecast, you now have an actual for 2020. You might have a forecast for the next year, but you base next year on your actuals for this year, not on your forecasts for this year. I think you should update that table to show the actuals for previous years.

Pat Caporale:

Change the title to "budgeted."

Mark Lieberman:

I don't know how you do municipal budgets but when we budget in corporate life, you finished the year and you had your actual cost next year and it was based on your actual costs going forward and you did zero-based budgeting for the next year. I don't know municipal budgets but I just think that table should show the actual charge that was made in last year's bill which was 168.35; it was not 169.75.

Councilman Vishnu Patel:

Mark, the other thing is that the town budget starts from January 1 to December 31, so there may be some difference in that.

Mark Lieberman:

Well, the bills were issued in March and paid in April, so that was the actual bill. So if everybody goes home tonight and finds their bill, you'll see that it was 168.35.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

I see what you're saying. Point taken.

Mark Lieberman:

So those are my three items. Thank you for giving me the opportunity.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

We appreciate your time.

Diana Quast, Town Clerk:

Next we have Tony Grasso.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Mr. Grasso? How are you? Jenny – how are you?

Tony Grasso:

Thank you, Matthew, and members of the Town Board. As you know, this is rather difficult for me, but I'm glad that Jenny understands part of it and she's allowed me to do some speaking tonight. I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. Secondly, considering the times that we're in, this small tax increase is - I think, most people are happy with it. The past two auditor's reports showed a good surplus; so much that it has eroded with the high cost of the conditions that prevail since January. Obviously, the previous speaker does not understand how tax rates are reached. I hope that if you'd like to know more, you should get up and talk to our tax finance committee so that she could at least educate him on how it's done. The budget for 2020 is a Gilbert budget but the results of that budget will not be audited until probably sometime in July. I have high praise for the leadership in the Finance Department and the hard work the Board went through to present this budget. The Town Board must hold the line on the 2021 budget. When it comes to spending, the responsibility from the department heads must concentrate on what they need, not what they want. I'll repeat that again. It's what they need, not what they want. The biggest part of the budget, as we know, is labor and benefits. The next items fall into spending from the Parks Department to Police Department and the Highway Department. These are the three major departments on the spending side plus, of course, labor. Again, I realize from experience, implementing and managing a budget of this size is a horrendous undertaking. Again, a job well done with this budget, and when I say you, I mean the Town Board as well as everyone that's involved with it. Hopefully, we can survive with a slight increase in the next budget. As you know, budgets are drawn from the auditor's report that goes back at least two years so you

can go forward in the next budget. But most people don't realize that you need the old budgets ... for the new budget. I hope that meets satisfaction as to how I feel. One other thing I would like to compliment the Board on is not a budget item, but Jenny and I would like to thank you for the great news – our future Senior Center we all needed. If we can be of any help to you and the Town Board, we're more than happy to do so. Again, thank you for the opportunity and, hopefully, we can see each other face to face rather than the method that we're using tonight. Thank you.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Always good to hear from you, Mr. Grasso. Any comments from the Board?

Councilman Ed Lachterman:

Thanks for your input, Mr. Grasso.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

We're going to move on then. Again, Mr. Grasso, thank you for your time and we're going to go back to our Town Clerk for our next speaker.

Diana Quast, Town Clerk:

Our next speaker is Susan Siegel.

Susan Siegel:

Good evening to you all. I have some general comments about the budget, but first, I'd like to point out three textual errors in the budget book in the event that the Town plans to print an adopted budget after you have to adopt the budget. On page 17 that compares the 2021 budget to the 2020 budget. The numbers for the general highway and library show for 2021 show a decrease but the text says an increase from 2020. I think you meant "decrease" so you might want to change the outline.

On page 22 on the pie chart that shows total taxes for a house in the Lakeland School District – the taxes shown for the Mohegan District are actually the taxes for the Yorktown Fire District, it being shown as \$180.37. But the Mohegan fire tax is \$659.43 – it's a major difference. I know because I used to live in the Yorktown Fire District and now I live in the Mohegan District. I'm not sure what number is actually reflected in the pie, but you might want to take a look at that because I think the pie chart ties to page 22 – that's the Lakeland School District. I think those pies are very important because it shows that, when I say town tax – those in the know, know town tax means ADL – but there are town taxes, which are many more – water, sewer, refuse, and so forth. But I think if you added up all the taxes you pay for town services, they still represent let's say roughly 13-15% of the homeowner total tax bill. Maybe 11% or something goes to the county and the bulk goes to the school district. So the pies are important. I think that should be corrected for the one that shows the Lakeland School District.

The more serious error is something that Mark alluded to that's on page 16, the historic tax chart. I'm sorry – I'm working off two computers and I have a chart that I will send to all the Town Board members after the meeting tonight. I have looked at Town budgets, as many of you know, for years and years and years, and for some reason, this is the first year that I caught this error. As Mark says, it's our tax charts. Technically that's what's known as the Town tax – the three general fund, library, and highway – those are the only funds that every taxpayer pays into, it's called the town tax, right? It shows it – it doesn't say it if you look, if you look at the list, it implies that that was the tax rate that people pay. But that's not true. It was what was budgeted. Pat explained the rate changes from what is actually and what Mark said when he looked at his tax bill. So, I think for transparency that should be shown as what the rate is. I looked at about 10 years and I went through the actual tax rate sheets printed out by the tax office and I compared them – sometime the rate was higher and sometimes it was lower, but it is not the same. Now the question is "why is this important?" And it is important because when the budget for next year is presented, it's always compared to the current. So, for example, the difference between what is shown in the budget as \$169.75 per 1000 was really \$168.25 – there's only a 10 cent difference for the budget for 2021; it's not \$1.50. The difference shows up – it's been said that the taxes are going down for the typical homeowner with a \$10,000 assessed value. That \$10,000 is the number the town always uses. And it was said that somebody with the \$10,000 assessed value with town water, they would save \$13. That calculation uses the wrong tax rate. If the correct tax rate is used, that same homeowner will actually be paying \$3.36 more in 2021. I will send you the calculation I did showing the differences using the accurate comparison. So I hope you will fix that going forward.

Again, if you reprint that page, you just have to go through all of the tax rate sheets that are available in the tax office. I will send you the files that I worked on so that you will see why this is important so that when a budget is presented, as compared to the current year, it is done accurately so people have a greater sense.

As for my specific comments on the budget, I urge the board to give this budget more thought before you vote to adopt it. I say this as somebody who has spent many years reviewing town budgets. Also because I watched the Board's two days of Zoom budget meetings with department heads so I have a good sense of what budgets were discussed or, as the case may be, what was not discussed. In general, I urge you to think in dollar terms, not percentage terms. Homeowners relate to dollars, not percentage terms. I urge you to think about the 2022 budget you'll be voting on a year from now because decisions you're going to make on the 2021 budget will impact your next year's budget and all of you will be on the Town Board next year when you have to vote on that budget. I also realize how attractive it is for elected officials to reduce taxes, which this budget supposedly does, but it really doesn't if you use the correct numbers. I also know how difficult it is to increase taxes even a modest amount. Here's something I urge you to think about – the preliminary budget includes a \$1 decrease in the town tax for the typical homeowner – only in the town tax, the ADL. Have you considered even for five minutes how much money could be raised for the typical homeowner, if the typical homeowner paid \$5 more in a town tax for less than the cost of a pizza? I don't drink beer, so I don't know what a six pack of beer costs, but when I see the cost of cigarettes, it blows my mind. I can't believe what the cost of a pack of cigarettes costs. how much money would you raise if the town tax ADL was raised by \$5? I don't know what that percentage would be. Dave, if you figure out that number and Pat could figure it out very quickly – is that another mile of road that Dave could pave? And do you really think that the homeowners would object to paying \$5 more in their tax bill if they have better roads to drive on.

I'd also like to make three comments. More specifically, I believe that some revenue projections may be overly optimistic. Some expenditure cuts may impact the delivery of town services. This year's tax levy will negatively impact next year's budget. About the revenue – I think some lines are overly optimistic, especially the sales tax that Mark Lieberman brought up. Sales tax at just over \$6 million is the largest non-property tax revenue source. Our sales tax comes from the county and the county is projecting a 6% decrease in its sales tax collections for 2021 but the Board's budget is projecting the same amount, as Mark pointed out. If the county is expecting less money, doesn't it make sense that it will have less money to distribute to the towns? Also, I looked at the 2021 budget for the county. It was said earlier this evening, that you're expecting the sales tax revenue for 2020 to meet what you've projected, which was just a tad over \$6 million. On page 645 of the county budget it shows municipal sales tax distribution. The county's budget has multiple columns, one column is budgeted for 2020 and then projected for 2020 – they're looking to what they're going to receive by the end of the year, and they are projected that they're not going to meet their revenue expectations that they budgeted. So we may not – I'm hoping that we do make the \$6 million, but we may not. Pat, this is something you might want to check with the county and why they're projecting less money and what this will mean for the final payments to the town. I think it's standard budgeting practices that you project your revenues conservatively, especially the revenues that you can predict. Ed, you said just a little while ago, we've planned for the worst. Okay, we have to plan conservatively for revenue. I'd also like to point out that the Town is continuing not to collect – that's right – I said, you're not collecting the fees that you're entitled to collect. Why have these if we're not collecting them? I can give you two simple examples. Years ago, the Town passed a very good bill to require permits for clothing collection bins and the permit fee is \$300 a year. I don't think we've ever collected a penny on that. The town also has a series of fees for the Town Attorney reviewing legal documents – I don't know – everywhere from six to a dozen documents. Some of the fees are \$250, others are \$1,000. To the best of my knowledge, these fees have never been collected. So why do we have them? The building inspector has told this Town Board that it desperately needs to upgrade its software. The software is so old that it is sometimes hard to get support for it. I think you've all heard that more than once. Maybe collecting some of these fees could help. Also, on the revenue side, could the Comptroller explain why it shows zero for the wetlands permits? I don't know the wetland permit revenue has gone into some other line. Also, why is the county bus shelter now in the refuse budget where it was always in the general fund budget? I don't understand that. Also on the revenue side, I strongly urge you to proceed with enforcing the commercial water meter requirements that requires the meters to be tested. I realize you're concerned with not wanting to impose an additional expense on businesses at this time but the water district is losing money each and every day you delay enforcing that law – the letters can be sent out. Once somebody is on

notice that they're going to need to replace their meter, a timetable can be established so that you know it's going to be done and you don't keep putting it off. Also, talking about the Water Department, can somebody on the Board explain how you can justify cutting the water tax when the water district needs millions of dollars for critical infrastructure upgrades. The water district is in financial trouble today because of the reckless tax cuts of previous years. Haven't we learned our lesson? Later in the agenda tonight you'll be voting on a budget transfer to add \$850,000 to the water budget line for the purchase of water. How does that reality square with your projected expense for water purchase for 2021? You might want to take a look at that and review that line because, as Mr. Rundle has said, we are using more water now because more people are home and you're showing that as a substantial increase in revenue. But, you have to purchase the water. So you might want to look at that line because, clearly, what you've spent in 2020 doesn't seem to bear any resemblance to what you're thinking about for 2021. On the expenditure side, for the General Fund, you've cut expenses for equipment for many departments. Those cuts are over and above that. You've cut back on purchasing equipment this year because of the decrease in revenue, which was a smart move once you saw that your revenues were going to come in lower. Obviously, you had to make cuts, but have you considered what impact two years of consecutive cuts in equipment purchases will have on the delivery of town services, if not in 2021 and going into 2022? Again, I use the Building Department's need for software as a perfect example. When it comes to maintaining our infrastructure or purchasing needed equipment, especially vehicles, Yorktown has the very sad history of kicking the can down the road – a practice that has ended up costing taxpayers more in the long run. I won't go into the sad history of that. Again, haven't we learned anything from our past mistakes about constantly delaying and cutting the equipment line because it's easy to cut that line?

Finally, the Board needs to consider the budget's tax levy, which is \$1.4 million less than its maximum allowed levy and how that very large gap between the allowed levy and the actual levy will lower the Town's allowed levy in 2022, which is going to put pressure on the 2022 budget and the tax rates. Remember, you'll all be on the Board next year when it comes time to vote on the 2022 budget and the decisions you make on the 2021 budget will have a direct impact on the 2022 budget and the years after that. This is not the time or place for a discussion on the tax levy, which can get very technical. That's why I strongly urge you, before you vote to adopt the budget for 2021, to have a frank and thorough talk with the Comptroller about the tax levy. And when you do consider and have that discussion, consider the following: assuming no reduction in the number of employees will occur, what expenses are likely to increase for next year? When I say next year, I mean for the 2022 budget and by how much. The salary line alone will automatically increase by half a million dollars because of union contracts calling for a 2.5% increase in wages in 2022. Debt service will also increase. You already know that you have to borrow money for the Peekskill Sewer District Study and possibly you'll need additional funds after that. You've talked about borrowing for roads so you can do more paving. The Water Department needs money. Also, this borrowing for the Yorktown Sewer Districts coming up – in debt service is an expense on the budget. Will you be able to defer equipment purchases for a third consecutive year? How much longer can you kick the can down yet another road. And remember, the Town doesn't control major expense lines, like medical benefits and payments into retirement funds. I've been around long enough to know that these budget lines sometimes go up and they sometimes go down and you were lucky in 2021 that retirement is going down and medical is going both up and down for active employees or retirees. What will you do in the 2022 budget if the Town's non-tax revenue doesn't increase by the same amount as the expenses increase? Your expenses are basically locked in. I think it was Tony Grasso who said and I think this just has to be said more often. Roughly, I think it's close to three quarters of the budget for salaries and benefits. That leaves you very, very little discretion, so the bulk of your expenses are locked in, but not your revenue. More than 50% of the Town's revenue comes from sources that the Town has no control over. Many of those revenues are heavily dependent on the state of the economy, and we all know we just can't predict what the economy is going to be like in 2021. The gap between expenditure and revenues will determine the tax levy because, I think the Comptroller will explain it to you, if you want to keep the Town's options for 2022 and beyond it's in the Town's long term interest to maximize its use of the allowed tax levy not to reduce it, as this budget does. And please, Pat, I urge you to give the Town Board a basic lesson in the tax levy. Maybe you can explain that better than I can, but I think you know what happens when you don't spend the money, when you spend less than your levy. Also I think, Matt, you mentioned something about capital planning. I would urge the Board – I would love to see a reasonable, realistic one-year capital plan. What is the Board planning to do next year? Not the capital plan that's in the back of the budget book – that's pretty much a wish list. I'd like to see specifics; whether you're going to do one project, three

projects, five projects – whatever it is – and where you’re going to get the money from. State grant funding doesn’t look too optimistic for 2021 so it might have to be fund balance. Thankfully, we have a very healthy fund balance in the general fund – certainly not in the other funds. But what are you planning to do? That reminds me of one other thing I wanted to say again and it’s related to the tax levy. You know that you’re going to have to borrow possibly up to \$700,000 for that Peekskill study and you’ve already said you’re going to have to borrow. Why are you also using fund balance from those Peekskill districts when you know you have that expense? You’re also using fund balance in the Yorktown Sewer District when you’re looking at major capital needs to replace the pump stations. We were lucky we used fund balance to be able to pay for the three pump stations that were already done and you didn’t have to raise taxes – you didn’t have to borrow to cover that. But now if you’re using fund balance just to reduce the taxes in the Yorktown Sewer district, you’re going to have to borrow money. We have to do the pump stations. Does that make sense?

I think that’s about it. I apologize for my lengthy comments but the budget is an important document, and there aren’t too many people who take the time to read through it and to understand all the nuances. So again, I strongly urge you – please do not vote tonight in a rush. There is ample time to go back and have more discussions and look at some of these options, correct some of the errors. Please rethink the water district tax cut. I’m looking at my computer screen and see that Ken (Rundle) is there and I know how desperate he is for revenue. Please get that commercial water meter project going. You need every dollar it can bring you and there’s really no expense. Those businesses have saved hundreds and hundreds of dollars over the 30 years that the meters were inaccurate. Now it’s time for them to pay up. Thank you. Pat, if you want to answer just those questions, I think the only two questions I had really are where’s the revenue for the wetlands permits and why was the bus shelter put in? Those are the two things I couldn’t understand and to get that water meter project moving.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Pat, if you can unmute yourself and address the wetland permit and the county bus shelter.

Susan Siegel:

I guess those two lines I just didn’t understand – why the county bus shelter money, which was always in the general fund is now in the refuse fund.

Patricia Caporale, Town Comptroller:

Because the refuse employees are the ones that are actually taking care of the bus shelters. That money is for the maintenance of the bus shelters, which is now completely handled by the employees of that department and that’s why it was moved. In the past it was handled by the employees in the Parks & Rec Department. It is no longer so that’s why it was moved.

Susan Siegel:

All right. What about the wetlands permits? Why is it zero? I know we’ve issued lots of wetlands permits.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

I can answer that. I think Michael Quinn can really answer that – I defer.

Michael Quinn, Town Engineer:

I can answer that without checking our records. We absolutely have issued wetlands permits.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

Where did you put the revenue that you got in?

Susan Siegel:

I think it shows no revenue.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

I think what used to happen was that the money would come up to the Clerk and then be put in that line. I don’t think the money goes up to the Clerk at this point.

Susan Siegel:

I know that, as Michael says, we have – I'm just looking here – did you do wetlands? It shows zero collected to date and nothing projected. I know when I sit in at the Planning Board twice a month, I know that we issue wetlands permits. And, as Michael just said, we issue lots of wetlands permits. So where is it?

Michael Quinn, Town Engineer:

I'd have to check with my staff. But I mean, we use the same coding we've always used. So I don't have an answer right now. I'd have to look into it, but our permit totals are approximately the same in 2020 as they were in 2019, so we have not seen a drop off in the total number of permits.

Susan Siegel:

Thank you. This is even stranger. The budget says these are the actuals in 2018 - \$3,600, which may be reasonable and then it shows zero for 2019.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

Michael, I think that you're going to find that the money – instead of the applications going up to the Clerk, which would then put the money in that particular fund, you keep the application. Diana, do you get the money?

Michael Quinn, Town Engineer:

No, I think that in certain cases the Planning Department takes the application fee. Other times we do; it really depends on what the application is. If it's a Town Board action, than that application goes up to the Clerk's office.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

But does the money follow it?

Diana Quast, Town Clerk:

But not always the fee that should go with it – that's what she's referring to.

Susan Siegel:

I'm just saying when I look at Planning fees, I assume that's the application fee to file for, you know, a subdivision or a site plan. I'm sure that the only issue is why don't you all kind of get coordinated and just see, because clearly the money is coming in – Michael is collecting the money. It's just a question of, if somebody wants to know how much we're collecting for wetlands permits, it should be clear because I know we're collecting it.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

We'll huddle up on that one to rectify where that money is actually going and we will make the correction.

Susan Siegel:

Thank you. I know we're collecting that. I raised this issue too many times – why we have so many legal fees listed that were added to the Master Fee Schedule in 2016, which we haven't collected. Pat, correct me if I'm wrong because I don't constantly ask you this question, but to the best of my knowledge we're not collecting a penny. It's to review variance applications, it's to review easement applications, deed issues. I know because I'm at the Planning Board that there are a lot of these documents that the attorney has to review. It's like \$1,000 for each document. Why, if it's on the books, aren't we collecting it? If you don't like the fee, take it off the Master Fee Schedule, but as long as it's there, why don't we collect it? The same thing with the collection bins. If Mr. Landi is connected on the phone, how much would that new software cost that you've been wanting? I've heard it mentioned so many times to upgrade Municipality.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

Susan, the majority of the bins that are in Yorktown are there by contract with the Refuse and Recycling Department. The ones that are at the Jefferson Valley Mall are on their property.

Susan Siegel:

There were two mentioned at the Planning Board just the other night; the BP Station on Commerce Street – the one abutting the old Rexall drugstore. They're supposed to get permits. We're not talking about the nice ones that Kim Angliss Gage did. We're talking about the ones on private

property. The JV Mall has them and the BP Station – I honestly don't remember if there are some other places. It was a good piece of legislation to want to clean up the proliferation of them and the permit of \$300 is on the books. I'm not telling you to impose a new fee. I'm just saying please collect what is due – like, Ken, your commercial water meters. How many thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars do you think you'd be collecting additionally every year? It's phenomenal what money that could bring in if the meters are running accurately. So that and the other issues, I urge you to rethink your sales tax issue and I hope the economy just recovers and your other projections will be good. But who knows? Thank you.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:  
Thank you, Susan.

Supervisor Matt Slater:  
Thank you. Diana, who do we have next?

Diana Quast, Town Clerk:  
Next is Stuart Glass. (Audio issues.)

Supervisor Matt Slater:  
Diana, do we have anybody else on to testify, if we can go to another person? You're bringing on Howard Frank. Thank you. Hi there, Mr. Frank, can you hear us? (Bad connection.)

Stuart Glass:  
My concern is just in a very limited area and that has to do with our water district. We've known in years past the fund balance for the water district had been used to keep the taxes low and it was depleted. The last administration tried to increase the funds available to the water district because the water district has a lot of important repairs that have to be made and projects that have to be undertaken. I guess I'm here to advocate for that because water is a prime need for all of us and it can't be neglected any longer. We have pipe relining that has to be done. We have transit pipe that we know fails. And when they do fail, it takes a longer time to repair them. And it's a more extensive repair that has to be made. We also have water tanks and we have to be looking towards the future that these water tanks are going to run over a million dollars each in order to refurbish them. We can afford to have one water tank down – we're lucky that we do have some extra capacity. So we can take one water tank down in order to do the repair work. But if we wait too long and we don't put money aside for the water tanks, for the relining for the transit pipe, we are going to find ourselves in a very severe condition. If we lose two tanks, we're going to have problems. So what I'm asking is that you look to find ways in this budget to put money aside for the water district – it is an urgent need that must be addressed.

That's my pitch – it's short and to the point.

Councilman Vishnu Patel:  
I had the student scholarship project and they mentioned this as an ongoing issue. The best way to solve this problem is increase the revenue when you sell the water. We've got to make sure that whatever we spend plus our expenses, we have to increase the price – like the gas stations. We are using more now and will be needing more tomorrow. If you use 1,000 gallons, you pay for 1,000 gallons, and today it's not done like that. We have to solve some problems of (leak) detecting but I think the future need will increase. We also have to take care of this electronic meter problem. It was very good this was mentioned in the students' report for their science project. And thank you for reminding us again.

Stuart Glass:  
If we don't do something now, we're going to be at a point in the future where it's going to be very, very expensive. And we're going to be hit with the cost all at once. So I do suggest that you look at the budget again and see what you can do to increase revenue for the water district.

Supervisor Matt Slater:  
Thank you, Mr. Glass. Any comments from the Board?

Councilwoman Alice Roker:  
Stuart, you're absolutely right. We talked about that for a number of years, as we did during our budget hearing with Kenny Rundle.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Right. I would also add that we are investing for the first time \$600,000 in relining to begin that process. We recognize that more needs to be done but it's a step in the right direction. Once the fluoride project is completed, there'll be an extra \$900,000 put back into the water department, which is supposed to be completed in March. We can reinvest that into the water department, as well. We've spoken about that with Kenny and put together a plan. But I would also say that one of the things I have not heard, and while I understand the concern for the water department (I think we all recognize), but there still needs to be a focus on completing the water meter project, which is really the foundation of making sure that we do have the revenue for the water department. I see Kenny's nodding – the first reaction we've gotten from him. That also needs to be a focus. We've had many conversations, and we continue to, and we're trying to find a way to move forward on that. The water meter project, as we stand right now, is simply insufficient and it's been going on for too long. Frankly, by the time you get halfway through the cycle, you're going to have to replace – you're never going to finish the full cycle of replacement until you have to replace half the meters again. So it's just a perpetual black hole until we actually fix the problem, which is your foundation for getting more cash into the water district.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

Can we have Kenny talk? I think during our hearing with you, you were satisfied with where we're going.

Kenny Rundle, Water Distribution Superintendent:

Yes, we are. Of course, it's not everything that we would like to do all at one time. I think over the years, the infrastructure has been overlooked, as I made the point to the Board several times. But this is certainly a step in the right direction. The infrastructure and what the folks were talking about the tanks – they're big ticket items, but this is a step in the right direction, and to the Supervisor's point about the water meters, as I've said a million times before, also. And Susan would agree that's really the cash register for the district. So that needs to be accurate, but we've had conversations about the water meter project. And, yes, it's something that needs to be done.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

It needs to be a priority.

Councilman Vishnu Patel:

You talk about the water meters, but the real infrastructure and electronic monitoring is already there and we pay for it. Nobody has ever said this in 10 years, that why the initial costs were much higher for building the electronic signal to the water department and each individual home – this is already established, and meters are much cheaper than the signal. So this is a really good thing we have – the foundation is there.

Councilman Tom Diana:

If I'm not mistaken, I think they actually enhanced that system a year or so ago when you got on the people who were doing the actual signal sending, so to speak, and putting a repeater so that we could get the signals from the lower end of town. If I'm not mistaken, that was something you had championed.

Kenny Rundle, Water Distribution Superintendent:

So just to refresh the Board's memory, there was an issue capturing reads over from the Croton Heights-Underhill Avenue area because we have an antenna at the Mohegan tank site and up at Quinlan Street. So I was talking to the supplier and they agreed to put a repeat or another antenna up at the French Hill Tank at no cost to the Town, which saves the Town and the water district probably about \$60,000. So as far as coverage right now, the coverage is 99.9%.

Councilman Tom Diana:

I think what a lot of people don't understand is that although there's going to be, and actually it's in the agenda tonight - budget transfers, the bills don't catch up with what we've already had to spend until a few months down the line. So what you're seeing as transfers, we get back into Kenny's budget. I think there's a \$900,000 transfer or something like that, which will come back as soon as the water bills are paid.

Kenny Rundle, Water Distribution Superintendent:

That's also, Councilman Diana, one of the benefits to have all the meters read electronically through the computers. The Board can certainly take a look at maybe bi-monthly billing. There a lot of benefits to that. But just to kind of touch on the large transfer that I'm putting through tonight, the reason why we need to do that transfer is because you purchased more water this year in 2020 at the beginning of November than what we purchased in all of 2019. You know everybody's home and a lot of people were using the water. It's kind of a double-edged sword. We weren't anticipating this pandemic with everybody being home and using so much water so we do have to do the transfer for that. On the other hand, that will increase our revenues, but to Councilman Diana's point, it's just going to take a little time for us to realize those funds.

Councilman Vishnu Patel:

You don't have money allotted in 2021 to purchase water; it should be higher, too, right? So that's another thing, you know, there is going to be more use – at least the first four or five months until things settle down. So you don't have enough money for next year, you just put the same number.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

If people are using more water, if we had accurate water meters, you'd be able to charge them the correct amount. Currently, you have 4800 meters that need to be replaced and on that schedule you're at, you're doing 200 a year. So simple math, it's going to take you 24 years to replace them.

Councilman Vishnu Patel:

No, this is a different issue, Supervisor. We are putting more money - \$850,000 – into next year's budget for water purchase for 2021. We are going to buy more water next year. So why don't you have some more money in that one, too?

Supervisor Matt Slater:

I wasn't talking about that. I was talking about the water meter project. My point that I wanted to make to Kenny and make sure the public understood also is that at the current rate we're going, it's going to take us 24 years to replace the 4800 meters. When they have a 20-year lifespan, it makes absolutely no sense. It's bad money; it's a bad investment. So the Board really needs to figure this out and this is something we talked about during the budget hearing. Councilwoman Roker is finding a way forward to address this because it is the foundation to making sure that we'll pay for the water that they are using. That will help Kenny also when has to purchase additional water, as he's seeing right now, because you're going to have more accurate reads and people are going to be charged their fair amount.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

I have to say something, Matthew, and you're right with what you just said – one of the biggest problems or concerns that I have had for the last three years is actually getting the capital plan. John Tegeder tries to get it from every department and my concern is that every time we hear of something new, it's not been on his schedule. To me, we are in the midst of I don't know how many sewer projects and water projects again. And you're right, Kenny, we have miles of old pipe in the road and we're going to have problems from now until whenever. I think, as in all businesses, in order for us to move forward, you have to have some documentation of what you're going to be expecting from the Board. That I find missing from a lot of the departments and it actually makes me crazy. The other thing I think I've always said is that we have something in hand that if at a time when infrastructure is done by the state or by the federal government, we would be on the line going "here's our plan for Yorktown." Kenny has been yelling for the last couple of years and I get it. I think what we need now that he's got a consultant working with him, we need to be seeing our plans put on a piece of paper, and I'm talking realistic plans, not wish lists.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

I think that's a great point. And I can also tell you, Councilwoman Roker, that when I did my original round of meetings with our department heads along with our comptroller, this was a focus of our attention, as well as – a realistic five-year capital plan for exactly what reasons you said. Also because it's important for our finance department, and it's important for the town to be able to properly financially plan instead of everything being an emergency with no plan and we're having heart attacks trying to figure out how we're going to pay for things. At least with the five-year plan we have a direction moving forward and the finance department and our comptroller and

the Town Board isn't being caught by surprise every two weeks with must-haves and emergencies and there's a working movement toward a goal and a plan that makes financial sense. That's one of the things that we've talked about. We've identified projects for the next year that we, I think, are realistic with under the current budget; things like the stairs over at the PD in the courtyard. That been on a capital improvement plan for quite some time. But it's finally coming up with a realistic list of how we're going to go and tackle them one by one. Until we accomplish all the different things we have, and there are a lot – there's no doubt about it – I think there is a lot of infrastructure needs that need to be addressed. I think we're beginning that process in a lot of ways. The water relining and the stairs over at the PD in the courtyard are just two examples of things that we've already flagged for next year that are realistic.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

Patty does a lot of things and when I was Clerk I was guilty of going out there trying to see if she could make wine from water. But I realized she's not a miracle worker and it's really something that I think we and have to consider.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Yes, absolutely. An I would actually debate you on the miracle worker part I've seen so far. We're going to continue. Good evening, Mr. Kopstein.

Jay Kopstein:

Good evening. How is everybody? I'm going to be short and sweet. First, Stu Glass was right. He's right on the money. Look what happened at the Town of Cortlandt when they had the problem with the one water tank and we had to back them up with our water tank. This budget is a good budget in bad times. Everybody did a good job on it. A municipal budget is not a corporate budget. Municipal budgeting must comply with New York State Comptroller's regulations and gap. It's not a corporate budget. The last item is a pet peeve of mine. I've mentioned it before. Questions should be addressed to the Supervisor or the Board. We should not be directing questions to individual town employees. The Board or the Supervisor should be addressing those town employees, if they deem it appropriate. Thank you.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Thank you, Jay. Diana, do we have another speaker?

Diana Quast, Town Clerk:

We have Ilan Gilbert.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Former Town Supervisor, Mr. Gilbert, good evening.

Ilan Gilbert:

Good evening, everyone. It's a pleasure to see you all and someday we can all hug each other. I can't wait until that time. And, Alice, as you said, we're all in this boat together so we're all looking to try to achieve what's best for the town. I'm confident that's the intent of everyone on this call and at the table. Again, Supervisor Slater, Board Members, Diana Quast our Town Clerk, Chief Noble, Dave Paganelli, Pat Caporale and all of our department heads. I'm not unique in this regard, but as a prior supervisor, I think I bring a perspective a little differently regarding this process. I recognize the hard work you all put into this process trying to weigh issues so you provide your constituents and citizens what they need and they deserve. The goal of government is to provide maximum service to constituents in the most cost efficient way. My following comments are why I urge you not to adopt the preliminary budget as proposed and reconsider several issues. I am glad to hear that we will be getting money back from the fluoride project. As we finish that, I'm glad to hear, Kenny, that we're finally able to move forward with the relining that you're going to be in a better financial situation than you were while I was supervisor. But the Board, I believe, has the time to consider the next few weeks and we should be a little bit more circumspect in this budget. Vishnu, your point is well served that if we needed to purchase additional water this fall, maybe we will be needing to purchase additional water this spring until things sort of get back to normal. I want to know whether that has been reflected in this budget. I believe also that the budget is too optimistic with regard to revenue projections, especially the sales tax, and along with the fact that we're very lucky to have department heads willing to tighten their belts. I know that they do a tremendous job and I'm sure they did this year. We're also very lucky to have Pat Caporale sitting in the capacity of Town Comptroller. It hasn't been said, but

Pat has also been recognized for great work on the state level, as well. So I think that's important to understand. I would hope that you take her advice as I did when I was the supervisor, Matt. She was adamant during my last budget cycle not to overestimate potential revenue benefits from the sales tax increase. We were very cautious. And, Pat, if you recall, I remember sitting with you. But then we became a little less cautious when we came up with the final budget. We were still cautious, but were a little less cautious. We were a little less cautious when the projections were going to be high by the county. Now we're hearing from the county, specifically, that they expect to reduce the sales tax, the 2021 projection by 6%. The budget shows less money to distribute to the towns. So it's really hard, I believe, for us in your attempt to justify getting the same amount of money in 2021 as we budgeted in 2020. So I think because the county is being less optimistic, we need to be less optimistic.

I believe we left the town in a great position financially, in part, relying upon you, Pat, and your fiscally conservative attitudes. I think especially during the crisis, and we're getting over that crisis, but we are still in the midst of the crisis. Until we do, we still need to move in that direction. While I would never regard myself as being an advocate of tax and spend philosophy, I know some people may say that may be the case, but I am a fiscally conservative individual.

There are several issues that concern me. I wonder how the Board can justify decreasing the tax rate when we know the town needs millions of dollars of capital improvements. I understand bonding is a consideration. But unlike many, I also believe bonding comes with its own cost, the cost of borrowing. So we have to be cognizant of that. I know that the long-term capital plans that we have at the end of book or at the back of the budget, are separate and distinct from operating costs of the town. But the town did agree to a 12.5% increase in salaries over the next five years. I'm not passing judgement one way or the other. I think that it was a fair negotiation. But we have to understand with that what we have built in. Because of the fact that we have such a large portion of our expenses, our employees and their contracts, we built in an increase. So it almost doesn't make sense that you can have less than a minus in terms of taxes. We have issues regarding our water tanks. I'm going to repeat some of the things, not because some of the other speakers have already talked about it, but I'm going to repeat it because I had this thought and I wanted to get it in anyway. It's important to repeat it because these issues need to be addressed. I sat with the other remaining four members on this Board so they are aware of this. You're aware of it because I know you've been filled in, but they are as aware of it because they sat with me for two years. We all saw these issues, you know, for two years. We have the issues regarding the water tanks. We have issues regarding 40 miles worth of transit pipe in our ground and our system. At one point in time while I was there, this could be done (inaudible) just like you, Supervisor Slater just recently mentioned about how we need to get on the stick in terms of doing the meters because if we only replace 200 meters per year, it's 24 years to complete the project. Cortlandt has 20 miles of transit pipe in the ground and they came up with a plan to replace basically a quarter mile every year and the Health Department basically gave them a pass on that. But that's an eighty year plan if, like you said, it's a 24-year plan for the meters, that's an 80-year plan to replace the transit pipe. For those that don't know, transit pipe has a serious cost. I'm not going to go into what it's composed of, but it has a serious cost; basically, component when replacing it because it's not unsafe while it's in the ground but if it gets broken or if it needs repair, you have issues that we have to be considering the public's safety. So that's another serious issue.

We know we have issues regarding the sewer district regarding an order we have for our SPEDES permit that needs to be addressed. We have been redlined on many culverts in town, as a matter of fact, and Michael, I'm addressing you not ordering you about this – Jay Kopstein might have to take issues, but I know you understand, I know Dave Paganelli and the rest of the Board knows that our number one project when we put forward three projects, the Hill Boulevard and Veterans Road Project, our number one project that was not funded was the Hunterbrook Project and the culvert behind MacDonald's. We know that needs to be repaired. I give you credit, Supervisor Slater, for moving forward after we funded it under my administration, but we completed that wonderful Mohegan Avenue project and the filtration aspect for Mohegan Lake – that was all worked on. We have reason to believe that the Hunterbrook Pumping station is woefully inadequate because of flows that need to be addressed. You only have one more year of the garbage contract that some have criticized but I believe was financially sound and beneficial to the town. It will be an open question moving forward in the 2022 budget how much money will be available for carting and the garbage contract. That's a big ticket item. We also have another big ticket item that came up while I was supervisor. Chief Noble, I know you and Dave Paganelli are aware that we've talked about improved communication for both the Highway Department and the

Police Department and how much that will run the town. Those things are given expenditures that are going to go up every year – you can't count on revenue increases. More than 50% of the budget is non-property tax revenue, which we don't have control over and we certainly didn't have control over it during this pandemic period. I don't agree with Susan all the time, but I agree with Susan Siegel where she talks about handcuffing ourselves by not coming close to the tax levy that we are holding back on – that we're not imposing – because that will limit our options for 2022. As I've already indicated, we've contracted salary increases that will add about \$500,000 to the budget, if we don't have any staff cuts. I know Parks and Recreation has been looking for additional people rather than cuts because we have a situation where we have more things to take care of. I would simply warn about passing a budget that ties both your hands. And it will tie your hands for the 2022 budget, Matt, and it will tie future administration's going forward. So I would ask that you don't rush and adopt this preliminary budget and take into account some of the things I've mentioned. With that said, I appreciate all the hard work that you do, but also the hard work that's ahead of us as a town. I also thank all the constituents for chipping in – this has been an unprecedented period for us all. I say a prayer for those that haven't made it through. Most of us have made it through and we will make it through. We are a strong town. We are a strong country. And those are my comments for this evening. Thank you.

Councilwoman Alice Roker and Councilman Vishnu Patel:  
Thank you.

Supervisor Matt Slater:  
Are there any comments from the Board?

Ilan Gilbert:  
Excuse me? There was one other item that I didn't address. Is that possible? I didn't notice in the budget, whether it was in planning or engineering, an environmental consultant – someone working for the environment in town. So that was my question, if that's going to be included in the budget. Thank you.

Supervisor Matt Slater:  
Thank you very much. That's a topic that I think the Town Board will be taking up in the not too distant future.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:  
Yes. Mr. Frank is back – I think he's got a phone. He's called me on my cell so I'm going to play him through my speaker. Okay? Mr. Frank, are you there?

Howard Frank:  
Yes, I am. Thank you. I wish every board and town supervisor would address the New York City Water Board. Nobody has complained over the last five years that they raised the bulk rate 5% - I believe it was 7% last year. Nobody from Westchester County has attended the hearings of the New York City Water Board and that's one hidden cost of our water costs, not only here but throughout Westchester County. They are being paid extra, which they do deserve to the accurate monitoring, but the (inaudible) set should be figured into the water. (Inaudible) Joint Water Board reported to which we never see exactly how much they pay in New York City on the gross amount of water. I also want to thank Ms. Siegel for good comments and our ongoing citizens' newsletter, which keeps us up to date. Another comment I'd like to make on this town budge is the number of fees that go to the building department with no accountability except that they're pretty good at sending out a bill. I would like the Town Board to take whatever money is raised by that burglar alarm fee and give it to the first responders – the water department is actually one of the first responders since they do emergencies. That fund should be spread around evenly from the Ambulance Corps to the Volunteer Fire Department. Even though it may be \$25 or \$27 a year, it will hold everybody accountable, especially when there're telephone responses. Also, the police department goes out on calls to see if there's a fire, which you may want to reserve and extra charge put in the burglar alarm fee if there is a police response. As far as the building department goes, I'm going back to Supervisor Spadaccia, Supervisors Elliot and Cooper and up the line. Every town board meeting had a building department report. Nobody closed the meeting until they heard the building department report, which was very informative and can be very simple: how many new house permits were issued, how many fees came in as hidden number? I couldn't even get the number of solar permits put out. It's very important to let everybody know what the

building is doing monthly, not only by inspections, but fees. Those are my comments toward making the town information more accessible. Thank you, Diana, for holding the phone for me.

Diana Quast, Town Clerk:

No problem.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Thanks, Mr. Frank. I know that Ms. Siegel asked to be granted a short courtesy.

Susan Siegel:

Thank you for this. Normally, if we have ever get back to live meetings, we usually stand along the edge of the wall and after everyone has spoken, we come up if we have something additional to say. One, I want to thank all of the residents who took the time to participate in this meeting. I've been coming to budget hearings for years. Last year it was me and the dentist who spoke about fluoride. It's usually two or three people. This is a very, very big meeting that has really covered a lot of territory and I want to thank everyone for taking that time. Supervisor Slater, I want to personally thank you so much for your comments about the importance of proceeding with the water meter project. This is something that I started with Councilman Patel (inaudible). And to proceed with it, we're going to need money. This may be a good time to borrow because the interest rates are low. You also then let me go one and combine a lot of other comments because it all comes down to one factor – the tax levy. As former Supervisor Gilbert said, (inaudible), thank you, Lanny – I hadn't even thought about that. All of these different needs will put tremendous pressure on the 2022 budget, which means it's critical how you deal with the tax levy for 2021. Pat, I leave it up to you to explain this to the Board. It's complicated, but it's really simple because what you do with this year's levy will impact next year's levy. So if you reduce it for this year by \$1.4 million, which you're planning to do based on this preliminary budget, you could lose easily half a million. Think of the potential levy for next year when you're going to have all those additional expenses. The water district is so absolutely critical. I'm not going to go over all of that, but I just want to emphasize why. The reason I think one of the reasons why you're lowering the water tax this year is because of the tax levy issue and because you're trying to come in with a lower levy. So please believe that the purchase amount for you to be aware of looks very unrealistic (inaudible). I've lived through times where monies set aside for the cement lining in the budget looked good but then as revenues came in less or other expenses came in higher than you anticipated. Guess what? The capital project never got done. So even though the money is there, believe me, I keep my fingers crossed that it will be spent on the cement but it's no guarantee if the revenues or your other expenses like the water purchase come in higher. So please, as Lanny urged you, please sit down – there's ample time; the budget has to be adopted by the 20<sup>th</sup> of December – you've got almost three weeks to review this and go over the sales tax line. I'm going to send you that page from the county budget where the county is anticipating not only a reduction for 2021 but collecting money for 2020, which will create a problem. So please, with all of this - tax levy, water district, revenue optimistic, and a capital plan that if you start putting it together, (inaudible) trying to do more, you're going to use some fund balance and some borrowing because this may be a good time to borrow, but that's going to be an expense on your 2022 budget – again a tax levy issue. Thank you.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

With that we will close have a motion to close the public hearing.

Councilman Ed Lachterman:

Motion to close.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Do we have a second?

Councilman Tom Diana:

Second.

Councilman Ed Lachterman:

What did you want to do, Alice?

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

I thought it was better to just adjourn it for right now. Closing means that you basically have heard everything and have done everything and I think we need to have a conversation.

Councilman Ed Lachterman:

I agree with the conversation, but we can close the public hearing and then we could reconvene on changes, correct?

Diana Quast, Town Clerk:

You can adjourn it and then you can speak about amending certain things but once you close, the public hearing is closed.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

I have no problem if you want to adjourn it.

Councilwoman Alice Roker:

Thank you, Matt.

Councilman Tom Diana:

Second.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

All in favor?

Town Board Members: Aye.

Supervisor Matt Slater:

Any opposed? Motion carries. We have adjourned the public hearing and will move to resolutions, taken together.

AUTHORIZE SUPERVISOR TO SIGN A MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT WITH BUSINESS ELECTRONICS, INC. FOR SERVICING THE YORKTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT'S VOICE RECORDER EQUIPMENT  
RESOLUTION #404

Upon motion made by Councilwoman Roker, seconded by Councilman Lachterman,

Resolved, the Supervisor is authorized to sign a maintenance agreement with Business Electronics, Inc. for servicing the Yorktown Police Department's voice recorder equipment for the period December 15, 2020 through December 14, 2021. The annual contract amount is \$3,660.00.

Slater, Diana, Lachterman, Patel, Roker Voting Aye  
Resolution adopted.

AUTHORIZE SUPERVISOR TO SIGN A MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT WITH WESTCHESTER AUTOMATED GATE LLC. FOR SERVICING THE AUTOMATED GATE AT THE POLICE DEPARTMENT/COURT COMPLEX  
RESOLUTION #405

Upon motion made by Councilwoman Roker, seconded by Councilman Lachterman,

Resolved, the Supervisor is authorized to sign a maintenance agreement with Westchester Automated Gate LLC. for servicing the automated gate at the Police Department/Court Complex for the period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. The annual contract amount is \$535.00.

Slater, Diana, Lachterman, Patel, Roker Voting Aye  
Resolution adopted.

RE-ENGAGE SULLIVAN DATA MANAGEMENT FOR INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES TO THE TOWN OF YORKTOWN  
RESOLUTION #406

Upon motion made by Councilwoman Roker, seconded by Councilman Lachterman,

Whereas, the Town of Yorktown's procurement policy allows for the Town Board to re-engage the same vendor without issuing a new Request for Proposals, and RFP for Information and Technology Services was received from Sullivan Data Management on October 20, 2011 and awarded on November 1, 2011; now

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that Sullivan Data Management is re-engaged for the services of Information Technology for an additional term of three years commencing January 2, 2021 throughout December 31, 2023 at a total cost of \$77,645.00 per year.

Slater, Diana, Lachterman, Patel, Roker Voting Aye  
Resolution adopted.

AUTHORIZE COMPTROLLER TO PROCESS THE FOLLOWING BUDGET TRANSFER FOR THE WATER DEPARTMENT  
RESOLUTION #407

Upon motion made by Councilwoman Roker, seconded by Councilman Lachterman,

The Comptroller is hereby authorized to process the following budget transfer:

From:		
SW.1002	Water – Fund Balance	\$425,000.00
SW8340.483	Water – Special Project	\$425,000.00

To:		
SW8320.450	Water Purchase	\$850,000.00

For the purchase of water for the months of November and December 2020.

Slater, Diana, Lachterman, Patel, Roker Voting Aye  
Resolution adopted.

AUTHORIZE COMPTROLLER TO PROCESS THE FOLLOWING BUDGET TRANSFER AMENDMENT FOR THE PURCHASE OF A FORD F350 XLT TRUCK FOR THE PARKS DEPARTMENT  
RESOLUTION #408

Upon motion made by Councilwoman Roker, seconded by Councilman Lachterman,

Whereas, the Town Board passed a resolution on March 3, 2020 authorizing the Parks Department to purchase a Ford F350 XLT Truck, and

Whereas, the cost of the truck has increased from \$45,955.33 to \$46,459.33, now

Therefore, Be it Resolved, that the Town Board authorizes to amend the original cost of the truck from \$45,955.33 to \$46,459.33 for the purchase of a Ford F350 XLT Truck for the Parks Department.

Slater, Diana, Lachterman, Patel, Roker Voting Aye  
Resolution adopted.

AUTHORIZE TOWN CLERK TO ADVERTISE THE WATER MATERIALS BID FOR THE WATER DEPARTMENT  
RESOLUTION #409

Upon motion made by Councilwoman Roker, seconded by Councilman Lachterman,

Resolved, that the Town Clerk is authorized to advertise the Water Materials Bid for the Water Department.

Slater, Diana, Lachterman, Patel, Roker Voting Aye  
Resolution adopted.

AUTHORIZE THE AUCTION OF MOTOR VEHICLES, MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT AND EQUIPMENT THAT ARE OBSOLETE AND NO LONGER NEEDED FOR PUBLIC USE BY THE TOWN

RESOLUTION #410

Upon motion made by Councilwoman Roker, seconded by Councilman Lachterman,

Whereas, the Town of Yorktown has found that certain motor vehicles, motorized equipment and equipment are obsolete and no longer needed for public use by the Town, and

Whereas, the Central Garage and various departments recommend to the Town Board that the listed motor vehicles, motorized equipment and equipment be deemed obsolete and sold at auction by Absolute Auctions & Realty, Inc., now

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the following motor vehicles, motorized equipment and equipment are deemed obsolete and will be sold at auction by Absolute Auctions & Realty, Inc.

2000 CHEVROLET S10 LIGHT PICKUP VIN: 1GCDT14W7YK241258  
Truck #4 2004 Ford F550 4x4 1FDAX57P44EC48546 128,522 MILES  
Truck #6 2006 Ford F550 4x4 1FDAX57P76ED42147 110,014 MILES  
Truck #7 1195 Chevrolet K2500 4x4 1GCGK24K95E26975 107,121 MILES  
Truck #25 2000 International 2574 4x2 1HTGEAHROYH250458 48,495 Miles  
Truck #49 1991 GMC Top Kick 1GDP7H1J6MJ508761 33,933 Miles  
Truck #55 1998 International 2574 1HTGEAUR7WH488035 68,588 Miles  
Trailer #62 Harvey 5 ton trailer 5A2H512231B000634  
Excavator #90 1986 Komatsu PC200-3 29789 4,879 hrs  
Truck #96 1997 GMC Sonoma 4x4 1GTDT14X2VK509542 96,252 Miles  
2 Western Ultramount plows  
2 Obsolete Fisher Plows  
2 10' Fisher Plows  
4 Swenson Stainless Steel Salt Spreaders  
Roller #88 Rex Roller Serial – 4GL330  
Generac Generator Model – QT06030KNAN Serial – 4524071  
Onan Generator w/ trailer  
Strato Lift Scissor Lift Model – KRX-20 Serial – 20347  
Smith Stainless Steel Electric Salt Spreader  
2 Hydraulic Gravel Spreaders  
2 Hydraulic Power Units  
Brine Machine  
Honda RotoTiller  
Trench Box 92 - 92”d x 52”w x 122”l

Slater, Diana, Lachterman, Patel, Roker Voting Aye  
Resolution adopted.

AUTHORIZE BOND RELEASE TO SPARKS - TILLMAN, 1415 CHRISTINE ROAD IN THE AMOUNT OF \$250.00

RESOLUTION #411

Upon motion made by Councilwoman Roker, seconded by Councilman Lachterman,

Whereas,

1. Idrissa Sparks-Tillman, as applicant, posted check #509 in the amount of \$250, which was deposited to the T33 account on July 12, 2019.
2. The applicant has requested the money be released as the site is now complete.
3. The Town Engineer has informed this Board that a representative of his department has inspected the property and determined that the work has been satisfactorily completed, and that the above referenced monies may be released.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the above referenced \$250 be and is hereby released to Ms. Idrissa Sparks - Tillman , 1415 Christine Road, Mohegan Lake, NY 10547.

Slater, Diana, Lachterman, Patel, Roker Voting Aye  
Resolution adopted.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion made by Councilman Lachterman, seconded by Councilwoman Roker, the Town Board moved into Executive Session to discuss the employment of a particular person. The Town Board will adjourn the meeting from Executive Session.

ADJOURN MEETING

Upon motion made by Councilman Lachterman, seconded by Councilman Diana, the Town Board meeting was adjourned.

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DIANA L. QUAST, TOWN CLERK  
TOWN OF YORKTOWN  
CERTIFIED MUNICIPAL CLERK