

Budget Hearing meeting held by the Town Board,  
Town of Yorktown on December 5, 2012 held at  
Yorktown Town Hall, Yorktown Heights, NY

Present: Michael Grace, Supervisor  
Nicholas J. Bianco, Councilman  
Terrence P. Murphy, Councilman  
David Paganelli, Councilman  
Vishnu V. Patel, Councilman  
Alice E. Roker, Town Clerk

### 2013 BUDGET HEARING

Supervisor Grace called to order a public hearing to order to consider the preliminary budget of the Town of Yorktown, Westchester County, NY for the fiscal year beginning January 1st, 2013. Affidavits of Posting and Publication were presented by the Town Clerk.

Supervisor Grace began the discussion by stating that this budget represents a tax decrease for everyone.

The Budgets referred to as ADL (General, Highway and Library) represent a 4.17% increase, driven largely by the settlement of CSEA and PBA contracts, some of which went back to 2009. Every residential property is a part of the refuse district. This year, the Town Board chose to re-bid the garbage contract instead of utilizing the option to extend. The result of the re-bid is a savings of \$800,000. This budget also represents a significant decrease in the levy for the water district. Sewer district levies remain flat.

Property owners with utilities will see a tax decrease of 3.6%. The tax decrease for property owners who do not have utilities is .2%.

The Tax Cap was not an issue for the Town of Yorktown. The total levy for 2013 is \$500,000 less than the levy for 2012. We could have levied an additional \$1.4 million in spending and still remained under the tax cap.

Supervisor Grace stated that new software in the Finance Department represents a cost savings of 1 and ½ employees. The Town is also looking to invest in digital software that will save on paper, permit the Town to provide more documents on line and ultimately save space in our archive center.

Mr. Don Roberts, a representative of the United Taxpayers of Yorktown spoke about the Town's fund balance beginning in 2010 when he said they were told the fund balance was \$500,000. After the audit, the UTY learned that the fund balance was more than \$1 million. In 2011, the Board used \$167,000 of fund balance to offset the tax increase. The UTY later learned that remaining fund balance was nearly \$2 million. Mr. Roberts expressed concern that the Preliminary Budget was filed on line on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, which he says gave his group only two days to go through the document. Mr. Roberts also urged the Town Board to appoint a Finance Committee.

Supervisor Grace stated that he wanted to form the committee, but with the late installation of the KVS Software and the fact that the Finance Department was in transition until just recently, he had his hands full. The Supervisor stated that he will appoint a committee in 2013.

Mr. Roberts asked about the fund balance in the Water District. Why are you carrying such a large fund balance? This money belongs to the tenants of the water district.

Supervisor Grace said he had no argument with that statement. He then explained how the fund grew beginning in the early 1990s when the Town Board was working on a plan to build a water filtration plant in Yorktown.

Mrs. Susan Siegel handed the Town Board a statement that analyzes the minutes of the November 20<sup>th</sup> Town Board Meeting and finds differences. A copy of Mrs. Siegel's statement is on file in the 2013 Budget File. Mrs. Siegel stated that while residents may see a reduction in their taxes in 2013; but what about 2014?

Mr. Dan Lefkowitz, also a member of the United Taxpayers of Yorktown asked a series of questions including why the cable services line went from \$15,000 to \$30,000. Why is there an increase in the Meeting Expenses? Why is there an increase in the police department's vehicle line and neighborhood watch line?

Supervisor Grace explained that the video-audio system requires updating. There's money in the police budget for 3 ½ cars, we hope they will take this as an incentive to save money in another line to pay off the balance of the additional car. He further stated that the Town Board would like to have our police department take a more active role in neighborhood watch.

Mr. Ed Ciffone asked a series of questions including having the Supervisor to explain the tax rate. He questioned why the Town Board had to keep large fund balances. Mr. Ciffone read portions of the 2012 Town Audit which states that "the Town has not developed a fund balance policy to address the requirements of Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 54 – "Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions." He explained that the Town ended 2011 with \$4 million in fund balance, but there was still a tax rate hike.

Mr. Anthony Grasso, a former councilman spoke about the way he analyzes a budget. He thanked Supervisor Grace and the Deputy Comptroller, Patricia Caporale for what they did with this budget. Mr. Grasso stated that this is a good budget and that everyone should be proud of the work that was done on it.

Mrs. Jennie Menton also thanked the Town Board for working hard on this budget. She wanted to know if the line that shows \$29,000 under Senior Programs is the funding for the senior clubs. Mrs. Menton reiterated her concern about the way this money is distributed to the clubs. Earlier this year, the Parks and Recreation Department sent out a letter asking for information with a return date of October 30<sup>th</sup>. Three clubs have failed to respond to the letter.

Supervisor Grace stated that the request from the Town is to gather information from the clubs.

Mrs. Siegel read a statement stating that she believes the new administrative fee proposed in the 2013 budget is inequitable and unfair. She suggested a study be done to come up with a more equitable solution. Mrs. Siegel ended by suggesting that the Town Board return to the 5% rate.

Mr. Ken Belfer, speaking on behalf of the Mohegan Lake Improvement District, handed in a written statement to the Town Board and said that he too was caught off guard with this increase in administrative cost.

Supervisor Grace stated that we will look at this issue. He also explained the type of work covered by that administrative fee which has never gone up even though budgets have. The fee covers work done by the Town Attorney, work done in the Finance Department, in the Town Clerks Office, etc. There is a lot of work provided to the special districts that go uncovered by this fee.

Supervisor Grace spoke about a letter he received from Abby Luby, a resident of Mohegan Lake. In it, she thanked the Town for the services it has provided her community. Mrs. Luby also thanked the Highway Superintendent who she says played an important role in repairing a collapsed culvert under Route 6. She spoke about the Improvement District's on-going efforts to keep the lake healthy. They will be applying to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for permission to use aluminum sulfate, or alum, to rid the lake of the algae. Mrs. Luby also spoke about their need for a new week harvester to replace their 35 year old machine.

The issue of the replacement of meters in the water district was discussed.

Mr. Ciffone asked that the Town Board purchase the transfer switch for Town Hall as well as the generators that have been talked about for the last couple of years.

The Town Board was asked whether unemployment or under-employment was paid to individuals.

The Board responded that the Town was paying both, unemployment and under-employment to some individuals.

Mr. Don Roberts asked questions concerning the following budget lines:

Page 19 – General Administrative Fees have gone from \$5,000 to \$130,000

Planning Director John Tegeder explained that these are fees for projects such as the new development at the Field Home.

There is an increase in cable fees?

This is for equipment.

Page 27 – a change in the line for Purchasing/CRS salaries

That line covers the salary for people who work with those sentenced by the court to do community service.

Page 28 – a change in the salary line in the Comptroller's Office.

The Town Board will have to speak to the Deputy Comptroller and explain the type of staffing it envisions.

The line for bottled water was questioned.

Mr. Roberts asked about cell phones at the Yorktown Community and Cultural Center.

Mrs. Margaret Gspurning, who is the Department Head for the Building Maintenance Staff explained that the phones are used by the custodians who work all around the building.

Page 43 – who is covered by salaries under the Building Maintenance Line for Public Safety.

Yorktown Police Chief Dan McMahon explained that the line covers two custodians who work in the Police Department and Court House.

Page 44 – Municipal Dues. We were told that this line would pay for a dinner that the Town was going to host in 2012. Why is this line still \$5,000.

Mr. Roberts raised the issue of grants which is one page 56.

The question of custodian fees in the Parks and Recreation budget was also raised.

Parks and Recreation Superintendent Brian Gray stated that the Yorktown Central School District has indicated that the Town would have to pay custodian fees this year.

The question of having the sports clubs who receive funding from the Town provide a financial statement was raised.

Mr. Roberts questioned why the part-time help at the Museum are paid under the line Temporary Help.

Page 85 – Mr. Roberts raised the issue of the Library's Fund Balance.

Mrs. Susan Siegel made several suggestions to the Town Board; that the cost of alarm fees go up. There has been no increase in fees since the legislation was created for these fees in the 1990's. She also suggested that the Town Board institute a fee for line A0000.2567 Mrs. Siegel also raised the issue that some of the fees that this budget is based on will only be seen one time such as the energy grant. There was discussion about a smaller increase in Planning Fees. The \$10,000 increase in salary for the Tax Aide is not reflected in the Preliminary

Budget. She spoke about a Mail-in Plea Program that she spoke to Judge Lagonia about last year,

Supervisor Grace stated that there are constitutional problems with this program.

Mrs. Siegel spoke about line 1220.0110 saying only one person has been sentenced to the community service program this year.

Supervisor Grace explained that the people who administer this program are always on call. But, it is a good thing that only one person went through this program this year.

Mrs. Siegel stated that the salary line under the Comptroller doesn't add up.

The Town Board will make corrections to that line.

What about the employment of a financial advisor, will that happen?

Supervisor Grace responded, no.

Mrs. Siegel questioned a \$35,000 expenditure in the Assessor's Department.

Mrs. Kim Penner, the Yorktown Assessor stated the money in the budget will be used to pay Robert Killeen. She explained that staffing levels in her department is well below the State formula for an Assessor's Office. Mr. Killeen will be working on commercial accounts for the Town.

Mrs. Siegel raised questions concerning the budget for the Legal Department, about a part-time cleaner, several lines in the Law Enforcement budget, taxes on Town Property and the Parks Department budget. Mrs. Siegel spoke about the fund balance in the Water Department. She questioned the salary proposal for the Water Superintendent. Mrs. Siegel also addressed the Board concerning issues in the Refuse Department including the fund balance. The fund balance in the Hallocks Mill Sewer District was also raised.

Supervisor Grace thanked the audience for participating in this public hearing.

All those present having been given the opportunity to be heard and there being no further discussion the hearing was closed. Councilman Bianco motioned, seconded by Councilman Murphy.

#### ADJOURN

Councilman Bianco moved, seconded by Councilman Murphy to adjourn the Town Board meeting.

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Alice E. Roker, Town Clerk  
Town of Yorktown