

Special meeting (BUDGET HEARING) of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Brockport was held in the Conference Room, Municipal Building, 49 State Street, Brockport, New York, April 20, 2009 at 7:00pm.

PRESENT: Mayor Morton Wexler, Trustee/Vice Mayor Maria C. Castañeda, Trustee Scott W. Hunsinger, Trustee Hal S. Legg, Clerk Leslie A. Morelli, Treasurer Gina M. Tojek, Police Chief Daniel P. Varrenti

EXCUSED: Village Attorney David F. Mayer, DPW Superintendent Harry G. Donahue, Building/Zoning Officer Scott C. Zarnstorff, Fire Chief Scott Smith

ABSENT: Trustee David J. Wagenhauser

ALSO PRESENT: Jim & Joan Hamlin, Josephine Matela, Merv Beaney, Norm GianCursio, Kathy Snyder, Bernie LoBracco

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Wexler called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He asked that cell phones be silenced.

MISSION STATEMENT: "To provide a high quality of life for all residents, exercising fiscal responsibility and preserving Brockport's unique heritage and historic character."

PUBLIC HEARING on Revised Tentative Budget 6/1/09 – 5/31/10:

Mayor Wexler welcomed those in attendance. The purpose this evening is to hear public comment on the proposed Revised Tentative (Preliminary) Budget. The Village Board continues to work on the budget in an effort to reduce the potential tax rate increase. The Board's next regular meeting is April 27th in which a vote on the budget should take place. A final budget must be adopted by May 1st.

Clerk Morelli read the following legal notice:

VILLAGE OF BROCKPORT
COURTESY NOTICE
CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC HEARING ON REVISED TENTATIVE BUDGET

Please take notice that the Board of Trustees of the Village of Brockport will meet at 7:00pm on Monday, April 20, 2009 in the Conference Room of the Village Hall, 49 State Street Brockport, New York for the purpose of continuing the public hearing on the 2009-2010 Revised Tentative Budget that was adjourned on April 15th.

The Revised Tentative Budget is available for review on the Village website at www.brockportny.org and at Village Hall during business hours Monday – Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm. Said Revised Tentative Budget includes compensation proposed to be paid to each member of the Board of Trustees as follows:

Mayor \$9,866

Trustees (4) \$3,443.25

Gina M. Tojek
Village Treasurer
Village of Brockport

➔ Trustee Hunsinger moved, unanimously carried 4/0 to open the public hearing at 7:06pm.

1. Josephine Matela of Adams Street read the following statement:

"I want to thank the board for allowing me to speak this evening. First, I have to say that I was quite concerned by the proceeding of last week. It seemed to me that the board in its attempt to balance the budget was arbitrary in selecting what figure should be used in various line items without the proper rationale. I would hope that the board would look to collaboration, consolidation and communication when deciding on the final budget. That means working with our neighbors, the Town of Sweden, the Town of Clarkson and the County of Monroe. One thing is for certain – this is the time for fiscal conservatism as the residents of this village cannot afford any increase in taxes."

2. Jim Hamlin of Park Avenue said he reviewed the proposed budget document and noted the following:

- a. Revenues - last year increases were built in for sales tax and utility gross receipts revenues that did not come to fruition.
- b. Revenues - \$82,000 in extra tax dollars meaning the assessed value used had to be wrong.
- c. Revenues - large increase in 3rd party billing monies.
- d. Village equipment line – no monies have been set aside – net loss \$38,000. Questioned where that comes from.
- e. Expenditures – parks and playgrounds budgeted \$26,000 but spent \$57,000. Questioned if that difference is the money the Village is supposed to get per the G.E.

memorandum of understanding regarding the Barry Street playground.

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- f. Workers Compensation - \$62,000 budgeted last year. Questioned if that includes the \$24,000 credit or would that really be \$85,000. Likely not getting cheaper.

Treasurer Tojek said she applauds his review of the budget. Yes, she found the assessed value used was incorrect last year. Yes, the deficit balance in the Village equipment line will be changing due to the decision to purchase 1 instead of 2 police vehicles. Yes, the parks and playground reserve will be reimbursed, as she will be billing G.E. per the MOU. She said she was not aware of that until it was brought to her attention. The workers compensation reflects the credit the Village received last year. The Village will not be getting a credit next year.

3. Joan Hamlin of Park Avenue said in reviewing the budget it seems the Board has cut just about everything it can cut. She agrees with the statement made by the Treasurer at the last meeting that the Village has to think long term and not budget from year to year. The Board cut taxes two years in a row and is now having to pay for it. She said she is disappointed the Police Department doesn't take a cut, that she has long been a supporter of the police, but that the cost is getting scary. Commented that when the Village solicits funding assistance for the Main Street rehabilitation projects that it would be dishonest to "shoot for the moon" as has previously been suggested and try to get money for extras like banner poles, irrigation system, sound system, fiber optics, etc. She said the Village should get what it truly needs, not wants. She said she's hate to go to representatives and say we don't want the money.

Mayor Wexler shared that he spoke with Senator Maziarz's office today and confirmed that two Board members have made contact and/or submitted necessary paperwork in an effort to obtain any possible funding towards the Village's portion of the project – water and sewer. Anything we can get will help. However, our state and federal representatives are members of the minority party – fighting for funding. The Village will keep calling to try to get a share of any stimulus monies. We haven't received a "no".

J. Hamlin said when I. Coyle was here he said the Village's infrastructure (Main Street water and sewer lines) has been here for 100 years and hasn't been taken care of. She said she'd like to see the project go forward and not be delayed. She said some think it should wait, but that would be silly because it won't get any cheaper.

4. Kathy Snyder of Lyman Street referenced the April 7, 2008 Village Board meeting minutes in which one Trustee stated that the budget would be padding a fund balance and save the taxpayers \$100,000. Now we're in dire straits. She questioned whether she should assume the taxpayers were misled. She said one Trustee made a statement that a tax rate decrease will lead to a large increase this year. She was right. K. Snyder thanked Trustee Castañeda for being there for the taxpayers while other Trustees snickered and whispered about her comments.

Mayor Wexler said it is going to be a difficult budget again next year. He said he truly wishes all those who seek elected office well. No matter who wins, they do not have an easy task ahead. Both the CSEA (DPW) and Stetson Club (Police) contracts expire May 31, 2010 and will require re-negotiating. Although he will no longer be on the Board, he remains a taxpayer and like everyone else he doesn't want to see his taxes go up. Of the 10 Villages in Monroe County, Brockport has the lowest per capita income but the second highest tax rate. However, if the Village wants all the services they get, they have to pay for it. Somewhere along the line, some hard decisions will need to be made about possibility eliminating some services.

5. Joan Hamlin of Park Avenue suggested the Board take a roll call vote to work together and meet as an entire Board between now and May 1st to come to a final budget. She said working as individuals and by e-mails and separate meetings "smells".

Mayor Wexler said most of the officials realize that a different method needs to be used next year and that the budget process needs to start much sooner.

J. Hamlin said the Board conducted a search process to fill the Treasurer vacancy and hired G. Tojek who only started January 5th and has worked hard and long and provided thoughtful recommendations. She filed the tentative budget on March 20th as required and on March 30th the day of a Board meeting a Trustee proposes a whole new budget. She said she couldn't believe it.

Mayor Wexler said he wouldn't be in office after June 30th, but that he is confident there will be a different and better process next year and that the staff and community will benefit from it. Not like this year. The Village Board really needs to work together and work with the Treasurer and Department Heads from day one. He said he has no doubt that while Board members have differing opinions; each truly cares about this Village.

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Chief Varrenti said he wished to speak about the Police Department budget. He said it is not unique that the Police Department has a very large percentage of the budget, as Police Departments are expensive to operate. While he agrees that costs usually don't go down, this year the cost of the Brockport Police Department did go down. Of the department's budget, 92% are salaries and benefits per the negotiated contract. This contract is handed to the Chief to make it work. He said he only has control over a small percentage. The 2008-2009 salary line was \$1,105,385, but should have been \$1,190,149 had the outcome of negotiations been known. The 2009-2010 proposed budget is \$1,163,215 which includes \$50,000 for overtime. He said he likes a challenge and will do his best to stay within budget as he has in the past. A lot of it is about allocating personnel and trying new things. So, even with a 3.75% wage increase for Union members they've reduced from 08-09 to 09-10. He said his budget process is 6 months long. He's kept the equipment line with only a \$300 increase. He's decreased the contractual line by \$5,000 and the salary line by \$26,000. Chief Varrenti said there really wasn't a lot of discussion between he and Board members regarding the department's budget. He said police departments are expensive, but it's a no-brainer that it is a needed service, especially in a college town. He said he was proud of the department when he got here 7 years ago, is more proud of it today, and will continue to be proud of it for years to come.

Mayor Wexler commented that certainly he and Chief Varrenti have had their differences, but he commended the Chief for his continued commitment to decreasing overtime costs. Unfortunately, it is not always under his control when there are on the job injuries with officers out whose shifts need to be covered.

Chief Varrenti said every police department is running without authorized strength, but when a small department loses 10% of its workforce, it suffers. He shared that he may request an executive session with the Board at some point in the future regarding a personnel matter that could result in possible savings.

6. Jim Hamlin of Park Avenue noted that if the Village hires a Farm Market Manager, it would need a line item in the budget. Treasurer Tojek concurred. J. Hamlin said salaries are all over the place in the water fund budget. Treasurer Tojek explained that there were only administration and labor accounts in the water fund and that it was important to segregate the labor for projects. Therefore, it now more accurately represents the operations. J. Hamlin questioned a discrepancy in one line. Treasurer Tojek explained that a piece of equipment was purchased after the last budget was adopted, but she does not recall which piece. Chief Varrenti said maybe it was the 10-wheel dump truck.

➔ Trustee Castañeda moved, unanimously carried 4/0 to close the public hearing and re-open the regular meeting at 7:50pm.

Mayor Wexler thanked everyone for their input. He said a flat or reduced tax rate would be impossible and an increase is necessary, each Board member probably has numbers they'd like to get to. He suggested the Board and public provide Treasurer Tojek with any further proposed revisions right away and that the Board meet between now and April 27th if needed.

Treasurer Tojek said no numbers would be changed in the budget by a member of the public. However, if they wish her to pass along suggestions to the Board she will gladly do so. The Board must as a whole present changes to her.

Trustee Castañeda read a statement into the record regarding the Board and then-Treasurer having overestimated revenues and underestimated expenses the past couple of years and concern of the budget process and lack of the Board working together and with the Treasurer and with the Department Heads. She said she voted no on the past couple of budgets and here we are faced with a possible 17% increase and once again DPW's budget has been stripped. She urged the Board to make a commitment tonight to meet again this week and to improve the process.

Mayor Wexler said he thought the four Board members in attendance April 15th did their utmost to move the numbers around and did a super job. If the Board agrees, it can meet again like that. It can be considered an emergency budget workshop. Clerk Morelli can put notice on the front door and on the website. Possible dates and times were discussed – leaning towards Wednesday, April 22nd. Board agreed to provide their Wednesday availability to Clerk Morelli tomorrow. Such meeting will be open to the public, but there will not be an opportunity for public comment.

Joan Hamlin of Park Avenue thanked the Board for their work at the April 15th meeting. It was a long meeting, but they did a good job working together.

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Public Service Announcement:

Chief Varrenti shared that in the last 10 days there have been 3 nighttime burglaries of homes that are occupied. This is brazen and scary. One common denominator is that the houses were not locked. Simple solution – lock your doors and if you see or hear something unusual, call 911. There was also a robbery at gunpoint of a person walking down Main Street alone at 1am. He urged that people not walk alone at night. This is not Mayberry.

ADJOURNMENT:

➔ Trustee Legg moved, unanimously carried 4/0 that the meeting be adjourned at 8:05pm.

Leslie Ann Morelli, Village Clerk