

State of New York
County of Fulton
Town of Caroga

Minutes of a Caroga Town Board budget meeting held Wednesday October 11, 2023 at the municipal building located at 1840 State Highway #10 at 5:30 pm with the following persons in attendance by roll call. The flag salute followed.

Supervisor Scott Horton - Here
Council Member John Glenn – Arrived at 6:10 pm
Council Member Barbara Deluca – Here
Council Member Richard Sturgess – Here
Council Member Donald Travis – Here

Department heads in attendance: Planning Board Members Lynne Delesky, Karen Dutcher, Matthew Cooper and Al Kozakiewicz, John Livingston – Board of Assessment Review Member, Steve Stedman – Greens keeper, Golf Course Manager Dave Cummings. Tor Shekerjian facilitated the Zoom meeting. There were eleven members of the public in attendance and seven people online using zoom.

The following changes were made to the Tentative Budget this evening:

A1110.1 Justices P.S.	decreased to	\$22,000.00
A1110.11 Court Clerk P.S.	decreased to	\$ 8,000.00
A1220.1 Supervisor P.S.	decreased to	\$18,000.00
A1220.12 Secretary	decreased to	\$ 0.00
A2705.2 Rec. Trail Donations	decreased to	\$15,000.00
A7145.1 Rec. Trails P/S	decreased to	\$45,000.00
A7145.4 Recreation Trails C. E.	decreased to	\$10,000.00
A7180.13 GC Club House P/S	increased to	\$26,000.00

Below are the discussions that took place rendering these changes.

Supervisor Horton stated there were several changes made at the first budget meeting last week. He had hoped the bookkeeper could be here. He hopes tonight that the budget can move from Tentative to Preliminary and then a public hearing can be scheduled.

The Supervisor asked any of the board members if there were things they wanted to add or delete at this time. Council Member DeLuca wanted to discuss the salaries for the town justice and court clerk. She agreed that they needed an increase to their salaries but did not think a 50% increase was warranted. She suggested line A1110.1 be changed to \$22,000 and line A1110.11 be changed to \$8,000.00. Supervisor Horton asked if she researched this with other courts. Supervisor Horton stated a few years ago a survey was done. He stated that most of the court clerks make around \$30,000.00. Council Member Sturgess agreed the change was significant. Council Members Sturgess and Travis agreed with the amounts suggested by Council Member DeLuca.

Supervisor Horton asked for a motion but Council Member Sturgess suggested that the board approve all of the changes at the end as was done in the previous meeting. The Supervisor was against the decreases to these salaries. He stated the reason behind the raises was because they were short changed for so many years. Supervisor Horton noted we had stayed below the tax cap on the summary sheet excluding the increase for the Fire Company. He was pleased to be able to keep below the cap despite the cost in insurance going up and inflation. He noted that this year the town received more revenue than expected except for the mortgage tax that went way down.

Council Member DeLuca thought the supervisor salary should stay the same. Council Member DeLuca did not think there should be an increase. It was noted there wasn't an increase put in for the town board members, nor was one being asked for. Council Member DeLuca suggested putting another thousand dollars into the Secretary line item. Supervisor Horton stated he tried to do this last year and it was voted down. Supervisor Horton stated his hourly rate is half of minimum wage. He thought the public should have more respect for the position. Council Member DeLuca thought the public has a lot of respect for the position. Council Member Sturgess wasn't comparing necessarily the Justice Court with the Supervisor who runs the town but, this is not an appealing job either. Council Member Sturgess noted the number of hours put in by the Supervisor justifies the salary. Council Member DeLuca did not agree and noted the amount of time the board members put in. Council Member DeLuca noted that the Supervisor also gets a stipend from the County. Council Member Sturgess noted that is for the work done down at the county though. Supervisor Horton looks out five years. He wondered how we would attract the kind of candidates needed to run this town. It is a donation, and would almost call it a religious calling. Supervisor Horton stated he has a tremendous amount of work. He compared Caroga to the Town of Johnstown. We have more employees, and specialized programs like BTI and weed harvesting, and we have the bike trials and golf course. This town does more for its people than any other town in this county. This town could flourish with the right economic development. He hopes that no one would run for Supervisor who didn't have qualifications that were up to the demands of the job. He thought the salary should be somewhat attractive because the job is time consuming.

At this time Council Member Glenn arrives. The supervisor informed him that there had been a recommendation to reduce the salary of the Supervisor back to \$15,450.00 by Council Member DeLuca. He was making his case. Council Member Travis sees all the work that the supervisor does and thought the \$20,000.00 salary was justified. He noted the money is not going into Supervisor Horton's pocket next year. We are trying make it better for the next person.

Council Member DeLuca suggested a 3% increase like everyone else is getting. Council Member Sturgess asked why she thought an increase for the justices was OK but not the Supervisor. Council Member DeLuca noted the late hours the justices are called into work and a new policy whereby the justice has to go hold court in Johnstown now at times as a reason to raise the salary. She knows he does an important job and a lot of work but everyone else does too. (Supervisor notes the time 5:45 pm) Supervisor Horton asked is it because the council members did not get a raise therefore the supervisor shouldn't have an increase. "Kind of" was Council Member DeLuca's response. Council member Sturgess noted the hours that Supervisor

Horton puts in. He does not see Justice Subik here 5 days a week. Council Member DeLuca stated she was trying to save money for the town.

Council Member Glenn asked about the salary of the Secretary. He noted the need to have one by wondered why the supervisor couldn't use the money from their salary to pay a secretary. Supervisor Horton suggested zeroing out line A1220.12 and letting the next supervisor make the case to the board. He apologized to Tor Shekerjian for having to listen to this. Mr. Shekerjian as Secretary to the Supervisor his contribution to the town were remarkable. He has saved the town so much. He has helped with FEMA, and the street lighting program. The position is up to the supervisor.

Council Member DeLuca wanted clarification for the salary of the town clerk. The request for a stipend to manage the drug testing program was not put in the budget and the clerk stated that was OK. The salary for the clerk was put at \$48,000.00 plus Registrar is \$850.00 and \$700.00 for doing the website. The clerk will not be doing Planning & Zoning she is only filling in. The clerk noted that there was one response to the ad put on Facebook. Council Member DeLuca asked if the position was full or part time. The clerk responded full time. Council Member DeLuca asked 40 hours a week? The clerk responded according to retirement reporting she works 24 days a month normally its 20 days a month. Council Member Glenn supported the salary as did Council Member Sturgess.

Council Member DeLuca wanted to discuss the Highway Superintendent line item. A5010.1. The salary was raised because the teamster's union raised the amount of money the workers made. Supervisor Horton stated that was one of the justifications. The other was the supervisor believed that was a reasonable salary for a highway superintendent. Council Member DeLuca wanted to understand lines DA5110.1 and DA5142.1. The summer and winter funds to pay salaries of the workers. She stated the only increase with those lines totals a \$2,600.00 increase. The contract states a 4 % increase in pay next year. She asked if there was enough money in the line to give a 4% increase. Supervisor Horton believed there was it was gone over with the budget director. Council Member DeLuca did not remember discussing this at the previous meeting. Supervisor Horton explained that there is a reduced workforce and therefore there would be enough money. Council Member DeLuca stated the salary of the mechanic would be \$51,000.00 – the highest paid. Supervisor Horton went back to the Highway Superintendent salary at \$60,000.00 was reasonable. The deputy received a 3% increase.

Council Member DeLuca asked about having a culvert line item under revenues specifically to keep track of it. Council Member Sturgess also thought there should be a line item. (Page 19) The clerk used to invoice people for this. Currently the Highway Superintendent does it. He turns the money over to the Supervisor and it's deposited. The clerk used to create a bill. The clerk didn't think it was a revenue he pays for the pipe and then the money should go back into his account. Council Member Sturgess questioned the \$5,000.00 deposited in one month and nothing else all year. Supervisor Horton stated year to date it is several thousand dollars. It is a revenue the supervisor stated. It is a way to save the taxpayer money and improves the conditions of the roads. Council Member Sturgess questioned the lump sum of money, it did not happen all at once. Supervisor Horton could not answer the question about why it was accounted

for in this way. Deposits are made within 5 days. The Supervisor noted that budget amendments are made from time to time.

Supervisor Horton noted it was 6:07 pm.

Council Member Sturgess wanted to review the revenue side of the bike trail. (page16) It is tough to justify that you are getting a certain amount in donations each year. He did not think the town should depend on that with our economic times. He knows if the money comes in it can go to that project. If we take it out of A2705.2 and off the expenditure side then what happened this year doesn't happen again. Supervisor Horton stated that the county approved the \$8,000.00 from the county on Monday for next year. It was stated that donations are not guaranteed. Supervisor Horton suggested reducing the donation line item. He thought zero was not reasonable because at the festival when clinics are put on a donation is made back to the town. A fundraiser for a deceased rider added a major source of the donations this year. However this is done will not impact the taxpayer. (Gavel used to gain order – public talking) Council Member DeLuca agreed about reducing the anticipated revenue. Council Member Sturgess stated if we did this then Mr. Manning would know how much he has to spend and can't go over the amount. But if a donation comes in he could then spend that. Council Member Glenn also agreed. Supervisor Horton stated in the spring Mr. Manning plans improvements based on what he has to spend. It was unrealistic to make the line item zero. It was noted that Mr. Manning is also going to apply for a grant. The supervisor suggested taking it out of personal services. He noted each month the board is given a balance sheet to track expenses and line balances.

Council Member Sturgess noted that line item A7180.13 was reduced as discussed at the previous meeting. Supervisor Horton reviewed for Mr. Cummings that line A7180.13 was reduced to \$24,000.00. Mr. Cummings replied OK. Supervisor Horton stated the total for Special Recreation Facilities this year is \$309,460.00 and for 2024 it is \$285,960.00. Mr. Cummings stated he has reworked a lot of numbers. He has a much better handle on it. He stated with the reduction it is going to be tight. Mr. Cummings stated with this last payroll the actual YTD is \$19,300.00 for the A7180.13 line. The line was changed to \$26,000.00.

Council Member Glenn noted that the town contributes to various organizations, Senior Citizens, Museum, Snow Mobile Club, and Fish and Game Club. Supervisor Horton recently had a conversation with the town attorney and this may not be either etiquette [ethical] or legal. Supervisor Horton stated that the attorney still has to get back to him about this. From a budgeting standpoint it can stay the way it is until we get a definitive answer. Because of recent events the donations to a 501c3 directly that benefits them may not be legal under Article 8 Section 1 of the state constitution. If it is deemed to be that way then those items will be cut from the budget. For now they will be kept in there. Fish stocking is a public benefit but if it is done through a 501c3 there would have to be proof they didn't receive any remuneration for the service. This will be addressed at a later date.

RESOLUTION #2023-105 to move the Tentative Budget to the Preliminary Budget was offered by Council Member Sturgess at the October 11, 2023 budget work session meeting.

WHEREAS, the Supervisor, Town Board and Budget Director have worked many hours to prepare, review, and discuss the 2024 tentative budget with the Town Board, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to have the Tentative Budget become the Preliminary Budget using the changes made at this evening's meeting.

Seconded by Council Member Travis

Adopted by the following Roll Call Vote,

Supervisor Scott Horton - Aye
Council Member John Glenn – Yes
Council Member Barbara Deluca – Yes
Council Member Richard Sturgess – Yes
Council Member Donald Travis – Yes

Supervisor Horton noted the board has until November 13th to pass the 2024 budget. He stated the budget has not been contentious and that he appreciated all of the boards help.

RESOLUTION #2023-106 to set the date for a public hearing on the Preliminary Budget
was offered by Supervisor Horton at the October 11, 2023 budget work session meeting.

WHEREAS, the Supervisor, Town Board and Budget Director have worked many hours to prepare, review, and discuss the 2024 tentative budget, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that a public hearing on the Preliminary Budget will be held on November 8th, 2023 at 5 pm at Town Hall.

Seconded by Council Member Sturgess

Adopted by the following vote of 5 Ayes, Horton, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Travis

At 6:17 pm the budget meeting was closed. There was a five minute break before the regular monthly meeting would begin.

Submitted by

Linda Gilbert RMC, CMC
Caroga Town Clerk