

NEW LISBON TOWN BOARD—OCTOBER 13, 2015---7:30PM
PUBLIC HEARING ON 2016 PRELIMINARY BUDGET---TOWN HALL

Present: Supervisor Robert Taylor, Councilwoman Connie Chase, Councilmen Joseph Gregory, John Pegg & Robert Eklund, Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker, Clerk Charlene Wells, Co. Rep. Edward Lentz, Residents Joy Sanders, Flo Loomis, Malcolm Bloomer, Bob & Nancy Biederman, Russell Card, Donald Smith, Neil Fogarty, John Bugyi, Kathleen & Fay Wilcox, Mike Halpin, Mike & Suzanne Gregory, Sue Smith, Edward Dawyot, Nadine & Victor Lasher, Michaela Lasher, Winifred Talbot, Timothy Miller, Thomas & Kathryn Riso

Supervisor Robert Taylor first recognized Victor Lasher who retired from the Highway Dept. in August. He was commended and thanked for his 36 years of service to the Town.

The Public Hearing on the 2016 Preliminary Budget was opened at 7:34 PM. Even though the 2016 Preliminary budget is approximately \$23,000.00 less than the 2015 Budget, the tax rate is 54 cents (per 1000) higher because of \$80,000.00 less in surplus funds being applied. To comply with the State imposed tax cap we can only have a .73% increase.

Edward Dawyot questioned if we lose any state funds if we go over the tax cap. (Not that we know of). He felt that taxes are going up too high. He also felt that stick built home owners are paying more than their fair share since mobile homes and double-wides depreciate in value. He reminded the Board that he had previously suggested that we ban trailers. Supervisor Robert Taylor noted that the majority of our taxes are paid by residential & open land owners.

Malcom Bloomer questioned how much more money we would be raising by tax with the proposed increase. (Approximately \$60,000.00) He questioned if the voters get to vote on overriding the tax cap. (No-only the Town Board votes on it.) Supervisor Taylor noted that we have approximately \$529,000.00 in surplus funds, with \$160,000.00 being applied to the 2016 budget.

Bob Biederman noted that the government says there is no inflation and with gas prices less it should help to comply with the tax cap. Our total town assessment increased approximately \$286,000.00.

Tom Riso questioned that if our tax base is larger wouldn't it help spread the increase around more. He questioned the decrease in the amount to be raised by tax in the general fund. (It appears to be a computer error). He noted that since we have underestimated the sales tax in the last few years, perhaps we could increase that amount some to help lower the tax increase. He noted that most things that were brought up to decrease at the tentative budget meeting were just little things that wouldn't make much difference. He added that since all areas are being looked at for cuts, that maybe we should ask the Fire Dept. if they could cut their budget a little. Supervisor Robert Taylor noted that with all of their state and federal requirements and their new truck purchase he doubted they would agree to a decrease in their contract amount. He also noted that if they don't get the funding they need they could decide to back out of the contract and shut down operations.

County Rep. Edward Lentz noted that he thought we should look at decreasing the hwy. garage contractual amount and the equipment category if we don't have any specific equipment we plan on purchasing. We may have to use the equipment funds to pay the bill (approximately \$90,000.00) for outfitting the 2009 Freightliner. Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker noted that he will look into using CHIPS funding to pay for the 2009 Freightliner bill. Co. Rep. Lentz also thought we should look at decreasing some overtime costs.

Edward Dawyot commented that if we put up door curtains in the hwy. garage we could cut heat loss. Tom Riso noted that we have better insulated doors and automatic door openers which help cut down on heat loss. Tom further suggested that we should find the extra \$3000.00 to repaint the army truck as the camo color will be harder to see and more of a liability. Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker added that the military paint is very high quality and should have a 20 year lifespan. Malcolm Bloomer advised that the military paint is very good paint and it would have to come off before they could

repaint. Councilman Joseph Gregory commented that with the stainless steel box and lights there should be no problem in seeing the new truck.

Councilman Robert Eklund stated that he was in favor of eliminating one full time position in the hwy. department, which he added should save approximately \$80,000.00. Supervisor Robert Taylor advised that he would have to look into what the impact would be in the hwy. department before he would support cutting a position. Sue Smith commented that Hwy. Supt. Whitaker knows the job and questioned if now would be the time to cut a position with winter coming. Supt. Whitaker added that winter is their busiest time, with most overtime occurring. He feels with him also running a plow truck it helps cut down on overtime.

Bob Biederman commented that the Board has a thankless job and he feels that they are doing the best they can. He questions the sustainability of the Town. With the lack of business, middle incomes falling and no increase for senior citizens, he feels that we need to eliminate things we can do without. Councilman Edward Lentz added that dissolving the town into surrounding towns would be the last resort.

Councilman Joseph Gregory commented that with the amount of money it will take to fix the grader we could purchase 6 army surplus graders. With no further comments on the 2016 Preliminary Budget, a motion was made by Connie Chase, seconded by Robert Taylor and carried 5/0 to close the public hearing at 8:15 PM.

NEW LISBON TOWN BOARD---OCTOBER 13, 2015---PUBLIC HEARING ON LOCAL LAW#1 OF 2015 (TAX CAP OVERRIDE)

Present: same as above

The Public Hearing on proposed Local Law #1 of 2015, a local law to authorize a real property tax levy in excess of the limit established in General Municipal Law Section 3-c was opened at 8:16 PM. The state imposed tax cap started out at 2%, but this year only allows a .73% increase over last year's amount to be raised by tax. This local law would allow the Board to adopt a budget over the .73% increase for this year only. Tom Riso commented that he was glad that the school now also has to comply with the tax cap to help control school tax increases. He felt the Board must feel they need to do this. Co. Rep. Edward Lentz added that he understands that there is a high probability that we will have to go over the allowed .73% increase. He urged the Board to get under the allowed increase or come as close to it as possible, even if it means using more of our fund balance. Malcom Bloomer commented that he can't believe the law was written the way it was and that the people should have to vote on it. After further discussion, a motion was made by Robert Eklund, seconded by John Pegg and carried 5/0 to close the Public Hearing on proposed Local Law #1 of 2015 at 8:30 PM.

NEW LISBON TOWN BOARD—OCTOBER 13, 2015 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING—TOWN HALL

Present: same as above

The regular monthly meeting was opened at 8:30 PM. A motion was made by Joseph Gregory, seconded by Connie Chase and carried 5/0 to accept the minutes for the September 8, 2015 regular meeting and September 29, 2015 Tentative Budget meeting as written.

The Board discussed fixing the 2009 Volvo grader. Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker advised that he got a price of \$26,500.00 for a new transmission (20% off), \$11,000.00 if a new clutch was needed, and labor at \$100.00 per hour for an estimated 50 hours from Vantage Equipment. They are the only ones who can do the repairs since it will take their parts and specialized services to complete the project. Hwy. Supt. Whitaker will also have them do the oil change while they have the machine. He noted that he found a used grader through the Army surplus program in Minnesota for \$2700.00, but it is not running. He will see if the County could transport the grader to Vantage to save some cost. Supervisor Robert Taylor advised that we do not have to put the repairs out for bid because it takes a specialized dealer to

be able to do the repairs. Supt. Whitaker noted that the grader is our newest piece of equipment, costing \$170,000.00 new, but it would have no value if we don't repair it. After further discussion, a motion was made by Robert Taylor, seconded by Connie Chase and carried 4/1 (Joseph Gregory against) to authorize the Hwy. Supt. to have Vantage Equipment, since they have the specialized parts & services, replace the transmission in the 2009 Volvo Grader at an estimated cost of \$26,500.00 plus labor.

Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker advised that the paving project was completed and they will be sealing it the next day. He is going to have Gus Tafel help with the concrete in the hwy. storage building. They are getting their plow equipment ready for the upcoming season.

Councilman Joseph Gregory questioned about grease that Hwy. Supt. Whitaker bought previously. He thought it was expensive at \$16.00 per tube. Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker advised it is a higher quality grease that is better for our equipment and he feels it will help things last longer. Edward Dawyot noted that we could check the mil spec on the grease. Councilman Robert Eklund asked why they didn't repair a clutch fan themselves. Supt. Whitaker advised that he felt it was too involved for them to handle.

Sue Smith questioned how many people live on town roads versus state and county road. We do not have that figure available. Malcolm Bloomer suggested checking the County website under Real Property tax services.

Co. Rep Edward Lentz suggested that the Town should look into plowing and sanding the County roads in our town again as a source of revenue. We had dropped it in the past because it was more work for our men, plus we were never fully reimbursed for materials used. It would mean approximately an additional 20 miles of road to take care of. Malcolm Bloomer commented that the County runs split shifts to save money. Councilman John Pegg noted that it would be more wear and tear on our equipment.

Co. Rep. Edward Lentz advised that the County is working on their budget. They are projecting one million less in sales tax revenue for 2016. They have instituted a hiring freeze for the rest of this year and asked all departments to cut spending. Rob O'Brien was hired as the 911 Coordinator. They are trying to stay under the .73% tax cap. He answered questions from the public on the Manor, sheriff and public safety issues.

Supervisor Robert Taylor noted that the County Supervisor's Assoc. looked at cyber security. He is planning on having someone come in and talk about solar energy next meeting. There will be a local candidate night on October 20th at 7:00 PM at the Town Hall.

The Assoc. of Towns sent information on their Municipal Energy Program with ProStar Energy Services. The average savings of participants has been 19% for electricity and 15% for natural gas. We could still join in the program if we are interested. We received notice from the County that they will hold meetings on drafting a countywide strategic plan On November 5th, 10th and 13th. The Mohawk Valley Economic Development District sent information on a Grant & Funding Opportunity Luncheon on October 29th at Noon in Mohawk. The Assoc. of Towns sent information on their training school and annual meeting to be held February 14-17th 2016 in NYC.

A motion was made by Robert Eklund, seconded by Joseph Gregory and carried 5/0 to pay General Fund bills #161 through #167 for a total of \$1,229.74 and Highway Fund bills #160 through #175 for a total of \$105,692.46. Supervisor Taylor paid General Fund bills #154 through #160 and Highway Fund bill #176 for a total of \$6,234.66 with prior Board approval. The Supervisor's monthly report was submitted to the Board.

A motion was made by Connie Chase, seconded by Robert Eklund and carried 4/1 (Joseph Gregory against) to adopt Local Law # 1 of 2015, authorizing a real property tax levy in excess of the limit established in General Municipal Law Section 3-c. The Board will continue to work on the 2016 Budget to lower the tax increase until it has to be adopted in November.

Lenny Melillo had advised Clerk Charlene Wells that he agreed to dig a new hole for a new post for the backstop for \$150.00. He will need people to work with him on this project. Councilman Robert Eklund will talk to him further on this.

Edward Dawyot questioned why we don't start the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Cathy Riso asked if the main reason for the proposed tax increase was due to the Fire Department's budget. Supervisor Robert Taylor advised that the increase is due to using fewer reserves than in the past to lower the amount needed to be raised by tax.

Councilman Joseph Gregory felt that the Supervisor should not be allowed to attend the 2016 Assoc. of Town's Conference in NYC. Supervisor Robert Taylor noted that the Board had already voted on giving approval to attend. A motion was made by Joseph Gregory and seconded by John Pegg to delete the separate job of Budget Officer and add it to the Supervisor's duties. Joseph Gregory & John Pegg voted in favor and Robert Eklund, Connie Chase and Robert Taylor voted against, thus the motion failed 2 to 3.

With no further business, a motion was made by Connie Chase, seconded by Robert Eklund and carried 5/0 to adjourn at 9:15 PM.

Charlene R. wells, New Lisbon Town Clerk