

NEW LISBON TOWN BOARD---SPECIAL MEETING---SEPTEMBER 29, 2015
2016 TENTATIVE BUDGET---7:30 PM---TOWN HALL

Present: Supervisor Robert Taylor, Councilwoman Connie Chase, Councilmen John Pegg, Robert Eklund and Joseph Gregory, Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker, Clerk Charlene Wells, Co. Rep. Ed Lentz, residents Edward George, Tom Riso, Tim Miller, Lenny Melillo, Russ Card

Supervisor Robert Taylor opened the meeting at 7:30 PM. The Board reviewed the 2016 Tentative Budget as prepared by Budget Officer Robert Taylor. We are only allowed a .73% increase if we want to stay within the provisions of the state imposed tax cap. The total amount of appropriations is lower than this year, but the amount of unexpended balance is also less, which increases the tentative tax rate to \$7.64 (up from the 2015 rate of \$6.72). Money has to be saved to possibly pay taxes back to Yogi Bear Campground once that assessment case is settled. Councilman Joseph Gregory asked if Board members would agree to lower their salary. There was no agreement to that. Town Hall cleaner Robin Lasher would like to purchase new rugs for the town hall and get a rug shampooer. Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker advised that he would like to partition off part of the storage building and put in a furnace. He would have the highway men do the work. He plans on putting in the cement floor this year. The salaries for the highway employees were figured with a 1% raise. The grader will be going out for repairs this fall. Vantage Equipment is the only one who will be able to do the work. Councilman Joseph Gregory questioned if we could get a surplus military grader with low hours on in. Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker noted that he has only seen older models of graders available. Lenny Melillo added that he would agree to have the dealer do the grader repairs and get the new warranty on the transmission and continue to have it serviced by them. He noted that if we got an old military grader it could be hard to get parts. Supervisor Robert Taylor advised that we have an approximate \$300,000.00 in general fund surplus and \$229,000.00 in highway surplus. Many surrounding towns are being chastised by the State Comptroller for depleting their surplus funds to balance their budgets. The majority of our taxes are paid by residential and open land owners.

Discussion was held on eliminating a position in the highway department. Highway Supt. Bill Whitaker noted that we have approximately 10 more miles of town roads to maintain than Edmeston and Burlington. He is not in favor of eliminating a worker. He noted that we could face more driver fatigue in the winter with one less man and that with vacations taken during the summer, he has fewer men available to do road work as it is. Lenny Melillo felt we should save money by either reconfiguring overtime or cutting a highway position. If the men come in early, they could go home after 8 hours and not sit around until 2:30 PM if they have nothing to do. We could also consider using part time workers if we eliminate a full time position. Councilman Robert Eklund noted that he is in favor of eliminating a full time position in the highway department.

Lenny Melillo noted that County Treasurer Dan Crowell had advised that we should have about 16% of our total budget in surplus funds. He noted that it's good that we are debt free. He suggested we should consider having stone trucked in to save money and wear & tear on the trucks. He further asked if we could save money by sharing a justice with other towns. We will have to check with the Bookkeeper to see what funds are included in Misc. fees in the budget revenue section. Supervisor Robert Taylor noted that we use good estimates of expenses and if our expenditures are less, the excess goes into surplus to use for emergencies or to reduce taxes the next year. Tom Riso commented that it isn't a bad thing to underestimate revenues.

Co. Rep. Edward Lentz commented that we should probably have 25-30% in surplus funds since we can't find or raise funds as easily as the County can. He questioned if we could cut some of the hwy. garage contractual funds in the tentative budget. He also asked what the \$50,000.00 in equipment was for and if we didn't plan on purchasing equipment, we could cut that amount out. He also added that if we eliminated a person in the hwy. dept. we could face deteriorated roads and service. He would suggest we try to reduce overtime first.

Tom Riso questioned if any of our reserves were used for the fire department cost. He felt that no surplus funds should be used to reduce the fire dept. cost and that all taxpayers should pay the full cost of that service. He also noted that if we only wanted to keep the hwy. storage building just above

freezing for the vehicles, we could use block heaters instead of installing a furnace. He will help Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker look into this option. Councilman Joseph Gregory questioned if we needed a cement floor if we're not going to put in a furnace.

Councilman John Pegg questioned Lenny Melillo about billing people for ambulance calls like some towns do. Lenny noted that billing for ambulance calls has caused problems in places and that they decided not to bill because they don't want to deter people from calling for an ambulance. If CMT handles a call, giving patient care and transporting, then the patient will get a bill from them. It was noted that in Delaware County, road signs are up saying there is no road maintenance from 9:00 PM to 5:00 AM.

A motion was made by Robert Eklund, seconded by Connie Chase and carried 5/0 to adopt the revised 2016 Tentative Budget as the 2016 Preliminary Budget and to hold a public hearing on it on Tuesday, October 13th, 2015 at 7:30 PM.

Councilman Joseph Gregory stated that we need to make more cuts in the budget. He suggested that maybe we should consider charging for using the Town Hall to cover our expenses there. He also added that we should check state bids for supply purchases. Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker noted that he does use County bid prices a lot.

With no further business, a motion was made by Connie Chase, seconded by Robert Eklund and carried 5/0 to adjourn at 9:35 PM.

Charlene R. Wells, New Lisbon Town Clerk