

November 10, 2011

A special meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Clifton Park was held in the Town Office Building at 7:00 p.m. in order to hear comments on the 2012 Preliminary Budget, Supervisor Barrett presiding.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Present: Councilman Paolucci
 Councilman Hughes
 Councilman Romano
 Councilwoman Walowit
 Supervisor Barrett
 Town Clerk O'Donnell

Also Present: Town Attorney McCarthy
 Mark Heggen, Comptroller

PUBLIC HEARING, 7:00 PM
 2012 PRELIMINARY BUDGET

The Town Clerk read the Notice of Public Hearing as published in The Daily Gazette on November 1, 2011.

Supervisor Barrett said the budget has been detailed at prior meetings, has been on line and available in the Town Clerk's office. He thanked Town Comptroller Heggen, the Town Board and other staff members for their work on the budget. The Supervisor noted this is a difficult budget year and though great strides have been made in reducing the cost of government, additional reductions in costs will need to be made for present and future savings. Supervisor Barrett noted the major decision made was in the renegotiation with the two CSEA bargaining units in reducing the costs of health insurance offerings. He said this will allow for flexibility to continue to invest in infrastructure, equipment and other things needed in the town.

Councilman Hughes stated this is a "taxpayer friendly" budget – noting there is no town tax, is debt free with balanced budgets. He agrees with smart investments for infrastructure, be it parks and recreation programs, paving, etc. Councilman Hughes said there has been substantial discussion about the management structure of the town and he hopes that the Supervisor moves to a fulltime capacity. He said this will be good for town hall but will also offer residents substantial savings, in excess of \$30,000, and is appropriate at this time.

Supervisor Barrett explained the Town Administrator position has been vacant since March 31st. The Board decided to see how the year would go and bring up the position at budget time. The fulltime Supervisor position was discussed during the budget process and the change was made in the Preliminary Budget in order to have it be part of the public hearing. Combining the two positions will result in a savings of \$32,000. Supervisor Barrett said it is the Town Board's opinion that there should be someone in the town hall fulltime and responsible for day to day operations. He noted the population is just under 37,000, and over the last 12 years security force has been expanded, as well as recreational programs. He further noted 12 years ago the town was responsible for approximately 200 sewer customers and now responsible for 9000; rates residents are paying now are less than when sewers were taken over.

Councilman Paolucci stated though there will be a reduction of \$32,000 in salary, there are also other benefits – going from two people to one in terms of payroll taxes and benefits that the town will see in savings.

Supervisor Barrett explained the salary was put in the Preliminary Budget because the salary of an elected official can be reduced but there is a long process involved to increase the salary. Noting that his current salary is \$21,076 and would increase to \$90,000 and the Town Administrator line would go from \$103,000 in 2011 to zero in 2012.

Councilwoman Walowit commented constituents want to speak to the Supervisor.

Councilman Hughes said Supervisor Barrett is the longest serving Supervisor in town history and has the knowledge of the day to day logistics of understanding how town hall works. He fully supports the fulltime position.

Supervisor Barrett said he would like a few days to think about the fulltime aspect of the position and will make his decision by November 17, 2011.

The public hearing was opened at 7:23 p.m.

John Irving, Executive Director of Community Human Services – Care Links of Southern Saratoga County, said since Community Human Services has taken over the number of volunteers has gone from 25-30 to 150, the majority of whom are Clifton Park residents. Care Links is asking the Town Board to up the \$5000 in the 2012 budget to \$11,500. Mr. Irving stated Care Links contributes to the quality of life in Clifton Park. He reported the \$11,500 would come to \$55 per year for each person being currently served. Mr. Irving explained multiple rides are given as well as weekly home visits. He said they have applied to various foundations for additional grants.

Carol Silvera, Care Links Program Director, reported when she started this job in 2001 there were less than 75 people in the program and has increased to 433 – forecasting 583 in 2012. 207 residents are being served from Clifton Park and there are 109 volunteers from town. Ms. Silvera said Care Links is helping the town reduce the cost of government by serving residents over 60 with anything needed, non medical, that the town or any organization is not doing. She noted volunteers are using their time and their own gas money. Ms. Silvera said sixty Clifton Park residents use Care Link's transportation service, chores are done for nine people, shop for ten people, reassurance calls, visits to 21 people and give respite to 14 people.

Bob O'Connell, Zamora Court, Care Links Director, said Care Link's volunteer transportation is becoming an adjunct to the town's senior express. He reported in December 2010 95 rides were given and in September 2011 increased to 166 rides. Mr. O'Connell stated \$11,500 would represent 16 percent of their total funding.

Councilwoman Walowit asked about the administrative costs. Mr. Irving responded the overall administrative costs are 5.5 percent so 95 cents of every dollar goes directly to the program.

Councilman Hughes agreed the town does save money through the Care Links Program stating this is neighbor helping neighbor. He continued Care Links is providing a valuable service and the speakers have presented a very compelling case.

Glenn Valle, President of Country Knolls Civic Association, but speaking personally, stated he is in full support of a fulltime Supervisor who has a closer accountability and is accessible to the people. He said running the town of Clifton Park is not a weekend and evening occupation.

Jim Baisley, Barkwood Lane, agreed with the previous speaker and supports, 100 percent, Supervisor Barrett as fulltime Supervisor. He asked if auditors review if the money received from Time Warner is correct. Supervisor Barrett said the contract dictates the revenue. Mr. Baisley stated Moe Road is very dangerous and asked that the trail extension be completed. He reviewed the numerous developments in the southern Moe Road area, noting there are well over 700 homes in that short distance and urged the Town Board to bring this project off the back burner.

Supervisor Barrett said preliminary engineering has been done on extending the trail but it is a challenging project because of the lack of room and now lack of funds. He stated as far as the Town Board is concerned the Moe Road trail is not a dead issue.

Town Comptroller Heggen reported an arithmetic error on the revenue side of the budget, page 83. The formula missed one of the lines so \$100 will be added to revenue and \$100 off fund balance. That line for total interest will say \$12,100.

Supervisor Barrett said he feels the budget can be passed at the next Town Board on November 17th.

Everyone was given an opportunity to speak in favor or against the budget or for or against any item or items therein contained. No one else wished to be heard. The public hearing was closed at 7:40 p.m.

Supervisor Barrett stated Care Links made a strong argument and the town does have a growing aging population as well as a great number of volunteers in town. He said Care Links has become adjunct to the senior van. He noted there is currently \$5000 in the 2012 budget and they are asking for \$11,500.

Councilman Romano said almost 50 percent of the program serves Clifton Park residents and 70 percent of the volunteers are from town. He stated he supports the increase for the organization and sees how it ties in with the senior van.

Councilman Hughes said this appears to be a very well run organization and supports the additional funding.

Supervisor Barrett asked if the Board supports the additional funding and the response was yes.

Councilman Paolucci stated it is necessary to figure out how to care for seniors in the future.

Councilman Romano said the Town Board needs an accounting with all groups the town supports.

Councilwoman Walowit spoke in support of increasing the funding and the need to look at what senior will need.

Supervisor Barrett, noting Councilman Paolucci long service to the town and his leaving the Board at the end of the year, asked him to stay involved with the town.

Supervisor Barrett stated the 2012 Preliminary Budget will be amended to \$11,500 funding for the Care Links program.

MOTION by Councilman Paolucci, seconded by Councilwoman Walowit, to adjourn the meeting to the next regular meeting or any other meeting necessary for the conduct of Town business.

Motion carried at 8:09 p.m.

Patricia O'Donnell
Town Clerk