

SPECIAL MEETING-SALEM TOWN BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING ON 2024 FIRE CONTRACTS & 2024 PRELIMINARY BUDGET
BUDGET WORKSHOP #6
NOVEMBER 08, 2023-5 p.m.-PROUDFIT HALL

Present: Supervisor Evera Sue Clary; Town Council Members: Howard Law; Brenda Levey; Laura Dunham; Tom McMorris; Town Clerk-Patricia Gilchrist; Clerk to Supervisor-Kathleen Chambers

Others Present: Travis Keys-Highway; Kim Erbe-Planning Bd./Library; Wyeth Coburn-Councilman Elect & Sewer Comm.

Absent:-Eric Rogers-Water; Maurice Patrick-Planning Bd.; Judy Flagg-Historian/Records Mg'mt.; Herb Perkins-Courthouse; Rebecca Brown-Water Clerk

Public Present: Joe Wever-as a taxpayer

5:00 PM-Meeting called to order by Supervisor Clary, followed by Pledge of Allegiance

Opened Public Hearing on the 2024 Fire Contracts w/Salem Volunteer Fire Dep't., Inc. & Shushan Volunteer Fire Dep't. Proposed amounts are \$182,014 for the Salem Volunteer Fire Dep't. & \$57,378 for the Shushan Volunteer Fire Dep't. for fire protection. Supervisor Clary asked three (3) times if there were any questions or comments regarding the figures in the proposed 2024 Preliminary Budget. Receiving no comments or questions on either, the Public Hearing on the proposed 2024 Fire Protection Contracts was closed @ 5:08 p.m.

Commercial Lease-on 196 No. Main Street bldg. was forwarded to all Board members by Supervisor Clary from the owner. Lease would be for one (1) yeas @ a monthly rent of \$1,100/month, w/a \$1,000 security deposit. Rent would include all utilities (heat, water, trash disposal, recycling, snow removal & electric service). Town would need renter's insurance & liability insurance of not less than \$200,000. A copy of both policies must be provided to the Landlord prior to taking occupancy. Parking in rear of the building is limited to 3-4 vehicles, which said space is shared by the building's four tenants. There is handicap accessibility in the rear of the building for use by the public. The first-floor handicap-accessible bathroom is intended for use by the Tenants only & not members of the public; responsibility for cleaning & supplies in this bathroom is shared by both first-floor commercial tenants.

Board discussion on this issue: Councilman Law feels a floor plan should be drawn up to make sure everything in the current office will fit in the space. More rent than first thought; tax season will be upon us in a month. Hold off for now on new lease as we need to see what will be done in the current office space we are now in.

5:15 p.m.-Open Public Hearing on the 2024 Preliminary Budget-Supervisor Clary opened the Public Hearing on the 2024 Preliminary Budget. She asked for questions/comments & taxpayer Joe Wever asked what was being done about the loss of approximately \$400,000 in property tax assessment, as the Town has gone from 100% down to 88%. How is the Town going to keep the assessment @ 100%? Assessor Jean McLenithan & her clerk, Tim Grogan, have been working on this problem. Tim will also need a new laptop. Question was also raised regarding the \$20,000 in the 2024 Budget for the Courthouse bldg. Supervisor Clary responded that the Town owns the building & upkeep of the same should be the Town's. It was the recollection in the prior MOU that the bldg. would not be taxpayer funded & the Town would only be responsible for insurance on the building & for upkeep of the generator. Will see what is in the files in Town Office on prior MOU.

Councilwoman Levey said she still feels that removal by the Courthouse of the school's drama club costumes, etc. was not right & that this still bothers her.

Public Hearing on the 2024 Preliminary Budget was closed at 5:44 pm.

Check what is remaining for 2023 in the Contractual line item for the Assessor--A1355.4; Clerk to Supervisor Chambers reported that there is currently a balance of \$3,580 in this line item of \$4,580 for 2023 Budget.

Board of Assessment Review-Member John Bardwell feels there should be two or three more members on the Board of Assessment Review & has requested this at least two times in the past.

Motion made by Councilman Howard Law, seconded by Councilwoman Laura Dunham, to advertise for two more people to serve on the Town's Board of Assessment Review; passed unanimously 5-0

6:00 PM-Motion made by Councilwoman Brenda Levey, seconded by Councilman Tom McMorris, to move to the previously scheduled meeting, w/representatives of the HSCPA Board to discuss update of the MOU & Lease Agreement; passed unanimously 5-0. (This meeting had been previously scheduled by Courthouse, w/ approval of Salem Town Board, prior to scheduling the Public Hearing on the 2024 Preliminary Budget & will have separate minutes.)

Motion made by Councilwoman Brenda Levey, seconded by Town Councilman Tom McMorris, to resume the special meeting regarding the Public Hearings & the 2024 Preliminary Budget; passed unanimously 5-0.

Special Request for Health Insurance Coverage-Supervisor Clary forwarded an email she had rec'd. from Assessor, Jean McLenithan, regarding health insurance coverage. Jean was receiving CDPHP Health Insurance from the Town of Jackson (for both her & her spouse), but that has stopped now as she is no longer employed by the Town of Jackson. She would like to be included in the Town of Salem's health insurance program. Kathy Chambers reported that the cost for both would be \$752.20/month.

Motion made by Councilman Howard Law, seconded by Councilman Tom McMorris, to offer Health Insurance to the Town Assessor & spouse; passed unanimously 5-0.

Resolution #81-Motion made by Councilman Howard Law, seconded by Councilwoman Laura Dunham, for an 80%-20% split for Health Insurance coverage for Town Assessor & spouse; passed 4-1. **Roll Call Vote:** Councilman Howard Law-Yes; Councilwoman Laura Dunham-Yes; Councilman Tom McMorris-Yes; Supervisor Evera Sue Clary-Yes; Councilwoman Brenda Levey-No

Resolution #82-Motion made by Councilwoman Brenda Levey, seconded by Councilwoman Laura Dunham, to go into Executive Session to discuss union representative's counteroffer.

Motion made by Councilman Howard Law, seconded by Councilman Tom McMorris, to come out of Executive Session; passed unanimously 5-0.

REVIEW OF 2024 TENTATIVE BUDGET FIGURES

Highway Fund Balance-Kathy Chambers, Clerk to Supervisor, reported that the fund balance for highway is low.

General Fund Balance-Kathy also reported that there is currently \$189,000 in the general fund balance but there must be a balance of \$102,500; the actual amount that is available is \$86,500. No fund balance for water.

Insurance Costs for the Assessor will have to be added to the Budget for 2024.

Report from Clerk Gilchrist-Report provided to all Board members showing the amounts rec'd. through October 31, 2023, for Marriage Licensing, Dog Licensing Fees, Planning Board fees; & Misc. Permit fees (birth, death & marriage certified copies & mobile home permit applications). Dog fees are currently at \$1,479.80; Planning Board fees total \$1,300; Marriage Licensing is \$242.50. Total fees remitted to T/O/S from 01/01-10/31/2023 were \$4,140.30, take away \$2,809.80 for dog licensing & Planning Board fees & the remainder of \$1,360.50 is other fees collected.

Line 182-Planning Board Fees-Department Income is currently @ \$1,000; could increase this as the am't. taken in so far is \$1,300; increase **from \$1,000 to \$1,500.**

Line 192-Dog Licenses-Licenses & Permits-is currently @ \$1,000; could increase this as the am't. taken in so far is \$1,479.80 (this also includes dog impoundment fees); **increase from \$1,000 to \$1,300**

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Line 193-Permits Other (Clerk)-Licenses & Permits-is currently @ \$1,000; could increase this as the am't. taken in so far is \$1,360.50; **increase from \$1,000 to \$1,300**

The three items above were the only changes made by the Board. Kathy will plug in these figures w/the others she needs to change for the next meeting.

Sandgate Meeting-Supervisor Clary reported that there would be another meeting on November 16, 2023, regarding the purchase of property off Beattie Hollow by the State of Vt.

Motion to Adjourn-**Motion made by** Councilman Howard Law, seconded by Councilman Tom McMorris, to adjourn the special meeting for the Public Hearing on the 2024 Fire Contracts & the 2024 Preliminary Budget (Budget Workshop #6); passed unanimously 5-0; meeting was adjourned @ 7:48 p.m.

Next Regular Monthly Meeting of the Salem Town Board will be held on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, @ Proudfit Hall, 181 Main Street; Salem, NY, beginning @ 5:00 pm for review & approval of Warrants #11 & Abstract #11 for payment. Regular business meeting will begin @ 6:00 pm.

7th 2024 Budget Workshop Meeting-will be held on November 15, 2023, after the regular monthly meeting of the Salem Town Board, to try & finalize the 2024 Budget.

Respectfully Submitted:

Patricia A. Gilchrist-Town Clerk
Town of Salem

