

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FORT EDWARD TOWN BOARD BUDGET  
WORKSHOP HELD ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2020 AT TOWN HALL  
COMMENCING AT 10:00 AM**

Supervisor Losaw called the meeting to order at 10:00am

**PRESENT:** Supervisor Losaw  
Councilman Middleton  
Councilwoman Mullen  
Councilman Fisher  
Councilman Mercier

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Peter Ives, Brian Brockway and Town Clerk Aimee Mahoney

**Supervisor Losaw:** We have lost \$6.7 million in assessment in the general fund and in the highway we have lost almost \$3.4 million. Even if we kept the budget flat which I have tried to do, it still would result in an increase. We will start with revenues in General A and go through the budget. I gave a 2% raise to the employees.

**Councilman Middleton:** Have you heard anything from the County on the State Aid?

**Supervisor Losaw:** It's still flat, both the Treasurer and the Administrator said in the near future don't be surprised if it goes up because the County is now paying it not the State. It's really mislabeled they have passed that on to the County because we can do the sales tax for internet sales and that is up so they are making the counties pay that.

**Councilman Mercier:** Why are you giving raises at this time?

**Councilman Fisher:** I know the highway guys haven't had a raise in 2 years.

**Councilman Middleton:** My question is, and I am not sure if it would go under Assessor but it is going to cost the Town some money for the revaluation I believe.

**Supervisor Losaw:** Right now it's \$500.00. The revaluation is back on; it was off due to the contract getting screwed up by the State. Part of the reval was going to be paid for by the shared services contract which is on hold right now. Chris DeBolt said you don't have to put it in your budget yet but it could be around \$26,000.00. I don't have it in here but we might have to add it before we adopt it or take it out of the fund balance when the time comes.

**Brian Brockway:** Why was the garage account reduced by \$1,000.00? We are going to have to pay for an alarm system.

**Supervisor Losaw:** I did it off the actual

**Councilman Mercier:** Why did Roger's Island double?

**Supervisor Losaw:** Because we are under funding that.

**Councilman Mercier:** I think they should get what they got last year.

**Supervisor Losaw:** Well it was one of the things that I ran for on my platform.

**Councilman Mercier:** Yes you ran for that reason I didn't.

**Supervisor Losaw:** What I am saying is that we own that building and don't you think we have an obligation to take care of that building?

**Councilman Fisher:** I think \$24,000.00 is a reasonable amount. When we came in it was \$90,000.00.

**Councilman Mercier:** I know that but I feel like at this time when everyone is short money we shouldn't just be giving it away.

**Councilman Middleton:** What are they going to use the additional money for?

**Supervisor Losaw:** Their operational budget is about \$24,000.00 and that is not including the salaries or anything else. I am also going to put in that they are responsible for the Patriot Garden. That Patriot Garden is disgusting.

**Councilman Middleton:** In defense of the Boy Scout's, when we looked at that we didn't know we were going to have COVID.

**Supervisor Losaw:** I'm not even talking about the flower bed, the shrubs and the trees have grown up. It needs a lot of attention, all of those shrubs have never been trimmed, they have grown so high that you can't see the flags and the lights don't shine because they are covered with the trees. The benches are covered with mold and mildew.

**Councilman Fisher:** We used to hire that out.

**Councilman Middleton:** I disagree with the amount, I can see an increase but I can't see doubling it at this time.

**Councilman Fisher:** I think \$24,000.00 is reasonable, I thought that last year too and plus you are giving them the responsibility of the Patriot Garden and we used to pay Larry to do that.

**Councilman Middleton:** Correct me if I'm wrong but the Town mows all except the big field. Brian has anyone ever asked you to trim the shrubs over there?

**Brian Brockway:** We probably could have if we still had the bucket truck and didn't lose it in the fire. There would be no reason we couldn't trim them.

**Supervisor Losaw:** Can you remove the ones that need to be removed?

**Brian Brockway:** If you take the money out of that budget and put it in my budget we'll do it. If you've got money to pay them you've got money to pay my guys.

**Supervisor Losaw:** You have to remember that is something that the Town started 20 years ago.

**Brian Brockway:** Yes and 20 years ago we were told they were going to be self-sufficient within 10 years.

**Supervisor Losaw:** That is never going to happen.

**Councilman Fisher:** I am on that Board that is never going to happen. We own that building.

**Councilman Middleton:** I agree but in the present fiscal times how can we almost double that and yet the library and the other things we are keeping straight?

**Councilman Fisher:** In fairness we went from \$40,000.00 down to \$12,000.00 and kept the library and them the same. We didn't cut the library from \$90,000.00 to \$12,000.00.

**Councilman Mercier:** I don't agree.

**Councilman Middleton:** I know this year was unique because of COVID but was it even open?

**Supervisor Losaw:** Yes, it's open now.

**Councilman Middleton:** What did we have for visitors in the Town?

**Councilman Fisher:** I think because of COVID the numbers are way down.

**Supervisor Losaw:** Their admission is down, they charge admission now but she is getting 10-15 people a day mostly from out of town. Let's face it there is no reason to come to Fort Edward for anything so if you want visitors to come, not that there is a lot to do here but if you want them to go to Weber's or Neal's you have to have a reason to come to town.

**Councilman Mercier:** They all just ride through.

**Councilman Fisher:** I don't know, there have been a lot of boats in the Yacht Basin.

**Supervisor Losaw:** It's our only tourist attraction besides the Old Fort House Museum and usually when they stop at the Museum they stop at Rogers Island.

**Brian Brockway:** Why did we keep the Museum flat?

**Supervisor Losaw:** Because we don't own the Museum. The Visitor's Center has a furnace over there that needs replacing. In the meantime the other furnace has to work harder and will eventually die too. Maintenance has been terrible over there, some of it is their fault but I don't

think they understand what they are responsible for. Obviously they know they pay the bills but if the furnace goes who is responsible for that? Is it them or is it us?

**Councilman Fisher:** I thought we were going to utilize that grant.

**Supervisor Losaw:** We can put it in there if we pay for it but they still haven't gotten a 3<sup>rd</sup> quote.

**Councilman Middleton:** A year ago when I was doing the budget I told Mr. Carpenter that I had the grant and to get quotes a year ago and we never got quotes. I recommend you reach out to C&L due to the work they did on the new garage.

**Councilman Fisher:** What about the fence at the new garage?

**Supervisor Losaw:** We got quotes and approved it; we were just waiting for the garage to be done.

**Councilman Mercier:** Are you going to contract that out?

**Councilman Fisher:** Yes, that is what we voted on and I think everyone voted yes but you Dick.

**Councilman Mercier:** I know I don't know why the town can't put it up.

**Councilman Fisher:** They have enough stuff on their table right now.

**Councilman Middleton:** We need to discuss the pool; if we are going to keep it, it needs to be repaired.

**Supervisor Losaw:** Tom Perkins is supposed to be getting us a quote on a complete repair job.

**Councilman Fisher:** A discussion needs to be had with the Village about filling the pool so we don't have to fill it out of the river again.

**Councilman Middleton:** Take \$5,000.00 out of Roger's Island and put it in the pool.

**Councilman Mercier:** I agree.

**Councilman Fisher:** Don't we have grant money for pool repairs?

**Councilman Middleton:** The bathrooms need more work we are partially handicapped accessible now but the doorways need to be wider and NYSDOH points it out at their inspection every year.

**Brian Brockway:** There are 3 sand filters over there, how long are they going to last?

**Councilman Middleton:** Refuse and garbage is showing \$0 in equipment. The packer needs tires and is barely hanging on.

**Supervisor Losaw:** I guess we need to discuss whether or not we are keeping garbage or getting rid of it.

**Councilman Middleton:** Maybe think about creating a garbage district.

**Brian Brockway:** Getting rid of garbage is going to hurt the elderly residents who have very little garbage. They will have to pay a private hauler a lot more. We could look into a new packer and maybe down grade a little, maybe we don't need a 20 yard packer. It runs 5 days a week.

**Supervisor Losaw:** Get prices, we can start a reserve and put it out to bid.

**Brian Brockway:** Tires are going to be at least \$6,000.00 so I suggest adding that back into the equipment line for tires.

**Councilman Fisher:** How are the sticker sales in comparison to years past?

**Peter Ives:** They are down about \$10,000.00.

**Councilman Middleton:** I believe that Fort Miller cemetery is going to be looking for a mower in their budget request.

**Supervisor Losaw:** They put in \$1,500.00 for a new mower.

**Councilman Fisher:** Most if not all of the work down there is volunteer.

**Councilman Middleton:** Yes and if they decide to stop due to not having proper equipment it will automatically become the responsibility of the town.

Also, if COVID continues we should consider meeting in person and live-streaming our meetings for the public.

**Supervisor Losaw:** Is Matt French salary?

**Councilman Middleton:** Yes

**Supervisor Losaw:** He is requesting an increase in vacation time. I didn't think part time employees got vacation time.

**Councilman Middleton:** We turned it down last time as well as asked for a detailed list of his 20 hours/week.

**Supervisor Losaw:** We paid the Village for recreation this year and there was none so I don't know if we will receive a credit or a refund on that.

**Councilman Middleton:** Back before COVID we were approached about a town wide garage sale, maybe we should add something to celebrations for advertising of that.

**Supervisor Losaw:** That should be the Chamber of Commerce.

**Brian Brockway:** You took the money out for the new plow truck, the fleet is getting old. We had a motor go last year. Can I go out to bid in 2021?

**Supervisor Losaw:** Yes because we wouldn't pay until 2022.

**Brian Brockway:** Earlier in the year we talked about taking the truck out of the grant from Betty Little.

**Councilman Middleton:** What is the plan for the bucket truck? If we had that you could trim the trees at the Visitor's Center.

**Brian Brockway:** we will have to get quotes for a new back end. I also suggest bumping up machinery contractual in case we have another catastrophe.

**Supervisor Losaw:** We can use fund balance when the time comes otherwise we will have to raise taxes. Have you gotten quotes for a generator yet?

**Brian Brockway:** Hour Electric is working on one, we can get one from Brownell and we will need one more. I see the snow personnel has been lowered. Sand and salt are going up and we are half-way or more through that pile.

**Councilman Middleton:** Now that we have a shared salt shed can we buy in bulk?

**Brian Brockway:** No because we piggy-back on a State Contract.

**Brian Brockway:** The water truck needs to be replaced.

**Supervisor Losaw:** Get a price for the truck and I will check the fund balance.

**Brian Brockway:** Maybe we should consider taxing Water District #1 .05 or .10 per thousand to grow a balance for future repairs.

**Councilman Middleton:** We didn't have money a year ago but National Grid had a grant to change all the street lighting to LED, you may want to look into that.

**2021 Budget Public Hearing October 13, 2020 at 6:55pm**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION** by Councilman Fisher, Seconded by Councilman Mercier to adjourn the meeting at 11:50am **ALL AYES**

DATED: October 1, 2020

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Aimee Mahoney, Town Clerk