

**Public Hearing Meeting
November 10, 2014**

The Hamlin Town Board held a public hearing meeting in the Hamlin Town Hall located at 1658 Lake Road, Hamlin, NY. The meeting was called to order at 6 pm by Supervisor Peters. The locations of the fire exits were explained for those present.

Present: Councilperson Jason Baxter, Councilperson Jennifer Goodrich, Councilperson Martin Maier, Councilperson Dave Rose, Supervisor Eric Peters, Assessor Elizabeth Spencer, Library Director Kay Hughes-Dennett, Town Historian Bob Kruger. Also Present: Attorney Ken Licht

Residents: Joel Yager, Christine Spiers.

Supervisor Peters opened the Public Hearing for any discussions on the 2015 Town of Hamlin Preliminary Budget and asked if anyone would like to speak.

Town Clerk Kathi Rickman stated that there was nothing from last year from which to compare the proposed budget. Supervisor Peters responded that the difference is that “we’re \$117,000 less than last year, and our budget is \$110,000 less with a \$7,000 difference from the fire department.” Assessor Elizabeth Spencer clarified that the proposed budget is \$110,000 less, to which Supervisor Peters responded affirmatively. Supervisor Peters noted that everyone’s cooperation during the process was greatly appreciated. He added that it was an unfortunate situation with the tax cap, since it was dictated to them. Councilperson Rose noted that the cap was 1.68%, not 2%. Assessor Elizabeth Spencer noted that she recently had someone come in from the trailer park complaining that he had not received the tax rebate check from the state, and indicated that they are supposed to get them. She stated that mobile home parks are all supposed to be done differently and noted that this will take some time. Councilperson Rose advised that the general fund tax rate (this year) is actually .7940, the Library is .5170, and the Highway Department is 2.698 for a total of \$3.38. He advised that these are the 3 main components of the general budget overall. Assessor Elizabeth Spencer stated she does not believe she had that sheet of information, to which Town Clerk Kathi Rickman concurred and stated her belief that it had only been provided to the Town Board members. Councilperson Rose stated that the General Budget is \$317,786.94, the Library is \$206,929.04, and the Highway Department is \$828,457.30. Supervisor Peters clarified that this represents the money from taxes.

Christine Spiers, 2082 N. Hamlin Road, Hamlin – She provided an inquiry sheet to the Board members, requesting clarification from the Board and sought permission to speak. Supervisor Peters approved her to speak, and she stated there were some things that “stood out to her” and she would focus on those items since she didn’t have sufficient time to go through the entire budget. In the Historian section AA2770.00/Historian books, she stated she observed that in 2013, while she could not access the budgeted amount for it, Ms. Spiers noted that \$405 was actual revenue. In the 2014 budget, she noted \$400 was budgeted for that line item and \$225 worth of books has been sold to date. Noting that in 2013, five more books were sold in the last two months of the year, and also understanding that the price has been adjusted per the Historian so that all such books regardless of hard or soft cover are now \$15.00, there would be an expected change in the overall expected income so that assuming another 5 books were sold in the last two months of this year we would expect another \$75 in revenue for a total of only \$300 when \$400 had been budgeted. Ms. Spiers observed that this would be a 25% downward departure from what was expected. Out of concern that the line would not meet the proposed 2015 budget, and noting that it may most likely be due to the economy, she suggested a decrease of that line item to \$300.

Also, on the Historian section, specifically Clerk to the Historian AA7510.11, Ms. Spiers stated in 2014 it was budgeted but remained unexpended. She observed that it's again budgeted for the same amount in 2015 but the Town does not have a Clerk to the Historian and noted that the Historian position itself is only part time. This being said, she inquired about the possibility of receiving additional information about that line item and/or requesting that the Board consider eliminating that position altogether. Ms. Spiers observed that many municipalities are experiencing fiscal difficulties and we're all working hard to ensure we maintain budget and close examination of such positions may help. Supervisor Peters responded that the position was left in the budget in the event that the Historian needed assistance. Bookkeeper Norm St. John added that the Historian had someone last year who was going to help him with possible grants; they left it in this year because he didn't know if the Historian was planning to bring her back. He added that it's only part time. Ms. Spiers stated she realizes he may need assistance and that it's best to rely on those who have additional experience doing something we need, but looking back at Town Board minutes over the past year she realizes grant writing is something that has been discussed and observed we are very fortunate in this Town to have a number of people who are very skilled at various aspects of grant writing so elimination of this line may be something the Board should consider.

Ms. Spiers then moved on to the Dog Shelter and compared budgeted versus actual. In 2013 we actually made \$16,715 from dog licensing. In 2014 to date we've made \$14,557 which is an average of \$1,456 per month. Understanding that we have 2 months left in this year, the additional estimated revenue is \$2,912 for a total annual expected revenue of \$17,469 at year end. In the proposed 2015 budget, \$13,000 is budgeted. Knowing that over the course of the past two years that we've exceeded that, she suggested that the Board consider increasing the line item to \$14,000 so there's not as much residual at the end of the budget year. Ms. Spiers noted how fortunate we are to have the Dog Shelter in Town, as the staff have been diligent about ensuring all dogs are licensed and in compliance with codes and regulations. The benefit to the Town is not only are the citizens safer because this means fewer animals can become rabid in Town but it also obviously helps the Town financially. Again, she requested that the Board consider adjusting that line item.

Ms. Spiers then discussed Dog Shelter line item AA2611.00/Dog Fines, noting she had not accessed records of budgeted vs. actual for 2013 given the short period of time between issuance of the proposed budget and public hearing date. She stated she did review the 2014 information and saw that \$7,000 was budgeted for that line item. As of 10/9/14, Ms. Spiers stated that \$4,747.50 had been generated from dog fines in Town. The estimated revenue (at that rate) in Nov-Dec at this rate is \$949.50, for a total annual expected revenue of \$5,697. She noted that \$7,000 was again budgeted on that line for 2015. She respectfully requested that the Board consider decreasing that line item to \$5,000-6,000 dependent upon resolution of the Local Law issue regarding dog licensing that's been discussed as noted through review of previous Town Board minutes.

Ms. Spiers then directed the Board's attention to the spreadsheet she had prepared that compared various Town department salaries from 2014 to 2015, both individually and by department. She stated she was very concerned when she observed significant discrepancies in what various departments were projected to receive in the projected 2015 budget. She stated she noticed that many of the Town officers such as Assessor, Building Inspector, and Recreation Director are relatively new to their appointed positions so their departments were not considered in her comparison. Ms. Spiers observed that most of the other departments were schedule to receive 1-2% wage/salary increases. She noted this to be commensurate with the fiscal crises indicated in the Town and other municipalities given the significant increases observed in health care benefits, etc. However, there were deviations from this in a few departments and initially brought up the Library. While she noted that it was difficult to distinguish some of it because clerical salaries are bundled, it appears to have increased 10.3% from the 2014 to 2015 budget. The other department she observed with a significant increase was Accounting, where the Clerk to the Supervisor is expected to receive a 27% increase and the Bookkeeper is expected to receive a 10.9% wage/salary

increase for that same period. This again while many other departments remain stagnant at 1-2%, and some other departments/positions received no increase in light of our fiscal crisis. Ms. Spiers requested feedback from the Board specific to the discrepancies between departments.

Supervisor Peters stated that the Accounting Department wasn't accounted for correctly last year and that these numbers were actually adjusted during the year because they weren't budgeted correctly during prior years. The same holds for the Dog Control officer – the amount of time that is required to do that job wasn't accurately reflected in the budgeted number and that was also adjusted during the year. Supervisor Peters advised Ms. Spiers that she was correct about the Library because they didn't know what the prior year had. It hadn't been broken out plus they didn't have any of the accounting for the benefits, and some of the associated administrative costs hadn't been charged to the Library. He referenced the L-fund and breaking it down, and stated that the Town was already spending that money just in a different area. Supervisor Peters also stated his belief that the Bookkeeper had a 2% raise, although he couldn't recall the specific adjustment. He began referencing the significant Clerk's raise when Bookkeeper Norm St. John (who was in the audience) advised that part of the reason for the adjustment in the Clerk wage was that it had purposely been budgeted for when she increases her hours when he's not in the office; that hadn't previously been budgeted. Supervisor Peters concurred and added that vacation wasn't previously budgeted in and there wasn't anything assigned to those costs. He added that Accounting/his office was "left with a little bit of a surprise" from the previous year's budget. As an example, he stated that they were only budgeted \$10,000 for an independent auditor even though the year before the Town had spent almost \$24,000 on the same thing. Accuracy was an issue and they looked at what was on paper versus what should have been accounted for. Ms. Spiers stated she understood, but added that what the Supervisor was submitting was that if there were increased expenditures it doesn't make sense why there would also be increased salaries/wages in that department when less would have been available as noted by payment for the additional auditing skills. Supervisor Peters stated that the auditor is a requirement, and that at the onset there was quite a bit of forensic accounting necessary just to return to a sense of normalcy and allow our system to move forward; he stated that initially they couldn't even write checks. Supervisor Peters also stated that the Town doesn't have a "revenue stream" because we're tax based and that's where we receive our income. He added that the adjustments were made during the year, so the numbers Ms. Spiers listed on the spreadsheet aren't exactly accurate – although he stated he wasn't sure about Dog Control. Councilperson Jason Baxter interjected that last year they had submitted for the noted increase in Dog Control wages but when the budget came out somehow the numbers had been reduced to their original state. He stated that has been his concern all through this process, in that the number budgeted isn't what they had agreed upon. Supervisor Peters observed that the numbers do not represent a salary because the position isn't a salaried position; the numbers reflect the number of hours so the "salary" didn't go up, the position just needed to have more time allotted. Supervisor Peters stated that the greatest complaint he'd heard was that the Accounting office wasn't covered and he needed to make sure the office was covered. He indicated this is the same rationale for both Dog Shelter positions. Councilperson Rose stated that this is just like the Library – the Director's wages are now broken out separately whereas before it was all-in-one. He added that on the \$71,976, the Library will be hiring a couple part-time employees to help operate the library. Ms. Spiers indicated she had explored this as a possibility, noting lack of identified FTE's on the budget/spreadsheet. She added that given the status of the new library, with increased space and usage, she knew there may be a need for additional personnel but noted difficulty coming to that specific conclusion due to the fact that the staffing is grouped. Councilperson Rose compared the issue to Councilperson Baxter's earlier statement about Dog Control and how the Assistant was supposed to get \$2500 but somehow it was again reduced to \$1020. She agreed wholeheartedly that the Dog Control officers are sorely underpaid, citing the risks they take are different but as difficult as the risks undertaken by the Highway Department. She added that regionally, and given the same size municipality, the DCO's are underpaid. Councilperson Rose stated that the Town is fortunate that they're willing to work for those wages. Ms. Spiers stated her fear that, given the state of the economy we may not have the luxury of having them in the long term because they

have families to take care of and sometimes the risks of a position can outweigh the benefits so she stated she hoped the Board would take the risks associated with the position into consideration when determining their wages.

Ms. Spiers also queried the Junk Jamboree line AA2001.10, noting that the line was blank and indicating knowledge that the Recreation Department does charge fees to participate in the Jamboree so there should be an amount listed on that line. Councilperson Rose stated he did not believe the Board was given the figures for the Junk Jamboree. Bookkeeper St. John advised that he thought it was “mixed in” with line AA2001, which is “recreation fees.” It was noted that it used to be its own fee, and Mr. St. John stated he could make the adjustment and break it out separately if needed. Ms. Spiers stated that this budget is very long and for consistency it may be a good idea, especially since there’s been so much attention to detail in other areas of the budget.

On a final note, Ms. Spiers inquired about Line item AA.2192.00 (Revenue/Cemetery) and asked where revenue comes from for the cemeteries, as \$400 is noted on that line. Councilperson Rose advised that people have to pay a burial fee (per open grave), which goes back to the Town. Some of the money was a perpetual-type of fund they received when the cemeteries were turned over to the Town. There is a small amount of interest associated with this which is considered income. Councilperson Rose stated his belief that it was approximately \$10,000, but he wasn’t able to be more specific. Bookkeeper St. John added his belief that \$600 was collected as income, and Councilperson Rose noted that there were burials this year. Highway Superintendent Baase stated that the Town has actually had only 1 burial this year, but last year there were 6 or 7. He added that the one was \$600 because they actually sold a plot and additionally did the burial. A plot is currently selling for \$450, and burial for it (a cremation) was \$150 but it was noted that the costs are higher on weekends and holidays due to overtime rates.

Ms. Spiers thanked the Board, and Supervisor Peters stated his appreciation that she had looked at the budget. He noted that this budget was changed significantly from the previous budget and in their attention to detail they appreciate feedback. Councilperson Rose also expressed appreciation to Bookkeeper Norm St. John in his efforts on the budget. Supervisor Peters inquired if anyone else wanted to speak about the budget; no one responded.

SEEKING TOWN BOARD RESOLUTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE 2015 TOWN OF HAMLIN PROPOSED BUDGET.

Resolution #237 Motion was made by Councilperson Maier, seconded by Councilperson Baxter, to close the public hearing regarding the 2015 Town of Hamlin Proposed Budget.

Polled votes: Baxter aye, Goodrich aye, Maier aye, Rose aye, and Peters aye. Motion carried.

LOCAL LAW NO. 5 OF THE YEAR 2014 AMENDING SECTION 520-66(J) OF THE TOWN OF HAMLIN ZONING LAW OF 1991 TO PERMIT A COMBINATION OF CONTIGUOUS PARCELS FOR TAX MAPPING PURPOSE WITHOUT PLANNING BOARD REVIEW.

Section 1: Subparagraph (J)(2) Section 520-66 of the Town of Hamlin Zoning Law of 1991 is repealed and replaced by the following:

520-66(J) Waiver of Requirements

(2) Lot Combinations

(a) Courtesy Combination without Planning Board Review. An owner of Two or more contiguous parcels may make a written requires to the assessor or acting assessor of

the town to combine two or more contiguous parcels provided that (1) all parcels are situate within a single zoning district and wholly situate within the Town of Hamlin, (2) none of the parcels are within a subdivision, and (3) the parcels have identical ownership. Said written request must be signed by the owner of the properties, shall set forth the tax map number of each contiguous parcel to be combined, and shall provide proof of payment of all property taxes on said parcels. Provided that the aforesaid requirements are met, between January 1st and March 1st, the assessor or acting assessor shall submit a letter to the Real Property Services Office of Monroe County requesting such combination for tax mapping purposes. Said request from the assessor or acting assessor shall include a copy of the signed request from the owners, shall include the tax map number and owner's name of each parcel to be combined, the tax map number remaining on the tax map that will identify the one combined parcel, and proof of payment of all property taxes on the parcels to be combined.

- (b) Lot Combinations Requiring Planning Board Review. An application for a plat that simply combines two or more contiguous lots, and which does not meet the requirements for courtesy combination pursuant to Section 520-66(J)(2)(a), must be reviewed by the Planning Board, and such plat meets requirements for filing as determined by the Board. Such plats are not considered as subdivisions.

Section 2: This local law shall become effective upon filing with the Secretary of State.

Supervisor Peters inquired if anyone would like to speak about Local Law No. 5.

Assessor Elizabeth Spencer provided merger information to the Board members, indicating that the information provided explains what the County does now. Councilperson Rose stated that this Local Law would make the Town more friendly to people wanting to buy a simple lot combination without having to go before the Planning Board. Supervisor Peters agreed, indicating it would increase efficiency. No one else expressed a desire to speak.

SEEKING TOWN BOARD RESOLUTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING LOCAL LAW NO. 5 OF THE YEAR 2014 AMENDING SECTION 520-66 (J) OF THE TOWN OF HAMLIN ZONING LAW OF 1991 TO PERMIT A COMBINATION OF CONTIGUOUS PARCELS FOR TAX MAPPING PURPOSE WITHOUT PLANNING BOARD REVIEW.

Resolution #238 Motion to close the Public Hearing regarding Local Law No. 5 of the Year 2014 amending Section 520-66(J) of the Town of Hamlin Zoning Law of 1991 to permit a combination of contiguous parcels for tax mapping purpose without Planning Board review.

Polled votes: Baxter aye, Goodrich aye, Maier aye, Rose aye, and Peters aye. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilperson Maier, seconded by Councilperson Baxter, to adjourn the meeting at 6:40pm as all business had been concluded.

Polled votes, Baxter aye, Goodrich aye, Maier aye, Rose aye, Peters aye. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathi A. Rickman, MMC
Hamlin Town Clerk