

Present:

Town Supervisor: Meg Wood

Councilpersons: Richard Gero, Steve Miller, Lynn Donaldson and Leanne Welch

Town Clerk: Erica Hedden

Assessor: Kevin Doherty

Also Present: Bill Tribou, Pete Johnson

Supervisor Wood called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. with a salute to the Flag.

Public Participation:

Peter Johnson stated; thank you for having me. I wanted to start off by saying that we were awarded the grant for a new bus. We put in the paper work last spring, our current bus is 15 years old. Hopefully with this newer bus we can lower out maintain costs, obviously the hope would be that a new bus would not need much work. The hope is that line item will be less this year. This bus is a 14 passenger with a hydraulic lift for wheelchairs, two spots for wheelchairs, well three spots if we pull one seat up. In the event that we have a group of people that want to go and its more than 15 people, the rest will have to car pool. We have only had that happen once and that was the diner cruise in Lake George, but other then that, this bus surely will meet our needs. This bus is from a state contract. Along with the lower maintenance costs line item, we are also hoping that the fuel line item will be able to be decreased as well. Hopefully this new bus will provide better fuel milage, but who knows maybe that means we will take more trips. The insurance, I was unable to get an accurate quote until we have the VIN number of the bus. Our building maintenance, we do not have anything planned, in terms of major repairs. It is an old building, we have an old heating system, old pipes, which by the way Erica, those are not lead and I will get that information to you. As the building ages, we just expect a certain level of repairs ever year. If you notice our electric bill has gone up due to the mini splits we put it, but in return our fuel bill has gone down. Overall, we are saving money with those split systems. We are also trying to really expand our reach into North Hudson, we have a few members but not many. We want to make sure that folks know we are here and what we can offer. We are also hoping to expand the nutrition program as well. We are trying to reach as many people as possible.

Supervisor Wood stated; thank you, and we have your balance sheet. Now we have our assessor here to speak next.

Assessor Chairman Doherty stated; Wonderful to see everyone. As you know we finished our revaluation last year, we are at 100%. The position was originally salaried at \$39,828 in 2023. The salary was reduced in 2024 because Neil was part time to \$24,624. I am asking the board to bring it back up to what it was \$39,828 as I intend to be working full time hours as the Chairman. I am also asking for an increase to the other two assessors, from \$7,669 to \$7,975. We do have special training that we need to be certified, I have completed my Assessor Certification, Joy is new and she will need to complete her training this coming year. I intend to be working approximately 30 hours a week, Neil and Joy will be working 6 hours a week. Their hours will not change but mine will increase.

Supervisor Wood stated; do you have any sense as to where the county is, in regards to revaluations?

Assessor Chairman Doherty stated; we were the only town in the county that completed a revaluation in this cycle.

Bill Tribou stated; I am here to represent the EMS. Thank you again for squeezing me in today. What I would like to do is hit the high points and give you a summary. For the 2025 year we are asking that the Town of Schroon support \$351,000. This is an increase over last year of \$31,739. This is the first time in many years we are requesting an increase. North Hudson also contributes to our budget. North Hudson has agreed to continue their support at the same level as they did last year. Schroon has slightly over 88.26% of the population between the two towns, but Schroon's contribution is 84%. North Hudson has 11.74% of the total population but they contribute 15.63%. North Hudson is aware of the disparity but despite that, they have agreed to continue to contribute what they did last year, even though it's a little out of sync. Since we started billing, that has helped our budget as well. Total income we would project if we hit the budget, we are looking for would be \$ 731,710. The \$351,000 we are asking for from the Town of Schroon is 47.9% of that. Our total expenses for 2025 are projected to be \$706,498.00. Those expenses are up 4.6% from the current year. If you look at the budget, there are two things that should jump out at you. One is medical supplies, that increased. Many of the medication we have on hand in the ambulances have expiration dates, and many of them are due to expire in the 2025, hence we would need to repurchase many of these medicines. That happens on a continuing basis. Also, our call volume since 2020 has increased 70%, so we are going through more of them then we did historically as well. The larger increase is staffing cost, just under \$28,000. That is because the agencies we work with, who provide us with staffing, have increased their salary. Our donations are down this year, as you can see, but also, we earned some more interest, more than we expected thanks to our treasurers wise banking choices for us. If the Town met our request, it would give us over our operating budget just over \$25,000. That would be the amount that we would want to put into our capital reserve. We try to put aside \$25,000 every year into our capital reserve. The capital reserve is used when we need to make a large purchase, such as a new fire truck. We have not raised our request for many years, in fact in 2018, the Town gave us \$353,000. You can see that has dropped down, meanwhile costs of everything are going up as well as the demand for our services. Historically if we got just over 300 calls a year, that was a lot, but this year we have had over 500. So, our operating costs have gone up. Our second ambulance is getting pretty old, and has a lot of miles on it. We have been repairing it but it still needs work. We also have a long-term plan to purchase a new ambulance in 2030. Thank you for having me.

Town Clerk Hedden stated; I don't have a speech prepared, but I do have some handouts for the board to take a look at. There are two, one for Town Clerk, showing the things, I have contributed to this position this year, as well as a list of the classes and webinars I've taken to help me continue to learn and grow as a Town Clerk. The second is for the Water and Waste water fee collector. I am requesting that the board change this from an hourly rate to a salaried rate, as many duties are in 10 to 20 minutes increments, and it's hard to keep track of all those small-time increments. In the handout I also included what other water and waste water billers make, all the examples used are close to us geographically, similar in term of district size, as well as the fact that their duties are similar to what I have been doing for

the water and waste water departments this year. I have been not only billing but creating forms and contracts for the departments, as well as helping out with the lead service line inventory, I have been creating hand outs and posters as well as ways to communicate more with the public. I think transparency is key and as much information as we can share with our district users the better. I really do enjoy helping out the water and waste water departments. I think its beneficial to the departments as well, helping manage schedules and appointments as well as to help manage all the paperwork

Councilperson Donaldson stated; has DEC made changes this year?

Town Clerk Hedden stated; yes, they have. The biggest change is the licenses. They went from supplying us with the plastic like, water proof paper to now the Town has to supply the paper to print the licenses on. Currently the town does not get compensated for the paper that we now have to use. The DEC is working on potentially adding another charge for that but currently they do not. The Town collects pennies on the dollar for selling the licenses, but even though it doesn't bring in much money for the town it is a service that we have always provided. It's convenient for many folks, the other local vendors are Wal Mart and I believe cross roads, other than that I am not sure. On my "Wishlist" is a folding machine. The water and waste water bills all get folded, one at a time by hand. This year in addition to the bills, I have also included flyers, that also need to be folded, and the lead service line inventory mailers was a separate mailing that also needed to be folded. We as town do send out mailers, having a folding machine would save a lot of time, and it would be available for any department who needed it. I know those machines can be finicky, we used one at the county as well. Another thing that I included on my sheet was the Internet Safety. Something I would like to take on next year is managing internet safety training for the town. I have a quote from Knowb4, they are the company that the county uses and they can provide a platform for us to help educate our employees. Recently we had a phishing email go out, and one of our employees unfortunately did not recognize the signs that the email was fraudulent, and proceeded to follow the spammers request and lost money. Knowb4 would provide us with an internet-based platform that I can manage to provide training for any town employee who may need to use a computer or has an email address. We did this at the county. As a former county employee, we all hated to do the training, but I will say that it was effective and it helped train us and teach us about how to be safer on the internet and how to recognize threats. Some threats are spammers but other things such as password safety and how to secure sensitive information. I have seen nearly a dozen scams come through MY email, trying to get me as the Town Clerk to fall for a phishing email. If I get that many, so do others. Some go to the spam folder, some do not. I think in today's world, everything is online, that we have a responsibility to our employees to help keep them safe online, so no one else gets spammed on our watch.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

INTRODUCED BY: Councilperson Gero

SECONDED BY: Councilperson Welch

Councilperson Welch moved a motion to go into executive session at 10:35 AM to discuss the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation; seconded by Supervisor Wood, carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

INTRODUCED BY: Councilperson Gero

SECONDED BY: Councilperson Welch

Councilperson Gero moved a motion to return to regular session at 11:15 AM, seconded by Councilperson Miller; carried. No decisions were made in executive session.

REQUEST TO APPROVE DATE CHANGES TO BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETINGS AND SET HEARING

RESOLUTION #193 -2024

INTRODUCED BY: Councilperson Gero

WHO MOVED ITS ADOPTION

SECONDED BY: Councilperson Donaldson

WHEREAS, the Town of Schroon seeks to approve changes to the budget workshop meeting dates.

Previously scheduled Budget Workshop Meeting on 10/23/24 at 9AM, will be rescheduled to 10/22/24 at 9AM.

Previously scheduled Budget Workshop Meeting on 10/30/2024 at 9AM, time change to 1PM

WHEREAS, The Town of Schroon seeks to approve a Public Hearing for the 2025 Budget on November 7th, 2024 at 5:30PM

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, the Town of Schroon approves Budget Workshop Meeting on 10/23/24 at 9AM, will be rescheduled to 10/22/24 at 9AM, Budget Workshop Meeting on 10/30/2024 at 9AM, time change to 1PM and Public Hearing for the 2025 Budget on November 7th, 2024 at 5:30PM

DULY ADOPTED OCTOBER 9TH, 2024 BY THE FOLLOWING VOTES:

AYES: 5 **NAYS:**

AYES: Councilpersons Miller, Donaldson, Gero, Welch, Supervisor Wood

ADOURN MEETING AT 11:25 AM

INTRODUCED BY: Councilperson Gero

SECONDED BY: Councilperson Donaldson

With no further business, this meeting was adjourned at 11:25 AM, carried unanimously

Respectfully Submitted by

Erica Hedden

Town Clerk