

**TOWN OF CANTON BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING BY ZOOM**

Thursday

October 29, 2020

6:00 PM – Public Hearing

Minutes

Present: Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley, Deputy Supervisor Bob Washo, Council members Jim Smith, Tim Danehy and Karin Blackburn

Also, in Attendance: Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector and Zoom Moderator Heidi Smith, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Lisa Hammond, Supervisor's Confidential Secretary/Bookkeeper Susan Huntley, Justice Michael Morgan, Historian Linda Casserly, John Gray from Gray and Gray, Ellis Giacomelli, Adam Atkins

Public Hearing:

Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley started the Public Hearing at 6:01 PM. Supervisor Ashley read out loud; Notice is hereby given the Preliminary Town of Canton 2021 budget for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2021 has been completed and filed in the Office of the Town Clerk at 60 Main Street, Canton NY. It is also available for inspection by any person during regular office hours. Further notice is hereby given that the Town Board will meet and review the budget and hold a public hearing thereon, at the Municipal Building on Thursday, October 29, 2020 at 6:00 PM and that at such hearing any person may be heard via electronic transmission by zoom.

The proposed salaries of Town Elected Officials are hereby specified as follows:

Supervisor - \$15,853

Council Members (4) - \$5,442

Highway Superintendent - \$62,500

Town Clerk - \$42,681

Town Justice (2) - \$29,297

Supervisor Ashley added that the preliminary 2021 budget appropriations are \$2,840,431 compared to the 2020 budget at \$2,838,998 and the Town is remaining under the tax cap. The amount to be raised by taxes is \$1,840,164 resulting in a proposed tax rate change of \$2.70 per thousand to \$2.79 for three per thousand. The total taxable assessed property is \$387,990,588 in comparison to last year at \$384,800,717. Supervisor Ashley also added how challenging it has been putting this budget together with the negative impact that COVID has placed on everyone. Ashley thanked the board for all their hard work that was put into creating this budget.

Supervisor Ashley noted that there is no pay increase for elected town officials and the non-contractual employees will receive a 1% pay increase and contractual employees or highway contract will receive 2.5% pay increase. The proposed increase in highway appropriations for construction went from \$372,600 to \$375,000. Fire Protection stayed

the same, Pyrites, Morley and Rensselaer Falls Fire Departments are proposing to get an additional \$5,768 each. Recreation is continuing to be discussed at the next joint meeting with the Town and Village.

Supervisor Ashley opened the meeting for public comments.

No public comment.

Council member Bob Washo thanked Supervisor Ashley, her staff and everyone at Gray and Gray for all their hard work.

Motion to close public hearing at 6:07 PM made by Council member Bob Washo, seconded by Council member Karin Blackburn. All in favor. Motion carries.

Supervisor Ashley added that its on the agenda to consider and discuss the passage of the budget. The supervisor is mandated by law to submit the tax cap form before the budget is passed. Supervisor Ashley's recommendation is to put this on the regular November monthly meeting.

A. Call Meeting to Order

Supervisor Ashley opened the meeting at 6:08 PM.

B. Discussion of Health Insurance Contributions

Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley stated the committee has met and made some proposed recommendations about the current health insurance contributions. We have the contractual agreement that's already set for 2021, non-contractual employees and they are under the non-contractual policy which is currently 20% contribution towards their health insurance. There are four full time employees that are under that policy. There is the retirees, we have twelve individuals that receive the health insurance and their contribution rate is anywhere between 26% and 48% dependent on the former retiree. Then there are the elected official positions that are deemed full time which is the Town Clerk position and the Highway Superintendent position.

The committee's recommendations for non-contractual policy it that it be amended from 20% to 25%.

Supervisor Ashley added that after tonight's discussion the Town will have to put together a Resolution to be added to next months monthly meeting.

The elected official positions: for the Town Clerk position it is recommended that the Town Clerk follow the non-contractual policy as far as health insurance contribution, in 2021 it would go from 20% to 25% contribution. Recommendations for the Highway Superintendent position that it would follow

the contract that the town has with contractual employees which is already set for 2021.

Recommendations for the retirees. Supervisor Ashely stated that for the past three years the retiree's contribution towards their health insurance has not changed. It has been flatlined at the same amount. It is not a percentage it is a flatline. The recommendation from the committee is that it should be standard across the board that all retirees are at a 35% of the premium. There has been a call put into the Towns legal counsel as there is one specific question and it is expected to have discussion with them next week.

Supervisor Ashley reminded the board that under the State Audit it was an item that Highway employees were not charged the amount of the contract when they retired at the time which is 50%. For the audit, the Town needs to continue to do what we said we would as far as a corrective action plan.

Council member Jim Smith added that he believes that the Town needs to move in a direction where everyone is treated the same even in retirement.

Supervisor Ashley added that this health insurance is a supplemental plan that the Town is providing for the retirees that are Medicare eligible. Should a retiree not want to pay more they are welcome to go to the open market and search for another supplement plan. Ashley believes that the Town paying 65% of a high-quality health insurance plan is reasonable.

Council member Bob Washo asked why there has to be four silos when there could be three? Washo questioned why the elected Highway Superintendent a non-contractual position would follow the benefits of the contract employees. It is understandable to follow days off and schedule it makes more sense. Washo also questioned why the Highway Superintendent, which is an elected position which is under the non-contractual policy should follow the benefits of a contractual employee when the Town Clerk position, which is also an elected position, would have to follow the non-contractual policy. Washo doesn't see why the Highway Superintendent should benefit from the union when the Highway Superintendent is not part of the union. Washo feels that if you allow one elected official to follow a contractual policy when they are a non-contractual employee and the other elected official has to follow the non-contractual policy for the health insurance it is going to cause parity between the two officials when the goal is to try to make things more equal for everyone.

Supervisor Ashley believes that there needs to be a separate resolution for the elected officials.

Council member Tim Danehy stated that there should be one resolution for both the elected officials and that they should follow the non-contractual policy for the health insurance. In terms of the health insurance there should be one resolution

that covers non-contractual employees and full-time elected officials. Council member Bob Washo and council member Karin Blackburn agree.

Council member Jim Smith stated he feels the Town Clerk works in an environment with non-contractual employees and the Highway Superintendent works a different schedule than the Town Clerk where the Highway Superintendent is meant to be a 40 hour a week position where the Town Clerk is 35 hours a week. Smith believes the municipal building should be insured one way and the highway department, including the Highway Superintendent should be insured another way.

Council member Washo believes separating the two elected positions for the health insurance is going to send the wrong message. Washo also believes the elected officials should be on the same page in terms of the health insurance. Council member Danehy feels that separating the two elected officials underscores the goal in trying to get all employees on the same percentage. Danehy stated he would like to think about it a little bit more as there's persuasive arguments on both sides.

Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley reminded the board that the Town has a letter with the Highway Superintendent that states he will be covered under the 2021 following the same labor contract amount.

Supervisor Ashley agrees with Council member Smith, this was a committee recommendation, and it seems cleaner, there would be a separate resolution for the health insurance.

Council member Danehy appreciates the reminder of the letter with the Highway Superintendent, with that being said Danehy believes in terms of the health insurance they should leave the Highway Superintendent tied to the contract policy for the calendar year 2021 but given the position is up for election next year then tie both elected full-time positions together with the non-contractual policy. Council member Washo agrees.

Supervisor Ashley recapped everything that was discussed between the board regarding the health insurance. The board agrees that the non-contractual employees' contribution towards their health insurance be increased from 20% to 25%. Supervisor Ashley and Council member Smith will meet with legal council to discuss a technical question for the retirees. At this time, the board agrees that the Town Clerk position will follow the non-contractual policy for 2021 and the Highway Superintendent position is set. All the board members agree with all the recommendations made by the committee.

a. Consider and discuss Passage of 2021 Budget

Supervisor Ashley stated that before the Town can pass the budget the

Supervisor needs to submit the Tax Cap form and would like to recommend that this discussion be tabled to the November monthly meeting.

Consider the passage of the 2021 budget is put on the agenda to be discussed at the November meeting.

Executive Session: Upon a majority vote upon a motion that identifies the subject to be considered, the Council will conduct an executive session to discuss any of the issues identified as proper by Public Offers Law 105(1)

6:37 PM Council member Karin Blackburn made a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of matters pertaining to employment history of a particular person, seconded by Council member Tim Danehy. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

7:36 PM Council member Jim Smith made a motion to come out of Executive Session, seconded by Council member Bob Washo. All in favor. Motion carries.

7:37 PM Council member Bob Washo made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Council member Jim Smith. All in favor. Motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heidi L Smith, Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector