

The Seneca Falls Town Board held a Budget Meeting on Thursday, November 16, 2017 in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 130 Ovid Street.

Present were Supervisor Gregory Lazzaro; Councilmen Louis Ferrara, David DeLelys, Thomas Ruzicka and Vittorio Porretta. Also present was David Foster, Town Attorney.

Supervisor Lazzaro called the Meeting to order at 5:00 P.M. A roll call of Board Members was taken and all were present; the Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Mr. Lazzaro referred to Mr. Foster as there has been some new information. Mr. Foster stated yesterday, the Town was served with a Notice of Summons in an Article 78 proceeding from Seneca Meadows against the Town of Seneca Falls and Seneca Falls Town Board. There was Local Law #3-2016; at some point, there was a replacement of that by this Board – Local Law #2-2017 which ended up in a suit being filed. When that suit was filed, the Court directed further investigation under the SEQR process. The Judge made a decision to set aside Local Law #2-2017. Since Local Law #2 failed, Local Law #3 came back into being. Seneca Meadows challenged Local Law #2 in the form of Article 78. When Local Law #2 replaced Local Law #3, they agreed to withdraw the proceeding. Now that the Judge has set aside Local Law #2, Seneca Meadows reinstated their original position on the Article 78. Mr. Foster noted there will be an Appearance on January 23rd.

Mr. Foster said the Budget proposal that was made by Mr. DeLelys was to say we should use three-fourths of the Landfill money which would lower the tax rate. He added the first thing to consider tonight is if the Board wants all the items discussed with Department Heads put back in or none of the items put back in. The second thing that has to be decided is now that we have been served with legal process, how certain are we that the money from the Landfill will be forthcoming. Mr. Foster said he has to give advice to the Board to say, along with our bookkeeping, do we rely on monies that might or might not come in. Mr. Foster talked about bonding for infrastructure and the affects this will have as far as the Town's credit rating. His recommendation is not to count on something you don't know reasonably that you are going to have. If we are in litigation, the Landfill may say it is not going to pay the Town. He advised the Board that the fiscally responsible thing to do is don't include any money that you don't think you have access to.

Mr. Foster gave an example of what the tax rate would be if no Landfill revenue was used and all items discussed with Department Heads were put back into the Budget. With a house assessed for \$100,000, taxes last year were \$569.60; without any Landfill revenue, the new tax would be \$1,147.00, which is an increase of \$577.40 assuming that you put everything back in. Mr. Foster further discussed the options.

Mr. DeLelys stated in his opinion, the Landfill is trying to hurt the Town. The Article 78 and withholding of funds are not locked together. Even though they have the Article 78 out there, they can still make the payments. He said the fact that they are withholding the funds is just being vindictive. If the Board passes an extreme tax hike and the lawsuit is settled in four months, you created a needless hardship on the people by going with a higher tax rate. Mr. DeLelys said the Town Board needs to have the courage and strength of conviction to see this through. He campaigned to keep the tax rate low, but as it is now, he will try to amend his motion to take out the three-quarters of the Landfill money and go with \$923.00 and use no Landfill revenue. He added at least we know we have the money in there to meet all the obligations of the Town. Mr. DeLelys said the \$577.99 comes out to \$48.00 a month more or a little over \$12.00 a week.

A motion was made by Dave DeLelys and seconded by Greg Lazzaro to amend the original motion from using three-quarters of the Landfill revenue to balance the Budget to using no Landfill revenue to balance the Budget.

The Board went through the line items that were discussed with Department Heads to either include items or delete items. Mr. DeLelys said to delete the \$87,000 for the Highway truck; \$12,000 for painting of the Canal promenade fence; and \$5,000 for wage increase for Mr. Spina. Mr. Lazzaro said the \$5,000 raise for Mr. Spina was taken out because he is over the matrix. Mr. DeLelys said all Department Heads are above their matrix except for Mrs. Holtz. He would like Mrs. Holtz included in the 2 ½% pay increase, also Dominic Belle included in the 2 ½% and Lt. Snyder the 2 1/2% increase. Mr. Lazzaro stated Lt. Snyder is pretty close to his cap – he can bring him up to his cap which he proposes \$300 increase. Brief discussion followed relative to salary increases and the matrix.

Mr. Porretta referred to the option of no Landfill revenue as suggested by Mr. DeLelys, and asked if the option of including one-fourth of the Landfill revenue could be discussed – the tax rate would be \$792.00. Mr. Foster noted the difference would be \$130.00 less. Mr. Porretta said in 2015, we needed a transfer of \$500,000 to close the books. Then \$1 million had to be added to the 2016 Budget before it began because there was some sort of miscalculation for the revenue we were going to get. Mr. Porretta said the money was taken out of reserve account – does that lower our bond rating. Mrs. Warfel replied when Standard & Poor sees a major fluctuation, it shows the instability of the Town, and they may drop the credit rating. Discussion followed relative to the amount of Landfill revenue to use to balance the Budget.

Mr. Porretta asked - when would we get a firm answer from the Landfill as to whether they are going to pay us money or not. Mr. Foster replied we have a January 23rd Appearance before Judge Doyle in Rochester. The Town's answer will be in by that time, and the Judge will probably make some preliminary decisions at that point. He added all of his discussions, encounters, trading information and dealings with their representatives have been very straight-forward, very good and very cordial. He is confident that we will find a solution and work it out as quickly as possible. Further discussion followed.

The above motion made by Dave DeLelys and seconded by Greg Lazzaro to amend the original motion from using three-quarters of the Landfill revenue to balance the Budget to using no Landfill revenue to balance the Budget was carried 5 ayes, 0 naves.

A motion was made to adopt the 2018 Budget as amended by Mr. DeLelys, by Greg Lazzaro and seconded by Dave DeLelys. No questions. Motion carried 4 ayes, 1 nay; Councilman Ferrara with the dissenting vote.

Being there was no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the Meeting by Vic Porretta and seconded by Tom Ruzicka. No questions. Motion carried 5 ayes, 0 naves.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

NICALETTA J. GREER
Town Clerk

The Seneca Falls Town Board held a Public Hearing and regular monthly Meeting on Tuesday, December 5, 2017 in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 130 Ovid Street.

Present were Supervisor Gregory Lazzaro; Councilmen Vittorio Porretta, Thomas Ruzicka, David DeLelys and Louis Ferrara. Also present were David Foster, Town Attorney; Dean Zettlemyer, Zoning Officer; James Spina, Commissioner of Parks & Recreation; Lt. Timothy Snyder; Stephanie Holtz, Assessor; James Peterson, Highway Superintendent; Joseph Tullo, WWTP Operator; Peter Baker and Luke Morenus of Barton & Loguidice and a Member of the local media.

Public Hearing – Restore NY Community Initiatives Municipal Grant Program: Mr. Lazzaro opened the Public Hearing at 6:00 PM and read the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, the Town of Seneca Falls intends to apply to the New York State Empire Development Corporation for a Restore New York grant in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000; and

WHEREAS, if awarded, funding will be used by the National Women's Hall of Fame to relocate HVAC systems from the basement of the old stone mill building to a new power house building; repair the limestone stem wall for incorporation into the new building; fully complete the buildout of the first floor; conduct exterior site work; provide access to public utilities and repair and restore the historic industrial smokestack; and

WHEREAS, the proposed project is consistent with the Town of Seneca Falls Comprehensive Plan, has received all required approvals and is recognized as a vital component of the Town's overall economic development strategy; and

WHEREAS, THE AWARD OF A \$1 million Restore New York Grant forms a portion of an appropriate financing package, helping close a \$1.2 million funding gap due in large part to the unanticipated need to relocate HVAC systems because groundwater elevation in the old stone mill building basement was recently discovered to be three feet higher than the proposed basement excavation level of 426 feet; and

WHEREAS, the proposed project facilitates both effective and efficient use of future public resources by promoting both economic development and preservation of community resources; and

WHEREAS, the award of a Restore New York Grant will allow the National Women's Hall of Fame to occupy the former Seneca Knitting Mill building by the close of 2018, favorably positioning the Hall of Fame to celebrate in 2020 the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment to the constitution of the United States which gave women the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, the proposed project develops and enhances an important facility of national historical significance in a manner that will enhance the local economy by attracting visitors from all over the world which will create and sustain local and regional employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the Hall of Fame will contribute the required local ten percent match; and

