

REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING
NOVEMBER 14, 2023
ELDRED TOWN HALL

PRESENT SUPERVISOR HAAS
COUNCILWOMAN HAAS
COUNCILMAN BOSCH

ALSO, PRESENT Attorney to the town, Michael Davidoff, Esq.
Town Clerk, Susan Hoffman

Supervisor calls meeting to order – 7:00 pm
Flag Salute
Moment of silence for Nellie King and Christine Elvin
Roll Call – Councilman Tambini not present

MOTION BY Councilman Bosch to approve the Town Clerk's October 2023 Minutes, seconded by Councilwoman Haas, discussion, motion carried all ayes.

MOTION BY Councilwoman Haas to approve the October 2023 Financials, seconded by Councilman Bosch discussion, motion carried all ayes.

CORRESPONDENCE

Yulan Fire Department
Highland Lake Fire Department
Highland Ambulance Service

HIGHWAY

We talked a little bit this morning, we have some ponds to work on today. We have a few little things to wrap up and we'll be done for the week. I'm going to call Joe Gottlieb tomorrow, have him come down to inspect to make sure everything's okay, which I'm pretty positive they are and we'll move forward and we can apply for the rest of our grant money.

SUPERVISOR

Okay, along with what Rob had to say about the silk ponds and the SWIPP program that we had to put in as per conditions of the grant. There's approximately \$132,000 that the state has held back. We will be applying for that after we get the engineers approval through LaBerg to get the rest of our money that's been sitting there since about 2018. This time of the year you know we look for our roads to be kept clean if you could just work with the highway department and their endeavors when they're trying to get out.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment

COMMUNITY/SENIORS

Councilman Bosch reports: Last months senior meeting went well. There was some discussion about the entrance to the seniors parking lot. Most of the people use the entrance and exit there is an exit and entrance and the entrance sign is no longer there. And there was a problem with driving other than on the pavement at the entrance. I did install a six-foot white PVC pipe over to mark five foot from the edge

of the payment. So that was taken care of. But I was very busy today and didn't attend this month's meeting which was a month or a week early. And I would like to ask Peter to comment on that meeting. We discussed closing the senior center for January and February resuming meetings in March. There'll be no meeting in December because we're having our Christmas gathering at the crossroads Sunday December 3.

YOUTH & PARK DEVELOPMENT

Councilwoman Haas reports: we're just awaiting the disbursement from the county for \$7,500 youth grant and then guidance as to when they'll be releasing the applications for the 2024 youth programming. We'll do that with Koinonia. We're going to pursue community partnership with them next year.

CODES

No report

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

No report

GRANTS

Supervisor Haas reports: The tap grant has gone in for the RFQ. RFQ stands for request for quotes on the whole program for the tap assist for the tap grant award. Tap stands for transportation assistance program. It's a program offered up by Governor Hochul with using federal dollars and we've applied for the corridor between Berryville and the Roebling bridge to create a hybrid type operation of shared roadway, bike lane, hiking trails, to travel the whole four plus miles of route 97. While doing that, it's kind of a two-fold thing. That's why I'm calling it a hybrid that these things don't happen in New York State very often. In light of transportation alternatives program, they're looking to save, you know carbon credits wherever they can, and get people back out and healthy with the bicycles that are hiking trails and things like that. There is money available its award is between \$505 million of which there's an 8020 match 80% by the government and 20% by the Town of Highland. If in fact we were awarded a grant for that we would be petitioning our local Assemblywoman as well as our state senator, for additional funds to cover our portion. I mean, if we were awarded a \$5 million program, you know \$5 million grant that would be a million dollars for us to come up with and below we have the money in reserve, you know, I would still look to save a lot of that and ask our local representatives if they could assist us with that in that program. The RFQ was due back in November. The last deadline to submit is 2pm on November 27 2014. So we will be opening those requests at that time, 2pm November 27th. And the request for quotes is basically the company that's going to manage this grant for us. Moving forward. Hopefully there'll be two or three companies looking to bid on this thing. Come up with a hybrid plan as per negotiations that we've had with state D O T, as well as this board. When this thing starts moving forward. We will probably look for I would say community involvement of some sort. People interested in the community that would want to sit on a small board of maybe five to seven people to move this forward to come up with actual ideas, areas on route 97, where we would want to create a dedicated bike trail/walking trail. And then of course, the shared roadway would be the whole length of the shared roadway. Idea is new to New York State. You'll see them all over most of the tourist areas and other states like Florida for one shared roadway. bicycles have just as much right to be there as the cars and sometimes more rights and pedestrians of course have more rights and even the bicycles so it's a it's a situation that's probably going to lower the speed limit on that stretch of road, which would help our emergency response teams with the accidents that we have on those on that highway down there. And the increased traffic in the summertime due to the delivery action in the restaurants

and so on so forth that are up along that area. It's a work in progress. It's not going to happen in one year. It's not going to happen in two years. There's probably going to be three years before the whole project is complete. But we got to put the first foot forward to get the project going.

INSURANCE

No report

BUILDINGS

No report

BEAUTIFICATION/RENAISSANCE

Doreen Hansen and Carol were here yesterday cleaning out the boxes, cleaning out the boxes by Pecks. All the weeds were pulled prior to Veterans Day. They will probably be putting up their winter stuff before the heavy frost. We would like to thank the highway department. They assisted with getting the planter baskets from Yulan over to the storage area at the highway facility. And I believe they took down the last three that were up this morning.

PERSONNEL

Councilwoman Haas reports: Nothing to report but we will need to discuss some personal items in Executive Session.

WEBSITE

No report

911 HEROES PARK

Peter Carmeci reports: Saturday we had a nice turnout.

OLD BUSINESS

The 2024 budget was actually part of the proposed resolutions, we did hold the public hearing on November 2, we did approve all the contracts with the exception of the New Highway budget, which will be done tonight. The vote will be tonight.

RESOLUTIONS

MOTION BY Councilman Bosch approve the modified agreement with the Sullivan County Sheriff's office for an additional term through December 31 2024, seconded by Councilwoman Haas, discussed, motion carried all ayes.

MOTION BY Councilwoman Haas to approve and extend the lease agreement with the Yulan Fire Department for an additional term through December 31 2024. That's for the Eldred firehouse as well as the Yulan firehouse, seconded by Councilman Bosch, discussion, motion carried all ayes.

MOTION BY Councilman Bosch to extend the lease agreement with the Highland ambulance service for the additional term through December 31 2024. That's in the emergency services building right next door here. Seconded by Councilwoman Haas, discussion, motion carried all ayes.

MOTION BY Councilwoman Haas to approve the continued agreement between the Eldred Central School District and the Town of Highland on the 2024 and inter-municipal road salt agreement, seconded by Supervisor Haas, discussion, motion carried all ayes.

MOTION BY Councilman Bosch to approve the Sullivan County Hauler renewal application for the 2024 calendar year, seconded by Councilwoman Haas, discussion, motion carried all ayes.

MOTION BY Supervisor Haas to approve the town of Highland 2024 Town Budget, which I will go into just a short rendition here, if you would the Town of Highland budget after many hours of negotiating has put forward a budget of \$2,267,60.27 budget that reflects a 1.47% increase over last year's budget. Our revenues are increasing to cover our insurance and additional expenses. But this board in the last six

years, has almost identically matched the rate of growth of the town to the rate of growth in the budget. And we've done it again this year, the ratables increase is just short of 2% and this year's fiscal year and we've put forward a budget of 1.47%. That coupled with the county releasing their budget at a 0% increase this town may actually see your taxes flat or possibly go down a hair okay, which is a tough thing to accomplish. The only other ratable that might be in here that we can't figure is the difference in the fire tax between the two protection districts. Highland Lakes went up just a hair more than the 2% and Yulan just under the 2%. You might see a little fluctuation there. Highland ambulance service went up a little bit but that was such a miniscule thing that it's not going to affect your budget.

Councilwoman states it reflects a 3% increase for staff. It reflects increases for those requested investments. I think the return on the NY Class investment was really helpful from the revenue side and helpful in creating some of those dedicated accounts. We've managed to increase the budget without burdening the taxpayer and the increase is not an easy feat to take it away. The sheriff's contract because that is reflected inside of the budget. The difference between the operation of the MOU with the sheriff's office is 22 cents per 1000 as budgeted, which is a maximum of \$100,000 per year. The constabulary as budgeted was 29 cents per 1000, that does not include an additional \$9,000 per year that we incurred the cost of insurance for vehicles and insurance for law enforcement. So it's do we get the second bill yet from the sheriff's we did not. The first six months of the MOU we were billed at \$30,000 which is 50% of the year which would have been should have been \$50,000. We are actually going to realize even more of a cost savings than we did with the \$100,000 that we budgeted as the ceiling for the MOU. So that's included in the budget so we had the 10% increase in insurance premiums, we had the 3% increases for staff salaries and some additional adjustments there and we still managed to come in with a flat or a decrease in the cost to the taxpayer.

John Pizzolato asks: Did we actually use the full budgeted numbers for the constabulary program? We did. We extended the full budget from what was budgeted 2022. Councilwoman Haas responds: We always extend the full budget line. (JP) what about for 2022. We didn't expend the full budget lines we didn't expend it because we suspended the constabulary in April. It was four months. I guess for 2021 did extend the full range of the budget that was 2020 for 2021. We did. Then that was roughly like 60,000? No, it was 100,000.00. It was 99,100. And something and then the last year we had them I believe was 105,000.00. Because that they did ask for so what happens at the end of the so there's two lines under the constabulary budget which I think people look at the personal services line which is the cost of the constables their payroll, there's a whole equipment and the line for their recertification, their bullets, their annual they're less than lethal their replacement or teasers. So, typically at the end of the year, they would expand whatever that difference was. That line is about \$90,000, they expended that it doesn't always reflect in the budget versus actual for December of that the end of that budget year because the bills are always a month behind. So those bills would come in and be submitted and then you would pay them in January, but they would be reflected in the budget for the previous year. So yes, we've always expended or they never overspent their budget, but they always expend that the totality of their budget line, seconded by Councilwoman Haas, discussion, motion carried all ayes. Roll call by Town Clerk. All ayes. The 2024 Budget passes.

MOTION BY Councilman Bosch for a budgetary transfer. The bookkeeper towards the end of the year we have to move monies from lines that have monies to lines that are just a little bit short, or we will come up short by the end of the year. This is proper accounting through our accounting service that request this be done before the line actually goes into the red. We have appropriations lines of the contingency budget buildings, zoning board and VFIS fireman's pension of \$29,463. That's the source of

the revenue to the appropriation side independent audit during the town engineer. Narcotics Control, the youth board, the zoning board, the planning board, and the pen flex ambulance pension of identical \$29,463.89. So, we're moving from the lines that have a balance to the lines that are going to come up a little short so we don't run those lines into the red. Seconded by Councilwoman Haas, discussion, motion carried all ayes

MOTION BY Councilwoman Haas authorizing paying Highway abstract number 11 of 2023 claims number 96 through 115 in the amount of \$25,766.01, seconded by Councilman Bosch, discussion, motion carried all ayes.

MOTION BY Councilwoman Haas authorizing paying General abstract number 11 of 2023 claims number 292 to 325 in the amount of \$27,190.63, seconded by Councilman Bosch, discussion, motion

MOTION BY Councilwoman Haas authorizing paying Eldred Street Lights number 11 of 2023 claim number 11 in the amount of \$129.42, seconded by Councilman Bosch, discussion, motion carried all ayes.

The board will need a short Executive Session for a personnel issue as well as discussion on litigation that's in front of us.

MOTION BY Councilman Bosch to go into Executive Session, seconded by Councilwoman Haas, discussion, motion carried all ayes. There will be no motions made in executive session. Any other motions that will need to be made will be made back in this forum, if needed after we reconvene.

MOTION BY Councilman Bosch to come out of Executive Session, seconded by Councilwoman Haas discussion, motion carried all ayes.

MOTION BY Supervisor Haas to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Bosch, discussion, motion carried all ayes.