

**Danby Town Board
Minutes of Special Budget Meeting
October 5, 2015
DRAFT**

Present:

Supervisor: Ric Dietrich
Councilpersons: Rebecca Brenner, Leslie Connors, Jack Miller

Others Present:

Town Clerk Pamela Goddard
Bookkeeper Laura Shawley
Public Ted Crane, H Katharine Hunter, Alison Christie

The Danby Town Board Meeting was opened at 7:40pm

Budget Planning and Review Discussion

The Town Board reviewed the Preliminary 2016 budget with Bookkeeper Shawley.

There was a discussion regarding a sizable increase in the Fire District budget. Dietrich and Shawley spoke of the need for clarity as to the amount being asked for and how much of that amount will be raised by taxes. Additional information may be provided at the next budget meeting.

Shawley and Dietrich provided information regarding the impact of Town-wide increase in property valuation/assessment. Shawley reported that, earlier in 2015, Tompkins County Assessment Department determined a \$25,000,000 increase in the total assessment of properties in the Town of Danby, related to recent evaluations. This spreads the levy across a broader base, and so the tax rate per \$100,000 of assessed value goes down. This was described as a “perfect storm” of good things, to keep the levy reasonable. In the preliminary budget, the tax rate will actually decrease per \$100,000 of assessment. Shawley noted that going over the tax levy limit raises the base for the following fiscal year (2017) and so has future beneficial repercussions.

The Proposed Tentative Budget was submitted to the Town Clerk on October 5. This budget raises the tax levy by \$100,000. A large portion of this increase (\$90,000) is in the Highway section of the budget. The budget will use \$40,000 from the General Fund balance and \$20,000 from the Highway fund balance.

Health Insurance premiums have risen 3 percent, compared to a much higher industry average. However, expenditures in the Highway Department are going up due to increased staff, with related increases in health insurance coverage and salaries. It is also anticipated that there will be an increased need for salt and sand related to winter road maintenance.

Dietrich asked what might be the options for the Board, if it did not want to raise the levy that amount? Shawley responded that there are options to go deeper into fund balances and to shave amounts from some line items. There was no discussion of these strategies for limits to the levy. Brenner noted that 2015 was an expensive year for the Town, due to various factors.

There was discussion regarding clarifying and/or updating the budget line titles for the staff in the Code Office. Shawley noted that these titles should be updated. The Code Office contractual line has gone up to cover the expense of some needed GIS mapping software. These funds were shifted from the Planning contractual line.

Support funds for youth employment, which normally come from Tompkins County, amounting to \$2000, have been reduced in the County's 2016 budget. The Community Council made inquiries as to whether the Town can do anything to help make up this difference. Shawley noted that there is currently \$2,500 in the A7330.400 Youth and Recreation line of the General Fund budget. Historically, this money has not be used. Connors and Dietrich expressed support for shifting these funds to where they will be more useful.

Alison Christie arrived at 8:45 to answer questions regarding Youth Employment and Youth programs. Christie informed the Board that 4-5 youth workers from Danby have been employed in recent years, each averaging 95-100 hours per summer. \$2,000 would continue to support that level of employment. Management of these youth workers will continue through Co-operative Extension.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Pamela Goddard, Town Clerk