

**Danby Town Board
Minutes of Budget Public Hearing and Special Meeting
November 6, 2017**

Present:

Councilpersons: Rebecca Brenner, Leslie Connors, Ric Dietrich (Supervisor), Jim Holahan, Jack Miller

Others Present:

Town Clerk Pamela Goddard
Bookkeeper Laura Shawley
Public Ted Crane, H. Katharine Hunter, Scott Davis

Public Hearing Opened at 7:38pm

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, that the Town of Danby Town Board has completed the Preliminary Budget for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2018, a copy of which is available for review at the office of the Town Clerk, 1830 Danby Road, during regular office hours Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 10am to 5pm and Saturday 10am to Noon.

Pursuant to Section 107 of Town Law, the proposed maximum salaries for the following town officers are specified as follows: Supervisor - \$27,860, Councilpersons (4) - \$11,287 (\$2,821.75 each), Town Clerk - \$38,229, Town Justices (2) - \$30,840 (\$15,420 each), Highway Superintendent - \$60,245.

FURTHER NOTICE IS GIVEN that the Town Board of the Town of Danby will hold following Public Hearing on November 6, 2017 at the Danby Town Hall, 1830 Danby Road, Ithaca, NY:

PUBLIC HEARING to to hear any objections of and consider approval of the proposed 2018 Budget. All persons will be heard either in writing or in person. The Town Board will consider voting on the budget during its meeting held subsequent to the public hearing.

Written communication from Ronda Roaring, expressing concerns about salaries and activities in the Clerk's office (particularly the sale of DEC sporting licenses), was received by the Town Board prior to the Hearing.

Katharine Hunter stated her understanding of the Town budget and that while she thought the budget "was fine," she was, "leaning on the side of not having a tax break this year, due to uncertain times." Hunter supported the idea of a dedicated fund for disaster relief. She suggested that, if needed, the Town spend down funds on infrastructure. The Town Supervisor and Bookkeeper responded, regarding the impacts and implications of a 0% increase budget at this time. They also noted the Town's budget history that has led to a position where Danby is able to maintain its current tax base.

In response to a question asked by Crane during a previous meeting, Bookkeeper Shawley stated that a 0% tax levy increase in 2018 will carry the unused-in-2018 credit forward to the credit for 2019.

Scott Davis did not express concerns or complaints. He asked a general question about the process for securing a bond in the event of a large expense. Would a Bond need to go to public vote? Information about this may be in meeting minutes. There was explanation from Bookkeeper Shawley, including the use of a bond attorney. Bond measures have been used to finance Highway projects in the past. Supervisor Dietrich stated his inclination to avoid the use of bonds for financing projects.

Ted Crane stated that he was not initially enthusiastic about a budget that borrows from the Fund Balance to avoid a tax levy increase. On further consideration, he came to the view that it's OK to, "take money out of the bank as well as putting it in." Crane described himself as a fiscal conservative, but stated that, "this is not so bad."

Dietrich spoke regarding his views on being able to give something back to the residents and taxpayers of Danby. He suggested that this budget be viewed in relation to past financial policy and looking to the future. Shawley noted that the Town may not need to borrow from the Fund Balance in any case, as this is a conservative budget in regards potential revenue.

Public Hearing Closed at 7:58pm

Special Meeting Opened at 7:58pm

Town Council Budget Discussion

The Board discussed adopting the 2018 budget as presented. Holahan thanked the Staff for its work leading up to this budget. He stated that it was, “nice to be in this position,” of being able to have a budget with no tax levy increase. He thought that the budget was based on solid facts and, with the Town’s previous record, that this is a good way to go.

Miller agreed that Bookkeeper Shawley did a good job.

Connors stated that she thought the 2018 Budget was very good and thanked Shawley for her years of work.

Brenner stated her full support of the budget, noting that it reflects years of good governance.

Miller asked a question regarding the potential impact of the Federal Budget and proposed Federal tax code revisions on New York State and Local budgets. He asked whether it was better to squirrel money away at this time? Shawley and Dietrich commented that this budget is based on current conditions, that they don’t anticipate big changes at this time, and that there is no way to accurately predict the future. Danby will want to review impacts on residents, based on Federal tax policy changes, in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 69 OF 2017 - ADOPT 2018 TOWN OF DANBY BUDGET

Resolved, that the Town Board of the Town of Danby adopts the 2018 municipal budget as presented to the public in the Preliminary Budget agreed upon on October 16, 2017.

Moved by Brenner, Second by Holahan. The motion passed.

In Favor: Brenner, Connors, Holahan, Dietrich

Opposed: Miller

Dietrich and Miller briefly discussed Miller’s motivation for his “No” vote. Miller stated that he is cautious in these uncertain times, “perhaps more cautious than I need to be, but this is my position.”

Adjournment

Adjournment was at 8:12 pm.

Pamela Goddard, Town Clerk