

**Danby Town Board**  
**Minutes of Budget Planning Meeting**  
**October 28, 2019, 6pm, Danby Town Hall**

**Present:**

Councilpersons: Leslie Connors, Ric Dietrich (Supervisor), Jim Holahan, Jack Miller, Matt Ulinski

**Others Present:**

Town Clerk Pamela Goddard  
Bookkeeper Laura Shawley  
Public Ted Crane, Ronda Roaring, Joel Gagnon.

**Meeting Opened at 6:05 pm**

**Budget Workshop**

Laura Shawley presented a revised Preliminary Budget for 2020, based on previous Board discussions. Ulinski asked for clarification regarding the level of tax bill change (per \$100,000 in assessment) in the SW (Water District) fund, relative to the A and DA funds (General Fund and Highway Fund). A small change in assessment in the SW fund can have a bigger impact on tax bills. A larger change in assessment is needed to offset the A and DA funds.

Ulinski spoke in favor of adopting the preliminary budget which stays under the NYS Tax Cap by \$692. He requested that budget planning start earlier in 2020, and that the Board consider a three to five year fiscal projection in order to plan out a minimal use of the Fund Balances for budget stabilization. Ulinski stated that he is comfortable using the Fund Balances for emergency needs, but is not comfortable using these funds to balance the budget.

Dietrich noted that conversations with financial institutions are needed in order to obtain the best interest rates on Fund Balances and reserve accounts. Bookkeeper Shawley has begun gathering some of this information. She urged the Board to continue this conversation early in 2020.

Connors asked about whether there was a salary increase for the secretary of the Planning and Zoning Appeals Boards. The budget lines for support to these volunteer boards was not increased in this budget. This person is currently receiving \$22 per hour, with hours as needed by the PB and BZA. Connors suggested that this be revisited in 2020 for the 2021 budget. Roaring asked what the justification is for a 2% cost of living increase? Ulinski noted that the Federal COLA is 1.9%. Shawley added that this increase parallels the negotiated increase in the CSEA union contract.

Gagnon asked what the consequence is to the taxpayers, if the Town goes over the tax cap? Dietrich noted that they will lose their "rebate" from NYS. Gagnon expressed concern regarding a steady depletion of the Fund Balances over time. Ulinski countered that reducing the level of the Fund Balance is in keeping with a NYS requirement that the level of municipal fund balances should be "reasonable." Ulinski further stated that he does not have a problem with going over the Tax Cap, but felt that he did not have enough information related to long range planning to do so at this time. Shawley added that it would be good to include a Fund Balance Policy as part of the long range financial planning. Shawley assured that the Fund Balance is secure and is "hefty" compared to other municipalities the size of Danby.

Shawley outlined some of the special projects which were undertaken in the past few years and which used the Fund Balance. These include one-time construction projects, such as improvements to the Highway Barn offices, construction of an exterior emergency stair, and covering the fuel tanks. There have also been higher than normal needs for salt and road maintenance during an extended and difficult winter. These were over and above standard operating expenses. Gagnon expressed concern about the use of the Fund Balance, in the General Fund, for offsetting expenses. Shawley noted that there are many years when operations are under budget and funds are added to the Fund Balances.

The Board expressed consensus for moving this budget to "Tentative" for presentation at the 2020 Budget Hearing on November 4 at 7:00pm.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm

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Pamela Goddard, Town Clerk