

November 6, 2024

Schultzville, NY

A public hearing on the 2025 preliminary budget was held on this day in the Town Hall. Present were Supervisor Whitton, Councilmen Charlie Dykas, Eliot Werner, Councilwoman Katherine Mustello, Councilwoman Auspitz and Town Clerk Carol-Jean Mackin. There were six people in the audience.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

At 6:30 PM, Supervisor Whitton called the public hearing to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **LEGAL NOTICE**

The Town Clerk read the Public Hearing Notice aloud.

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

MM Supervisor Whitton, 2nd Councilman Werner to open the floor to public comments. All aye. Motion carried.

Katherine Mustello - read a communication from town resident Patty Smith stating that PB/ZBA Clerk Arlene Campbell works hard and is helpful and asked to please leave her current salary in the budget.

Supervisor Whitton received an email from a resident, Sam Moyer. Deputy Supervisor Werner read it: Mr. Moyer recognizes the hard work and dedication of the Town Board; the Board lowered taxes for the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year, achieved bronze status as a Climate Smart Community, the Board always fights to fund the library, the Board honors service men and women with the Hometown Heroes project, and commends the Board for spending ARPA funds on much needed projects around town.

Judy Canham – speaking on behalf of her husband Charlie who serves on the ZBA, he acknowledges the wealth of knowledge Arlene Campbell brings to the Board. He enjoys working with her, she is on top of everything and supports her wage increase.

At 6:36 PM, there being no further comments, MM Supervisor Whitton, 2nd Councilman Werner to close the public hearing. All aye. Motion carried.

Katherine Mustello – wants to make a comment about the last-minute changes to the highway secretary salary. Both she and Councilwoman Auspitz are in the minority on this decision, but she agrees that the majority chose a different path. Argues that not agreeing makes us a stronger board as a general rule however, back room planning and last minute bate and switches and attempts to silence other board members does not make us stronger. The wage change was sprung on Board members last month despite there being a summary of other changes to the budget. Board members received an email today that we should be quiet and let the public speak tonight as this meeting is for the public. She commented that the Supervisor can make time for communication, as he did today, but time for communication was not made at the time of the last meeting (Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>). She

pointed out that at the October 17 meeting, both the Supervisor and the Deputy Supervisor did not agree to the original, increased wage (for the Highway Secretary) which was ultimately changed at that meeting. It was Deputy Supervisor Werner's idea to make both wage increases the same for the PB/ZBA Secretary and the Highway Secretary. Everyone agreed it was a good way to go. Councilwoman Mustello notes the change the Highway Secretary increase was done legally but cautions the public to watch carefully as it is similar to the decisions made at the January 2024 meeting where last minutes changes were also made. She said there is no reason for this as they are the majority, and this eliminated dissent. She is disappointed by the way it was handled and wants to public to take note.

At this time, Mm Supervisor Whitton, 2<sup>nd</sup> Councilwoman Mustello to reopen the floor to public comments. All aye Motion carried.

Dan Harkenrider Recreation Director -- questioning the number of hours for Groundskeeper Tim Horton who was cut back to 28 hours from 32. Mr. Harkenrider is concerned that 28 hours is not enough time to get all the work done at the parks and the cemeteries. Supervisor Whitton said he is eligible for part time benefits with the full-time position, but at 32 hours he was also eligible for health care which he said he does not want. If he works the 32 hours, we must budget for health care even he does not take it, so his wage was increased but his time cut. We are considering adding hours for him to make sure there is enough time to do the work. Katherine Mustello wants to know if we raise his hours will we cut his rate? Mike said it will stay about the same. Councilwoman Mustello is concerned about the bottom line.

Mm Supervisor Whitton, 2nd Councilman Werner to close the public hearing. All aye. Motion carried.

Deputy Supervisor Werner wants to address Katherine Mustello's comment: his recollection is the board agreed to put both salaries in the Preliminary budget and then revisit the issue when we convened again, it was not a commitment to support either one. That was his proposal to move the discussion along. It is different than Katherine's recollection and sometimes conversations are subject to interpretation. Councilwoman Mustello appreciates that, but her point was that that change was not mentioned and there were opportunities to share that information. She does not like being treated this way, there is no reason for it as the chances were that you had the votes anyway to make the change.

Councilman Charlie Dykas said that is twice Katherine mentioned being treated poorly. He did not see anyone being treated poorly. Councilwoman Mustello appreciates his comment but feels the last-minute switch to change the wage was left off the summary for no reason. She feels that treated her disrespectfully. Supervisor Whitton said it is not a last-minute change, we have had two weeks before this public hearing where people can comment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

MM 6:46 PM, MM Supervisor Whitton, 2nd Councilman Werner to adjourn the meeting.  
All aye. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Carol-Jean Mackin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol-Jean Mackin, Town Clerk