

MINUTES OF THE BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE TOWN OF FORT ANN HELD ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2023 AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE FORT ANN TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Supervisor Samuel J. Hall
Councilwoman Gretchen Stark
Councilman George F. Smith
Councilwoman Deborah Witherell

ABSENT: Councilman Michael Sexton
Mark Miller, Enforcement Officer
Shannon Celeste, Dog Control Officer

OTHERS PRESENT: Paul Winchell-Highway Superintendent, Helen Denno-Budget Officer, Miranda Herringshaw- Town Clerk, Jennifer Jackson-Clerk to the Supervisor, Christine Milligan-Fort Ann Town Historian, Jon Pollock, Rick Dumas, Regina Ladd, Robert Ladd, Tom Noble, Haley Noble, Mike Gould, Matt Gould, Duane Burch.

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

This meeting was published in The Post Star September 26th, 2023.

Supervisor Hall stated that this is the first budget meeting of the year and the second meeting will be held October 19th, 2023 at 6 PM at Town Hall. He also advised that no decisions will be made tonight, that tonight's budget is a tentative budget, they took what all department heads requested, and we will work on cutting down on things once we have a clear picture of what we are working with. Supervisor Hall turned the meeting over to the Budget Officer, Helen Denno, to read the 14-page 2024 tentative budget and answer any questions people may have. Everyone that was present was given a copy of the 14-page tentative budget as well as the Town of Fort Ann budget Summary 2023. Paper copies are available in the Town Clerk Office as well as on the town's website www.townoffortannny.com

Supervisor Hall mentioned that as far as salaries go the town has kept the employees at a very low wage for a long time and that in order to attract the younger generations, we will need to be somewhat in the ball park of the average competitive salary rates. The price of everyday living has increased for everyone, and the Town Employees have families to raise and we need to have their salaries reflect their positions and what they are responsible for on the day-to-day bases.

The purposed salary raises for most departments' budgets are based on giving a \$2,000.00 (Judge, Court Clerk, Town Clerk, and Highway Superintendent) annual raise, and the highway workers will receive a \$3.00 per hour increase on their hourly wage. Clerk to the supervisor will receive \$2,440.00 annual raise.

Any line item that was not changed from the 2023 budget has not been listed and any budget that only changed by the 2% increase was also not listed. You can see all budgets on the website or in person in the Town Clerks office.

Line Items that have changed:

The line-item Supervisor was increased by \$11,834.00 due to increase in salaries and increase in cost for supplies.

The line-item Audit was increased by \$5,500.00 due to Fort Ann fire department joining the LOSAP program.

The line-item tax collection was increased by \$1,000.00 due to the contract with Washington County increasing.

The line-item assessor was increased by \$4,616.00 due to no longer having a contract with Washington County. The assessor will be a Town employee starting January 1, 2024. This will be more cost effective for the Town.

The line- item Town Clerk was increased by \$20,120.00 due to the purchasing of the short-term rental program, and salaries increasing for Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk.

The line item for Central Communication for the Town's website services and WiFi was increased by \$1,000.00 due to increasing prices.

The line-item central printing and mailing was decreased by \$1,000.00 due to not spending as much as projected in 2023 budget.

The line-item A1989.4 was added into the budget this year \$7,500.00 for cyber security and computer technician.

The line-item animal control was added \$1,200.00 for removal of beavers.

The line-item Buildings was increased by \$903.00 due to hourly wage being increased from \$15.00 to \$18.00 per hour.

The line-item Special Items was increased by \$4,140.00 due to an increase in insurance.

The line-item personal services (A7180.1) was increased \$1,800.00 due to lifeguards pay increasing to \$20.00 per hour.

The line-item Joint Youth project was increased by \$1,650.00 due to more students being enrolled in the program.

The line-item Adult Recreation increased by \$500.00 due to the request of the program.

The line- item Planning Board was increased by \$6,598.00 due to the planning board secretary's salary increasing along with the Chairman will now receive \$75.00 per meeting and board members will get \$50.00 per meeting.

The line-item Employee Benefits was increased \$14,553.00 due to retirement, social security, and insurance amounts increasing, there will be a 13.44% increase of employee's health insurance for the 2024 year.

The line-item machinery decreased \$8,300.00 due to a new sander being purchased in this fiscal year and not next year.

The line- item Snow Removal was increased \$32,000.00 due to a \$3.00 per hour raise for the highway employees.

The line-item Contractual Expense was increased \$2,500.00 due to rising prices for fuel and materials.

The category Employee Benefits under highway appropriations was increased \$11,382.00 due to employee wages increasing causing retirement, social security and insurances to increase, there will be a 13.44% increase of employee's health insurance for the 2024 year.

The line-item principal bonds decreased \$43,000.00 due to the truck not being purchased in 2024.

The line item bonds interest decreased 9,460.00 due to no payments being made on the new truck.

The line-item Ambulance requested a \$12,500.00 increase in budget due to rising cost in fuel, medical supply cost.

The line- item Fort Ann SF1 was increased \$2,930.00 for a contract amount of \$236,743.00. Fuel price increases, insurances increases, physicals have increased due to number of members and the Chief holding members responsible for actual getting the physicals done. They have increased money for equipment due to things needing to be replaced like hoses and other things of that nature. Fort Ann fire district will be set up with LOSAP for the 2024 year that increased the budget by \$18,000.00 (15 members X\$1,200.00)

The line- item Pilot Knob SF2 stayed the same as the 2023 budget for a contract price of \$93,200.00.

The line- item West Fort Ann SF3 was increased \$44,231.00 due to adding the \$56,000 truck payment back into the budget- they did not receive any funds from the Town towards the payment of this truck in 2023. Contract amount to requested \$270,784.00

Supervisor Hall told West Fort Ann Fire Department that they would not receive the full \$56,000.00 for the truck payment due to the purchase of the truck not being authorized by the Town Board. He asked the fire department of that payment what could they come up with? Regina Ladd stated she believes they can cover \$20,000.00 of that payment if the Town would be willing to give them \$36,000.00- Supervisor Hall said he would discuss this with the Board members and we will discuss to further at the next budget workshop (10/19/23).

** Supervisor Hall took \$23,800.00 out of West Fort Ann, \$22,433.00 from Fort Ann fire districts, and \$30,000.00 from the Rescue Squad due to the Town having ARPA funds left that need to be designated to be used by 2025- this will help get the budget where we need to be and will still be awarded to the Fire Companies and the Rescue Squad.

The line-item sales tax (from county) increased to \$188,000.00 due the Town requesting its monies from the county- all other Towns do this Fort Ann was the only Town that had left sales tax revenue at the county level.

The line-item Personal Service for Hadlock District was increased \$2,500.00 due to the employees' salaries being increased.

The line- item Contractual Expense for Hadlock District was increased \$9,500.00 due to rising cost in insurance, cost of maintenance of both the harvester and dam, along with fuel.

The line-item transfer to capital project fund increased \$25,000.00 due to putting money in a reserve for the purchase of a new weed harvester for Hadlock park district.

The line-item Serial Bond was decreased \$1,950.00 due to decrease in interest.

The Budget Officer went over the Town of Fort Ann Budget Summary 2024 sheet paying special attention to the last line (Increase/Decrease from 2023 budget);

Allowable increase per tax cap calculation: \$51,672.00 and amount over tax cap \$154,285.00 from the original tentative budget.

After all revisions were made from the budget workshop the numbers are \$8,008.00 under allowable tax cap.

6:55 p.m. Motion was introduced by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Witherell to adjourn.

Motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Miranda Herringshaw, Town Clerk
Town of Fort Ann, New York

Dated: October 10th, 2023,