

**COUNTY OF GREENE  
TOWN OF NEW BALTIMORE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
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**SPECIAL MEETING**

Supervisor O'Rorke called the special meeting to order at 6:35 pm. Attending: Councilwomen Benway and Finke, Councilmen Meredith and Norris, Attorney Wukitsch, Highway Superintendent Jordan, Town Clerk Brooks, and 3 members of the public who signed the attendance sheet. Absent:.

Supervisor asked that all cell phones, BlackBerrys, and other electronic devices be turned off, having experienced static with the digital recorders, and stated that the purpose of the Special Meeting was long range planning.

Supervisor printed the 2011 Final Budget and the 2012 Adopted Budget for the Board members.

Beginning with General Fund, looking at Revenue, property taxes have gone down over 5 years averaging a 2% decrease, Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) has gone up, State Aid has gone down and is based on the state and population, Mortgage Tax has gone down about 16% (Supervisor is optimistic), and Justice Court fines are down 7%. Other Revenue items make up remainder of budget. Supervisor asked for comments. Justice Court fines and forfeitures are picking up in 2012 and may meet or exceed 2011; courts are always one month behind due to the way the NYS Comptroller's Office files. Building Permits and Planning Board have reached 2012 budgeted amounts.

Projecting Revenues going forward, Supervisor asked what do Board members want to use? PILOTs for Serta and Empire Merchants are locked in. Mortgage Tax has been holding due to lower rates and folks refinancing homes; Supervisor asked what the Board wanted to use for a property tax rate.

Ellie Alfeld asked regarding folk in foreclosure, the bank pays their taxes and, if they sit in Water or Sewer Districts, their usage fees. Councilman Norris asked regarding Court Fines, is this a 5 month total? Supervisor responded last year November and December dipped down. Councilman Norris asked to use higher expectation; Councilwoman Benway offered in 2011 there were cancellations for primaries and is unsure of their [nightly] income, Supervisor added that they recouped most of that and plugged in \$150,000. Supervisor asked does Board want to keep property tax flat to keep a number in there? PILOT flat? Yes on both.

State Aid: Councilman Norris suggests same, level. Mortgage tax was at a high in 2008, Councilman Norris said keep it, unsure whether housing market will make a huge swing in this year and Supervisor suggests using the 2011 number; \$55,000, suggests Councilman Meredith. If dog enumeration is done, there will be more expenses the first year; Councilman Norris suggests to raise dog license fee, other towns charge \$10-12/dog, Supervisor reminded that a dog census will have costs, Board can hope for a "wash" with a license increase; Building Permits are ahead due to the one \$5,000 fee but now have dropped off; use \$85,000, no \$80,000. Total revenues are projected about \$600,000.

For Expenditures, Personal Services: on track, average increase of 3% over last 5 years, does the Board wish to keep flat? \$289,000, added Supervisor. Professional Services varies due to number of lawsuits, services needed, and engineers, asked Ellie? No, special Sewer District would cover that cost for the Wastewater Treatment Plant; have not had to retain an engineer at the Town level, and in 2010 the Town Board did not have Town Attorney at each meeting so that cost dropped off. Councilman Norris recommends leaving at \$20,000 (level).

Departmental Non-Personal Services includes what departments need in supplies, postage and the newsletter; keep at \$34,000. Network printer comes out of building.

Centralized Services includes Building Contractual, Education, phone for satellite, traffic control signs, streetlighting for Highway and Town Hall, newsletter printing (3 online now). Keep at \$80,000, yes, in agreement. Ellie asked whether phone cost for satellite was shared with

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Coxsackie; no, any incoming or outgoing phone call is paid for by Town of New Baltimore, there is a fax machine, cell phones must be used in the parking lot, cannot be used in the basement offices. The renovations to Town Hall and to the basement were one-time occurrences and would have come out of the Building Fund. Councilwoman Benway asked Councilwoman Finke whether many had responded to offer of online newsletter; Councilwoman Finke has received 3 requests. Councilwoman Benway asked whether the Board would approve having newsletter only online, except by individual request to mail, if could save \$2000/year. Councilman Meredith believes it was only \$6000/year now; Highway Superintendent Jordan replaces 4 tires and the cost is more than the newsletter. Supervisor suggests \$80,000; all in agreement.

Programs includes Seniors \$2500, and this year \$1500 Summer Rec contractual, and Veterans \$700. Supervisor explained that the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) sends a yearly request that has been Town policy. Councilman Norris would like to increase Programs and restore funding to Youth Programs. Supervisor reminded that Summer Rec payroll came out of Personal Services, Programs includes only the Contractual portion; would it be necessary to return and change Personal Services. Councilman Meredith asked what else; answer: parks equipment, lawn mowing for Town Hall, some comes out of Highway, but this account pays for Kirk Trombley or Roger Wilson's mowing, and mulch for parks. Councilman Norris would like to restore Summer Rec; Supervisor explained this was the Contractual portion, and suggests increase to \$10,500.

Regarding Debt Service, there is no debt at the Town level.

For Employee Benefits, the Town took a greater deductible on health insurance, must pay back Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) if it takes too many 'hits', few more coming into retirement; go to \$150,000, Councilman Meredith thinks. Supervisor anticipates health insurance may see 10-20% increase, and will do what she can with HRA; adding that Workers' Compensation will rise; all agreed at \$140,000.

Contingency hasn't typically been used, Supervisor usually budgets something, asked \$5,000? Come back to this.

Transfer to Park Reserves was not done in 2011; another \$12,000, with no plan to replace parks equipment; leave at \$0.

Transfer to Highway: except for the one 2009 five-year bond ran out, Town Board put \$50,000 to the Highway, rather than commit new Town Board to debt. Supervisor explained that many towns, where the majority of the budget is the highway, keep more surplus in highway fund; once the Board puts surplus in the Highway it cannot return to the General Fund, so the Town has kept majority of surplus in General Fund, with the idea that it'll transfer it to the Highway if something were to happen.

Transfer to Highway Capital, Supervisor thinks \$0, or keep in \$10-15,000 fee; agreement.

Transfer to Building Fund: Supervisor said Board hasn't put any money lately into Building Fund, but there is balance of \$44-47,000 in this account. Councilman Norris thought for land swap and stairs, (land swap \$10-12,000); Supervisor figured that would come out of this year's budget and Highway Superintendent Jordan thought he would not take the full reserve transfer in 2012. Supervisor asked about any other building expenses; Councilman Norris reminds Board of the possibility of another office downstairs by moving the vault's air conditioning unit and hanging a newer and more efficient unit on the wall inside the vault. Supervisor said if they were to be expended in 2012, it might be better not to put it in Reserve. Regarding the stairs, Supervisor thinks of that as expenditures, could be taken from Reserve Fund or paid by budgeting. Councilman Norris asked for the question again; Supervisor reminded this is about the Reserve Fund and these are expenditures that the Board may want to make in 2013; might not make lots of sense to put in Reserve and then to spend right away. Reserve is for long-range

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planning, a building addition, or a catastrophic event, Town Board hasn't put anything in for many years; Councilman Norris thought \$5,000.

With the Board's input so far this evening, Supervisor said \$33,000 would be required from Unappropriated Fund Balance; \$32,000 was used in 2011. For 2012, \$90,000 of Fund Balance was budgeted and, if that was used, the Fund Balance would end the year with \$335,356. After carrying over to 2013, if \$33,000 was used, the year would end with Fund Balance of \$301,000.

Unrestricted or Unappropriated Fund Balance (which doesn't include the reserve funds) was 68% of 2011 Town Budget- a very safe number and more than NYS Comptroller's Office prefers to see (15-25%). If 2012 Town Budget goes as planned, Fund Balance would be reduced to 54%; if \$33,000 is used in 2013, it would be reduced to 47%. Councilman Norris asked what number was used for taxes; Supervisor kept it flat from 2012 and the actual amount, but Penalties fluctuate.

Councilman Norris asked where Penalties appear; Supervisor answered Other Revenue; \$8,000 for 2012 and now at \$7,900; that item is usually 'underbudgeted' a little; Taxes are guaranteed once the tax levy is set. Supervisor will work on projecting to 2013, 2014, 2015 with this computer file and, if this is the direction the Board wishes, she can project as far as 2016.

The Deficit appears as \$33,000; Councilman Norris asked if the Board wants to revisit Revenues. Supervisor asked to look at trends: Employee Benefits and Retirement are going up in the next 3-4 years. Councilman Norris suggests increasing 2%, Councilwoman Benway would rather see a \$10-20/year increase over a 10% increase, and save the 'rainy day money'. Most taxpayers can handle 1-2.5% but do not want to see 7%. Supervisor thought \$6,000 or 2%, and that brings Deficit to \$27,000, not as large a number, said Councilwoman Benway. Councilman Norris reminds that this is a projection to consider; if the water park comes into Town, all is thrown 'into a tizzy'.

Regarding Highway Fund, Councilman Norris thought increase by 2% also; Supervisor thinks keep PILOT and CHIPS flat, Interfund Transfers at \$70,000, use of Fund Balance and Reserve Fund.

Supervisor asked, under Expenditures, Personal Services, what was done for General Fund? Supervisor asked 1%? Councilman Norris said 1%. Town Clerk Brooks asked for 1% for General Fund; Supervisor said if increased salaries are projected for Highway, she would not want to leave out General Fund people; last five years have averaged 3%. Councilman Norris concurred.

Equipment- Supervisor wants to budget for purchases, unlike prior Town Boards. Councilman Norris asked what is being considered for replacement? Nothing is scheduled for replacement in 2013; Supervisor suggests leaving \$30,000 balance over a five-year period.

Equipment Contractual- if you don't buy equipment, this account replaces the hoses, rear ends, etc. of an aging fleet; over 5 years this has averaged 9%. Councilman Norris asked to raise \$105 figure by 9%? No, 5% per year.

Highway Improvements pays for road maintenance. Supervisor related a call from a person on a dirt road asking why the Town is not paving it. The Town has 11 miles of dirt roads; there is no plan to pave dirt roads, only to stone and oil them. Councilman Norris said the dirt road maintenance sometimes ends up costing more than paving. Ellie Alfeld reminds, if there were 1-2 houses on a dirt road and now there are 6 houses, they want more from their tax dollar. Supervisor reminds that they all pay the same amount in taxes and if we were going to follow that thought, to think of the number of houses. Ellie Alfeld suggests some of these dirt road residents have nothing, maybe set money aside and every 5 years take on one road. Councilman Norris reviewed 69.5 miles of paved roads in Town; repaving 7 miles per year has turned into 4 miles per year. Supervisor said Town has a Reserve fund for equipment, could set up Reserve Fund for Roads to accommodate those residents. Supervisor asked what to do at this point for

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Highway Expenditures: trend is 5% increase on average per year; Councilman Norris asked for dollars; answer: \$17,000. Councilman Norris asked for \$355,000.

Snow Removal- the kind of winter affects this budget item, one season in current year and one in following year. Councilman Norris thinks 2012 could end up less. Supervisor said average annual increase (gas, maintenance) is 13%, doesn't include personal services; suggests bump to \$80,000? Councilman Norris asked \$77,000. Councilwoman Benway said \$80,000, with \$48,000 left to expend in 2012.

Brush and Weeds is left with no increase or decrease.

Returning to General Fund, Supervisor increased Employee Benefits Personal Service, 18%, and Surplus became \$28,000. Councilman Norris asked whether that was with the Highway Reserve Fund for the Roads; no. Councilman Norris suggests opening that with \$5,000-20,000? Supervisor used \$20,000 for Capital Improvement for any road, would not have to be a dirt road, Councilman Norris added, as opposed to bonding over 5 years.

Supervisor thanked the Board for getting the long-range planning started, and **Councilman Meredith moved to adjourn the Special Meeting, seconded by Councilman Norris.** The adoption of the foregoing Resolution was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

**ROLL CALL VOTE: BENWAY-AYE FINKE-AYE MEREDITH-AYE  
NORRIS-AYE O'RORKE-AYE**

The Special Meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully,  
Janet A. Brooks  
Town Clerk