

**Town of Charlton  
Saratoga County**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**For 2016 Preliminary Budget**

**October 26, 2015  
7:00 PM**

The Public Hearing for the 2016 Budget of the Town of Charlton, Saratoga County, New York was held at the Charlton Town Hall and called to order by Supervisor Grattidge at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Councilman Gay, Councilman Grasso, Councilman Hodgkins, Supervisor Grattidge, Town Clerk Brenda Mills, Attorney Van Vranken.

Excused: Councilman Lippiello

Town Clerk Brenda Mills read the following Legal Notice and confirmed that it was published in the official newspaper, The Daily Gazette on Friday October, 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015:

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
ON PRELIMINARY BUDGET**

Town of Charlton  
Saratoga County, NY

**NOTICE** is hereby given that the preliminary budget of the Town of Charlton for the fiscal year beginning January 2016 has been filed in the office of Town Clerk, where it is available for inspection during business hours. Further notice is hereby given that the Town Board will meet and review said preliminary budget and hold a public hearing thereon at the Charlton Town Hall, 758 Charlton Rd, Charlton, NY at 7pm, on October 26th and that at such hearing any town resident may be heard in favor or against any item therein contained.

Pursuant to Section 108 of the Town Law, the proposed salaries of the following town officers are hereby specified as follows:

Town Supervisor \$10,000.00  
Town Councilman (4) \$4,800.00  
Town Clerk \$37,143.00  
Highway Superintendent \$55,437.00

BY THE ORDER OF THE TOWN BOARD

Brenda Mills, Town Clerk  
10/14/15

Supervisor Grattidge asked the Town Clerk to insert the following paragraph from the September 28, 2015 minutes, which is his budget announcement where he talked about what is in the budget and what is coming up in the budget, and the possibility that in 2017 there may be a Town tax. He stated that for the last 34 years there has been no Town tax. He said that since he is the person that is starting the discussion on a Town tax, he would like to get all of the information out for people to review.

Excerpt from 9/28/15 minutes

Supervisor Grattidge said he has given the Board a copy of the 2016 Tentative Budget. He said that the good news is that the General Fund spending is actually \$21,000 less for 2016 than 2015 partially because the interest payments and retirement contributions are reduced for next year, and one Constable position was eliminated. He has put money back in the budget for 2 newsletters, Bulk-Item Pick-Up, free tree distribution, and a couple other items. He kept the Town Board and Supervisor salaries the same as last year, as well as the Attorneys fees. He put in a 2% increase for the two ambulance corps, and for employee increases. He kept the charitable contributions that same as last year. The Highway budget is actually \$78,538.00 higher than last year. The main drivers of the increase are the request for more money for road construction, asking for additional purchases of equipment. Last year we bonded the big truck, and this year they are asking for replacement of the dual wheel one ton and the mower. Mr. Emerich may have been able to get a mower from Government surplus, which may save some money. He added in money for the Cornell Road Review worker for a 3-month position. Part of the bad news is the Town will need to use money from Fund Balance, since the forecast from the County Treasurer is that revenue is going to be flat next year. This year we used \$99,000 from General Fund Balance and next year we will need to use \$210,000. This year we used \$59,000 for Highway and next year he is proposing using \$46,000. The \$46,000 is based on the fact that we did not have to start bonding the truck until next year, so the money that was set aside for bonding this year, will go into Fund balance for next year. The Bookkeeper's records are showing around \$600,000 in Fund Balance. Using \$210,000 is a big chunk. He is preparing people for the 2017 Budget, because we will not be able to use that amount of Fund Balance. We can continue with the no Town tax for this year. Unless an unexpected source of revenue comes in, next year we may have to look for another source of revenue instead of using the Fund Balance for the Highway Fund. Supervisor Grattidge set up a Budget Workshop for Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup> for Town Departments, Galway Library, Galway Ambulance and other outside agencies to come in and talk to the Board. He said that if three or more Board members settle on a number, that will be the number they go with.

Supervisor Grattidge asked that the article that was written by Steve Williams and published in the Gazette last week be entered into the minutes. Supervisor Grattidge said that the article resulted from a conversation that he had with Steve Williams after the Tentative budget had been proposed.

(see next page)

# The Daily Gazette

Sunday, October 18, 2015

<http://www.dailygazette.com/>  
See HTML Version of article

## 2016 could be Charlton's last year with no town tax

By Stephen Williams



A cupola is installed on the new Charlton Town Hall during construction in 2009. The town said paying for a lawsuit involving the Town Hall has put pressure on the town's finances.

free trees are given to residents willing to plant them.

**CHARLTON** — The town of Charlton has been tax-free for more than three decades, but Town Supervisor Alan R. Grattidge is warning that the streak could end in 2017.

Grattidge has proposed a tentative 2016 town budget that will require no property tax for the 34th consecutive year, but he said the combination of drawing down surplus funds to balance the budget and paying off a 2013 lawsuit settlement could mean there will have to be a tax — probably a highway tax — in 2017.

"I'm starting to prepare the people for next year," Grattidge said Friday.

The proposed 2016 budget totals just under \$2 million, \$60,000 more than this year's. Grattidge said general fund spending would actually go down by \$15,000, but the Highway Department would be allocated \$78,000 more, to pay for additional paving work and for equipment purchases. In the general fund, Grattidge said a part-time town constable position was eliminated, but money was added into the budget for a bulk-item roadside pickup, which wasn't done this year, and for a popular program in which

"They are both popular programs, and we want to bring them both back," Grattidge said.

The town will also return to printing and mailing a twice-a-year newsletter at a cost of about \$2,500, rather than relying on electronic communication to reach all residents, as it did this year after cutting the newsletter funding.

Balancing the 2016 budget without a property tax, Grattidge said, will require the town to draw \$210,000 from a \$600,000 fund balance — a level of draw-down Grattidge said isn't sustainable. "The squeeze we have is between the lawsuit payments and the diminishing surplus," Grattidge said.

The town is paying \$269,000 each year through 2019 for the lawsuit settlement. Under an agreement reached after a state Supreme Court trial jury reached a verdict against the town, Charlton paid Schmidt & Schmidt Construction — the original contractor for the problem-plagued Town Hall construction project — for \$1.17 million in damages, borrowing the money over five years.

Grattidge said any new property tax in 2017 will probably be less than \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Despite the possibility of a tax, the supervisor cautioned against cutting highway spending too far in an effort to prevent a tax.

"With 47 miles of town road, you have to be able to keep up [with repaving and other maintenance]," he said. "You can skip a year, but that only contributes to what you'll have to do later."

Charlton was among about a half-dozen Saratoga County towns that eliminated its property taxes after a county sales tax was established in 1982, creating a revenue stream split by the county and its municipalities. The county treasurer is predicting that local revenue from the sales tax will not increase from this year to next.

Reach Gazette reporter Stephen Williams at 885-6705, [swilliams@dailygazette.net](mailto:swilliams@dailygazette.net) or @gazettesteve on Twitter.

Supervisor Grattidge read the following e-mail and response from resident David Lis regarding the article that was in the Gazette regarding a possible Town Tax for 2017. The Supervisor requested that the e-mails be entered in the minutes. The Supervisor said that the construction lawsuit is definitely drawing a large amount out of the General Fund. The Highway Department costs are being driven by the cost of equipment and the cost of maintaining 47 miles of Town roads. He stated that the Town is contemplating using the Cornell Road software program next year, where the roads will be evaluated and information would be available of the conditions of all of the roads. He stated that Councilmen Hodgkins and Grasso have done a terrific job over the past 2 years inventorying the Highway equipment and planning out capital expenditure for replacement of equipment. They came up with a figure of \$80,000 to \$90,000 per year that the Town should be committing for equipment. This year we spent \$65,000, but we did bond a truck last year with a \$35,000 payment, so we are around \$100,000 this year. As large pieces need to be replaced, they will probably have to be bonded.

Re: New town tax for 2017

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**Re: New town tax for 2017**

David J. Lis [djlfox@aol.com]

Sent: Friday, October 23, 2015 12:39 PM

To: Supervisor

This answers my question . But why do we the tax payer have to pay for the contractors screw up. A town tax to pay for 47 miles of road in the town is ? What did you use before . Roads in my area are never kept up. We have a dirt road in the area that has never been done. Again I will remember this in the future thank you for your time.

Sent from my iPhone

> On Oct 21, 2015, at 8:02 AM, Supervisor <supervisor@townofcharlton.org> wrote:

>

> Dear Mr. Lis,

>

> I recieved your first email on this subject, the contractor was terminated after 14 months on the job with no roof on the building. The jury found that he breached the contract but did not award the Town any damages. The jury then said that the Town's Architect hindered the contractors ability to complete the job which in my opinion was not true, and they awarded him 900K. There is no insurance out there to cover this type of loss. Those are the facts. The need for a Tax next year is driven more by the costs of maintaining 47 miles of roads.

> I hope this information helps you.

>

> Thank you,

>

> Alan Grattidge

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> From: David J. Lis [djlfox@aol.com]

> Sent: Wednesday, October 21, 2015 7:55 AM

> To: Supervisor

> Subject: New town tax for 2017

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> After an article in the "Gazette" on 10/19/15 informing us tax payers of a possible tax levy in 2017 for the law sue with the contractor who build the present town hall is totally in called for . You are asking for us to pay for your screw up!!! Didn't the town have insurance to cover this mistake by you. Well, election is coming and I will not forget this election year. Maybe it is time for change. Thank you. David J Lis.

>

> Sent from my iPhone

**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**

No one spoke. No written comments were received by the Clerk.

**RESOLUTION #171**

**Adjournment of Public Hearing**

Motion by Councilman Gay

Seconded by Councilman Hodgkins

Motion was made to adjourn the Public Hearing.

Vote: All Ayes, No Nays, CARRIED.

The Public Hearing adjourned at: 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Mills  
Town Clerk