

VILLAGE OF HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON, NEW YORK
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PUBLIC HEARING NO. 2
APRIL 15, 2008

A Public Hearing was held by the Board of Trustees on Tuesday, April 15, 2008 at 8:25 p.m. in the Meeting Room, Municipal Building, 7 Maple Avenue.

PRESENT: Mayor Wm. Lee Kinnally, Jr., Trustee Peter Swiderski, Trustee Jeremiah Quinlan, Trustee Diggitt McLaughlin, Trustee Danielle Goodman, Village Manager Francis A. Frobel, Village Attorney Marianne Stecich, and Village Clerk Susan Maggiotto.

CITIZENS: Sixty (60).

Mayor Kinnally declared the Board in session for the purpose of conducting a Public Hearing in accordance with the legal notice that appeared in the March 28, 2008 issue of *The Rivertowns Enterprise* to consider the Proposed Budget for the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson, New York for the fiscal year beginning June 1, 2008 and ending on May 31, 2009.

Mayor Kinnally: I have asked the Manager if he would give a brief overview of the budget, and then we will open it up for public comment.

Village Manager Frobel: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I hope by this time everyone has had an opportunity to look over the budget. It has appeared on the Village Website for the last 30 days. I have also included my message, which is a narrative with accompanies the budget, which I hope some of you have had an opportunity to look over.

The budget as it now rests totals \$12,378,688. If unadjusted by the Board of Trustees after hearing your comments this evening, it would require a tax increase of 6.6%, raising the rate to \$207.40 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Overall, the budget requires an increase of \$434,972. This is a modest 3.3% in actual operations and expenditures.

Our assessed values have increased slightly, less than 1%. Other significant changes include an expectation that revenues generated from state and county aid including the mortgage tax will remain level-funded. Generally, our revenues are projected to be flat. We are not anticipating increase. Our interest earnings and dependence on surplus are recommended, as well, to decline.

Like most of you, we are being confronted with rising expectations of expenses in our utilities, energy that we are paying for our electricity, motor fuel, and other items that we use in providing services. The budget is increasing more than we would have liked. The Board has held a series of work sessions so far and have heard from the department heads. I fully expect there will be some changes to this budget before it is adopted at the end of this month.

Mayor Kinnally: This being a public hearing, anyone wishing to speak either in favor of, or in opposition to, the budget please come forward, give your name and address for the record, and address all comments to the dais.

Elizabeth Felber, 415 Farragut Avenue: I apologize because I came in in the middle of your presentation, Fran, but I did watch last week's meeting. I would urge you to find the political will, and the way, to fully fund the Comprehensive Plan. The people on the Comprehensive Plan Committee have been herculean in their efforts so far. They began meeting in October. They have not asked for a dime in the six months they have been working. They have been working more than twice a week. They have twice monthly meetings. In addition to that, they have broken up into groups, they are doing their own research, they are meeting with committees, and they are interviewing employees. They have elicited the volunteer work of Hunter College graduate students, who have done a lot of the legwork. My understanding is, because we are a Greenway community, they are going to save money by having somebody from Greenway doing the visioning workshop.

All of these efforts on their part would have cost the Village money. I know, Mayor Kinnally, you said the pain has to be spread. But I would respectfully suggest that they have already taken the pain that way. These are all people that work. They are doing this as volunteers. They are not being paid to do this. They have spoken to the people that did the comprehensive plan for Dobbs Ferry, Nyack, and Tarrytown. My understanding is, the minimum that it costs to do a plan is \$60,000 to write it. And if you really want a creative plan, with lot of input from the community, they suggested \$75,000. I also understand that at least 300 people have responded to the survey so far on-line, and I think it has only been about a week. Kathy Sullivan, the chair of the committee, said that about four or five people have come up to her and said when can we get started on this, what is the next step.

There is a momentum going, and if you only give them \$15,000 to match the \$15,000 grant, this momentum is going to die. This affects the entire community, and I respectfully request that you find a way to fund it.

Jim Metzger, 427 Warburton Avenue: I am here tonight as a member of the Comprehensive Plan Committee. Eleven of us volunteered to help out Hastings, and we do that because we want to help the community and for no other reason. But the fact is, we need money to make this plan happen. The importance of this plan has been debated before this Board for many years. Fortunately, Marge Apel saw fit to bring it up before the Board. This current Board voted on it. We are moving forward, we are spending an incredible number of hours, and I will tell you it is a labor of love. I found out more things about Hastings in the last three months than I have living here for nine years.

There are incredible people out there. They want to do things for the Village. But unless we have a plan to bring all of this information together, we have people floating out there. They do things, and do not know how to get in touch with other people that are doing things. This plan can make that happen, but we need money to do that. So I am asking you to improve the health of the Village so we do not continue as we did in the past taking one item at a time, but looking to the future and trying to tie all the loose ends together. Please try and find a way to make this happen.

Elisa Zazzara, 68 Southside Avenue: To find money in the budget, and I have looked it over as well as I can, I was surprised to find out that the amount of garbage that we have tipped this year as opposed to last year remains the same. We can see a savings in that. Sustainable Hastings has started working with the DPW. We had a compost bin sale and we got 40 Hastings residents to possibly start composting. Looking at the numbers that I understand of kitchen scraps and compostable materials that people throw out, it is about a third or a quarter of our waste. Pollyanna speaking, if everyone in Hastings composts, that is 1,500 tons of trash we do not tip at \$24 a ton. Do the math. It is also the manpower and the trucks.

Recycling can be improved. Again, all the work that Sustainable Hastings can do to help promote that and get that going, I hope that will work. I was dismayed a couple of weeks ago to see, at 8:30, on Warburton Avenue our street sweeper idling, waiting for the 9 o'clock hour to start sweeping the streets. I have seen other municipal cars. I know that you have sent out memos to watch our idling and savings of fuel. But I have seen it run rampant that we are wasting fuels. There is another way to save some money. As Sustainable Hastings, as Elisa Zazzara, I am happy to help do that so we can get some money for the Comprehensive Plan and other good things to fund in the Village. Thanks.

Cyndy Travis, 427 Warburton Avenue: This is about the cars that are given to the head of the Parks Department and the Building Inspector. I am wondering why, for a two-mile square village, they need their own cars to do two miles of driving.

Village Manager Frobel: They use it as part of their responsibilities. They are on-call to respond to calls on the weekend or in the evening, and they use the cars to travel from spot to spot in the Village.

Ms. Travis: I know, but they do not own cars of their own?

Village Manager Frobel: Sure they do, of course.

Ms. Travis: I am confused about why they need a special car just to go within the confines of the Village. It seems like a very large cost to give them another car to drive to be on-call. They cannot drive their own car?

Village Manager Frobels: I am looking into the policy right now. It is not uncommon for the municipality to provide a car for those particular department heads in the carrying out of their responsibilities, but I am looking at that policy.

Ms. Travis: Also, there is this Smart Car that is very tiny and very highly gas efficient. If one of them had to have it for whatever particular reason, I am not sure why we have to have bigger cars. My personal opinion is, I do not know if they really need to have a special car when they own one.

Village Manager Frobels: We are looking at the policy. The cars they use are the hand-me-downs from the police department, which is why they are the larger cars. But we are looking to change the cars to a smaller, more fuel-efficient car. We are looking at the policy in its entirety.

Rebecca Strutton, 2 Ridgedell Avenue: I am a member of the CTC, and have come tonight to show my support for a Village budget that incorporates sufficient funds to retain a consultant to help draft the Comprehensive Plan the Board of Trustees, approved last year. I do not think I need to go into all the reasons why a comprehensive plan is a good idea. Clearly you know what all those reasons are, or otherwise you wouldn't have approved the resolution. We ask you to fund our committee to the extent necessary to empower us to carry out your mandate. Thank you.

Ellen Hendrickx, 136 Circle Drive: I am also a member of the Comprehensive Plan Committee. I would like to suggest that we make some concerted effort to get more grants so the onus is not on the Village only. If Angie Witkowski could research other opportunities, the John Denehy from the Greenway Compact said that they would be a resource for finding other grants as well. So if Angie's responsibilities are such that she cannot manage that, if the Board could appoint someone to perhaps do that, or if there is some way of finding someone in the community who would volunteer to do that, that would be really wonderful. Thank you.

Trustee McLaughlin: Mayor, a resident asked me to read something into the record. I would like to do that.

Mayor Kinnally: Under the rules we adopted last week, we do not read them. We will make that part of the record.

Trustee McLaughlin: May I say that this person sent the letter, and what it is in favor of?

Mayor Kinnally: Oh, sure.

Trustee McLaughlin: The letter is from Linda Merchant, 35 Marion Avenue. She is a member of the Comprehensive Plan Committee, and speaks in favor of our finding the funds to fund the work of the Comprehensive Plan Committee completely.

Mayor Kinnally: And that will be made part of the record.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Kinnally asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing.

CLOSE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On MOTION of Trustee McLaughlin, SECONDED by Trustee Swiderski with a voice vote of all in favor, Mayor Kinnally closed the Public Hearing at 8:35 p.m.