

MEETING HELD APRIL 11, 2011

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Port Chester, New York, was held on Monday, April 11, 2011 at 6:00 P.M., in the Village Senior/Community Center, at 220 Grace Church Street, Port Chester, New York, with Mayor Dennis Pilla presiding.

Present in addition to Mayor Pilla, were Trustees Bart Didden, John Branca and Luis Marino

It should be noted that Trustee Joseph Kenner arrived at 6:13 p.m. and Trustees Daniel Brakewood and Saverio Terenzi were absent.

Also present were Village Clerk, Joan Mancuso; Village Manager, Christopher Russo; Village Treasurer, Leonie Douglas; Director of Code Enforcement, Christopher Steers and Assistant to the Village Manager, Elisa Sciarabba.

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On motion of Trustee Didden, seconded by Trustee Marino, the meeting was declared open at 6:12 p.m.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Trustees Didden, Branca, Marino and Mayor Pilla

NOES: None

ABSENT: Trustees Brakewood, Terenzi and Kenner

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The Board held a budget work session on the Garage and Department of Public Works Budgets with the Acting General Foreman, Rocco Morabito and his staff including mechanics Orlando Hernandez and Derrick Bilniski, street sweeper Louis Ferretti, Jr. and sanitation man Anthony Pizzerallo.

Mayor Pilla noted with amazement on what the Public Works does on such a limited staff and budget. He asked about the expenditures cost regarding salt for this winter season.

Leonie Douglas, the Village Treasurer said that the overall budget regarding snow removal will be between \$62,000 and \$63,000 over budget for this fiscal year. She spoke about the salt expense that was included in this total.

Rocco Morabito, the General Foreman told the Board that the Garage was able to hire a new mechanic that can do transmission work which provides the Village savings of doing this work in house instead of purchasing rebuilt transmissions.

Christopher Russo, the Village Manager spoke about the personnel changes that were made in the Public Works Department noting that one change was eliminating the Garage Foreman position which was the highest paid position. He said that other in-house repairs that are being done beside the transmission work are body work on vehicle accidents which is saving money also. Mr. Morabito stated that we still outsource the painting aspects for this repair work.

Mayor Pilla asked if we did not do this work in house what would be the costs for these repairs.

Mr. Russo said that the cost would be much higher if done through outside sources. He also spoke about the timely repairs of the garage which requires off-hours repairs to equipment especially during difficult winter seasons.

Mr. Bilniski told the Board that most municipalities replace police cars every three years but we are maintaining these vehicles that they are being used for about seven years.

Trustee Branca asked about the increase for the fuel costs and is that because of the anticipated higher cost for fuel.

Mr. Morabito said that is correct and spoke about costs of current fuel deliveries.

There was a brief discussion regarding tire replacement and other ways to have longer life of tires.

The Mayor said that it is good when we can extend the life of vehicles and tires but is concerned when it gets to a point of putting too much money into vehicles. He asked if the Garage could provide input when the costs may exceed retaining such vehicles.

Trustee Branca also asked about insurance recovery when our vehicles are in accidents that are not our fault.

Mayor Pilla said that he would like to know how we can have better oversight of vehicles regarding their wear and tear / accidents and repairs.

Mr. Russo said that we go through a insurance recovery process in the cases that Trustee Branca spoke about and concerning the Mayor's questions that there was a program in place regarding police vehicles which needs to be reinforced with additional training.

Mr. Morabito spoke about what should be done on a routine inspection of police vehicles.

Trustee Didden said that he does not think the recommended fuel cost is enough for this budget. He asked if in the proposed budget numbers that have been provided for these departments have reduction been included.

Mr. Russo said not at this time that they can look it over and there maybe additional savings.

Trustee Branca asked about the building repairs line and what are we looking at for the annual amounts.

Mr. Russo said that this budget roughly has \$3,600 less in this line than from the last fiscal year and inquired from Rocco Morabito, the Acting General Foreman what items usually get repaired.

Mr. Morabito explained what type of building equipment is repaired including heaters and a certain type of heater to be used regarding vehicles.

Mr. Russo noted that there are vehicles and equipment that are being stored in DPW garages that are not heated and the type of heating equipment that Mr. Morabito spoke about would be used in these storage garages.

Trustee Marino said that the garage has done a great job with all of their duties and functions with the staff that they have.

Trustee Didden asked if the garage has a portable diesel tank noting how they had to refuel fire apparatus at the fire on Midland Avenue last month.

Mr. Morabito said that they are making one up now.

Trustee Branca also commended the DPW and Garage especially during this last winter noting that they have been doing so much with so little.

Mr. Russo reviewed the following budget items; street maintenance and snow removal which are being kept the same and street lighting which has increased due to electrical cost from the State going up which Ms. Douglas confirmed.

Mayor Pilla asked about street cleaning and the downtown area.

Mr. Morabito said that a small riding vacuum machine is being used in some areas which allows cleaning into smaller areas and the regular sweeper which is out seven days a week.

The Mayor brought up the consideration for a business improvement district for the downtown in relationship to the Public Works Department functions including the street sweeping.

Mr. Russo spoke about what they are doing toward that goal.

Mayor Pilla said that we need to be proactive on this subject.

Trustee Didden asked if we know if the G&S properties would be included in the business improvement district.

The Mayor said that G&S is positive toward this district.

Dolph Rotfeld, the Village Consulting Engineer told the Board that street sweeping is critical if you are to have a business improvement district.

Trustee Branca asked for an explanation regarding the contract line under street administration budget. He said that there was never funding in that line and now there is \$100,000.00

Mr. Russo said that is the line for the General Foreman and support staff person but then conferred with the Village Treasurer that this may be a saving.

Mr. Morabito spoke about catch basin cleaning program and there was a brief discussion on this topic which may require additional personnel and repairs to the catch basins.

Mr. Russo spoke about the sanitation department personnel noting that there were some retirements and employees that had left that were filled by part-timers but that we had to hire full time personnel because of the need for drivers.

The Mayor asked about the head count from last year to this year.

Mr. Russo spoke about the head count noting that there were senior personnel that retired with two of these retirements at higher salary levels and the filling of two positions in sanitation which were at entry level salaries.

Mayor Pilla asked if the transfer station was still in the budget.

Mr. Russo said that it is and that after the budget process we will need to get back to the DPW study noting that there is money regarding taking in the green waste but need to further weigh changes of bulk and recycling collections.

Mr. Morabito said that the department requires an employee that is a mason.

Mr. Russo said that position is still in the budget.

Trustee Didden asked what would happen if we adjusted the Wednesday curbside bulk pickup. He said that Yorktown has four bulk pickups per year and if residents need additional pickups it can be arranged by appointment at a fee of \$25.00 per pickup.

Mr. Russo spoke about providing for each month three Wednesday bulk pickups and one Wednesday for metal pickup instead of sending out personnel and truck weekly to pickup separately.

The Mayor asked if we got out of the bulk trash pickup all together what would the savings be.

Mr. Russo said that if you eliminate that service you would need more code enforcement personnel. He further explained the circumstances regarding removing this service and how to enforce it. Mr. Russo said that code enforcement is already making an impact on the abuse of the bulk pickup with the reduction of the number of containers that are being filled at the yard.

The Board discussed further with Mr. Russo and the DPW staff regarding these services. There was also a brief discussion about changing the weekly recycling from both paper and glass/plastic to one week for paper and the other week for glass/plastic.

Trustee Didden said that there needs to be a formula regarding bulk pickup and recycling on how we can do it better with a different approach with user fees.

There was further discussion on this topic.

Louis Ferretti, Jr., said that the violations are making an impact on the abusive. He said that if you only have a quarterly pickup it would take the department a week to pick everything up.

Trustee Didden said that it could be done by sections in the Village.

Mayor Pilla said that he has gotten complaints that the fee for dumping at the yard of over two hundred pounds is too high.

There was a discussion on this topic and staff said that the fees should not be reduced noting that outside dumping locations charge a much higher fee.

The Mayor and Board thanked Mr. Morabito and his staff for their input during this work session for the Garage and Department of Public Works.

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The Board then held a work session with the Village Engineering Consultant Dolph Rotfeld regarding engineering, streets, sidewalks and sewers.

Mr. Rotfeld informed the Board that he is putting together the requisitions regarding the grant funding for all the work done on the EPA sewer project.

Mr. Russo told the Board that Ms. Douglas will be providing a proposed 5 year Capital Project for their consideration.

The Board discussed with Mr. Russo and Mr. Rotfeld Phase II of the Sidewalk Betterment Program. Mr. Russo said that the sidewalk work for this project has been completed and that his office has been provided from Mr. Rotfeld with the listing of the properties and costs for this phase of the project. He said that this information is being reviewed and that once that is complete will need to set a public hearing on the

assessments for the work and when the assessments are adopted the Finance Office will bill the property owners.

Mr. Russo said that the Board has for the last three years or so been providing for this 50/50 Sidewalk Betterment Program and that he would recommend taking a year off regarding sidewalks. He said that there is \$100,000 in the budget for minor sidewalk repairs.

The Board discussed with Mr. Rotfeld the paving contract, the streets being done and capital budget regarding street paving.

Trustee Didden asked if the engineering line of \$75,000 under contractual is that the retainer for Rotfeld Engineering.

Mr. Rotfeld explained the process of his firm's services and that they are also paid through escrow accounts on projects.

The Mayor and Board thanked Mr. Rotfeld for his input during this budget work session.

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The Board then met with Christopher Steers, the Director of Code Enforcement regarding the Code Enforcement Department.

Mayor Pilla asked Mr. Steers about the consideration of a surcharge and if a surcharge could be done regarding code enforcement.

Mr. Steers said that the Village Attorney is researching if a surcharge would be an impediment to the process. He explained how a surcharge could be attached to violations as a court surcharge if possible.

The Mayor asked if this could be part of this budget.

Mr. Steers and Mr. Russo spoke on this issue noting that at this time it would not be possible to include revenue based on a surcharge in this budget.

Mayor Pilla asked Mr. Steers what is the breakdown of the personnel for the Code Enforcement office now.

Mr. Steers explained that the Code Enforcement Department has the following personnel, himself as the Director, one code enforcement inspector, two fire inspectors, two part-time inspectors, one immediate clerk full-time and one administrative intern which is full-time for one year.

The Mayor asked about the revenue side for this department commenting about the expenditure side versus of the revenue.

Mr. Steers spoke about the current revenue regarding the fire safety inspection program and code enforcement and that there could be additional potential revenue streams.

Mayor Pilla asked if Mr. Steers has the necessary staff and technology for his department.

Mr. Steers said yes we have the technology with the Muncity system but there are constraints because of all of the necessary data that needs to be input into this system. He said that records since the beginning of this year have been put into this system.

Trustee Marino asked Mr. Steers about the amount of funds that are being used in the overtime line for this department.

Mr. Steers explained the use of overtime.

Mr. Russo noted that they are looking to use recording secretaries not employees for the Planning, Zoning Board and Architectural Board of Review and would pay for these services from contractual.

Trustee Didden said that he would like for this department to have another part-time code enforcement officer and asked Mr. Steers if two clerks could handle the work load.

Mr. Steers said that he would ask for a part-time clerk instead of a part-time inspector stating that the additional clerk would help with the paperwork and the inspectors would be out more in the field. He said that the cost for a part-time clerk could be between \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Mayor Pilla said then we need to get the surcharge.

Mr. Steers spoke about additional violations that would increase building permits fees.

Trustee Didden spoke about zoning violations and the fines regarding this subject. There was a brief discussion on this topic.

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The Board then met with Mr. Steers and Mr. Russo regarding the Building Department budget.

Mr. Steers said that this budget is streamline.

The Board discussed the personnel services for this department and where payments are being paid part-time and contractual.

Mayor Pilla noted that the Code and Building lines are over \$700,000 and the revenue is only a 1/3. He asked how could we increase the revenue for these departments.

Mr. Steers said that all the fees for construction costs are being reviewed by the Building Inspector and not the clerks because he knows what the cost would be on projects and not just the applicant giving a lower cost. He said that typically recovers 50% or more in fees with this process.

Trustee Didden spoke about the building fees collected this year regarding new development which was quite an increase.

Mayor Pilla said that he wants further information regarding the prosecutorial process regarding these departments.

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The Board then met with Mr. Russo and Mr. Steers regarding the budget for Planning.

Mr. Steers said that we are in transition regarding the planning items but have a listing of projects that he provided to the Board.

The Board inquired on some of these projects and a brief discussion was held with Mr. Steers on these matters. Mr. Steers asked the Board if a listing similar to this would be of value to the Board. The Board agreed that it would be beneficial.

Mayor Pilla asked as to the strategy regarding a full-time planner and/or planning firm.

Mr. Russo spoke about the process for a planner that had Industrial Development Agency (IDA) experience along with planning experience. He advised the Board on the

proposals that were received and whether the Village's IDA is on board. There was a brief discussion on this subject.

The Mayor asked about the budget for this position.

Ms. Douglas said that the funding for this position also includes funding from escrow accounts.

There was further discussion between Mr. Russo and Mayor Pilla regarding funding and cost recovery.

Trustee Didden questioned the cost recovery of the process for planning services stating that it takes several meetings before even an application may be submitted.

Mr. Russo said that they are looking toward an initial free first meeting then an escrow fee upfront to continue the planning process.

Mr. Steers said that they are doing the same for the building process.

Mr. Russo said that approvals should be contingent upon all payments received before.

Mr. Steers spoke about the input process into the Municipality program.

The Mayor asked Mr. Steers his expectations regarding code, building and planning.

Mr. Steers said that he is looking at all of the procedures for these departments up front. There was a further discussion about the strategic outlook for all these departments.

Trustee Didden asked about a particular planning application regarding the use for a cabaret.

Mr. Steers said that if this location has not had that type of use for over a year they have lost the right for that use and would have to go before the Zoning Board.

Trustee Didden said that he wants to make sure that cabaret application law does not get trap with a property right.

The Mayor and Board thanked Mr. Steers for his input regarding the Code Enforcement Department, the Building Department and Planning.

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Mayor Pilla asked if anyone from the audience would like to address the Board. He recognized Gene Ceccarelli.

Mr. Ceccarelli asked about the additional overtime for the Garage for this year.

Mr. Russo explained the use of the overtime for this department noting that personnel from the Garage needs to be called out for repairs to mechanical systems.

The Mayor recognized Goldie Solomon.

Ms. Solomon said that we need to get off of the taxpayers backs. She said that the County should get money from other communities to us for the sewer treatment plant that is in our Village.

Mayor Pilla recognized Mr. Ceccarelli again.

Ms. Ceccarelli said that he was unable to attend last week's budget sessions and saw a newspaper article regarding reduction in the Police and Fire Departments. He said that he is concerned with this consideration.

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Apr. 11, '11

On motion of Trustee Branca, seconded by Trustee Marino, the meeting was declared closed at 8:06 p.m.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Trustees Didden, Branca, Marino, Kenner and Mayor Pilla

NOES: None

ABSENT: Trustees Brakewood and Terenzi

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan Mancuso', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Joan Mancuso
Village Clerk