

November 10, 2011

A special meeting of the Town Board of Vernon was held at 6:00 p.m. on the above date at the Town Office Building to consider enactment of a Local Law to override the tax levy limit established in General Municipal Law paragraph 3-c, subdivision 5. Council members present were: Myron Thurston, Supervisor; Gene Bennati, Sandy Williams, Mick McDonough and Randy Watson. Also present: Howard Regner, Oneida County Legislator District 2 Elect; Kenneth Smith and Garold Vanderwerken. Attorney Rossi was absent. The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Thurston at 6:00 p.m. at which time the Town Clerk read the Notice of Public Hearing dated October 10, 2011, which is attached to the minutes. Supervisor Thurston explained the reasons for considering the increase of more than the 2%. The 2012 budget has been cut \$160,550 across the Board. Our lost revenue for 2012 is \$150,000 of VLT money (which is only used to lower taxes) and the sales tax is estimated at \$190,000 a quarter which is a \$10,000 increase because it averaged \$15,000 per quarter more in 2011. There were no raises given to anyone and he decreased his pay \$500. There was a \$30,000 increase put in for fuel and the NYS Retirement was increased \$30,000 from 2011. The tax levy will be \$319,032, which is an increase of \$121,964. This will be a 40 cent increase from last year. The total tax rate will be about \$1 per \$1000. Our sales tax pays our fire tax. We have enough in our B fund reserve for all the fire contracts, plus about \$150,000 extra for any emergency. We also have about a \$70,000 surplus in our A fund because we have to estimate revenues such as mortgage tax, which fluctuates, plus the reduction in interest rates has made a difference. Also, he firmly believes that today's taxpayers should pay today's bills. We shouldn't have huge fund balances and we shouldn't have any outstanding bills. The Board and all the employees are doing a very good job to keep expenses down. Also, none of our employees have health insurance except the highway department and highway superintendent. Kenneth Smith asked how many employees we have in our highway department because they do a very good job and Supervisor Thurston replied that we have eight highway employees plus the superintendent. Smith then said that he has talked to other people and they question why the Town spent tax dollars on the walkway and the pavilion. Bennati replied that no tax dollars were spent on the Veterans' Memorial, the walkway or the pavilion because we received donations to cover the Veterans' Memorial and grant money to cover the walkway and the pavilion. Smith also asked how much land was taken off the tax rolls that the Oneida Indians own and Supervisor Thurston replied that none of the land is taken off the tax rolls, but we get our tax money first and the County subsidizes the rest of it (which means that it's added to our County tax bill amount). There were no other questions. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

A special meeting of the Town Board of Vernon was held at 6:30 p.m. on the above date at the Town Office Building for the purpose of a public hearing for the year 2012 fire contracts. Council members present were: Myron Thurston, Supervisor; Gene Bennati, Sandy Williams, Mick McDonough and Randy Watson. Also present: Art Freemire, Highway Superintendent; Howard Regner, Oneida County Legislator District 2 Elect; Kenneth Smith and Garold Vanderwerken. Attorney Rossi was absent. The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Thurston at 6:15 p.m. at which time the Town Clerk read the Notice of Public Hearing dated October 18, 2011, which is attached to the minutes. The amount for Oneida Castle is \$59,200, Sherrill-Kenwood is \$27,400, Vernon is \$74,100 and Vernon Center is \$74,800. Supervisor Thurston mentioned that the fire contract amounts are not increased at all from last year. There were no questions. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

A special meeting of the Town Board of Vernon was held at 6:45 p.m. on the above date at the Town Office Building for the purpose of a public hearing for the 2012 fiscal budget beginning January 1, 2012. Council members present were: Myron Thurston, Supervisor; Gene Bennati, Sandy Williams, Mick McDonough and Randy Watson. Also present: Art Freemire, Highway Superintendent; Howard Regner, Oneida County Legislator District 2 Elect; Kenneth Smith, Garold Vanderwerken, Norman Laube, ZBA Chairman and Roger Eaton. Attorney Rossi was absent. The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Thurston at 6:45 p.m. at which time the Town Clerk read the Notice of Public Hearing Upon Preliminary Budget dated October 18, 2011, which is attached to the minutes. Supervisor Thurston stated that there were no raises given to anyone and he took a \$500 decrease. We researched the library programs in Vernon and Sherrill and decided to reduce the Vernon Library by \$5000 and gave \$2000 of it to the Sherrill Library because they have many programs and many more people go to that library. Also, our building costs have decreased due to our energy efficient highway garage and the solar panels on the Town office building. Bennati mentioned that these solar panels only need ambient light, not sunlight. Kenneth Smith asked where the money came from for the solar panels and Supervisor Thurston replied that about \$135,000 from NYSERDA, \$10,000 from USDA, \$3000 from the

County and \$15,000 from the Town's taxpayers, so it will pay for itself in about 3 years. There were no other questions. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Town Board of Vernon was held at 7:00 p.m. on the above date at the Town Office Building with all Council members present. Also present: Art Freemire, Highway Superintendent; Howard Regner, Oneida County Legislator District 2 Elect; Kenneth Smith, Garold Vanderwerken, Norman Laube, ZBA Chairman, Mike Kaiser of PAC 99, Roger Eaton, Michele Peavey, Sarah Peavey, John Douglas Sr., Reg Webster, Howard Rebeck, Ted Zabele, Judy Zabele, Lisa Nelson, Bruce Nelson, John Peters and Gerald Seymour, Village of Vernon Mayor. Attorney Rossi was absent.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, there was a moment of silence. The meeting was then called to order by Supervisor Thurston at 7:00 p.m.

Supervisor Thurston stated that he knew the minutes from the October 10, 2011 meeting had been received by Council and asked if there were any additions or corrections. There being none, a motion to approve the minutes as written was made by McDonough, seconded by Bennati. No discussion. Ayes 4. Nays 0. Motion carried.

PUBLIC CONCERNS:

Bennati asked Sarah Peavey from V.V.S. F.F.A. if she would like to address the Board and she said that their biggest concern right now is the extension on the sap house.

REPORTS:

The following reports were presented: Town Clerk: Williams noticed that the dog licenses are up and Supervisor Thurston added that the dog census by mail worked out well. Highway Superintendent: Freemire said that they cancelled Oneida-Herkimer waste for this Fall because we didn't have that much. Codes Enforcement and Supervisor's Report were presented.

There were no reports from Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Assessors, Education and Libraries, Intergovernmental Relations, Economic Development (Supervisor Thurston mentioned that the Fall Festival committee will have their next meeting in March and if there is any business in the Town of Vernon that would like their website linked to ours, please email it to bookkeeper@townofvernon.com), Operations, SWOCO, Highway Superintendent, Historian (Garold Vanderwerken thanked Bennati for filling up the display case and Bennati asked for the public to loan us anything that they may have to display). The County Legislators were absent, but the Board congratulated Howard Regner for being newly elected as County Legislator District .

A motion to accept the above reports was made by Bennati, seconded by McDonough. No discussion. Ayes 4. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to pay the bills was made by Watson, seconded by Williams. No discussion. Ayes 4. Nays 0. Motion carried.

BUSINESS:

A motion to pass Local Law #1 to override the 2% tax levy limit was made by Williams, seconded by Bennati. No discussion. Ayes 4. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to approve the 2012 budget was made by Bennati, seconded by Williams. McDonough made a motion to decrease the Board members salary, but it was not seconded. John Douglas Sr. missed the public hearing and asked Supervisor Thurston to explain the sales tax and VLT money, which he did and he also went through the budget again. No further discussion. Ayes 4. Nays 0. Motion carried.

Supervisor Thurston stated that he has spoken to Gerald Seymour, the Village of Vernon Mayor, regarding contracting with them to have a Village police officer here during Town Court. Bennati mentioned that in all the years that he has been on the Board there has always been a working relationship with the Village, but it has never been better than it is now. Williams said to also thank the Village Board members. Seymour said that he hopes for more shared services. A motion to approve contract with Village police officer bailiff for town court twice a month

@\$200 a month was made by McDonough, seconded by Watson. No discussion. Ayes 4. Nays 0. Motion carried.

Notification was received from Time Warner of a rate increase from \$62.95 to \$67.45 a month effective December 1, 2011.

A motion to change December 26th Board meeting to December 27th was made by Williams, seconded by McDonough. Ayes 4. Nays 0. No discussion. Motion carried.

A motion to renew Filley Road snowplowing contract for 2012 with Kevin Mumford for \$395 was made by McDonough, seconded by Bennati. Ayes 4. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to approve 2012 Prospect St. water district maintenance agreement for \$7800 was made by Watson, seconded by Bennati. Ayes 4. Nays 0. Motion carried.

Notice was received from Pedro's Kitchen for NYS liquor license, which should have been given to the Village instead of the Town.

Supervisor Thurston wanted to clarify that at last month's meeting there was a misunderstanding regarding who does the mowing at Twitchell cemetery and Elizabeth Eastman does do the mowing and John Peters just mows the side of the road.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Bennati stated that there are numerous businesses in the old Oneida Limited buildings in Sherrill. He explained a new business there that he visited called Aqua Vita, where they use water and fish manure to grow different kinds of greens. It's a very fascinating process and thought the Board would like to go over and see it. He bought a bag of it at Arnie's and it had seven different greens in it and was very good. It's great to have locally grown lettuce and hopes that more people support this business.

Supervisor Thurston mentioned the possibility of a new business moving into the vacant manufacturing building in the Village of Vernon. This company is turning away work because they just don't have enough room any more and more and more business is coming back here from China because of the cost of shipping. So, we are hoping that this business comes here.

Supervisor Thurston also mentioned that Mr. Cole from Utica-Rome Speedway donated their 50th Anniversary book to the Town and it is very interesting to read.

Williams wanted to explain that the tax bill that is paid at the Town is the Town and "County" tax bill and if you look at it you will notice that the Town portion is a very small part of the total tax bill.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

None

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn at 8:09 p.m. was made by McDonough, seconded by Bennati. No discussion. Ayes 4. Nays 0. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Additions to minutes on file
in Town Clerk's Office.

Julie A. McElroy
Town Clerk

It should be noted that this meeting was tape recorded and is on file in the Town Clerk's office.

COMMUNICATIONS:

New York Regulations for Polling Campaign Signs
Letter from Empire Energy Forum

