

Supervisor David P. Kelly opened the Workshop Meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Pawling at 7:00 PM November 4, 2015 at Pawling Town Hall, 160 Charles Colman Blvd., Pawling, New York. Present were Councilmen Montemarano, Johnson, DeRosa, Upham and approximately 60 interested citizens.

Supervisor Kelly asked any Veteran's in the audience to stand, he thanked them for their service and asked them to lead the Pledge of Allegiance in observance of Veteran's Day.

PRESENTATION/NYS SENATOR TERRENCE MURPHY

Senator Murphy said he got involved in politics to make the Hudson Valley a more affordable place to raise his family. He gave the Board an update on new legislation and on progress he has made on many important projects, including jobs and creating a "Jobs Impact Statement", taxes and economic development. He is working to make New York a business friendly state and promote economic development. He said heroin is an epidemic and he is involved in the IStop Program, which tracks doctor's writing prescriptions for drugs like oxycodone and percocet which is a factor in heroin addiction. Our mental health and hygiene effort has failed miserably in New York State and solutions need to be found. He urged people to call him with questions and comments. He is here to fight for seniors, Veterans, and do the right thing, create jobs, create economic development and keep New York an affordable place for everyone. He is always open to talking and meeting with people.

UPDATE ON CASTAGNA/THE HAMLET OF PAWLING

Mr. Peter Setaro from Morris Associates presented site plans of the overall project and gave the Board an update on the project. They have been focusing on getting the sewer pipe in along Route 22 and anywhere that needs to be paved. They will also be working on the sewer line in the area of East Main St. and Holm Run, which is a very busy intersection and will probably cause traffic issues. Once that area is done, it will be paved. There will be three bores included in this project, where they will be boring under the highways making the connections to pipes that are already installed. The concrete structures for the pump stations are in and in January or February the pump stations should be completed. They plan to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy for the first senior housing building in March 2016. The Town Board received a request from the Pawling Joint Sewer Commission regarding the sewer pipes that go from the pumping station to the senior housing buildings. The entrance road will be a private roadway and it has been suggested that the Town accept the dedication of the private mains as part of the sewer district and they would then be the responsibility of the Pawling Joint Sewer Commission. The reason behind that is so that in the event there is a maintenance issue with these lines, the Town would have the right to go in and inspect and notify the owner to fix it and if it is not done, the Town would go in and fix it and it would not affect the rest of the system. In his opinion, it doesn't hurt anything to do this now but it is the Town Board's decision. He hoped the Board would make a decision on this soon because they would like to finish the map, plan and report and move the project forward.

Supervisor Kelly thanked Mr. Setaro for his presentation.

PUBLIC HEARING ON 2016 PRELIMINARY BUDGET

Anthony Polidore, resident of Holmes, said the roads are horrible and asked how much of the roads are paved each year. He asked how the roads are being maintained and what kind of equipment is being provided the workers. This is a very serious matter and should not be taken lightly.

Liliya Popovich from 68 Rhone Ridge agreed with Mr. Polidore's comments, saying Old Route 22 is terrible and the roads are very dangerous to drive on.

Vinny DiMarco from Holmes said he is disappointed with the way 80% of his taxes are used, which is the school tax portion and he is thrilled with the way the other 20% is used, which is the town tax portion. He said he is happy with the way the Town Board has prepared the budget for the past few years, keeping under the tax cap and is happy with the services he receives. The tax dollar is used wisely and intelligently. He urged the Board to approve the budget as is.

Glenn Carey, resident of Pawling, felt it was important that data relating to the town budget is clarified. There has been a lot that has been written on line, particularly on Pawling Tax Cut.org about percentage increases in the taxes. This information has really been a disservice to those who have been reading it because they are in fact not accurate. He quoted mill rates and increases in taxes, saying from 2010 to 2015 there has been a 1.3% overall town tax increase to the Pawling taxpayers. Overall, over the past 15 years, there has been a 102% increase, not 160% as has been stated on line, with a majority of that increase taking place over the first 10 years, again with a 1.3% increase in the last five years. Those are the numbers. He explained the Pawling Fire District budget and the Library budget, saying the Town has no control over those budgets. Overall, including the Fire Department and Library in the last five years, have gone up 14.8%, only 1.3% of that was the town portion of that tax. These are the facts and they are accurate and it is important that the taxpayers get accurate information.

John Gjakaj from 227 Highlands Drive said he moved here from Westchester because it became increasingly more difficult to living there due to taxes in particular. He purchased a piece of property in "The Highlands" a few years ago and built the house himself. His taxes are \$16,000.00 per year and his brother purchased the property next to him and his taxes are \$12,000.00. He felt his brother had more than he does and did not understand why his taxes were more than his brothers. He felt the formula for coming up with the tax number is flawed and felt the Board should alleviate the tax burden in Pawling.

Harvey Matcovsky from Holmes asked why we give these generous health benefits to Town Board members as these benefits cost a lot of money. The interest and principal for the serial bond is \$470,000.00, which is one of the largest items in the budget and he asked why we pay this for property that produces little or no benefit to the town in terms of income. He saw nothing being done to pay off these bonds or anything being done with this incredible investment.

Helen Grosso from Tracy Road, said you can make numbers do anything you want. She was very grateful Supervisor Kelly met with her. She found numbers on line from open book which clearly show real property tax totals for the town in 2001 were \$1,000,613.00 and in 2014 were \$3,000,858.00, which is more than doubled. She wanted to sit down and go through the numbers with Supervisor Kelly. The equalization rate is voodoo economics. Her house value has gone down 40% so she didn't care if the tax rate was flat lining, her property is going down and she did not see any way to stop it. The value of real estate has gone down. The budget she sees is a rolled over budget from last year and she wanted to go over it with Supervisor Kelly.

Leslie Hollaran Mondshein from Harmony Road said numbers aren't simple math and are as easily spun as any rhetoric or hyperbole. She felt the Board had done a very good job at holding the line but felt it was the line itself that had to be examined. The inequity is something that is untenable. It is well known that our tax base, probably driven more by the school, is 25% higher than Scarsdale or Mamaroneck or better school systems. There is a problem that is not just her problem, and taxes need be fair and need to come down, not stay under the tax cap. Hard things need to be looked at for economic growth.

Chris Wood from Sumner Lane thanked Supervisor Kelly for taking questions. There are several different data sets, all of which produce different answers. He suggested he and some others sit down with members of the Board to discuss this because numbers can be spun any way you want. He would like to talk about the golf course, saying there was a loss of approximately \$30,000.00. He suggested a committee be formed to conduct a feasibility study on the golf course and he would be very happy to serve on such a committee.

Steve Sollazzo from DiPietro Lane felt the intermunicipal agreement for the Assessor was where the problem lies. He did not see how the Assessor could do the job in two days per week. 40% of home values were taken with the recession. The town has the mechanism to reevaluate and reinvent. This is where properties are valued. The town has to be very careful with its planning and zoning. He suggested the Town employ two Assessors. We need to get the true value of Pawling.

Betsy Montgomery from Quaker Hill Road said she wanted to address transparency in government. She quoted numbers from the budget and said there are only lump sums and there

is no supporting documentation to back up the budget numbers. There is no information on the active number of employees or a breakdown of full time employees verses part time employees. She proposed an impartial citizen's audit committee be formed to review the town's finances, made up of business people who have no direct government affiliation. We are at a crossroads here where we can continue to approve uninformative budgets or begin a new chapter of actually being the pride of the Harlem Valley.

Supervisor Kelly opened the meeting for questions and answers on the budget and following the question and comment period, he closed the public hearing on the 2016 Preliminary Budget.

RESOLUTIONS

The Board discussed the proposed resolutions. Following discussion, the Board took the following action, and stated that the remainder of the resolutions would be discussed at next week's meeting:

Resolution 2015116 Appointment- Clerk; Highway Department

Whereas, the current assigned Part Time Clerk to work at the Highway Department is unavailable to cover the required hours needed by the Highway Superintendent, and

Whereas, the Town Board has advertised to fill such vacancy, now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Town Board hereby appoints _____ to fill the position of Clerk at the rate of \$15.00 per hour and not to exceed 10 hours per week.

MOTION: Councilman Johnson

SECOND: Councilman DeRosa

Councilman Johnson introduced an amendment to insert the name of Heather Turner to fill the position of Clerk at the rate of \$15.00 per hour and not to exceed 10 hours per week, seconded by Councilman DeRosa, motion passed unanimously.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON RESOLUTION 2015116:

Councilman Johnson – "AYE"

Councilman DeRosa – "AYE"

Councilman Upham – "AYE"

Councilman Montemarano – "AYE"

Supervisor Kelly – "AYE"

FURTHER BUSINESS

UPDATE ON CASTAGNA/THE HAMLET OF PAWLING

Supervisor Kelly said regarding the update on the sewer project for Castagna given by Pete Setaro earlier in the meeting, he has spoken to a number of people involved with this and the concern is not to replicate what is now happening at Cedar Valley. In the case of Cedar Valley, there are collection lines and there is no ability to get on the property. He was in favor of taking dedication of the lines on the private property, as long as there are easements for ingress and egress to monitor and to do the operation and maintenance of the lines and the collection system up to the building, and to include all of the pumps.

Following further discussion, Mr. Setaro said he would work on preparing the easements and resolutions and hoped to have them ready for the November 18, 2015 meeting.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT OFFICER

Councilman DeRosa said the Town no longer has a Stormwater Management Officer (SMO) on staff. He said Carl Ellis is the new Town of Pawling Building Inspector and he has taken a course to get certified and is able to take this title.

Councilman DeRosa made a motion to allow Carl Ellis, current Building Inspector, to become the SMO since he is now certified, seconded by Councilman Johnson.

Councilman Upham asked about compensation.

Councilman DeRosa said that has not been discussed.

Councilman Johnson introduced an amendment to say that there will be no additional compensation at this time and take it up as budget matters are discussed, seconded by Supervisor Kelly, motion passed unanimously.

ZONING ADMINSTRATOR

Councilman DeRosa said there is no Zoning Administrator on staff and the Board needs to keep that in mind.

Supervisor Kelly said the Board will need to look at options as he has tried to find part time people with this title and there doesn't seem to be any available.

WHALEY LAKE DAM UPDATE

Councilman DeRosa said the road is constructed and he felt the Board should have another meeting to update the public.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Glenn Carey felt the Board needed to think long and hard about the medical insurance benefits that are provided to the Board as it is an extremely generous benefit. He felt full time employees should receive this benefit because they earn it.

Harvey Matcovsky thanked the Board for opening the budget process. He was happy to see a compromise on the cell tower. He suggested the Town Board meet with bond counsel on refinancing the bond for Lakeside Park.

Betsy Montgomery felt the Town, Village and School Board should work to schedule meetings so that they are not conflicting so that if someone had the time, they could attend all of them.

Supervisor Kelly made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 PM, seconded by Councilman Johnson, motion passed unanimously.

Town Clerk