

Supervisor James Schmitt opened the regular meeting of the town board of the Town of Pawling at 6:00 PM October 4, 2023, 2023 at Pawling Town Hall, 160 Charles Colman Blvd., Pawling, New York. Present were councilwomen Snow and Pitt, councilmen McCarthy and DeRosa, Nancy Tagliafierro, town attorney, and approximately 15 interested citizens.

Supervisor Schmitt said the community lost a young man named George Guerro, who was seventeen years old, in a tragic car accident, and he asked for a moment of silence to remember him.

MINUTES

Supervisor Schmitt made a motion to acknowledge the minutes of September 13, 2023, seconded by Councilwoman Snow, and passed unanimously.

Supervisor Schmitt made a motion to acknowledge the minutes of September 22, 2023, seconded by Councilman McCarthy, and passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Harvey Matcovsky, resident of Holmes, thanked the bookkeeper for presenting the budget. He said that the tax cap of 2% is imposed by New York State, with the possibility of increases over the 2% due to certain adjustments. The school board has not taken advantage of the adjustments and kept the tax levy well below the maximum allowed by law. The way out of the dilemma of increased taxes is to increase the tax base. The current town board has allowed two large developments, Castagna and the ASPCA, to use their tax exempt status to avoid the payment of a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes), which in the past has been negotiated by the town. Both projects will use ambulance and fire services, along with other services that all other taxpayers in the town are paying for. He felt they should pay their fair share of taxes, and the town board should negotiate a PILOT so that these projects pay their fair share.

BUDGET PRESENTATION

Christine Mitchell, town bookkeeper, presented the 2024 tentative budget and a budget summary, which would be put on line so everyone could see them. She presented the 2024 budget summary as follows, asking the board to revisit the percentages for elected officials and discuss it further because the allocation skews the percentages:

2024

TOWN TENTATIVE BUDGET SUMMARY

Estimated tax increase:

-1.02% if you live in the Village= \$5.85/1,000
2.54% if you live outside the Village=\$8.77/1,000

How do I easily calculate my 2024 Town Tax?

Say your house is assessed at \$300,000

Drop the last 3 zeros, you get \$300

You live in the Village-

Take \$300X \$5.85

Your Town tax is \$1,755

You live outside the Village-

Take \$300X \$8.77

Your Town Tax is \$2,631

THE LAKESIDE DEBT QUESTION

We paid off \$570,650 of Lakeside Park (A Fund) debt in 2023. What are we doing with the savings? \$305,298 was used to reduce the use of Fund Balance (savings). Pawling appropriated \$462,888 in 2023. We are appropriating \$157,590 in 2024. We appropriated a larger FB in prior years to keep the tax increase low:

2024 Townwide	-1.02%
2023 Townwide	3.92%
2022 Townwide	2.23%
2021 Townwide	2.32%

All while absorbing a major increase in the cost of ambulance service

2024	\$541,610
2023	\$524,160
2022	\$462,189
2021	\$336,755

The remainder of the debt payment was used to reduce spending. Total A Fund spending for 2023 was budgeted at \$5,154,645. 2024 is budgeted at \$4,828,060. This is a \$326,585 spending reduction, a large part from having paid off the Lakeside Bond. Townwide taxes this year have a 1.02 DECREASE 5.85/1,000 vs 5.91/1,000.

CONTINUED SERVICES

- Park & Recreation Programs
- Contracted Ambulance Service
- Transfer Station
- Golf Course
- Paving, plowing & road maintenance
- Building Inspector in house vs. contracting

PERSONNEL

- 2.75% wage increase for most employees
 - Most Elected Officials split 2.75% allocation
 - Health Insurance Buyout increased to \$4,500
 - Longevity increased by \$500 per tier
 - Full-Time Clerk added to Building Department
 - PT Code Enforcement Officer added to Building Department
 - PT Administrative support added to Building Department
 - PT Programs for Aging active senior program coordinator added \$3,000
- Benefit increases
- Retirement system contribution about \$271K. Rates by Tier have increased over 15% from 2023 to 2024
 - Health insurance estimated 15 % increase. Will have new rates in November

PERSONNEL CONTINUED

About \$856k budgeted for health insurance costs for current and retired employees across all Funds. That's over a \$200,000 savings vs the 2023 \$1.1 million budget, even after adding a 15% increase for 2024. Pawling switched to the NYSHIP Excelsior plan 5/1/23. The Town has \$48,000 of this savings budgeted for the employee Health Reimbursement Account in 2024.

EQUIPMENT & CAPITAL IN BUDGET

\$91,800 Total in General Fund A Budget
\$19,000 for Building equipment (A.1620.2)

\$15k Legion Bldg furnace, \$4k Safety Eqpt& tables
 \$25,300 Central Data Processing (A.1680.2) Annual computer upgrades
 \$12,500 Garage Equipment (A.5132.2)
 \$10k for Garage Doors, \$2,500 Oil Tank Roof
 \$16,000 Park Equipment (A.7110.2)
 \$15k Zero Turn Mower, \$1k Safety Equipment
 \$1,500 Teen Center tables (A.7145.2)
 \$5,500 Beach & Pool (A.7230.2)
 Sand, paddleboards, kayaks
 \$3,000 Golf Course Equipment (A.7250.2)
 Fencing around irrigation
 \$9,000 Transfer Station container (A.8160.2) paid by Transfer Station Capital Program

CAPITAL BUDGETED HIGHWAY FUND (DB)

Paving (DB.5112.2) increased to \$650,000 from \$300,000 in 2023
 \$265,000 of revenue from NYS CHIPs program (DB.3501) is budgeted to offset the tax cost

EXPANDED INVESTMENT IN EQUIPMENT & BLDGS AND PAVING in 2023

-In following with Pawling’s 5 year plan and on advice of financial advisors Pawling bonded \$1.495 million for 20yrs@ 4% for major equipment purchases, building and paving improvements. **This bond was rated AA+ by Standard & Poors**
 -Capital items include- \$900,000 for the new Lakeside Pavilion project and \$50,000 for Dutcher Golf Course irrigation
 -Equipment includes \$300,000 for a Large Highway Truck, \$145,000 for a Highway Backhoe, \$50,000 for an F250 for Buildings & Grounds and \$50,000 for a golf course fairway mower

ADDITIONAL CAPITAL FUNDS

Pawling has been granted \$611,690 in American Rescue Plan Act funds
 Funds have been spent & allocated as follows:
 \$94,215 Used for a new Well at Water District 2
 \$107,750 Used on improvements to Town Hall
 \$82,000 Used for the Great Lawn Project
 \$74,620 Used for the Roller Hockey Rink
 \$16,600 Allocated for a new Town website
 \$100,000 Allocated to the Lakeside Pavilion project
 \$30,000 Fire Alarms, Keypad etc. Town Hall
 \$20,000 Speed limit signs
 \$20,000 Partial cost Lathrop generator
 \$25,000 Town Hall generator
 \$2,500 Lake accessible wheelchair
 \$2,500 ADA Compliant Beach Mat
 \$36,505 of ARPA funding is still to be allocated

USE OF FUND BALANCE (savings) 2024

The Town use of Fund Balance in the 2024 budget compared to 2023 changed as follows:

	2024	2023	Change
A Fund	\$157,590	\$462,888	(305,298)
DA Fund	\$ 0	\$ 15,000	(15,000)
B Fund	\$132,575	\$159,700	(27,125)
DB Fund	\$153,180	\$103,315	49,865
SW2 Fund	\$ 10,000	\$ 3,800	6,200
WL Fund	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	-0-

How much will we have left 12/31/24? About \$744k in A, \$18K in DA, \$491k in B, \$618k in DB, \$59K in SW2 and \$58k in WL, assuming we use all of our 2023 appropriation. Fund Balance estimates are monitored and updated on a regular basis

TAX LEVY LIMIT for 2024

Tax Levy limit for 2024 is \$4,658,386 for all Funds and special districts
We are currently under the limit by \$21,296

GENERAL FUND (A) Revenue Highlights

- Golf Fees (A.2050) \$315,000 Golf revenue continues to do well
- Fines & Forfeited Bail (A.2610) \$100,000
- Mortgage Tax (A.3005) \$220,000, Mortgage Tax collections have fallen in 2023
- Employee contributions (A.2704) \$31,000

Estimate of amount employees contribute for health insurance coverage

GENERAL FUND (A) Additional Expenditures

- Auditor (A.1320.4) \$30,000 for independent audit, had NYS Audit end of 2020
- Central Data Processing (A.1680.4) \$34,500 for computer IT support and data storage
- Ambulance (A.4540.4) \$541,610 New contract in 2022. There was a significant increase

DEBT

Total Town Debt for all Funds as of 12/31/23 will be \$7,247,898.

General Fund Debt (A) \$1,783,596 Total Debt

Lakeside Park final payment made 2023
\$900,000 4% Bond for Lakeside Pavilion, final payment 2044
\$50,000 4% Bond for golf course irrigation, final payment 2044
\$100,000 4% Bond for a truck & fairway mower
Final payment 2044
\$467,410 1.45% Bond for Building Improvements, final payment 2037
\$128,919 1.45% Bond for Equipment, 2037
\$102,240 Building Improvements, Paid 2037
\$35,027 Golf Course Mower, Paid 2037

Highway Fund Outside Village (DB) \$2,580,337

\$410,780 2021 1.45% Bond for Trucks, paid off 2037
\$141,013 2021 1.45% Bond for Town portion of Hurds Corner Improvements, paid off 2037
\$300,811 2021 1.45% Bond for Highway Equipment, paid 2037
\$946,667 4% Paving Bond, paid 2037
\$336,066 4% Truck Bond, paid 2037
\$300,000 4% International Truck, paid 2044
\$145,000 4% Backhoe, Paid 2044

Highway Townwide (DA) \$164,450

\$164,450 3.5% BAN for West Main Street Culvert, mostly covered by grants (about \$38k Town cost).

Special Districts-

Whaley Lake Dam District \$2,264,582

1.45% Bond paid off 2037
2024 rate per unit will be \$299.97 vs \$296.57 in 2023, a 1% increase

Water District 2 \$454,933

\$161,485 1.45% Bond paid off 2037
\$183,448 4.5% BAN renewing 12/23
\$110,000 New BAN to be issued 12/23
2024 rate per unit will be \$4.45 vs \$3.96, or \$445.17 per household, a 12.4% increase
The additional debt is being issued for District improvements

DISCUSSION/2024 TENTATIVE BUDGET

Councilwoman Pitt, councilmen McCarthy and DeRosa said they would discuss the budget at next week’s meeting.

Councilwoman Snow said regarding the percentages in the budget, she felt there was inequity in the percentages. She personally did not agree with it. If the board is giving a raise for elected officials, she felt the percentage should be the same amount for all elected officials. She would like more discussion about that. She understood others may want to wait until next week to discuss this.

Supervisor Schmitt thanked Ms. Mitchell for her work on the budget.

RESOLUTIONS

The Board reviewed the resolutions and agreed they would be acted upon at next week’s meeting.

The board took the following actions:

**RESOLUTION 2023-143
Billing for Pawling Water District No. 2**

WHEREAS, Pawling Water District No. 2 bills need to be approved by the Pawling Town Board, and

WHEREAS, the bills have been prepared and submitted in the amount of \$14,055.50 for the period of July 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023 by the clerk to the water district, Catherine Giordano, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the town board of the Town of Pawling hereby accepts the billing as recommended for Pawling Water District No. 2.

MOTION: Supervisor Schmitt
SECOND: Councilman McCarthy

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Councilwoman Pitt – “AYE” Councilman DeRosa – “AYE”
Councilman McCarthy – “AYE” Councilwoman Snow - “AYE”
Supervisor Schmitt – “AYE”

**RESOLUTION 2023-146
Awarding Bid for Hazardous Material Abatement Services Lakeside Park Inn**

WHEREAS, on behalf of the Town of Pawling, Laberge Group, Engineer to the Town, solicited proposals for abatement work at the “Inn at Lakeside Park” and,

WHEREAS, the following bids were received:

Company	Amount
1. Sullivan Contracting	\$31,000
2. Environmental Maintenance Contractors, Inc.	\$25,760.40

WHEREAS, per Laberge Group, Engineer to the Town, it has been determined lowest qualified bidder is Environmental Maintenance Contractors with a bid in the amount of \$25,760.40, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Town of Pawling hereby awards the bid for hazardous material abatement services to Environmental Maintenance Contractors, Inc., located at 333 Lexington Avenue, Mount Kisco, NY 10549 in the bid amount of \$25,760.40.

MOTION: Supervisor Schmitt
SECOND: Councilwoman Pitt

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Councilwoman Pitt – “AYE” Councilman DeRosa – “AYE”
Councilman McCarthy – “AYE” Councilwoman Snow - “AYE”
Supervisor Schmitt – “AYE”

RESOLUTION 2023-147
Approval of Air Monitoring Services

WHEREAS, the town board previously authorized the services of Paradigm Environmental Services for air monitoring of Lakeside Park demolition and removal project, and

WHEREAS, abatement work needed at the “Inn at Lakeside Park” requires additional air monitoring, and

WHEREAS, Paradigm Environmental Services has agreed that their rate of \$475 per day is still applicable, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the town board of the Town of Pawling authorizes Paradigm Environment Services to complete the required air monitoring of the Lakeside Park demolition at their rate of \$475 per day.

MOTION: Supervisor Schmitt
SECOND: Councilwoman Pitt

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Councilwoman Pitt – “AYE” Councilman DeRosa – “AYE”
Councilman McCarthy – “AYE” Councilwoman Snow - “AYE”
Supervisor Schmitt – “AYE”

TOWN BOARD DISCUSSION

PITT

Councilwoman Pitt said the town’s town wide speed limit request has been accepted by the State and they will begin their investigation and study. Upon completion of the study, the town will be notified of their findings and conclusions. She said a ticket has been created northbound/southbound at Route 22 and Quaker due to the alignment of the lights. She would like to see toboggan run open again. The new website is on the way, she is in touch with the county on a daily basis. She has touched base with the historical society regarding replacing the historical markers around town. She asked if anyone had heard anything about a county wide ambulance service.

Supervisor Schmitt said no, nothing recently.

MCCARTHY

Councilman McCarthy said regarding next steps for “The Inn” project, there will be a meeting next week to discuss the bathrooms and pavilion.

SNOW

Councilwoman Snow said she was hoping to get someone to give the board a presentation on their experience with a conservation advisory board at an upcoming meeting.

DEROSA

Councilman DeRosa said the highway department is doing a good job on paving the roads at Sanita Hills. He asked about the bid for the PWD #2 water meters.

Supervisor Schmitt said the bid packet is being finalized by Laberge.

Councilman DeRosa said Whaley Lake is high, and Wendel Weber, supervisor of buildings and grounds is keeping an eye on the lake level. There are algae growing in the lake. What needs to be done is a study on the lake, and once that is done, recommendations can be made on how to correct the issues. He said the community group should take the samples and do the study.

Councilman DeRosa said the number of transfer station permits being sold is going down every year, it is down to approximately 700 permits this year. Part of the capital fund is budgeted based on the number of permits sold, so the capital fund is lower. The board needs to look at doing something different there. Councilman DeRosa said regarding the health insurance buyout, he felt it should be based on a percentage, maybe 20% of the family plan, which would be calculated each year.

SCHMITT

Supervisor Schmitt said the board received a letter of resignation from the part time fire marshal. The town will be advertising for that position. He spoke to a number of residents on the height of Whaley Lake over the weekend. Mr. Weber and his crew are looking at the lake level. He said since June, there have been over thirty inches of rain.

Councilman DeRosa said the beaver dams in the swamp need to be taken care of.

Supervisor Schmitt said he and Mr. Weber have been working on that.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rick Wilson, resident from 64 Lakeview Drive, Whaley Lake said there are algae blooms in the lake, it is not the first time, and this is not the only lake that has them. He brought in samples to show the board the green water caused by the blooms. He said Whaley Lake is surrounded by three watersheds and he suggested the board research funding for this issue. There are solutions and with funding, it could be corrected.

Harvey Matcovsky, resident of Holmes, complimented Ms. Mitchell on the preparation of the budget. He is confident that she has taken into account Lakeside Park being paid off. There are increases that we have no control over, such as mortgage tax and the one solution is to increase the tax base. The town has large, wealthy institutions that refuse to pay their fair share. He has not heard a word from the board about the attempts being made to try to negotiate PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) programs with these large projects.

Supervisor Schmitt said the town has not been asked for a PILOT program. If they want a PILOT program, they would have to ask for it.

Mr. Matcovsky asked what the board is doing to get these establishments to pay their fair share.

Janet Jones, resident from 5 Holiday Street, asked for an update on the Tremson project.

Supervisor Schmitt said they were issued a stop work order. There was a meeting to go over the fines they are facing at this time and the legal proceedings they are facing if they continue to violate the stop work order.

Marty Mygan, resident from One Aspen Court, said under personnel in the budget, it says most elected officials are getting a 2.75% allocation.

Supervisor Schmitt said the way it is currently set up is there was a total number taken and divided up between most elected officials, but it is open for change.

Mr. Mygan said regarding the health insurance buyout, he felt the \$4,500 was an extremely high amount. If you work for New York City, the health benefit buyout is \$1,000 for

family coverage and \$500.00 for a single. If you work for New York State, it is \$1,000 for individual and \$3,000 for family.

Supervisor Schmitt made a motion at 7:00 PM to adjourn the meeting and go into executive session to discuss personnel, seconded by councilwoman Pitt, motion passed unanimously.

The Board returned from executive session at 7:45 PM, no action was taken.

Town Clerk