

**TOWN OF SCHUYLER FALLS
TOWN BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING NOVEMBER 5, 2020**

Supervisor Randall called the Public Hearing to order at 5:45 p.m.

	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
MEMBERS Howard Newton	X	
Vernon Bruno	X	
Martin Perrotte		X
Reginald Facticeau	X	
Kevin Randall	X	
Donna Hamel	X	
Michael Snider	X	

PUBLIC RECOGNITION/ Richard Donah, Ricky White, Mary Sorrell, Crystal Simpson, Philip VanNortwick, Sam Campbell, Paul Sarbou, Sherm Hamel

The notice regarding the Public Hearing on the Preliminary Budget was placed in the legal ads in the Press Republican and on the Town’s website.

The purpose of the meeting was to hear comments for or against the 2021 budget. Mr. Randall opened the floor up for discussion

Mr. Donah stated that he would like to see the Board revisit some of the salaries. He said that he thought that some employees could have been furloughed during the COVID as they were not working for about seven months. He mentioned the Court Clerks that were getting paid even though Court had not been in session.

Mr. Donah said he thought that \$40,000.00 was too much to spend on a new truck. He said that he thought the new truck that would be purchased should go to the Highway Superintendent and the Highway Superintendent’s truck should be passed down to the Recreation Department. He stated that from his observation, the priorities are out of line; too much friendship, too much connection. Mr. Randall told him that the truck was only \$33,000.00 without the plow. It will be a little over \$40,000.00 with the plow. He explained to him that the Highway Department did not have the funds in their budget to purchase a truck this year. The Recreation Department had the funds in their budget this year to purchase the truck from what was left in that budget and the \$9,000.00 in insurance monies that the Town received for the old truck. Mr. Donah said that just because the money is there to use, he doesn’t see why it cannot be returned to the general fund. Mr. Randall replied that the Recreation Department needs a truck to haul equipment around; such as lawn mowers. He mentioned that the Highway Department has no obligation to plow the Town Hall parking lot. The Town paid approximately \$3,000.00 last year for plowing services. He thought that by purchasing a plow for the truck, it would be advantageous for the Town to save money on plowing service. He thanked the Highway Department for swinging into the parking lot to plow and sand after the last little snow storm.

Mr. Donah asked how many safety inspections the Codes Officer does in a year’s time. Mr. Randall replied that without the reports in front of him, he could not say. Mr. Donah thought it would be financially advantageous for the Town to pay him per safety inspection instead of the salary that he receives. Mr. Randall stated that the Codes Officer does not charge mileage and has never asked for a phone or vehicle. Some other Towns supply their Officers with that equipment to do their job. He added that his salary is comparable to other Towns. He said that the Codes Officer has been employed through the Town for about eighteen years. He did not start out with the salary that he is currently receiving, but every year, he was given a percentage increase to put him where he is to date. He told Mr. Donah that the State Comptroller’s office does push for salaried employee as it takes the liability off the Department Head to justify the hours. Mr. Randall said that the new Highway Superintendent’s salary was decreased due to the retirement of the former Highway Superintendent. He added that he received complaints from residents, including Mr. Donah, on what the salary was for the job of the Highway Superintendent before it was decreased.

Mr. Donah said that a lot of things were discussed with Mr. Randall before he became Supervisor including the Town Clerk’s salary, the Court Clerk’s salaries and “getting rid of” Sherm Hamel. He said that if anything were to happen to Mr. Randall, who would take over and sign checks. He added that Mr. Randall has not followed through on anything that affects this place.

Mr. Facticeau stated that a salary should be based on a position not the person. He referred to the Highway Superintendents salary. Mr. Donah mentioned that next year, hopefully there will be “new blood” on the Board and the salaries will be revisited.

Mr. Hamel spoke up to state that he has been Deputy Supervisor since 1998. He wanted it clear that he has not ever gotten paid for this position. Because of his love for the Town, he has and still would

do anything he can to help. He stated that he is sick and tired of people “throwing him under the bus” because he holds this position.

Crystal Simpson mentioned that the Court Clerk’s worked through the pandemic. She stated that the Courts were open and did not know why someone would say that they were not. Mr. Donah replied that he did not know that. Ms. Simpson told him he should get the facts before he makes a statement.

Rickey White wanted to know where the \$100,000 was that was cut from the budget. He stated that his taxes in the City of Plattsburgh were going down fourteen percent and had money that was not used to put back. He said that one way that they did it was to furlough a bunch of people. He did not think a receptionist that is making \$17,000.00 a year was needed, as the Town Hall door has been locked. Mr. Randall mentioned that due to COVID, the door is locked and a door bell was installed. The receptionist answers the door and still does her daily job. He stated that the Town does not have the number of employees that the City of Plattsburgh has and does not know who could be furloughed.

Mr. White asked if anyone looked into offering less expensive health insurance plan for the Town. He said that the insurance that is offered is the best, especially with the stipend that is given each month. Mr. Randall replied that Mr. Perrotte has been gathering information on different insurance plans. He said that if the Board wanted to not offer insurance in the future for new employees and retirees, it still would not change what is offered to who is currently employed. Mr. Facticeau said that a work session is needed to look into other insurance plans.

Mr. White asked where the new plow truck would be parked. As a taxpayer, he will want to know where it will be parked and what locations will be plowed, as it is not a pleasure vehicle. Mr. Randall said that nothing has been formalized as the Town does not have the truck yet. Mr. White stated that he is not happy with the purchase, and he will be very upset if he catches it somewhere where it is not supposed to be.

Mr. Randall said that it would not be financially smart to not address to the constituents that the tax rate has been way too low because the unappropriated income has been used to offset the tax rate. People are not going to remember the Town’s low tax rate when their taxes are raised over the next three years. Cuts should be made where they can and hopefully get the right people to do the job. Mr. White asked if it has ever been addressed if an employee was not doing their job. Mr. Randall said that he cannot speak of the past, but he has spoken to some of the employees if it was needed. Mr. White told Mr. Randall that he thinks it is going to make it hard on a future Board by not taking more out of the budget this year. He added that he was sure more money could have been saved. He said that there is a few getting rewarded on the backs of the Town. He said that he talks to a lot of taxpayers and they are upset with the perks offered.

Since there were no other comments, Mr. Newton made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Bruno and was UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED. Adjournment/6:40 p.m.

Donna Hamel/Town Clerk