

November 5, 2020

Budget Public Hearing and Special Meeting

Present: Supervisor Edward Bender, Councilman Alan Wood, Councilman Dan Wiley, Councilman Marty Mason, Councilman Paul Aubertine and approximately 9 visitors.

Supervisor Bender opened the Budget Public Hearing at 6:30pm with the pledge of allegiance.

Public Comment

Amy Pond – Amy told the board that she was there to make a formal request for continued funding from the town budget to the Cape Vincent Community Library. She said that the library board feels that it is important to maintain a relationship with the town board. Amy reviewed the history of the library, stating that the Purcell family bought the property to be used as the Community Library and that they created a charter. Amy explained that in 1972 an application was made for an Absolute Charter and was granted in 1973. She explained the Charter's financial obligations. She said that she knows the pandemic created a hardship, but asked the board to honor the request for funding.

Councilman Wood said that the reason the board deleted the \$5,000.00 from the 2021 budget is because the library was closed.

Amy said that the library did not close, but operated differently. They offered curbside service, patrons used the Wi-Fi in the parking lot, they offered assistance to people who lost their jobs, and they worked with the Victims Assistance Center to offer services. She said that the town's financial support will help the residents in Cape Vincent.

Shannon Connerton – Shannon said that she is a Library Trustee and she was there to support Amy's letter for continued financial support from the board. She explained to the board that the library helped to fill the gaps during the school shut down. Shannon asked the board to reconsider their decision to remove the library funding and continue to support the library.

Christine Stark – Christine told the board that the library offered positive activities over the summer. Christine said that she would like to talk about the Community Development Committee. She said that she understands the town is paying for two planners and she is only aware of the activities of one planner and she would like to know why they are paying two.

Councilman Wood said that he would like to address the library again before addressing Ms. Stark. He said that he would think that the library saved money by closing and changing the way services were provided.

Councilman Wiley said that the board understands the value of the library, and that he knows the school gave them more funding in their budget.

Amy Pond said that the funding from the school budget is divided between three libraries. She said that the library had to cut their fund raising activities this year because of the pandemic. She said that they need help with funding to keep the Charter.

Councilman Aubertine said that he would like to address Christine Stark's questions. Councilman Aubertine said that the board had to budget for the two Planner positions because of the Club Street

project. He said that the board agreed to be the lead in order to avoid the loss of grant funding and because of that they needed to create a position oversee the jobs being done.

Christine said the in the budget, account code 8989.1, is for the Project Manager. She asked if this will disappear. The board told her it wouldn't.

Councilman Mason told her that the town has projects coming through for next year and they will need to have the manager.

Christine said that paying for two planners has the appearance of redundancy.

Elizabeth Brennan – Liz told the board that she was there to support the library's request for continued funding. She said that she does not think the board is aware of all they do and she said that the library is an incredible resource for residents. Liz asked what if the school budget goes down; they can't be assured of that funding. She said that the town cut funding to organizations that she is on. She said that she would like the board to look at other areas to cut to continue to offer the library financial support. She said that once funding is cut, it is hard to get it back. She said she is urging the board to consider funding.

Councilman Aubertine said that he would like to explain why the board took the action they did. He said that the town board requested a funding request letter from the library and after reading it the board felt there was no sense of urgency for funding in 2021. Councilman Aubertine said that after listening to Amy speak; he agrees that the board did not make the library as high of a priority as they should have. Councilman Aubertine said that this does not mean that the board won't fund the library again. He said that he needed to explain the rational of the board's decision

Councilman Mason said that he has been on the board for some 20 plus years and this was the hardest budget season he has seen.

Councilman Wiley said that the board fought to stay under the tax cap. He said perhaps they should have gone over because the town has a lot of projects. He said the board had to make difficult decisions to stay under the tax cap.

Christine Stark asked what the rational was behind cutting the ambulance budget from \$90,000.00 to \$45,000.

Councilman Wood said that the board had several meetings regarding the ambulance service and it was clear that the people wanted it. He said that the town gave them money to get them started. He said that the town would like the ambulance to raise their own funds.

Councilman Wiley said that the ambulance has created a billing system for funding and he does not think that they need to do fund raising.

Supervisor Bender said that he has contacted an Attorney for advice on how to form an Ambulance District. He said this would then become a line on the tax bill. He said this may take some time.

Councilman Wood made a motion to give the Community Library \$2,500.00, from the slush fund in the 2021 budget, seconded by Councilman Wiley.

There was the following discussion

Councilman Aubertine said that he would like to know what lines Councilman Wood would like to amend to allow for this, where can they take this money.

Town Clerk, Michelle Bouchard, asked what fund he is referring to when he says slush fund.

Councilman Wiley said that he thinks the town will be receiving some funds from the Playground Committee. He said perhaps it can come from there.

Councilman Mason said that the slush fund is down to \$40,000.00, and it should not come from there.

Councilman Wood said that he thinks it still could come from that account.

Town Clerk, Michelle Bouchard again asked what fund they are referring to when they say slush fund.

Councilman Mason said the Capitol Reserve fund.

Councilman Aubertine said that he would like the board to take some time with this request, and make a budget amendment next year.

Supervisor Bender said he agreed this would be the best way to handle the situation.

Councilman Wood withdrew his motion, Councilman Wiley withdrew his second.

Councilman Mason made a motion to close the public hearing and open the special meeting at 7:12pm, seconded by Councilman Wood. All members voted AYE.

Resolution #44

Resolution #44 was moved by Councilman Aubertine, seconded by Councilman Mason. Resolution #44 is the adoption of the 2021 Preliminary budget and the following wages/salaries:

Clerk to the Supervisor - \$42,813.00

Chamber of Commerce - \$17,973.00

Asst. Record Keeper - \$15.00 per hour

MEO's - \$23.27 per hour

Working Foreperson - \$24.30 per hour

Extra Snow Help - \$17.50 per hour

Transfer Site Operator - \$34,680.00

Planning Board Secretary - \$2,519.00

Zoning Board Secretary - \$1,752.00

Town Historian - \$1,640.00

Supt. Public Works & Water Districts - \$60,633.00

Asst. Public Works - \$48,400.00

Zoning Enforcement Officer - \$13,059.00

Asst. Zoning Enforcement Officer - \$20.00 per hr

Dog Control Officer - \$22,000.00

Deputy Dog Control Officer - \$20.00 per hr

Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector - \$16.22 per hr

Part Time Clerk to Assessor - \$14,734.00

Assessor - \$28,520.00

Court Clerk - \$11,250.00

There was not discussion. All members voted AYE

Resolution #45

Resolution #45 was moved by Councilman Wiley, seconded by Councilman Mason. Resolution #45 is to authorize the Supervisor to pay Jefferson County the amount of \$16,442.59 from account 1989.4 for tax map maintenance.

There was not discussion. All members voted AYE.

Town Clerk, Michelle Bouchard, spoke to the board about the request from the Chamber of Commerce for permission to use the small meeting room at Recreation Park to house their copier and allow the Director to use the room a couple of times a week during the winter. She said that they have decided

not to rent office space and the Director will be working from home. The board gave approval, as long as Keith Brass has approved the use of the room.

Councilman Wood made a motion to adjourn at 7:15pm.

Michelle Bouchard, RMC – Town Clerk