

State of New York
County of Fulton
Town of Caroga

DRAFT 10-30-08

Minutes of a Caroga Town Board budget work session held Wednesday October 22, 2008 at the municipal building located at 1840 State Highway #10 at 7:00 pm with the following board members in attendance:

Supervisor Kane - Here
Councilman Ralph Palcovic - Here
Councilman Robert Sprung - Here
Council Member Valerie Scribner - Here
Councilman Robert Sullivan - Here

Lita Hillier Budget Director, Mike Heberer – Code Enforcement Officer, Joseph Insogna-Highway Superintendent, and Katherine Hillock - Assessor were present. There were fourteen members of the public also in attendance. Prior to the meeting at 6:45 pm Supervisor Kane met with Councilman Palcovic, and Councilman Sprung until 6:52 pm behind closed doors.

Supervisor Kane announced that there were four members of the Planning Board who have requested to attend mandatory training at Fulton Montgomery Community College sponsored by the Fulton County Planning Department on Thursday November 6, 2008.

RESOLUTION to permit Planning Board members to attend Training #2008-090

Offered by Councilman Sprung

Seconded by Councilman Sullivan

WHEREAS, the Caroga Town Board held a work session on Wednesday October 22, 2008, and

WHEREAS, the State of New York passes legislation over a year ago mandating 4 hours of training each year for planning and zoning members, and

WHEREAS, Douglas Smith Chairman of the Planning Board, and members Sharla Wager, Michael Voght, and alternate member Karen Wheeler have signed up to attend a training at Fulton Montgomery Community College sponsored by the Fulton County Planning Department on Thursday November 6, 2008, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to permit the above mentioned Planning Board members to attend said training.

Unanimously Adopted

Councilman Sprung discussed with the board the upcoming meeting on the Herms case. He had to put in a request for time off to attend the meeting, which was canceled. He does not want to take time off again without being reimburse from the town. Councilman Palcovic stated that this is an informational meeting and a subpoena is not involved making it difficult to get time off.

Council member Scribner was not in favor of reimbursing Councilman Sprung. She will still attend the meeting in Albany.

Mrs. Hillier asked if the board wanted her to start where she made changes since the last meeting. Councilman Sullivan wished that he had been notified of the revised copy.

“The last time we talked we had 3% increases in for most everybody in. The supervisors tentative took those 3% increases out. But I have done a work session since and put them back in if you so choose for preliminary state.” A3620.2 line item was reduced to zero. Mr. Heberer said he could do without this year. Justices A1110.2 was reduced to zero also. Mrs. Hillier did not believe they needed any equipment. Page 7 in General \$25,000.00 was removed from the Capitol Projects A9950.9. The Library donation was back down to where it was in 2008. Mrs. Hillier noted the Highway fund did not change much at all. Independent audit A1320.4 was reduced to zero. Mrs. Hillier stated that \$2,000.00 was not going to do anything for an independent audit. It would cost around \$12,000.00. Councilman Sullivan noted that the line item was to be used as a reserve. Council Member Scribner asked about Assessor clerk A1355.13 not to exceed amount in the 2008 organizational minutes. Mrs. Hillier explained there was not a clerk last year so the minutes just stayed the same. Councilman Sprung questioned the A1355.4 line item, which Mrs. Hillier explained was for any mileage, seminars, and office supplies. Council Member Scribner noted the Town clerk contractual A1410.4 was down to \$5,000.00. Councilman Sullivan asked about the having no capitol project fund for next year. Mrs. Hillier responded that the board could put it back in and raise taxes.

Currently the tax rate is up \$0.90 per thousand over last year.

If a 3% salary increase were put back in the budget it would impact the budget \$9,000.00 with an increase of \$0.09 per thousand if she put it back in. It would be \$0.99 or she could take it out of fund balance. Councilman Palcovic suggested removing the 3% from part- time employees – anybody that doesn’t work full time with full benefits is part time -youth, and BTI. Councilman Palcovic noted the unemployment continues to kill us. “We are now paying unemployment for all our seasonal employees.” Unemployment line items regular is \$5,000.00 and golf course is \$7,000.00.

Councilman Palcovic proposed holding all raises from part time employment other than full time. Councilman Sullivan and Council Member Scribner responded “No.” Councilman Sprung noted a difference is only nine cents.

Before the budget is adopted on Nov. 20 Councilman Sprung wanted to talk to the insurance person. Retiree health care is \$7,200.00 a year. Councilman Sprung made a motion to do away with retiree healthcare for council people and the supervisor. Councilman Palcovic noted this was not going to help us today. Mrs. Hillier noted that no one on the board has it. She explained that there is a resolution that says you have up to a year to decide if you want to take the health insurance. Since the board did not take it then they can’t get it now. He recommended having people pay for it. Mrs. Hillier is not in favor of having people pay their health insurance. It is a nightmare because if they do not give her their money, especially retirees, you can go after them but you can’t remove them from the policy. Mrs. Hillier noted the need for policies. She was in

favor of having employee buyouts. Councilman Sullivan noted that you can offer that but you can't budget it. Council Member Scribner asked about consolidating services with the schools insurance. Mrs. Hillier agreed the town had to do something. Councilman Sullivan shared information about the Town of Charleston where his father is on the board and their town employees insurance are part of the teamsters. Their hourly rates are not very far out of line with the Town of Caroga. Councilman Sprung agreed there is a huge savings in the teamster plan. In order for this to happen the Town Highway would have to unionize. Then the teamsters would take in as many people that are in the unit. He noted there were no deductible or no co pay. Every 3 –4 year the terms are negotiated.

Mr. Wager – a highway employee asked about the union dues. Councilman Sprung responded the dues are 2.25% of their hourly rate. Health Care expenses are given in contract three years running. The town's insurance carrier will be called tomorrow.

Councilman Sullivan asked what was considered a capitol project last year. Mrs. Hillier explained it was mainly for the highway garage. Originally we used to put \$25,000.00 in for the irrigation system. "When that stopped we continued putting the \$25,000.00 in each budget, not that we rolled it over, we put it in each budget incase we decided to do a capitol reserve on the highway garage or whatever." Councilman Sullivan stated, "If you do not designate dollars to go someplace to buy a new truck – there is always going to be something else that comes up that it's going to get spent on. If you don't designate where it is going. That is part of the reason why we are in the situation we are in today because we did not put something away every year toward a goal. Mrs. Hillier did not believe that was the reason we are in the situation we are in. "We have used a lot of our fund balance over the years to hold the taxes down. From 1997 to today alone if we put the ninety cents on the tax rate for 2009's budget we've only brought our tax rate up \$1.39 in 12 years. That is eleven cents per year, that takes a humongous toll on your fund balance." Councilman Sullivan did not agree with doing that in the first place. Mrs. Hillier stated that the town has never taken the taxes up and brought them down when we could. She noted our assessed valuation has not helped us in years. We've had a drop in our assessed valuation that does not help for the budget purposes at all. She noted the revenues are going down and expenditures are going up. We have put money away in the past. The irrigation system was paid for outright. There is some money put away for this building.

Mr. Selmsler discussed with the board the medical insurance cost each year. Mrs. Hillier noted the 16% increase she proposes is just a high estimate. Usually the rate comes in the beginning of November. She noted this is only for the next 6 months.

Councilman Sprung asked what the increase was in the fire contract this year. There is an increase of \$0.04. Council Member Scribner thought the board could take a lesson from the fire department projected plan.

Mrs. Hillock explained about the state owned lands on which some they pay taxes. Some are exempt. The state tells her what the assessment is and then they tell you how much they are going to pay you. She could raise their lands but then they could say they aren't going to pay. In the tentative tax roll section 3 which she produced in 2008 was for \$14,803,277.00. The State sets their state-owned land sometimes after grievance. The final assessment was

\$11,041,567.00. This is almost a four million dollar difference just in state owned land. She noted only \$10,835,017 was taxable. If you divide it by one thousand and multiply it by the town tax rate that is what the state paid for land assessed in the town.

Councilman Palcovic put the proposal on the table to remove the increase from part time employees. Supervisor Kane was in agreement with him. Councilman Sprung did not agree. He felt seasonal employees might not return next year. He wanted to make up the difference in health care.

Council Member Scribner asked if there was enough money in the building line item A1620.4 due to the increase in fuel costs. Mrs. Hillier has broken out the golf course building – it now has its own line item with \$20,000.00 in it A1620.42.

Councilman Palcovic asked about the multi- seasonal park expenditures to date. He suggested removing \$5,000.00 from A1620.41. He explained that \$13,500.00 has been spent to date. There is no need to carry that amount over into next year. Council Member Scribner stated that she was not going to be able to finish it if the money is taken out. Councilman Sprung stated that she could not go over budget. She stated she won't go over but it won't get done. Mrs. Hillier suggested leaving \$13,000.00 on the line item and put \$6,500.00 in revenues. On page 9 A3910.1 Revenues \$6,500.00.

The grant writing line item A1010.41 - \$2,500.00 was removed. Only another thousand was needed to reach \$9,000.00.

Council Member Scribner noted that A3510.1 Control of Dogs already has a 3% raise.

BTI Mrs. Hillier did a six-year comparison she annually spends around \$4,800.00. She did not speak to Mrs. Dean the budget sheet expenses were reviewed. The contractual line item A4050.4 was reduced to \$5,800.00.

The board discussed the garbage contract with Bleecker. The board suggested raising the contract by \$2,000.00 this year and negotiate a future contract for years to come. Supervisor Kane will contact Supervisor Howard.

Council Member Scribner will contact National Grid to see about saving money on Street Lighting.

Council Member Scribner noted that \$1,000.00 was added to golf course A7180.4 as it was overdrawn due to the leases. Councilman Sullivan asked if the cost to do renovations to the bathroom was in this budget. Mrs. Hillier responded that money for that is in the buildings line item A1620.42. It is an \$8,300.00 increase. The roof is in this year's budget; a transfer has already been made.

Supervisor Kane asked if unemployment is high enough. Mrs. Hillier hoped so, it won't be known until the second week of March. Mrs. Hillier noted some employees have already signed

up. Councilman Palcovic recommended college students be hired for seasonal work. in the town.

Council Member Scribner noted that the 3% raise had already been placed on the weed line item. Mrs. Hiller responded yes, but it won't impact the budget for the next three years because of the grant.

Councilman Sprung suggested discussing and getting his input on the unemployment situation on the golf course with Mr. Jennings. Mrs. Hillier stated that it has been brought to his attention, he is not happy about it either – it cuts into the profits. Council Member Scribner said he didn't want a raise due to the unemployment situation.

Mr. Shutts figured the Town of Bleecker would pay the Town of Caroga \$154.00 a week. This is the revenue after Mr. Cooper's salary was paid and figuring the use of 30 gallons of fuel.

A2410 is the income from the clinic.

Supervisor Kane recently met with Michael Greason a forester. Supervisor Kane estimated that \$20,000.00 to \$30,000.00 in revenues could be realized on two parcels. The Forrester has to go in and mark the trees then it is put out to bid. The 100-acre parcel behind the firehouse was cut not too long ago. The other parcel being looked at is along the alienated property. Councilman Sullivan wanted the revenues to go into capitol projects, it is found money. The board was in favor of going forward with the forester.

Gifts and donations are the contributions the town receives from the Wheelerville School toward the youth program and some Caroga books. Councilman Sprung asked about line item A2655 Map sales the town clerk explained she no longer sells them in her office the line item was removed.

The mortgage tax revenue was increased because in the last two years the town has received \$58,000.00 and \$54,000.00, Mrs. Hillier spoke to Mr. Heberer and they thought there was no problem with what's going on out there as far as building and what people are borrowing right now. They felt comfortable raising it \$5,000.00. There was a \$680,000.00 sale on Canada Lake the assessor noted.

DA5148.4 Services for other Governments is used if the town needed services from the county planning board.

Mrs. Hillier expects that state retirement will go down. She received a projection from them.

Mr. Insogna estimated that he would spend about \$16, 000.00 on sand this season. He has it in already. There was a hospital -medical increase for two new employees. Even though one person is leaving they will still stay on for benefits. Interest on statutory bond is for the truck payment and the interest. This figure comes down every year.

Sale of Equipment – DA2665 \$18,000.00 is what Mr. Insogna will realize he thinks.

Councilman Sprung stated that all the raises are back in. Mrs. Hillier will talk to the health insurance representative. Councilman Sprung will get some insurance rates from his union. Mrs. Hillier deals with unions in the Towns of Ephratah and Broadalbin.

The board decided to meet with Chuck Herman on the insurance issue on Wednesday October 29, 2008 at 3:00 pm.

Mr. Heberer noted that asbestos abatement would start on October 27th. The contractor would like to do the entire building while they are here since they are contracted to do it.

Mrs. Hillier noted a bill got overlooked at the last board meeting. The company wants to be paid. The amount is \$912.00 for ice control. This goes in with the sand.

Resolution to pay a bill **#2008-091**

Offered by Councilman Palcovic

Seconded by Councilman Sullivan

WHEREAS, the Caroga Town Board held a work session on Wednesday October 22, 2008, and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Hillier bookkeeper to the Supervisor notified the board of a bill that was overlooked at the last board meeting for ice melt control from the Highway fund, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to pay Earthchem, Inc. of PO Box 245 Green Camp Ohio 43322 the amount of \$912.32 for Liquid Ice/Snow Melt

Unanimously adopted

Mrs. Hillier asked if the board wanted to move to set the budget to it's preliminary State. Councilman Sprung wanted to examine the insurance and street lighting issues further. Another work session was set for Wednesday Oct. 29th.

A copy of the forester's letter will be distributed per Councilman Palcovic.

The clerk received a copy of the golf course specifications today. The board reviewed them. Mrs. Hillier noted that a transfer of \$6,800.00 was already done. The board will have to find the money from somewhere. Mrs. Hillier noted there is \$7,100.00 in the .2 accounts and contingent there is \$5,700.00. Councilman Sprung wanted to go to bid, and then transfer money when they know the cost.

RESOLUTION to go out to Bid for Golf Course Roof **2008-092**

Offered by Council Member Scribner

Seconded by Councilman Sprung

WHEREAS, the Caroga Town Board held a work session on Wednesday October 22, 2008, and

WHEREAS, bids were previously solicited, opened on August 13, 2008, awarded, and then rejected on the golf course roof project, and

WHEREAS, Mike Heberer revised the bid specifications, and the town board reviewed them this afternoon, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga town Board does hereby move to put the project out to bid, with the bids to be opened at 7:00 pm at the November 12, 2008 regular monthly meeting of the board.

Unanimously adopted

Councilman Sprung was concerned about the weather at this time of year and putting down the shingles.

Councilman Palcovic asked Mrs. Hillock about the salary of the clerk in her office as it compares to other clerks on staff. Mrs. Hillock responded that she was a clerk and then went to the deputy. She also does data collection work. “We’re trying to go back to where she was prior to this year. Mrs. Hillier noted she was paid \$8.76 an hour before being a deputy. Councilman Sprung asked how many hours is she going to work. Mrs. Hillier responded she worked 20 hours at \$10.93. Mrs. Hillock thought all the clerk salaries were different depending on how many years they were here. Councilman Sprung stated that we need to make a resolution to abolish the position prior to the first. It was stated that the deputy was a one-year appointment. It expires at the end of the year. Councilman Palcovic stated that the position is not budgeted in 2009 period. There isn’t a need to create a clerk position. Mrs. Hillier noted that a pink personnel sheet would be issued again. Councilman Sprung asked if she understood that there was no health care with that position. No one had addressed this issue. The board decided to bring the employee in to discuss it with her as an executive session. It was noted that they are a valued employee. Mrs. Hillock noted that cobra would have to be offered. Councilman Sullivan brought up what was policy.

At 8:45 pm Councilman Sprung made a motion to adjourn, Councilman Palcovic seconded the motion. All board members were in favor of the motion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda M. Gilbert – RMC
Town Clerk