

State of New York
County of Fulton
Town of Caroga

Minutes of a Caroga Town Board work session held Wednesday October 7, 2009 at the municipal building located at 1840 State Highway #10 at 6:30 pm with the following persons in attendance by Roll Call:

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

Other town officials in attendance were Town Justice James Subik, Assessor Katherine Hillock, Joseph Insogna – Highway Superintendent and Councilman-Elect Anthony Russitano. Chuck Herman from Lockpointe Inc. the towns Employee Benefits Consultant presented information to the board.

Supervisor Selmsler introduced our employee insurance broker Chuck Herman. He did not have any information on rates for 2010 yet. The earliest it will be is in the middle of November. He noted that the closest plan to ours is going up 10% next year. He discussed other plans and options available with the board. There may be a premium tax handed down from the Federal Government next year. He noted there is a new COBRA enhancement program, which impacts rates. There is also a new option to have a family member covered under family coverage until age 29. The employer can charge back the employee. Premiums are up 10% for the fourth quarter, and are going up next year also. At this point it still looks like Blue Cross is still priced the best in the market place. The board could go to a higher deductible plan. A plan similar to what the school implemented could be put into place at the town. A lot depends on where the rates end up next year. The high deductible plans are still experimental. The plan designs change quite a bit from one year to the next. Councilman Sullivan has seen this type of plan in his workplace since July. A debit card is used. The board would like Mr. Herman to put together information on the plans when he receives them. Supervisor Selmsler noted last year we saved 40% on insurance. That is slowly being chipped away. Mr. Herman noted the town could split the plan design. New employees could have a different plan. Mr. Herman suggested adding at least 16% to the budget for insurance expenses next year. Mrs. Hillier noted we added 25 – 30%. Mr. Herman was thanked for attending the meeting.

Judge Subik filled out and submitted his annual budget request. He asked if there were any questions. Councilman Palcovic responded that the board is looking to cut costs. “Your courts costing the town a lot of money.” Justice Subik asked the board what they wanted him to do about it? He noted we are down to one judge and he is getting paid what they used to pay two judges. Councilman Sprung did not want him to do anything different. The justice has no control over how many tickets are written. Councilman Palcovic noted that he had control over their disposition. Justice Subik noted his biggest expense is the OCA software. He updates his law books regularly. His mailing expense has increased due to new regulations. He reviewed his expenses and noted the cost to go to NYC for training. Supervisor Selmsler asked if it is necessary to go to NY every year? Justice Subik states the training and instructors are much better there. He noted he has been a delegate for the town for a number of years as well. Supervisor Selmsler stated, “we have already made a decision and somebody else has volunteered to represent the town.” Supervisor Selmsler noted the educational classes at FMCC. He did not know if it was totally necessary to go to NY.

Justice Subik asked Supervisor Selmsler to let him know about this, as he has to plan ahead for future training.

Mr. Insogna submitted budget requests, which are pretty much the same as the previous year. No major increases. Mr. Insogna has a problem with the 544G Loader. To have it repaired it would cost around \$39,000.00. It is dangerous to drive on the sand pile. If it quits you can't steer, drop the bucket, or break. The governor is bad and so are the injectors. It is a 1989 with 14,000 hours on it. Some of the other pumps are bad, the cab is rotted, and the axel bearings and pins are gone. A new machine cost \$87,500.00, or they can shop for a used one for about \$40,000 - \$45,000.00. The 1996 Loader was checked out it is in pretty good shape and has 10,000 hrs on it. Two peddles have to be replaced it is throwing fluid. They are \$600.00 each. The board was in favor of having the work done. He did not plan to replace a Loader this year. He can operate the machine on ground level. NorTrack gave him a trade-in value of \$19,000.00. Plus it is going to be more if they have to get into the transmission. Information on payment plans were given to the Highway Superintendent. There is a 5-year plan at \$19,000.00 per year and 10-year plan at around \$11,000.00. This is based on a state contract. A ten-year lease on the loader was thought to be preferred. Mrs. Hillier noted that she tallied the fund balance and the \$60,000.00 CD has been cashed in.

Councilman Sprung asked if there was a plan in place to discipline employees that don't take care of the town equipment. Supervisor Selmsler asked about employees who do not wear the safety vests like they are supposed to. Mr. Insogna stated that he has warned them and stated it is mandatory. The board wants Mr. Insogna to make sure that all safety practices are followed through with. If the employee does not conform there must be a paper trail of the counseling sessions by the Highway Superintendent. This is article 75A of the Civil Service Law. The board wants to provide a safe work environment for the employees by providing the tools they need. If they aren't following through then we have to document it. Mr. Insogna noted that one employee calls in sick when he doesn't have benefit time. The Highway Superintendent is thinking of making the garbage run a part time job. A work session will be scheduled to discuss these personnel issues completely. A notice could be drawn up with an effective date and the disciplinary actions for the employees to sign. Councilman Sullivan also asked to make sure that all loads are covered.

Councilman Palcovic asked for another competitive bid on the loader. Sometimes state contract is not the lowest. Supervisor Selmsler asked about the bridge repair line item it is up \$2,000.00. Highway Superintendent Insogna noted the North Bush Bridge has to be repaired. It is undermined and it is estimated to cost around \$9,000.00. Randy Bass does this type of work for the county and the job does not have to be bid out. Council Member Scribner has information on that bridge from when Mr. Szurek was Highway Superintendent. She thought that since the bridge was historic the town could receive money to repair it. She will find the paperwork on this. Supervisor Selmsler said one of his main concerns was staffing. He wondered if there was any possibility in changes in staffing. This will be discussed at a future work session. Councilman Palcovic wondered if there was anyone who worked construction and may want to work on an on call basis to plow. The board discussed using one wingman in the winter on the plow truck. This could be done on the county highways but not on the side roads. Mr. Insogna had, in the past, discussed purchasing a smaller plow truck with a sander on it. Every few weeks the big truck could push back the banks. The board discussed a 450 ton/ton and a half truck with a sander on it. Eventually two of the sanders from the 80's will have to go. Mr. Insogna would like to keep the big trucks off the small roads. Councilman Sullivan recommended that a V plow be spec'd out.

Snow Removal CE – sand and fuel come out of this line item. The sand expenses can come out of his CHIPS money. Last year almost \$30,000.00 was spent on sand at \$6.00 a yard. This year he purchased it for \$2.50 a yard. Roughly \$12,000.00 was spent on sand for next year. There is about \$60,000.00 in CHIPS for 2010.

Assessor Katherine Hillock noted there is an extra \$2826.00 in her CE line item. This is the expense for two years for her software program. She put \$1,500.00 in her equipment account as a buffer. She does not expect any major expense. She does not know how old her computers are maybe 3 or 4 years. The Supervisor asked if the assessor was comfortable operating without a clerk. There is \$11,000.00 in the line item. She left the same hours in the budget she is planning to use Sandy Pavlus toward the end of the year to help with exemptions. Both Mr. Heberer and the assessor want to use her as a clerk. She does not plan to have her work 40 hrs a week. The board asked how many hours should be budgeted for next year. Mrs. Hillock thought \$9,000.00 in P.S. Clerk should be enough. \$500.00 was left in the equipment line item.

Mrs. Hillier reviewed the first page of the budget with the board. She notes the basic tax rate is up about 5%. She is projecting in the general fund all-inclusive which means the CD that was labeled as highway building. It is no longer reserved, it is all part of the fund balance. To hold down taxes she will use \$175,595.00. There will be around 5% left in fund balance. She would like to see 20% in reserve. If everything works out she estimates a 10% fund balance conservatively. Mrs. Hillier put 40% more in retirement. Retirement projects a 33% increase next year. For many years there wasn't an increase in the budget. Mrs. Hillier noted last year the budget was overspent in attorneys, engineering, and on the building projects we did. We have to go by the budget. We have to start bonding for things we need if there isn't money in the budget. Council Member Scribner asked if the new shed was in the budget. Supervisor Selmser responded presently it is not. He thought there were adequate revenues in there to cover part of it. Estimates for the other two components of the structure are being sought and they are saying it is going to cost a lot more than originally discussed. That is why Council Member Scribner wanted all three bids in before the work commenced. Supervisor Selmser stated initially the project was thought to cost \$60,000.00 now the estimate is an additional \$70,000.00 to \$75,000.00 to finish in addition to what we have started. "We have to make a decision." The footings are poured we are committed on that.

Supervisor Selmser noted that our revenues on sales tax and mortgage taxes are off. Mrs. Hillier noted the last two payments showed an 11% decrease. We have not yet received the third quarter payment. Supervisors Selmser took the sales tax down 10% or \$15,000 - \$20,000. Next year the revenues A1120 line item will have \$480,000.00 for sales taxes vs. \$510,000.00 this year.

Supervisor wanted to look at areas to change or increase revenues. He looked at landfill solid waste fees. The revenues from the stickers cover half the cost of the transfer station. The county is looking to increase the tipping fees in the future. Supervisor Selmser gave the board a spreadsheet on the revenues brought in by the sale of stickers. Last year the Town took in around \$9,000.00 and the cost was \$17,000.00. This does not include the curbside garbage pickup or the recycling pickup. This year the figures look comparable. The board discussed transfer station sticker fees for 2010. The board noted that residents do receive curbside pickup in the town. Justice Subik asked about subcontracting out the garbage pickup. That was done in the past.

RESOLUTION to increase transfer station permit fees

#2009 – 064

Offered by Councilman Sprung

Seconded by Councilman Palcovic

WHEREAS, the Caroga Town Board held a work session on Wednesday October 7, 2009 at 6:30 pm, and

WHEREAS, Supervisor Selmser created a spreadsheet outlining the revenues from permits sold and expense of the tipping fees at the transfer station comparatively, and

WHEREAS, the board discussed the fees charged in other towns throughout Fulton County for vehicles to access a transfer station, and the fact that the town does have curbside pickup, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to set the fee for transfer station permits for 2010 as follows:

Car - \$10.00	Truck - \$30.00
Trailer \$30.00	Temporary Truck or Trailer \$15.00

Carried by a vote of 4 Ayes and 1 Nay [Council Member Scribner]

The board discussed the Time Warner Franchise Tax. Supervisor Selmsler noted that 1% would bring in \$5,000.00 as revenue. Supervisor Selmsler stated the tax is only on the cable not on the roadrunner. Mrs. Hillier noted that Mayfield and Broadalbin bring in about \$42,000.00 and \$44,000.00 respectively.

RESOLUTION to set Time Warner franchise tax #2009-065

Offered by Councilman Palcovic

Seconded by Supervisor Selmsler

WHEREAS, the Caroga Town Board held a work session on Wednesday October 7, 2009 at 6:30 pm, and

WHEREAS, the board discussed setting a fee for users of Time Warner Cable in the Town of Caroga, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to set a 4% fee in the renewal contract with Time Warner Cable through its Albany Division at 1021 High Bridge Road, Schenectady NY 12303.

Unanimously Carried

The Budget Director added \$20,000.00 to the revenue side of the budget. The Justice salary was not raised in 2010. The travel expense for training was discussed. This expense comes out of the contractual line item. The budget director noted that the requested \$2,500.00 needs to stay as in years past he has been consistently way overdrawn. Councilman Palcovic want to make sure there was money in the budget to cover the one-day certification at FMCC and not in NYC. Councilman Palcovic spoke to another town justice who attended that training and he had no complaints about it. He noted the supervising judge of our region teaches the course. In the Assessor CE line item it was noted that the software expense is for two years. The equipment line item was reduced by 1,000.00. The town clerk has \$400.00 on the equipment line item incase something happens to her refurbished printer, which was purchased over two years ago.

In A3620.4 Mr. Heberer asked for \$4,000.00 on the contractual line. This is for everything, training, mileage, office supplies. Earlier in the day the Supervisor and the Budget Director met with Mr. Heberer a request for new chairs and a new laptop were squashed. The file cabinet will come out of this year's budget. Councilman Sprung wanted to discuss the clerk line item. He noted one person would draw a salary from both departments. Council Member Scribner noted there is an hourly rate set, and they can't go over the budgeted amount. It was noted that the golf course

personal services were not increased because Mr. Jennings wants to restructure the wages. Councilman Sprung wants to hire retirees on the golf course to get away from unemployment, last year only one person filed for unemployment. The previous year there were several. Council Member Scribner asked why the youth director did not attend a budget session. She hopes she does not show up next year and need more funds for the program. Councilman Sprung heard that heating costs were going to be down considerably. At this time no bids have been received for fuel, gasoline or diesel.

The board asked that the custodian take down the flags lining the roadway.

On line item A8160.4 – Refuse and Garbage was raised \$5,000.00 this year. That was because of the asbestos removal in the old section last year. The line item was put back to \$40,000.00.

Councilman Palcovic asked what happens if a position is cut on the highway department. Mrs. Hillier noted that a person worked for two days and then filed for unemployment. The town is fighting this. The board wants to streamline that department. A meeting will be set up with the highway superintendent. The highway superintendent salary did not receive an increase this year. It was noted that the councilman salaries are all equal.

Councilman Sprung asked if the rate was set where everyone wanted it to be. Mrs. Hillier noted that this tax rate – an increase of 5% is a good thing. That is what the board took the budget up. She noted that we have to stick to our budget and make the department heads be accountable to the board before they go over – not after the fact. The major operating expense is the highway department. The board wants purchases to remain local.

The next regular monthly board meeting is next Wednesday. The Supervisor and Budget Director will fine tune this budget information and have it available for the work session.

Councilman Sprung asked if the rate is going to be left where it is. He wondered with what we cut out tonight would the rate change? Mrs. Hillier recommended leaving the rate the same and take less of a toll on the fund balance. He thought there might be money for the utility shed through the cuts made this evening. Mrs. Hillier noted that we have to bond out for this. She notified the board that if they want to do a specific project then they need to have figures, as it has to go in the budget. We would not bond next year because first you borrow then bond the following year. The payment would come up in 2011. The shed would come out of this budget and the utility work would have to be budgeted for next year. Councilman Sprung wants to determine where the additional \$70,000.00 is going to come from to complete the shed.

Mrs. Hillier informed the board that there is a problem with Shepard Oil and an outstanding balance. She did some research, and they did their research and found a discrepancy of \$782.75 in their favor. There are two charges for which we never received a bill. They have excess money of overpayments from prior years. Shepard said it is a red flag they have had for a very long time. They identified the problem from back in 2006. The town should not be dealing with this three years later. There is a new system in place at Shepard Oil. There were two deliveries that they never billed us for. The board decided to pay the \$782.75 to Shepard Oil on a prepaid voucher. A hold was put on our account over this matter.

At 8:36 pm Councilman Sprung made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Sullivan seconded the motion. All board members were in favor of the motion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda M. Gilbert – RMC
Town Clerk