

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING OF
THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
ON THE TOWN BUDGET FOR 2020
HELD ON NOVEMBER 7, 2019**

Present: Margaret Robertson, Interim Supervisor
Kevin Smith Sr., Councilmember
Jesse Newton, Councilmember
Mark Baumli, Councilmember
Norman Rasmussen, Councilmember

Recording Secretary: Tistrya Houghtling, Town Clerk

Others Present: Jeff Winestock, Highway Superintendent
Jessica Byrne, Town Justice
Jack Nevers, Town Justice
Steve Powers, CAC Member
Cynthia Creech, CAC Member & ZRC Member
Eugenia Browning, LVPA
Judy Zimmer, NL Rep to CC OFA & Cleaner
Several Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER:

The public hearing was called to order at 6:38 p.m. by Interim Supervisor Robertson.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE:

Interim Supervisor Robertson waived the reading of the public hearing notice and asked Town Clerk Houghtling to include the following notice in the minutes:

**TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
ON THE LVPA 2020 PRELIMINARY BUDGET AND
THE TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
2020 PRELIMINARY BUDGET**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the PRELIMINARY BUDGET of the TOWN OF NEW LEBANON for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2020, including general town funds, highway funds, and fire protection district funds, has been completed and filed in the office of the Town Clerk at the New Lebanon Town Hall, 14755 NYS Route 22, New Lebanon, New York, where it is available for inspection by any interested persons during regular Town Clerk office hours. The Preliminary Budget for 2020 has also been posted on the town website (www.townofnewlebanon.com) and can be viewed or downloaded from the website.

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Town Board of the Town of New Lebanon shall hold a public hearing on the Lebanon Valley Protective Association's 2020 Preliminary Budget on Thursday, November 7, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at the New Lebanon Town Hall, 14755 NYS Route 22 for the purpose of receiving public input on said budget.

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Town Board of the Town of New Lebanon shall hold a public hearing on the Town of New Lebanon’s 2020 Preliminary Budget on Thursday, November 7, 2019 at 6:15 p.m. at the New Lebanon Town Hall, 14755 NYS Route 22 for the purpose of receiving public input on said budget.

The following are the proposed 2020 salaries of the Elected Town Officers of the Town of New Lebanon:

Supervisor	\$14,772
Councilmembers (4)	\$4,000 each
Town Clerk	\$35,000
Highway Superintendent	\$64,840
Town Justices (2)	\$11,259 each
Tax Collector	\$10,812

The following is the proposed amount for 2020 for the Lebanon Valley Fire Protective Association:

SF-1	\$129,500
------	-----------

By order of the Town Board of the Town of New Lebanon

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Interim Supervisor Robertson opened the floor to public comment.

Michael Deegan asked what the difference is between the budget officer’s tentative budget and the preliminary budget. Interim Supervisor Robertson stated that the tentative budget is what the town board discusses and hashes over and changes when the board comes to an agreement and then what has been agreed upon becomes the preliminary budget. Town Clerk Houghtling stated that the Supervisor prepares the tentative budget and the town board as a whole works from the tentative to make the preliminary budget. Michael Deegan asked why we are decreasing the pay of the Supervisor for next year. Councilmember Newton stated that technically we are not. It is actually split into two separate account, personnel services and secretary. They used to be two separate line items on the budget and were combined so now it’s the same amount but the choice is left to whoever is sitting in that position to combine them and do their own secretarial work or keep them separate. Michael Deegan asked what was the budget in 2016 and what was the budget in 2017 for the Supervisor. Interim Supervisor Robertson stated she doesn’t know, she doesn’t have the old budget with her. Councilmember Smith stated it was lower. Town Clerk Houghtling stated that it was \$17,772 because there was a \$5,000 increase in the 2018 budget. Councilmember Baumli stated that is the same year that the councilmembers went from \$2,000 to \$4,000. Michael Deegan asked what this does as far as precedence for the future. Councilmember Smith asked what he means. Michael Deegan stated that he is very concerned because 6 months ago when we lost our Supervisor there were people talking about the Interim Supervisor working for nothing. That sets a bad precedent to have somebody come in here and work for nothing. Interim Supervisor Robertson stated he is right, that is why it didn’t work.

Cynthia Creech asked if there is a cost of living on the salaries. Councilmember Newton

stated that there is a 3% COLA across the board with the exception of new people coming in to a position and a couple minor exceptions. There was a merit based increase for park staff and the Highway Superintendent received much deserved a 5% increase. Cynthia Creech asked if the compensation plan that the town adopted is in place in the 2020 budget. Councilmember Newton stated no because there needs to be reviews by the department heads and that criteria hasn't been established yet.

Adelia Moore asked what is the basis for the increase in the court clerk over the last couple of years. Interim Supervisor Robertson stated because the court clerk's actually run the court. Adelia Moore stated that she is not questioning the work she is just wondering about the increase in the budget. Town Clerk Houghtling stated that it is an increase in hours but the hourly rate is still the 3% COLA.

Monte Wasch asked why there is no COLA on the Supervisor's budget. Councilmember Newton stated because it is going to be a new Supervisor coming in. Monte Wasch stated in his experience COLAs go with the job, not with the person. Councilmember Smith stated that there was a \$5,000 raise given the year before and there was such a large increase there. Councilmember Newton stated that we skipped the COLA on a couple of things that we adjusted up by merit or brought up to standards common with the county last year. Monte Wasch stated that he hopes we accept the principal that a cost of living adjustment goes with the job, not with the personality. Cynthia Creech stated that the Town Clerk went down \$2,700. Councilmember Newton stated that went down to the starting salary. Councilmember Smith stated that the base pay is lower if you come into the position new because of the experience. He believes that is what the compensation plan committee set up. Town Clerk Houghtling stated that we worked on a compensation plan for a couple of years. Each position we defined a starting salary and we defined a way for increases to be based on employee evaluations. Those evaluations aren't in place yet so this year we did the COLA. Hopefully next year we will have evaluations to base merit increases on and when a COLA goes across it will affect all of the starting salaries as well. The Supervisor position was a little tricky because it didn't actually get set a salary amount, what got set was \$25 an hour at 20 hours a week which would be \$26,000. This board did not go with what was proposed in the compensation plan for that starting rate, but they did adopt a salary based on \$25 an hour so that salary of \$22,772 divided by \$25 per hour is going to dictate how many hours the person in that position works. If the town decides they want the Supervisor to work more hours, they can adjust the salary accordingly. It is not an hourly position but we had to have some basis for what the salaries are based on because one person working for a salary was making over \$100 per hour and another person who was salaried was making \$15 per hour so we used a fair hourly rate to figure out what that salary should be, but of course as a salaried employee some weeks you work way more and some weeks you might work a little less but that is what we tried to use. Interim Supervisor Robertson stated that her big argument was that when you are salaried you put in 1,000 hours or you put in 10 hours, it is what you are earning. Cynthia Creech stated that typically salaried employees make more per hour than hourly employees. Interim Supervisor Robertson stated that the Town Supervisor will also be making a salary of \$14,000 from the county so when you combine the two, it's not too shabby a deal. Councilmember Baumli stated that the Supervisor's health insurance also comes from the County, not the Town.

Judy Zimmer asked on page 3 for human resources, did the town used to have a human resources person and somehow that got absorbed into another position. Interim Supervisor Robertson stated that years ago it was a separate position but now it is done by the Town Supervisor. Judy Zimmer asked if the town has considered whether a human resources position is important to have. Councilmember Smith stated that it used to fall under secretary if you look under the Supervisor budget line, it would fall under that extra \$8,000 position. Judy Zimmer asked if the Supervisor wanted to have a human resources person, it would fall under that \$8,000 otherwise the Supervisor would take on that role. Interim Supervisor Robertson stated yes. She is doing both. Councilmember Baumli stated that is what Colleen did. She stated that years ago she had a bookkeeper that did that.

Michael Deegan asked what the State, County and Town laws say about someone holding multiple positions. Councilmember Newton stated that just because we have them separated out in the budget line, it is the choice of the Supervisor to have a secretary or assume those themselves, they are still only a single position. They are a Supervisor who does their own secretarial work. Michael Deegan asked if they have talked to the lawyer about this. Councilmember Baumli stated that after the 1st of the year, the new board could move that money from the secretary budget line to the supervisor salary line. Michael Deegan stated that doesn't mean it is legal. Town Clerk Houghtling stated that we have multiple employees that work multiple positions for the town and there is nothing illegal about that.

Christine Dreyfus asked when LED streetlights might be installed. Town Clerk Houghtling stated that we are waiting on NYSEG and they are hoping it will be before the end of the year.

CLOSING OF PUBLIC HEARING:

All persons desiring to be heard, having been heard, a motion was made by Councilmember Smith, seconded by Councilmember Newton and approved unanimously to close the public hearing at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tistrya Houghtling
New Lebanon Town Clerk