

STONY POINT TOWN BOARD SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING
OCTOBER 5, 2010

A Special Budget Workshop Meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Stony Point, Rockland County, New York, was held on October 5, 2010 at 7:00 P.M. at the Stony Point Community Center (Rho Building), 5 Clubhouse Lane, Stony Point, New York. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance. The following roll call was recorded:

PRESENT: Councilman Geoffrey Finn
Councilman Louis Vicari
Councilman James White
Councilwoman Luanne Konopko
Supervisor William E. Sherwood

ABSENT: None

Supervisor Sherwood explained that the purpose of this special meeting is for the presentation of the 2011 tentative budget to the Town Board.

Joan Skinner Town Clerk presented the Board with the tentative budget.

Supervisor Sherwood read the following budget message:

The Town's finances remain in crises and I am submitting a budget that I believe will continue to provide the necessary town services at the most reasonable cost to our taxpayers. It is not pain free for anyone. Stony Point remains the best town in the county where you get what you pay for; police, roads, sewers and safety codes are all addressed and there is no better place in the county to have a home, open a business, visit and shop. The budget last year was balanced by taking almost 25% of the total tax levy from town reserves. This represents more than 40% of our reserve fund and leaves us with dangerously low savings and threatens our bond rating. It gave taxpayers some temporary relief in the hopes that economic times would improve. We all know that the local and national economy continues to be depressed and we cannot again tap reserves to the same extent. On top of the \$2.5 million that was taken from savings we are facing contractual increases for wages and an unresolved police contract that will call for retroactive payments that will be awarded by state arbitrators. Health insurance premiums for our employees are a contractual obligation and will increase by 17% to \$2,185,000 or about one fifth of our tax levy. Retirement costs will go up 41% for town employees and 25% for police officers and total \$1,875,000. These two items are not in our control and represent about 40% of the tax levy. There is little help from state or county government aide and in fact the modest help we get from these sources is delayed crating cash flow problems. To keep the increase to a minimum I request the use of \$1.4 million from reserves. While maintaining reserves at fiscally responsible levels is a top priority we must also provide taxpayers with whatever relief we can. Therefore, it will be necessary to make drastic cuts to our work force. Our police department which currently has 28 full time officers will be cut by 5 officers. Outside of the Police Department the town has about 60 full time employees in sewer, highway, parks and town hall. This budget calls for layoff of 10 employees from those departments. Short of additional crippling layoffs there is little more we can do to reduce expenses. Voluntary wage freezes, furloughs, retirements and give backs could save some positions. The budget submitted herewith calls for a tax increase for the average homeowner of about \$20 per month. Because the national and state economy is still looking extremely weak we must look ahead to next year. Some of the areas we are looking at are:

- County wide police force or a North Rockland police force combined with the Town of Haverstraw.
- District courts for the county eliminating our local justice courts.

- Repeal of binding arbitration and repeal of the onerous Rockland County Police Act that was passed in 1933 and restricts our management rights with the police.
- Getting a state cap on school tax increases at 4% or rate of inflation (school taxes represent about 75% of your total tax bill as town taxes are only 17% of your total tax bill.)
- Sale of the surplus property at Patriot Hills to get a onetime revenue source and return the property to the tax rolls.
- Getting a contribution from the school district for our School Resource Officer (they contribute for two officers from Haverstraw.)
- Reducing outside legal fees.

Increasing Revenues:

- Getting new ratables is a top priority but extremely difficult in this economy. We are actively pursuing new development on the Lovett plant site which is ideal for the right type of industrial development.
- Our beautiful waterfront is ideal for town house development and neighborhood retain as well as recreational uses.
- Private development at Patriot Hills of commercial ratables that would complement our golf course and catering facility/conference center.

The tentative budget for the Highway Department was discussed between the Town Board, Finance Director and Larry Brissing (Superintendent of Highways).

The tentative budget for the Parks Department and Buildings and Grounds was discussed between the Town Board, Finance Director and Rich Ryder (Maintenance Supervisor Grounds).

Councilman Finn announced that budget talks would proceed at the next regular town board meetings on October 12, 2010 and October 26, 2010.

Adjourn

At 8:44 pm a motion was made by Councilman White, seconded by Councilwoman Konopko and carried by a voice vote to adjourn the October 5, 2010 Stony Point Town Board Special Budget Workshop Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Skinner
Town Clerk