

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

April 27, 2020

7:00 p.m.

Due to public health and safety concerns from COVID-19 this meeting will be closed to members of the public

The public can still watch the live meeting online through the Zoom app or website

<https://zoom.us/join>

Meeting ID and Password to be posted on Village Website prior to meeting

If any interested members of the public would like to provide comments prior to the meeting, comments can be emailed to dburke@tuckahoe-ny.com and will be distributed to the entire Board

The Tentative Budget for FY2020-2021 can be accessed at

https://www.tuckahoe.com/sites/tuckahoeny/files/uploads/vot_tentative_budget_fy20_21.pdf

CALL TO ORDER/ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Trustee Andino

Trustee Lang

Trustee Howell

Trustee Lee

Mayor Luisi

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 1) Public hearing to consider a proposed local law repealing local law #3 of 2019 which authorized a FYE 2021 budget to exceed the NYS tax cap
Trustee Andino made a motion to open public hearing; motion was seconded by Trustee Howell and upon roll motion was carried by a vote 5-0.
Mayor Luisi made a motion to close public hearing; motion was seconded by Trustee Andino and upon roll motion was carried by a vote 5-0.

FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE BOARD ON AGENDA ITEMS

RESOLUTIONS

- 1) Authorizing a proposed local law repealing local law #3 of 2019 which authorized a FYE 2021 budget to exceed the NYS tax cap

Trustee Andino made a motion to approve motion; motion was seconded by Trustee Howell and upon roll motion was carried by a vote 5-0.

- 2) Authorizing the adoption of the fiscal year June 1, 2019 through May 31, 2020 Village Budget with modifications.

David Burke said this budget is a fair budget and a plan. We really have to go through the lines in months to come for modification. It is fair with what information we have now.

Trustee Lee made a motion to adopt budget; motion was seconded by Trustee Andino and upon roll motion was carried by a vote 5-0.

DISCUSSION

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS TO THE BOARD

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Mayor Luisi announced:

Next Village Board Meeting – May 11th at 7:00pm

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBER REPORTS

► TRUSTEE Andino The budget process for the Village or any other organization does not end with the adoption of the budget in front of us. Instead it's a living document that has to be monitored and amended as needed throughout the year. This holds true now more than ever given the current crisis in the world, the country, the state, the county and right here in our beloved Tuckahoe. The COVID-19 pandemic is a public health and financial crisis that will touch us long after it resolves. Prior to the impact of this crisis, we had already been grappling with the fact that the delay of the hotel opening would result in lost tax revenue for the village, we were already looking at what the impact of our sewer and traffic light infrastructure would be as well as a reduction in budgeted meter revenues.

Within the last 4-5 weeks, we have been hit hard and we did not see it coming. First and foremost, we have all been impacted in some way, but I want to acknowledge those who tested positive and are suffering as well as those 962 people in Westchester County who lost their lives to this disease and their loved ones who are now left to grieve. Having said that, we as a board, along with David Burke, our Village Administrator and Dept. Heads must also look at the financial impact of this crisis and continuously monitor our budget in the months and years to come and strategize for the future. We currently have no meter and permit revenues coming in and getting things back up and running will take some planning. I am really grateful that the Village does have a fund balance (savings) to fall back on, but we will also need to look at ways to build it back up as we move forward.

I thank all of the village leadership and staff as well as the board for the, sometimes, spirited discussions as we grapple to make tough decisions during such a time as this.

► TRUSTEE Lang First I want to start by thanking all of the department heads for their help in streamlining this year's budget I just want to start by saying that this budget process is the most important thing we do as trustees of this village and it's something I take very seriously So in regards to this years budget we have been diligently working on it line by line And believe we put together a reasonable and fiscally responsible budget All the while protecting our fund balance.

We have put ourselves in the best possible position to fight the financial shortfall we expect next year We have been able to do this without lay-offs And without a cut to services Early in the budget process

Myself and trustee Lee suggested we bond for as many capital expenditures as we possibly could knowing that we can take advantage of low interest rates and possibly refinance any existing loans

Our bond rating has just been increased making now the best time to take advantage of favorable interest rates. These efforts help to lower taxes from our preliminary budget and as a result the tax increase will be just over a half a percent .67 to exact. If I had it my way and if not for this cloud hanging over our heads and our villages unsure future I would have dipped into the fund balance and made it zero. However I pledge to continue building our fund balance to enable next year's budget to be as low as this year's and with a little luck even lower. Once in a while the Unexpected happens. Such as this virus. I want the residents to know I am focused on keeping a lid on taxes during these difficult times as so many Families and are just trying to get by. Further more I have joined forces with the mayor and decided to take the 5k dollar stipend I receive and put it back in our local businesses. Just to recap the budget has come in well under the tax. Levi we've done this while maintaining the services we all come to enjoy and best of all without layoffs. We will continue to invest in our infrastructure. Such as our roadways, sidewalks and curbs. And upgrading our parks. Continue Advancing in environmentally friendly initiatives. As well as many other projects that make Tuckahoe great place to live.

► TRUSTEE Howell This budget process has been probably one of the most difficult in our history. Before the pandemic we were investigating the reasons why our revenue from parking meters had decreased, also our permits and licensing were significantly lower, and were expecting no revenue from the hotel, and now expecting very low numbers on sales tax revenue and really all of these sources came to a halt by mid-March. That is all but thrown out the window now. This board will be closely following the budget every month like we have never done before.

In such a time we can make unconventional decisions. Last meeting it was mentioned that some of us would forego our stipend. It will still show on the budget because we want to keep that expectation that trustees of our village will be given a stipend. I will be foregoing mine this next year because I can. I believe it will be best spent here. I want residents to know though that it is really important to offer the stipend because we want this to be open to as many people as possible and there are people who would need it to offset costs of being a trustee such as attending charity functions that support the village or driving to NYCOM meetings.

We have moved what we could on capital expenses to be added to a bond which we're planning on later this year primarily to raise monies needed for repair of our sewer and traffic light systems. In addition, we are thinking to the future with this effort and will include funds to be put toward embarking on updating our Master Plan. We will also be planning and working across several groups as we plan to come back to something that looks like normal life after the Covid19 pandemic. I never imagined in my wildest dreams my background as an infectious disease scientist would be of benefit as a trustee. When we were faced with decisions such as postponing elections or closing schools or the parks I knew I could see in the data it was crucial to make those decisions. My stand on the postponing elections was not well received at first. While the ultimate decision for elections was in the hands of the Governor I felt it was important for us as elected officials to lobby for those things to happen for the safety of our constituents and I did to our state and county representatives. I am so thankful I did. I think if we had held elections we would have put so many in danger and the same is true of keeping Eastchester schools and our village parks closed. Bringing these functions back will require a lot of planning and thought and right now our police, DPW, library, community center and village hall are starting to formulate what that might look like. So ask for your patience. You have done an amazing job so far as a community. We have lost some beloved members of our community and I want to again express my condolences to their

families. We do not want to experience any more loss. The board will be working to ensure your safety and we need your continued support to do so.

Wanted to remind everyone that there are usually appointments made at this time of year and those will be deferred until a new board has been elected. As always we are looking for residents interested in serving on the planning and zoning board.

► **TRUSTEE Lee** First off I want to express my condolences to those who have lost a love one during this Pandemic. Also, if you are fighting the virus I pray for a speedy recovery.

As you know this past Saturday we were very productive on finalizing the budget. However, it's not normal time right now. We are being hit emotionally, physically and financially. This virus has caused numerous illnesses, has shut down our local businesses and has our restaurants fighting to stay open all within a few short months.

As elected officials this time of year the budget is a main priority, and now with all that is going on we need to help our residents and businesses more than ever.

The budget is pretty solid at this time and I have to say we are very fortunate that we have a strong fund balance.

Thank you to David Burke and Ryan Rueda. Without you we wouldn't be in the great position we are in. We did not lay off any employees which was a goal. However, we did have to cut a little here and there from departments. I am sure each department head understands and I personally want to say Thank you.

Also, I along with Deputy Mayor Lang suggested to remove capital expenditures from our budget and bond for them at a lower interest rate along with refinance old bonds into a lower interest rate bond which would save on interest expense.

Furthermore, I have decided along with Mayor Luisi and Deputy Mayor Lang to dedicate my stipend that I receive from the Village to local businesses to help get them on their feet.

All these efforts I have mentioned helped lower taxes from the preliminary budget and as a result the tax increase will be .67%.

My main goal as your Trustee was to do all I can to help get the budget below the tax cap and we have succeeded.

I am so proud of our accomplishments because we did it without taking away all the things we love about Tuckahoe!

Please join us in helping out our local restaurants, bakeries & Deli's during this horrific time.

Be well and stay safe TUCKAHOE!!

► **MAYOR Luisi** This past February, the New York State Comptroller issued an analysis via the Fiscal Stress Monitoring System regarding the Village's financial condition. Narrow in scope, it measures fiscal stress from a budgetary solvency perspective. It simply asks the question, "Does the local government generate enough revenues to meet expenditures?" We received a "No Designation" score in two categories which means there was no financial stress to the Village and innovative efforts to increase revenue were providing positive results. Moody's last week upgraded the Village from A2 to A1, some of the reasons being improvement to our reserves and increased tax base valuation. The last three months of this current budget (March, April, May) will have seen an estimated loss in revenue in an amount close to \$300,000. It is fortunate that we have a substantial fund balance that will be able to back fill this unanticipated loss due to COVID-19. The budget being presented tonight began at the tax cap of 2.55%, which translates into \$78.21 for the average home assessed at \$7,500. Many serious issues were discussed by the members of this Board as to how to mitigate the impact of today's current situation on Village taxpayers while also keeping an eye on future budgets. Tough decisions had to be made. An open position in DPW caused by attrition, has not been backfilled, the hiring of part time seasonal workers

will be severely curtailed and sidewalk repairs will be impacted. I applaud the entire board who have dedicated their stipends back to the Village and community as show of solidarity with all the residents and business owners. I applaud all of our village employees in every department for coming to work every day and continuing to provide services without missing a beat despite the virus. The focus was to maintain essential services and current full-time staffing levels. We have achieved that and managed to decrease the tax levy to 1.81%. The same home owner mentioned previously will now pay \$28.78 in taxes to the Village. We still continue to maintain a healthy fund balance. However, the following months are filled with uncertainty. Will revenues begin to rise, will Washington pass a stimulus package that will send money to villages to help them recover from the financial losses? This budget may very well be re-visited several times throughout the coming year, with modifications being made depending on our economic recovery.

I thank all our department heads for presenting sensible and financially sound budgets. Many thanks to our Village Treasurer Ryan Rueda for his hard work and dedication and David Burke for overseeing the entire budget process.

SECOND OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Mike Dardano was confused regarding the stipend. The Mayor and trustees explained.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:45PM

Camille DiSalvo, Village Clerk