

SPECIAL MEETING  
November 5, 2015

A special meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Busti was held on November 5, 2015 at 7:00 p.m., at the Town Administration Building, 125 Chautauqua Avenue, Lakewood, New York with the following members present:

Supervisor Jesse M. Robbins  
Councilman Kenneth J. Lawton  
Councilman James Andrews  
Absent:  
Councilman Todd M. Hanson  
Councilman Brett A. Mucheck

Supervisor Robbins called the meeting to order with the salute to the flag and a moment of silence was observed.

Present at the meeting were: David A. Crandall, John Francisco, Susan Lane, Kathy Stedman, Eugene A. Johnson, Rudy Mueller, Myra V. Blasius, Edmund McCague, Bob & Judy Schultz, Bruce & Joan Erickson, Tillie Solomonson, Highway Superintendent Melvin J. Peterson, and Post Journal Reporter Mallory Diefenbach.

Supervisor Robbins noted that it was 7:00 p.m. and moved to open the public hearing on the 2016 Budget which was duly seconded by Councilman Andrews:  
Upon roll call vote, all aye.

Proof of publication was placed on file.

Eugene Johnson asked for clarification of the exact tax increase if the preliminary 2016 budget is adopted and asked the board to find ways to reduce the increase. Supervisor Robbins stated that the preliminary budget has a 16.4% increase, which he is not happy with and will continued to seek ways to reduce that figure.

Joan Erickson requested that the budget include money for the construction of a recreation/community center.

Rudy Mueller noted that if the preliminary budget is adopted, spending would be over \$3.5 million, a 6.9% increase for the total town budget including the special districts. Mr. Mueller stated that the increase would eliminate the savings to tax payers with the county tax decrease; and that the increase will affect primarily residents out side the village. He encouraged the board to keep working to get the rate increase down and offered his assistance.

Myra Blasius, President of the Lakewood Memorial Library Board of Trustees, noted that last year the library has had 20,669 visitors; 30,848 books, e-books, DVDs and audio books have been checked out; people used the public access computers 6,085 times; and over 1,700 participants attended special programs including over 100 children who attended each session of this year's Children Summer Reading Program. The trend for 2015 indicates that these numbers will only increase. The trustee board is requesting that the town budget \$68,000 to be given to the Lakewood Memorial Library. Ms. Blasius noted that the town has cut over \$20,000 given to the library since 2012. Supervisor Robbins noted if the town increased the amount given to both libraries to the \$68,000; it would increase the tax rate 12cents per thousand. Ms. Blasius stated that the board should look at the two libraries and base their contribution on the amount of use rather than just splitting the contributions. Residents outside of the village stated that they are paying for both libraries and feel that the money should be fairly distributed. Discussion followed.

Supervisor Robbins noted that the primary services that the town should be contributing to is Highway, Police, and Fire Departments and sees all other services as secondary.

Bruce Erickson stated that maybe the time has come for more combined services.

Highway Superintendent Melvin Peterson noted that 1/3 of the town budget is the highway budget. He explained that his process of developing the budget was to look at 2013 budget and added 6% on the important issues. Superintendent Peterson pointed out that approximately \$200,000 has been used out of the fund balance in recent years, reducing it to a dangerously low balance of \$68,000.

Discussion followed regarding the total town fund balance and the possibility of using it to reduce the tax levy increase.

Ted McCague stated that he is concerned for the future of the town and how long this trend can be sustained. He suggested that the town seek advice from an outside consultant. Supervisor Robbins noted that he has talked to the Erie County Executive, who has turned that trend around for Erie County, and will be meeting with him some time in the future to seek his advice of what can be done to help the town.

Supervisor Robbins moved to close the public hearing at 7:55 p.m. which was duly seconded by Councilman Lawton:

Upon roll call vote, all aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Darlene H. Nygren, Town Clerk