

**COUNTY OF GREENE
TOWN OF NEW BALTIMORE
PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2009 BUDGET
OCTOBER 27, 2008- Page 1**

Supervisor called the public hearing on the 2009 Preliminary Budget for the Town of New Baltimore to order at 7:35 p.m. Present were: Councilwoman McKeon, Councilmen Kuenster, Norris and Byas, and 1 member of the public. Absent: Highway Superintendent Jordan, Town Clerk Brooks, and Tax Collector Stuart.

Supervisor Louis stated the purpose of the meeting was to hear all present regarding the Preliminary 2009 Budget for the Town of New Baltimore to the Town Board.

The Preliminary Budget carries with it (General and Highway Funds combined) a tax rate increase of 1.78%. In the General Fund there are appropriations of \$655,644, in the Highway Fund there are appropriations of \$944,832, for a total of just over \$1.6 million. The amount to be raised by taxes Town-wide is slightly over \$1,028,000. The 2009 Tentative Budget was left intact for the adoption of a 2009 Preliminary Budget.

There is a total increase in expenditures of slightly more than \$65,000; just over \$11,000 in General Fund and approximately \$54,000 in Highway Fund.

In General Fund there is a full-time elected official increase of 4% or just under \$3,000, a 2% increase for part-time elected officials, there is an hours increase proposed for part-time staff in the Justice Court, and other cost-of-living increases, for a total Personal Services increase of \$13,244. Total Benefits savings to be realized are \$11,880 primarily from the change in health insurance programs.

In the Highway Fund there is a 4% cost of living increase is proposed for full-time employees. \$54,000 increase for fuel and materials, and benefit savings to be realized will be \$5,433 primarily from the change in health insurance programs. The subtotal in the Highway Fund is \$53,979, after a transfer from the Capital Reserve Fund of \$5,000.

Justice Court fines on the revenue side are being increased in the budget by \$20,000, state aid is being increased (2008 increases, no increase is anticipated in 2009) \$22,150, and increases are budgeted in other revenue sources of \$8630, for a subtotal in revenue increases of \$50,780. One-time revenues (in 2008) of \$22,780 must be subtracted, yielding a total increase in the property tax levy of \$42,393 or a 1.78% increase.

Sewer District's proposed budget is nearly the same year to year, expenditures are \$185 less in 2009, revenues balance that decrease.

Lighting District No. 1 has a significant increase, from \$15,500 to \$20,500, due to increased energy costs. The Water Districts are not impacted significantly. Ambulance District No. 1 shows slight increase for basic ambulance service and for paramedic services. Ambulance District No. 2, with the new Town of Coxsackie Ambulance Service's contract, will go from \$7,821 (\$3,000 of which was for basic ambulance service) to \$18,000, overall increase will be expenditures \$15,289. There are some one-time revenues to be taken out, but that levy will go up by \$17,039. Those costs are still below the original projections done in 2003 when Advanced Life Support (ALS) was introduced.

There is a projected Fund Balance in the General Fund at the end of 2008 of \$419,670. Supervisor proposes a (1) \$45,000 transfer to Capital Reserve Fund for Buildings for future projects at the Town Hall and the Highway Garage, (2) \$15,000 to Capital Reserve Fund for Highway Equipment, and (3) \$1,500 to Capital Reserve Fund for Parks Equipment.

Ellie Alfeld asked about the \$45,000 for Buildings? Supervisor explained the current fund has \$11,000 and this would bring it up to \$56,000; it is a "lockbox", with no plans at this point (Justice Court needs are being satisfied by grants already gotten) but there has been conversation about historic work to the meetingroom/schoolroom. Councilman Byas thought that money was to be raised separately. Supervisor pointed to siding, roof, and insulation, one-time renovations. Ellie Alfeld asked if the Board had considered a flat 2%

increase to provide more of a cushion in times of higher energy costs. She asked if the rise in ambulance cost is put on the taxpayers of that district or is it in the total Town Budget? Supervisor answered that prior to 2000, it was the respective fire districts that contracted for ambulance, taxpayers in those fire districts paid the charges. Then the NYS Comptroller's Office revealed that there is no legal authority for fire districts to contract for ambulance services, so the Town formed two ambulance districts with the same boundaries as the current fire districts. Because neither ambulance service (Ravena or Cocksackie) had the means to provide ambulance service to the entire Town, each ambulance district had to make arrangements for that basic service. Ambulance District No.1 contracted with Ravena Rescue Squad; Cocksackie Rescue Squad never had a contract with Ambulance District No.2, despite the Town's efforts to negotiate one, and historically had provided ambulance service at about \$2500/year to the Medway/Grapeville Fire District, but when the Town of Cocksackie took over that ambulance service in 2007, now funded by a municipality, they took a close look at the services being provided outside of the Town of Cocksackie. It seemed fair to everyone to charge on the relative number of calls being made into the out-of-town area as a percentage of the total number of calls. The two Ambulance Districts are no different from a Lighting District in terms of assessed charges; the difference lies in that one of the two Ambulance Districts covers every taxpayer in the Town of New Baltimore with no overlap. Historically Medway's Ambulance District has had a real discount, now it will be fair value. Paramedic service (subjected to a Town-wide referendum at the time), a contractual cost for the entire Town, is allocated on the basis of assessed valuation (same rate per thousand), not the number of calls or the Ambulance District.

Tonight will be followed by the Town Board Regular Meeting on November 10, 2008, for final changes and adoption; the deadline for adoption is November 20, 2008. Ellie made the point that a person could not complain about the tax rate unless they participate in the process.

Councilman Byas asked Supervisor Louis if he had reconsidered checking on the Attorney for the Town budget line. Supervisor responded that he had. Researching the cost of Attorneys in Albany, Greene, Columbia, and Ulster County Towns, he looked at per capita cost. New Baltimore is the third lowest in per capita cost; out of 61 Towns, New Baltimore ranks 42, 41 Towns in the 4 counties pay more per capita for their attorney. Supervisor stated that, in the context of the Budget, he would be uncomfortable with a change.

At 8:00 pm, with no more from the public, Councilwoman McKeon moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Councilman Norris.

Motion Carried **Ayes- 5** **McKeon, Louis, Norris, Byas, Kuenster**
 Nays- 0

The hearing was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Janet A. Brooks
Town Clerk