

Town of Sherman
BOS Budget Hearing
April 1, 2020
Via ZOOM Conferencing

Member's Present: First Selectman Don Lowe, Selectman Bob Ostrosky, and Selectman Kevin Keenan via ZOOM

Member's Absent: None

Audience & Invited: Treasurer Eric Holub, Business Manager Liz LaVia, and several townspeople from the community via ZOOM

Clerk: Margaret Beatty

Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance: First Selectman Don Lowe called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. followed by the pledge

Meeting was initiated by First Selectman Don Lowe updating fellow citizens participating in teleconferencing about the latest information on the Covid pandemic. He discussed precautions the community should be taking to prevent the spread of the virus and current federal/ state mandates. He also gave the current update of cases in town and safeguards to stop the spread and maintain healthy social distancing to protect local residents and businesses. After a brief discussion on the virus, he also highlighted key points of the Town budget, including a 6.3% decrease largely due to debt service (\$390,000 per year) that has been paid up. He said the overall budget (the Town and School) will result in a 3.2% tax decrease. He then yielded to Selectman Bob Ostrosky who proceeded to give a brief synopsis of the Town Budget providing a PowerPoint spread sheet with current proposed figures. Selectman Bob Ostrosky then opened up the conversation to residents with any questions and comments. Treasurer Eric Holub offered additional information about the budget, in particular the potential effect to the Park and Rec budget regarding seasonal help due to the Covid 19 virus. Treasurer Eric Holub interjected discussing the expenses accrued from the prolonged and ever changing criteria to overcome the virus, and expenses logged by the SVFD. With this additional information time was yielded to the residents for comments/questions. (All budgetary information can be found on town website, townofshermanct.org)

Question: Corrine Kevorkian of 1 Jericho Rd. South, what type of issues do you anticipate given the Covid 19 situation that would change revenue? Eric Holub responded discussing the impact as it relates to cash flow. Money has been appropriated for budget items prior to the virus based on prior spending models. He also discussed the ramifications on the potential job loss or delay i.e. lifeguards, camp counselors and the proposed part time P&R position. He also

reviewed the role the state has in providing funding to towns and whether the virus would potentially impact money allocated by district that provided budgetary relief.

Question: Deirdre Fitzpatrick of 13 Smoke Ridge Dr., have any of the line items in the proposed BOE budget expenses been scrutinized, particularly administrative cost with declining student enrollment? First Selectman Don Lowe offered his opinion that the school provided a sufficient presentation of an itemized budget. He stated that he was satisfied with the budget and is noted that the school budget is flat, no increase. In turn, Jeff Melendez and some members of the BOE joined the conference. Superintendent Jeff Melendez offered to provide a truncated version of the budget that might help answer any questions relating to cost/expenses.

BOE and principal/superintendent Jeff Melendez join ZOOM at approximately 7:20 p.m.

Jeff Melendez presents an abbreviated PowerPoint presentation of the BOE Budget. He provided slides with specific information laying out the strategic plan for the schools operational vision. He highlighted areas of the budget that are most beneficial to providing optimal educational standards. All information associated with the BOE budget can be found on school and town website. Following Jeff Melendez's presentation, questions and comments were opened up to the public.

Question: Corrine Kevorkian of 1 Jericho South, with respect to reduction in staffing, how does it correlate to student enrollment? Superintendent Jeff Melendez responded to the question stating that the decline of students encompassed all grade levels and that it did not directly affect the number of sections needed for each grade. The estimated difference in student was 18 and these students' encompassed grades K-8, this decline in students would not directly impact classrooms needed and the number of staff.

Question: Corrine Kevorkian of 1 Jericho South, what is the anticipated number of registered preschoolers and the loss of revenue associated with universal preschool? Superintendent Jeff Melendez also answered this question stating that the Sherman school is anticipating an enrollment of 20 students, 2 classes at 10 per class. The estimated loss of approximate revenue to the town is valued at \$40,000. The recommendation of offering universal preschool to town residents is significant to the educational value.

Note: Any other questions or comments can be emailed to the BOS prior the next Budget workshop scheduled for April 16, 2020.

No further comments or questions, First Selectman Don Lowe motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Motioned By: F. Selectman Don Lowe

Seconded By: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

All in Favor: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by Margaret Beatty on April 6, 2020.

