

**April 14, 2008**

Tentative Budget Hearing  
Fiscal Year ending May 31, 2009  
Called to order 8:00 PM

Present: Mayor John Fitzpatrick  
Trustee Steve Ecklund  
Trustee Luigi Marcoccia  
Trustee Clare Gorman  
Trustee Margaret Coleman

The meeting opened with the salute to the flag and Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Fitzpatrick announced that the Tentative Budget has been available at Village Hall for residents to review since March 20, 2008. He stated that with a preliminary budget changes to this budget were inevitable. He noted that the budget needs to be approved by the Board members by May 1, 2008. Mayor Fitzpatrick announced that the Village Treasurer Stephen Porpora has moved to a new position. The new Treasurer, John Pintos, will make the transition by working with Mr. Porpora and the Board members to complete the budget.

Nora McAvoy, assisting the Village of Tuckahoe Treasurer, reviewed the total expenditures for the preliminary budget. The expenditures amounted to \$10,894,641, which would be a 7.53% increase over last year's budget.

The total non-tax revenues received are projected at \$4,586,309. The Village must collect \$6,308,332 to balance the budget. This results in a tentative increase of 7.29%. This amount would include the appropriated fund levy.

Ms. McAvoy noted that the increase in the tax rate has much to do with the increase in salaries and the recent union settlement, increase in electricity, 20% increase in fuel, and the NY Power Authority has predicted a 15% increase. She stated that when the union settlement was agreed upon, the increase in the employer's contribution for the Social Security tax also increases. Last year's budget did not anticipate the huge increases in electricity and fuel. The property tax will increase 7.12% and the health insurance cost will have an increase of 5.4%.

Mayor Fitzpatrick noted that the Library has hired a Children's librarian. The library needed to offer a higher level tier salary to attract qualified librarians. As a result, the library budget increased by 39%. The library agreed to some cost cutting to afford this increase. As for increases in revenues, Mayor Fitzpatrick stated that the Village is aggressively collecting unpaid fines and the program has already increased revenues for the current year's budget. He noted that he was concerned with the mortgage tax line and sales tax line, as the market has cooled considerably.

Trustee Marcoccia stated that it would be reasonable to assume that the mortgage tax line will be lower as there is very little activity. The forecast for this coming year will take this slowdown into account. He added that the appropriated fund balance is \$250,000 and will be able to include an additional \$100,000.

Mayor Fitzpatrick stated that funds were set aside for the sidewalk paving program. Plans are to pave the secondary roads starting with the worst in the Village. Maple St. is very bad and will be included on the list to be paved. The DPW will not be purchasing any new equipment this year as in the past budgets.

Trustee Ecklund noted that the DPW was neglected for many years and needed new equipment. The newly purchased equipment should last the Village many years. The new superintendent is paying close attention to each budget line. Trustee Ecklund noted that two major cost increases have impacted the budget. The increase in fuel - gas and diesel, and energy - heating, air conditioning and lighting. These two items have impacted society as a whole as vendors are charging surcharges to cover the increase in the cost of delivery.

Trustee Gorman stated that the Environmental Committee is looking into doing an energy audit to trim costs and improve expenditures.

Mayor Fitzpatrick stated that Village Hall is an old school house which is not insulated properly and not a fuel efficient structure. The new system to monitor the heating has helped somewhat. The old building at the DPW has been demolished which should be a reduction for heating costs.

Trustee Ecklund noted that the DPW converted all the trucks to now use a more efficient fuel. He noted that all the Board members were working to prepare a fair budget.

Trustee Marcoccia stated that some of the secondary roads were paved in the past; the plans are now to pave many more. He noted that the parking permit fee has not been raised this year to help residents. He also stated that the Board is working hard to prepare a budget all the residents could live with.

Trustee Coleman stated that the streets were a major issue for the residents. In addition, she noted that the residents have enjoyed the newly purchased trees throughout the Village.

Mayor Fitzpatrick stated that the plans are to plant bigger and more substantial trees than those planted in the past.

### **Public Comments**

Philip Allison, 283 Marbledale Rd., stated that the Allison family will have a 15% increase in the property taxes between the Village and the School tax. He noted that this was a substantial increase for the budget. He noted that within the past ten years, the Village of Tuckahoe has enjoyed immense growth. New buildings such as 50 Columbus Ave., the Rivervue, the Main Street townhouses and office buildings have contributed to the increase in revenues for the Village. He asked why the taxes continue to jump each year with this substantial increase in the tax base. Mr. Allison stated that he disagreed with Senator Klein's recommendation recently regarding the tax formula.

Mayor Fitzpatrick noted that the Village Board cannot predict with any certainty the increase in the approved construction plans. As a result, the Building Dept. was budgeted for \$310,000 and the actual income from permits etc. is now \$676,000. This increase will be allocated for tax certioraris. The loss of assessment is countywide. It is a huge expense for municipalities to do new assessments. In addition, property owners get their property assessed while the property is vacant, full knowing that a building will be built on the lot shortly. It is a few years before the property is reassessed, in the interim the property owner pays taxes based on the empty lot.

Trustee Marcoccia added that in addition to tax certioraris, the state has now relinquished the payment for the police and employee retirement system to the Village as of 4 years ago. The state used to pay the entire cost, but the Village must now pay \$438,000 for police each year and \$204,000 into the employee retirement system each year. This is a considerable amount of money that was not in our budget 4 years ago.

Ms. Nora McAvoy added that the retirement system was doing well with their market investments, once the market took a dive, they reevaluated their policy and decided the municipalities must pick up the cost.

Trustee Marcoccia noted that with all the development in recent years in Tuckahoe, the Village should collect more, but assessments are lower and with tax certioraris, the Village is paying out more than what is coming in.

Mr. Allison asked if Mayor Fitzpatrick was a member of the Council of Mayors. Mayor Fitzpatrick answered that he was a member of the Conference of Mayors.

Trustee Marcoccia noted that with regards to tax certioraris, an appraisal on a home or commercial property may be done as a cost, comparable, or discount cash flow. The state uses the income approach method. He noted that if all three methods were used, tax certioraris maybe less if based on a different method. The Village will possibly owe less if the Village could compare the appraisals.

Trustee Ecklund stated that as bad as a tax rebate is for the Village, it is worse for the school budget.

Jeff Zuckerman, 24 Bronx St., stated that if the Village tax increased 7.5% and the school tax increased 7.5%, than Mr. Allison tax increase is 7.5% not 15%.

Former Mayor Phil White noted that there is a water main beneath Maple St. He advised the Board to be careful when repaving that road. He added that commercial properties can sue on income value when the income has decreased, yet the business may have had several successful years prior. The Village of Bronxville requires that businesses submit their income value every year once they sue due to income value. Mayor White stated that the sales tax from the Village must be shared with the county while the city does not have to share with the county. The utilities have increased which in turn brings more revenue to the Village due to the 1% increase in the sales tax. He noted that although the trees are quite small, they are cheaper for the Village than the more mature trees.

Mayor Fitzpatrick responded that the smaller trees were just too small.

Mayor Fitzpatrick introduced the new Treasurer John Pintos.

Mr. Pintos stated that he was honored to have been selected as the Village Treasurer and looks forward to working with the Board.

Motion by Trustee Ecklund to keep the public hearing open was seconded by Trustee Marcoccia and unanimously carried with a vote of 5 – 0.

There being no further business, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 P. M.

---

Susan Ciamarra, Village Clerk