

Minutes of the special meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Durham held November 5, 2020 in person conferencing at 7:30pm.

Present: Joan Breslin, Deputy Supervisor
Linda Sutton, Council member
Scott Hulbert, Council member
Walt Bennett, Council member

Absent: Shawn Marriott, Supervisor

Recording Secretary: Janet Partridge, Town Clerk

Others Present: Tom Sutton, Police Sgt.
Joe van Holsteyn, Highway Superintendent
5 community members

Deputy Supervisor Breslin called the meeting to order at 7:37pm with the pledge to the flag.

A motion was made by Council member Hulbert to open the public hearing on Local Law #1 of 2020 to override the Tax Levy Limit, seconded by Council Member Bennett, all in favor, motion carried. (4 Ayes – Breslin, Sutton, Hulbert, Bennett)

Breslin explained the property tax levy was set at 2.2% increase and the current budget is a 3.85% increase. She explained it took the board 16 hours to get the budget from 11% increase down to a 3.85% increase.

Hulbert mentioned they can always decrease the budget they just can't increase it at this point.

A motion was made by Hulbert to close the public hearing, seconded by Bennett, all in favor, motion carried. (4 Ayes – Breslin, Sutton, Hulbert, Bennett)

A motion was made by Bennett to adopt Local Law #1 of 2020, seconded by Council Member Sutton, all in favor, motion carried. (4 Ayes – Breslin, Sutton, Hulbert, Bennett)

A motion was made by Hulbert to open the public hearing for the 2021 Preliminary Budget, seconded by Breslin, all in favor, motion carried. (4 Ayes – Breslin, Sutton, Hulbert, Bennett)

The board discussed the health insurance plans and costs. Town Clerk Partridge shared some numbers she put together at home on what the cost would be next year and it looks like there is enough in the budget line for the town to keep the insurance plans they are currently using. The board asked if she would double check her numbers to make sure she was sure they were right and they would be able to ask Supervisor Marriott what he had.

Chris Kohrs called the Town Hall and warned the board she was afraid they were in violation of the open meeting laws. Hulbert suggested to Breslin to call Attorney Rappleyea.

The board members were going to close the public hearing and adopt the budget but after further discussion and attempts to make contact with Attorney Rappleyea, it was decided although they needed to hold the public hearing by today, they need to keep it open until the next meeting to give the public a chance to ask questions.

Discussion on whether to wait and keep the public hearing open and not adopt the Local Law until the next meeting followed.

A motion was made by Breslin to rescind the adoption of the Local Law #1 of 2020 and to leave the public hearing open until the November 17th meeting so more of the public can be heard, seconded by Hulbert, all in favor, motion carried. (4 Ayes – Breslin, Sutton, Hulbert, Bennett)

The members of the highway department present at the meeting were asked if they had any questions. They asked if there could be more communication with the board and the highway employees. They asked why they weren't even given a copy of the health insurance plan options the board was looking at. In the past they were reviewed with the employees. Partridge made copies for them.

The ambulance budget was questioned because it was a large increase. It was explained that the EMS workers were only going to be getting \$14/hour with no benefits. If there is not funding for the ambulance squad we have no service here in our town.

The highway employees feel the health benefits are the most important part of their job. They are working 6 months of the year with the phone always ringing at all hours to report. Breslin suggested to van Holsteyn if he thinks health insurance benefits are his number one priority for his workers then that is what he should be fighting for first and foremost.

A motion was made by Hulbert to adjourn at 8:29pm, seconded by Bennett.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Partridge
Town Clerk/Collector