

The minutes of the Special Meeting of the Village of Haverstraw Board of Trustees on Monday, April 9, 2012, beginning at 8:00 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL	Trustee Batista	- Present
	Trustee Bueno	- Present
	Trustee Watson	- Late
	Trustee Dominguez	- Present
	Mayor Kohut	- Present

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor opened the Public Hearing with regard to the 2012-2013 Village Budget. He announced there were copies available for anyone not having a copy. He then gave a general overview of the changes proposed for the 2012-2013 budget as follows:

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Board of Trustees – Small reduction.

Village Justice Court – Minimal increase for the court officers.

Contractual Expenses – Minimal increase for interpreters for the court.

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Treasurer – Decrease and Increase by switching payroll processing to its own line.

Contractual Expenses – Increase from \$2,000.00 to \$3,000.00 based on estimates for the year.

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Law & Personal Services - A slight increase due to the retention of the Ass't. Village Attorney, on an hourly basis, to act as prosecutor pleading vehicle and traffic violations before the judge allowing the Village to collect more fees.

Engineering Contractual – Slight increase due to additional Village projects, such as the work on the Streetscape and the Promenade.

Shared Services – Increased due to the price of fuel for the Village equipment, as well as a slight increase in gas/electric fees.

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Special Items: Municipal Association Dues – Increase in dues paid to NYCOM (New York Conference of Mayor's).

Judgments & Claims – Reduction due to some pending litigation costs, specifically tax certioraris, that have been litigated.

Contingent Account – Reduction due to some adjustments to the budget.

Personnel Services/Crossing Guard – Small increase due to the possible addition of a Security Guard at the ball field off Warren Avenue.

Contractual Expenses/Contractual Town of Haverstraw – Decrease - The obligation to the Town for several Police Officers and Sergeants no longer exists.

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Contractual Expenses for On-Street Parking – Slight increase due to the cost of the Ticketing Program.

Water Hydrant Rental – Increase due to the increase in the monthly charge to maintain each hydrant in the Village by United Water.

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DPW Equipment Repairs – Increase due to the cost increase to maintain the fleet of vehicles and to replace old equipment.

Street Lighting Contractual Expenses – Slight increase due to the costs of the additional lighting that the Village will be responsible for on Route 9W and the new bridge overpass, plus the increase in O&R rates.

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Ball Park & Utilities-Ball Park – Decrease and Increase by switching ball park utilities to its own line.

Community Center

Personnel Services – Increase because the County of Rockland is no longer funding the program for Youth Board Services and other grants no longer being funded.

Fuel – Increase due to the increase in rates.

Cleaning/Maintenance – Increase due to the increase in fees to maintain the center.

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Sanitary Sewers – Increase due to the maintenance on failed sanitary lines and the need for a new trunk line.

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Employee Benefits:

N.Y.S. Retirement – Slight reduction based on calculations made by the state and the Village is no longer amortizing one of the payouts.

Social Security (FICA) – The Village estimate of what will be paid for Social Security.

Worker's Compensation – Reduction due to the lower premiums charged to the Village as a part of the Rockland County Worker's Compensation Consortium, which includes the county and other municipalities and no longer involves the police calculations.

Unemployment Insurance – Increase due to an employee that is no longer on the books and is collecting unemployment.

Hospital & Medical – Increase due to rates for current employees and retirees.

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Debt Service:

Bond Anticipation Note/Interest – Increase due to paying down Chair Factory Bond, plus possibility of purchasing Damiani property.

Contributions to Other Funds Reachout – Slight increase due to the Village counseling service, which is funded by the N.Y.S. Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, but does not cover all costs. The Village provides assistance in running this program.

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Estimated Revenues:

Interest on Taxes - Interest the Village earns on penalties accrued on unpaid taxes.

Sales Tax – Small increase estimated based upon increase in sales tax.

Interest on Earnings – Interest from banks are dismal leaving the Village with extremely low interest earnings.

License & Permits – 20% increase

Building Permits – Decrease due to the housing/economic situation.

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Estimated Revenues Con't.:

Appropriated Fund Balance – Decrease due to drawings from this account to help keep the budget in line over previous years and reducing the amount that can be drawn from this line.

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Amount to be collected – Increased from last year by approx. \$138,000 which stays within the 2% cap.

Assessed Valuation – Reduction due to tax certioraris over the past year.

Mayor Kohut entertained a motion to open the Public Hearing.

RESOLUTION #93-2012

Motion by: Emily Dominguez

Seconded by: Rafael Bueno

Motion carries: All

Mel Post, 1422 Round Pointe Drive: Mr. Post is disturbed about an article in the Journal News, which stated that the reduced tax rates at the Harbors is the reason the taxes are increasing for the Village. He wanted to know where the press gets its information. He was hoping for a retraction by the Village. He does not like the fact that the article pits neighbor against neighbor, Harbors against the rest of the Village. He stated that the Harbors residents are in the same boat as the rest of the Village. He feels that the Harbors residents have been over assessed and overtaxed from the beginning, with almost no services whatsoever from the Village.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor responded that he does not write the articles that are published and that he and Trustee Dominguez spent almost an hour and a half discussing the budget extensively with Akiko, the reporter for the Journal News. He explained that the bulk of the increase was because of assessment reductions, with a good amount revolving around Harbors and GDC properties, but also other properties. He cannot control what is written and often times the press oversimplifies things.

Mel Post: Mr. Post feels if the article did not come from the Village that the Board needs to send a rebuttal to the Journal News to rectify the situation, explaining exactly where the increases come from. He feels the Journal News is ripping the Village apart.

Gil Musinger, 1416 Round Pointe Drive: Mr. Musinger thanked the Mayor and Trustees for properly maintaining the Village. He also reiterated what Mr. Post has said. He feels the story gives a very distorted view of Harbors. That kind of article promotes resentment on the part of many individuals in the Village and inquired if this village is better off with Harbors or without it. The Harbors residents are paying hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Village, the school district and the Town. He feels it is vital for the Mayor and the Board to enlighten the Village to the fact that Harbors is a definite asset to this community. They also have many individuals who commit their time and effort to community endeavors. He feels it is vital to get information out to the press, as well as the community, that Harbors is a positive addition to the village.

Mel Post: Mr. Post stated that he would like to see coverage in the Spanish newspapers as well as the Journal News.

Larry Levine, 1414 Round Pointe Drive: Mr. Levine strongly agreed with everything that both Mr. Post and Mr. Musinger stated. He also read a letter from Arthur Taub, 3304 Leewood Drive, who could not be at the meeting that night, a synopsis of which is that the Mayor made derogatory statements about the Harbors and he wanted an explanation why.

Fulvio Ortega, 23 Pratt Street: Mr. Ortega also owns a business at 19 New Main Street. He wanted to know if there would be a reduction in the school taxes with the closing of Neary Elementary School. He understands BOCES is coming in and that the building is also being rented to HILTOP, a Nyack organization for troubled kids.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor stated that the questions about the school tax would have to be brought to the school district because the Village has no control over the school taxes. He stated that the school district will receive revenue because they are renting the building, but he does not know where the funds will be used. He has heard that BOCES is renting the building, but did not hear about anyone else renting it.

Francisco Batista: Trustee Batista informed the public that HILTOP is a program of BOCES to help difficult children.

Fulvio Ortega: Mr. Ortega feels this program is going to be a problem for the community. He mentioned that there are crack houses in the Village that were raided and wanted to know who pays for the policing in those

incidents and whether or not the Village is getting billed for the police presence at these incidents.

Emily Dominguez: Trustee Dominguez instructed Mr. Ortega to speak with the District Attorney for those answers.

Mayor Kohut: With no further input from the public, the Mayor stated that the budget process is not complete. The Village has until April 30 to submit a budget for approval. The Trustees have met and will continue to meet with the Mayor to determine what can be sliced from the budget, if anything. They have been keeping close to actual costs for a number of years, and as the budget lines get tighter and tighter it leaves less to be cut. Within three weeks, by law, the budget has to be passed. He asked again if anyone had any questions.

James Mackay, 39 Village Mill: Mr. Mackay inquired about how the Board goes about determining the budget and at what point do you say this is something we cannot do.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor responded that they do use the preceding year's budget as a baseline, but then they review the actual expenses for the year and whether those costs will go up or down. They have been doing more with less wherever they can, while still trying to maintain the same level of service without increasing the burden to the taxpayer.

James Mackay: Mr. Mackay feels that in some instances we may have to do less with less. He used the expense of the Justice Court as an example stating that at a certain point the Village is not receiving enough from tickets, etc. to warrant having a Justice Court.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor responded that this community is a mostly walking community and it would be a disservice to the residents to have to deal with the Justice Court at the Town level. Additionally, by state law, a sitting Judge cannot be removed until that Judge is up for re-election so the court cannot be closed. Judge DeCaprio was elected last year and when his term is up, the Board will probably have the same discussion about whether or not to maintain the Justice Court in the Village.

James Mackay: Mr. Mackay gave an illustration of a time he lived in Boston and they did an analysis of their subway system and found that it was costing them more with the cost of the token system than if the city subsidized the subway and let the people ride free. He thought that kind of thought process might be utilized in the Village.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor explained that the Board does periodically go through everything very thoroughly to see if anything can be done differently.

Mel Post: Mr. Post felt that unless we know of a large ratable coming into the Village, that the Village use a "BAN" at this point for our debt. Knowing that rates are currently incredibly low he would think that the Village would want to fund that debt or float that debt at these low rates before they start to increase.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor explained that the Village is currently using a “BAN” and when it is up the Village could either renew the “BAN” or switch to a Serial Bond. The Board will do an analysis as it comes due and make a decision to go to long term borrowing or continue the BAN.

Stanley Fit: Mr. Fit wonders why, while the Board is trying to cut expenses, that the Building Inspector, DPW, etc. are allowed to take their work vehicles home. He feels there is no need for them to take the vehicles home wasting the Village’s gas, etc.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor responded that they are often required to come out in the evening for emergency incidents. He explained that if the fire department is going into a property with a fire, that the Building Inspector may be called out to inspect a building for illegal apartments, etc. He has come out at least once a month to inspect a building. He also mentioned that the DPW Foreman or Superintendent are called out on a regular basis for watermain breaks, problems due to weather or any other emergency that may arise and they are provided with these vehicles to respond.

Christy Andrews, 26 Bridge Lane: Ms. Andrews asked if it would be possible to give her a total figure for the reassessment of Harbors that night.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor stated he did not have that information with him, but he would be glad to e-mail it to her.

Fulvio Ortega, 50 Pratt Street: Mr. Ortega inquired why the taxpayers have no vote on raising taxes.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor explained that it is the decision of the Board whether or not taxes are raised, which is mandated by NYS law. He mentioned that the only time a taxpayer has any input on the taxes is in a school vote where the taxpayer has a right to vote down a budget.

Fulvio Ortega: Mr. Ortega wondered why the Board has not given any thought to bringing in more factories, etc., mentioning that since the Chair Factory was torn down there has been nothing brought in to increase the Village’s revenue. He also mentioned all the foreclosed properties in the Village. He feels the Board has to do more to bring revenue and jobs back into the Village.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor responded that the Village does receive tax payments on foreclosed properties. The County of Rockland, by law, has to make the payment to the Village, but will then go after the owner for repayment of the tax amount. The Mayor explained that before a foreclosed house is sold, those taxes have to be satisfied by the bank. As far as the Village is concerned they have endeavored to get industry to come into the Village, however, at times the problem with bringing large industrial companies into the Village is its access, which is only Route 9W and Route 202. The nice thing is we are out of the way and the bad thing is we are out of the way.

Mayor Kohut: With no further business to be conducted by the Board, the Mayor entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mayor Kohut entertained a motion to that effect.

RESOLUTION #94-2012

Motion by: Francisco Batista
Seconded by: Emily Dominguez
Motion Carries: All

Respectfully submitted by,

Beverly A. Swift
Senior Steno Clerk
May 14, 2012