

VILLAGE OF RENSSELAER FALLS

Special Budget Work Session Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2023
(5:00 P.M.)

Present: Mayor Michael Hammond, Trustee Jolene LaSieve, Deputy Mayor Charles Fifield, Trustee Connie McAllister and Trustee Samatha Booth, Village Clerk Lisa Hammond, Sewer Superintendent Mark Basford and Becky Donnelly

5:00 p.m. Mayor Michael Hammond opened the Special Budget work session meeting

1. Pledge of Allegiance:

Pledge of Allegiance was said by all in attendance

2. Budget workshop Session - Discussion:

Mayor Michael Hammond went over proposed changes to the current budget with board members. Board members were given current budget figures showing what has been spent out of what funds in the 2022-2023 budget.

Discussion was held on Sales Tax revenue and the current situation of not having the City of Ogdensburg to bargain with the County on sales tax. Sales tax is not a sure thing noted Mayor Hammond

When put into perspective the Rescue Squad and Fire Department are currently receiving all of the Villages Tax revenue and discussions have been carried on for months about sustainability of this. Hammond had printed out of the Village of Canton's budget showing that they give their Fire and Rescue a small percent of their real property tax revenue in perspective. Hammond added that he and Becky Donnelly did comparisons to other villages and Towns on proportion of dollar amounts to Fire and Rescue. Hammond would like to see Rensselaer Falls in the range of other neighboring departments. Hammond would like to regain our real property tax dollars to better serve the village residence. A new culvert was recently installed in front of the Fire Station by the Village with more work to be done there.

Mayor Michael Hammond noted he wants to work on getting the Fire Department the money they need and deserve. The Village board is in agreement that it's hard to know what the Fire Department needs when they do not supply the Village Board with documentation, of which has been requested from them in the past. Trustee Jolene LaSieve noted that the Fire and Rescue has seen an increase over the last few years and it is not sustainable for the Village to

maintain any longer. To date no budget has been received, nor any written plan of the turnout gear or air tank replacement. LaSieve suggested inviting fire department members to discuss this possible decrease in the Budget. Mayor Hammond noted that discussions have been going on and are reflected in the minutes posted online. Hammond also noted that at the last Fire Department meeting he attended the Fire Department said they were coming back to the board regarding a BINGO licence and he assumed someone would be attending but no one has. Going forward the Village Board would like to have a contract with Fire and Rescue. Hammond said he would ask for a copy of the Fire Department's budget. Trustee Jolene LaSieve added that she does not want to build the Village of Rensselaer Budget around the Fire Department's Budget. Mayor Hammond added that this is a yearly process and he feels the Departments members know this. At Fire Department meetings Mayor Hammond stated the Village Board would be holding sessions on the upcoming budget. Both Trustees LaSieve and Samatha Booth are in full agreement of the decrease. LaSieve stated that she feels strongly about transparency. Mayor Michael Hammond said he could type up a fact sheet to have on hand for the public if requested.

Clerk Lisa Hammond is going to check on the workman's comp for the Fire Department.

Fire tax discussion was held, as Mayor Hammond continues to work with the Attorney on the matter.

A discussion was held on decreasing both Recreation and Street funds.

A possible increase to Historical due to a possible furnace replacement.

A brief discussion was held on the Playground equipment going on ten years old.

A possible decrease in trees will be seen.

Discussion was held and figures reviewed on the Sewer Budget. Trustee Charles Fifield noted that retirement contribution is a benefit to employees from the Village. Discussion was held on the sewer debt and the monies for Sand replacement.

Mark Basford gave prices on priming systems for the Lift Stations at the cost of \$3,658.00 a station. Trustee Connie McAllister made a motion to purchase 4 kits in the amount of \$7,316.00. Seconded by Trustee Jolene LaSieve. All voted in favor.

A brief discussion was held on Corning being behind on their sewer payments and the fact that they have no increase in their bills, but have put on several expansions and many more employees. The Village board is in agreement to move forward on setting up meetings to update the current outside user contract with Corning and possibly increase their rate.

Trustee Charles Fifield asked Mark Basford if he was good with things and Basford replied “yes”.

A second Budget work session Public Hearing will be held on March 13th, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. on the proposed 2023-2024 budget.

3. Any other business that may come before the Board:

6:36 p.m Adjourned meeting

Motion:Connie McAllister Seconded: Charles Fifield Vote: unanimous

Respectfully Submitted:

Lisa Hammond, Village Clerk