

Superintendent in this year's election and this meeting is really for honest dialog and I am willing to speak to you about the Budget, but it's a little disingenuous to speak about the Highway Superintendents Budget when you are running for that position.

Steve Engelhardt: I'm only giving the facts. I'm also a taxpayer and I wanted to bring this to your attention.

Nancy Zverev: I'm sure you guys will find a way to get the budget way down. But, what I did was to go and start to understand how things work a bit and one thing has to do with is how New York State trains people to do their budgets and one of them is; Input from stake holders including taxpayers. Also, a lot of these budgets can be done on or before a lot of the dates imposed. If you push back some of the dates, you could actually get the budget on the general ballot every year. Then the taxpayers could either bless it, or not. I'm really hoping that somebody, next month, proposes to do something so that in 2011 it can be voted on.

Supervisor Myers: I don't think we can do that.

Town Attorney Mahar: You can't do it.

Nancy Zverev: Why?

Town Attorney Mahar: We are not authorized by Town Law. The State of New York---

Nancy Zverev: I checked the State law. If we can vote on Casperkill, why can't we vote on our budget? The citizens vote on school budgets.

Town Attorney Mahar: Because there are certain provisions within the Town law of the State of New York that authorizes those types of referendums. There is no such provision for budgets.

Councilman Conte indicated that "This Board does the best they can in analyzing the Budget and make unnecessary cuts where possible and we will continue to do this. There are, however, some things that are out of our control."

Councilman Seminara: What may be a surprise to many citizens, is the general municipal law of the State of New York tells municipalities how they are going to operate and probably 95% of what we do, is at their direction.

Town Attorney Mahar: The Education law of the State of New York, specifically authorizes the School Budgets to be voted on and the contingencies. We do not have a similar provision in the Town Law or the General Municipal Law.

David Kaminski: I'm here, not only as a resident of the Town, but as a major owner of commercial property and a property manager of commercial property in the Spackenkill School District, in fact, the properties that we manage represent 10% of the Spackenkill School Districts tax levy. We are the second largest taxpayer in the Spackenkill School District. We understand, as a business owner, what you face in looking at a budget each year. However, the Poughkeepsie Journal's articles of 8.9% tax levy increase do not even come close to explaining what this is doing to commercial property owners. If you look at the rates, it is a 21% increase in Town taxes to commercial property owners. This can not happen. You must sit back, I know it's difficult, it's time to make cuts. You can't leave employment off the table, you can't leave services off the table, you had a 17 ½ % increase last year in Town taxes and it was over 25% the year before that, I believe. I ask you to sit back and sharpen on commercial property. Even the 8.9% is not fair for the residential owners, which I am one, it's truly a 12 ½ % increase in our Town tax to the residents, not an 8.9% increase. It's in the numbers. So, I am asking you to please sit back and do what you have to do. We can not afford this, you are going to drive commercial properties down because people are going to move out. You will then have a never ending cycle of not being able to cover the tax revenue we need in this Town.

Councilman Baisley stated that the Town is working diligently on cuts and they are working with the Police Department to make some cuts and the Building Department, etc. We have had a dozen meetings so far and tonight's meeting was in hopes that the public could shed some light with some ideas.

Councilman Seminara: We do appreciate your feelings and you expressing these feelings and we encourage anyone in any part of the Town that if there is a specific line item that you question or think there is a way to save it, we would love to have that specific information so we could investigate it. A lot of good ideas come from 42,000 people looking at things, not just from this side of the bench, so we would encourage you looking at things and so we would encourage any specific recommendations on any line item of the budget.

Councilman Baisley stated that the Board members are willing to sit down on a one to one basis with any Town resident and go over the budget with them. We will take anything into consideration that you may bring up.

Marc Pfeifer, Town of Poughkeepsie Highway Superintendent: I just wanted to bring up a few points of interest to you. Just so you know, from the Highway's Budget, in 2009 to 2010 I have proposed is less than 0%. It is \$30,000 less for 2010 than it was for 2009. We are the largest municipality in the area and, if you take \$135,000 out of my salt budget, I only start with \$245,000, one of the lowest in the area. That would leave me with \$120,000 and it would be pretty hard to deal with snow removal on \$120,000.

Doreen Tignanelli: I just want to reiterate something I said previously about the Planning Department and Planning Board fees. I was looking at the Budget and I'm not done, so I will have more next week, but Planning Board fees are going down substantially as far as revenue and yet the fines and non-compliance items are 0 and we need to be doing a better job of fining people who are not in compliance and if it is in our Town Code that we could impose fines, I think we should. Also, if the Planning Board is scheduling special meetings for people who have violations, then I believe those people should pay. We are paying the Planning Board members for the actual meeting night and then the field trips associated with it and we have to pay the Planning Board secretary and the Legal representation that night. So, any way you look at it, there is a substantial amount of money that I don't think taxpayers should have to bear the burden for. Also, the example of the STOP WORK ORDER for the Woods at Cliffdale property. We had another instance this week with that parcel that Mr. Wilson had to look into and we had two people from the Planning Department and Don Beer to go out and inspect the site, again because they were not adhering to the approved site plan. I don't think that taxpayers should have to pay for these law violations.

Councilman Tancredi indicated that the Board is all working with Neil Wilson to fine line his budget and ideas within the Planning Department. The additional issues you brought up are fine suggestions and I for one would like to see that when we pay the employees to do work above or beyond because of a mistake or something that was an oversight, I don't think the residents should be expected to foot that bill.

Councilman Baisley stated that they discussed things with Mr. Wilson the next day after the last meeting and Mr. Wilson stated that he is putting together a schedule and we should have it before the budget is done. He is putting together a schedule of menu items to eliminate Town employees having to cover for someone else's mistakes.

Doreen Tignanelli: Fine, but they are not collecting fines.

Councilman Seminara: We agree, and I think that's an extra thing we can do. I also think most of the Board members are in favor of that also.

Councilman Tancredi stated that we don't want to make it more costly for people in the Town to do business with the Town on the other hand either, but what we are looking for is to be compensated for employee's time.

Doreen Tignanelli: Especially in this case of repeat offenders. That's my point. We have a couple instances of years of repeated offences.

Karen Johnson: I just wanted to come forward and say I agree with other people that have stated that it is impossible for people to survive with an 8.9% increase. I know people who are on a fixed income and I don't know how they are going to survive with an 8.9% increase in their taxes. They don't know how they are going to stay in the Town of Poughkeepsie. I do, on the other hand, want to thank this Board for taking so much time to try to work out something to decrease that 8.9%. I really give you a big hand of applause because it is a lot of work and again I want to thank you for that. I know a lot of other people appreciate what you are doing to try to lower the tax rate.

Peter Valdez: I just want to reiterate what other people have said. Although it may seem high, if you compare that to the Arlington Fire District, they are at 15%. So, I would say that the Board has done a very good job as far as cost controls. I was at the Arlington Fire District Budget meeting two weeks ago and at least you folks have some answers, there were no answers given by the Commissioner and I another issue I've seen when I've gone to those meetings and I've asked the Commissioner if we could work with the Town Board as far as cost controls and they told me that they have talked to everyone else but the Town Board. I think it is important that we have lines of communication. We need to all work together.

Supervisor Myers: Totally agree.

Councilman Baisley made a ploy to the public to come and speak with the Board members on a one to one basis with any suggestions that may possibly help the Board to achieve a lower tax on the Town.

Motion made to resume the rules: Supervisor Myers/J. Conte

CARRIED: 6-0

10:28-PS 2 ANNOUNCEMENT

November 4, 2009 As A Date For
The Public Hearing For The Town
Budget For The Fiscal Year 2010

Supervisor Myers: The Public Hearing will open, I do not know if it will close or not, but it will open next Wednesday, November 4th at 7:00 PM. You will all have another opportunity to hear any changes proposed. We want to thank everyone for coming this evening.

Councilman Baisley: We will probably keep it open to the last minute and we will still make changes then.

Motion made to Close the meeting: Supervisor Myers/T. Tancredi

CARRIED: 6-0

MEETING CLOSED AT 7:30 PM

SJM:lkm