

February 10, 2018

The special meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Newton was held on the above date at 9:30 a.m. Present were Deputy Mayor Elvidge, Mr. Flynn, Mrs. Le Frois, Mrs. Diglio, Mayor Levante and Town Manager, Mr. Thomas S. Russo, Jr. Also present were Ms. Dawn Babcock, CFO, Mrs. Ginny Raftery, Treasurer and Jennifer Dodd, Human Resources Director.

Mayor Levante made the following declaration that "in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this special meeting was given to the two newspapers of record and posted on the official bulletin board on February 1, 2018."

COMMENTS BY TOWN AUDITOR

Mr. Tom Ferry, Town Auditor, addressed the Council and outlined Newton's financial status. He outlined a new program, F.A.S.T., the State rolled out this year which is extremely slow with many issues.

Mr. Ferry then provided some financial advice and stated the fund balance is in good shape. Mr. Ferry advised Council the Newton budget and tax levy as proposed represents the municipal taxes on an average assessed home **in 2017 of \$2,702** and will go to **\$2,741 in 2018** which is an increase **of \$3.25 a month** or about .11 cents a day. Mr. Ferry noted:

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|--|--------|
| The current ratio for the 2018 Tax Year is: | 95.42% |
| The prior year ratio for 2017 was: | 97.07% |

Mr. Ferry outlined the financial status of the Newton Water and Sewer budget. He noted the Town increased the water rate collection in 2017 but is pleased to announce this budget is supported by customer billings and does not require property tax revenues to meet financial obligations. The Water and Sewer budget is proposed at **\$4,525,000 for the 2018 year**. The Water and Sewer budget provides service to **2,653 accounts**.

Mr. Ferry reviewed the 2% levy cap and the appropriations cap. He recommended the Town adopt the Ordinance allowing the Town to exceed the 2018 Municipal Budget appropriation limits and to establish a cap bank. It provides that in the preparation of its annual budget, a municipality shall limit any increase in said budget unless authorized by ordinance to increase it to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations.

Mr. Ferry also reviewed the 2018 Operation Current Fund. Mr. Ferry addressed

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the Fund Balance and noted this budget reflects a strong Fund Balance and is very important.

Mr. Ferry noted Newton is the County Seat and has approx. 33% tax-exempt properties. It was noted that a tax point is currently \$59,910.00.

After a lengthy discussion, Mr. Russo and the Governing Body thanked Mr. Ferry for his presentation.

TOWN MANAGER'S REVIEW OF BUDGET SUMMARY

Mr. Russo then proceeded to review the budgets with various department budgets. He outlined the Engineering budget; Bldgs & Grounds; Road Repair & Maint. budget; Snow Removal budget; Recycling/Sanitation; Vehicle Maintenance; Recreation budget; Public Assistance budget; Swimming Pool budget; Parks & Playgrounds budget;

Ms. Babcock reviewed the Debt Service with the Town Council.

Throughout the budget meeting, the Town Council asked questions which were addressed by Mr. Russo and Ms. Babcock.

DPW BUDGET REVIEW AND CAPITAL PROJECTS

Ken Jaekel, DPW Director, and Adam Vough, Assistant DPW Director were present to review the DPW Budget and address Capital Improvement projects.

At this time, Mr. Jaekel reviewed several areas of the Department of Public Works (DPW) budget. The Council had several questions which were addressed by Mr. Jaekel, Mr. Vough and Ms. Babcock.

Mr. Russo, Mr. Jaekel and Mr. Vough outlined several areas of the capital improvement expenditures requested in this budget.

Councilman Flynn suggested the Town improve the area where the walking trail can be accessed at E. Stuart Street. Mr. Jaekel noted his crew does work on the trail which goes to Lafayette Twsp.

Councilmembers addressed various questions which were addressed by Mr. Jaekel, Mr. Vough, Ms. Babcock and Mr. Russo.

Council had questions regarding the swimming pool which was addressed by Mrs. Dodd, HR Director and Debbie Danielson, Recreation Director.

BREAK

WATER & SEWER BUDGET REVIEW AND CAPITAL PROJECTS

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Ken Jaekel, DPW Director, and Adam Vough, Assistant DPW Director reviewed the Water & Sewer Budget and addressed questions of the Town Council.

Dave Simmons, Water Engineer and Joe Carr, Licensed Water & Sewer Operator outlined various 2018 projects and updates: Newton Dam Site #2; Dam Inspection Reports; Morris Lake Gatehouse; Water Allocation Increase; Bridge Q-06 on Main Street in Sparta; and Qualified Assets Plan Project.

John Scheri, PE, of Mott & MacDonald, Sewer Engineer, and Joe Carr, Licensed Water & Sewer Operator updated Council on various projects and updates: Sparta Avenue Pump Station Feasibility Study and Preliminary Design; Sanitary Sewer System Inspection, Condition Assessment and Rehabilitation Plan; Madison Street Sidewalk Improvements Construction Phase Services; Escrow Projects (200 High St.; 37 E. Clinton St.; Kroghs Brewery); General Consulting Services; Completed Projects (STP Rotating Biological Contactor Replacement Project); Morris Lake Dam – Valve Blow off Phase II; Town Square Gardens; Atlantic Ambulance (Newton Hospital); Lead & Copper/THHM&HAA5; Morris Lake Forestry Plan; Kaltsas – Sanitary Sewer Tie-In; and Newton Water Meter Bid.

Council asked several questions which were addressed by Mr. Carr, Mr. Jaekel, Mr. Vough, Mr. Scheri and Mr. Simmons.

Council thanked the Water & Sewer professionals and personnel for their presentation.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mayor Levante opened the meeting to the public.

Ludmilla Mecaj, 9 Madison Street, questioned the completed paving of Madison Street and was advised the grant only covered from Spring Street to Halsted Street. She questioned sewer work on Madison Street which was addressed by Mr. Scheri. She questioned the “missing” street signs throughout the Town which was addressed by Mr. Jaekel. She also questioned payments to the Newton Board of Education which is dictated by the BOE.

Neil Flaherty, 154 Sparta Avenue, thanked Mr. Russo and his team for a thorough job on the budget. He suggested numbering the line items for easier retrieval and also suggested the funds for education/training under the Fire Department be reinstated.

COUNCIL & MANAGER COMMENTS

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Mr. Russo asked that all Council comments and revisions to the budget be held and discussed at the next regular Council meeting on Monday, February 12, 2018.

There being no further business to be conducted, upon motion of Mrs. Le Frois, seconded by Mr. Flynn and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lorraine A. Read". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned centrally below the text "Respectfully submitted,".

Lorraine A. Read, RMC
Municipal Clerk