

Preliminary Budget Public Hearing Meeting Minutes

Held: Tuesday November 8, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: 7578 County Route 333 Thurston, NY

Present: Michael Volino, Holly Chase, Noel Sylvester, Daniel Gee, Diana Dixon, Randy Akins, Richard Gauss, Jr.

Absent: Jennifer Hargrave, Rachel Treichler

Visitors: Barbara Dartt, Eva Turner, Elizabeth Donderewicz, Marge Taft

Michael Volino called the public hearing to order at 6:45 p.m.

Volino asked if there were any public comments.

Randy Akins stated that he was looking forward to working with the newly elected Highway Superintendent Christopher Volino. Akins stated that he would like to see the Thurston Town Board drop the 15% premium health insurance expense attached to the Highway Superintendents cost, which has never been in place in the Town of Thurston. Akins stated that Christopher Volino has a CDL which enables Volino to drive the dump trucks and plow snow if needed. Akins stated that if Volino decided to resign the position because the income and expense isn't worth staying for, Akins isn't willing as Deputy Highway Superintendent to do two positions. Akins complimented Richard Gauss, Jr for his dedication and longevity to the Town of Thurston.

Richard Gauss, Jr stated that he is willing to help Christopher Volino with the Highway Superintendent's position. Gauss stated that the Town Board needs to reconsider the added 15% premium insurance expense to keep Volino.

Dolores Crooker stated that she agreed with Randy Akins and Richard Gauss, Jr. Crooker stated that Christopher Volino has 14 or 15 years experience with Steuben County Highway Dept. Crooker stated that Volino has a young family and needs the insurance coverage and the added expense of the 15% cost isn't worth losing a young experienced person. Crooker stated that the Town needs to do something to entice the younger generation to come on board to replace retirees. Crooker complimented Richard Gauss, Jr for being willing to help Christopher Volino when needed.

Diana Dixon stated that maybe the Town Board should leave the 15% expense in place and do something else to compensate for the expense. Holly Chase stated that maybe a six month evaluation would lead to a pay raise. A brief discussion took place about the term limits of the elected officials. The Board decided to drop the 15% insurance premium expense and change the position from a 2 year term to a 4 year term. Michael Volino will do the research to find out what is needed to change term limits.

With no further discussion motion was made by Daniel Gee seconded by Noel Sylvester to close the public hearing at 7:09 p.m. Put to vote: Michael Volino, aye; Noel Sylvester, aye; Daniel Gee, aye; Holly Chase, aye. Carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Dolores Crooker, Town Clerk