

Caroga News Flash

Town Board Meeting Highlights

November 4, 2020

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This special meeting lasted 110 minutes at Town Hall and via zoom. More than 40 families participated, and 6 community members made comments during the public hearing.

The meeting focused primarily on the 2021 Town budget and tax levy. The Budget Director and Bookkeeper, Ms. Young, confirmed 2020 accounting details. Given lower expenditures and higher revenues than budgeted (including \$22,494 additional sales tax), the Town expects a Fund Balance (money available to allocate for the 2021 budget) of more than a million dollars.

Supervisor Horton announced, "We've proven this year that we can manage the budget," and "We passed a law to override the tax cap, and taxpayers have to trust us!"

Resolutions/Local Laws:

- 1. 2021 Budget Hearing** — The Board held a public hearing. Public comments called for:
 - (1) reducing the 2021 property tax levy to the New York State limit of 1.6%,
 - (2) funding the current shortfall with available Unrestricted Fund Balance,
 - (3) planning 2021 public discussions about a specified Comprehensive Reserve Fund Plan,
 - (4) revisiting a possible tax increase next year, taking into account the specified Fund Plan.
- 2. 2021 Budget Adopted with Tax Increase** — Supervisor Horton moved to adopt the Preliminary Budget as the Final Budget. Councilmember Long proposed an amendment to use \$487,000 Unrestricted Fund Balance to hold taxes under the 1.6% cap, but this failed. Supervisor Horton proposed adding \$50,000 Unrestricted Fund Balance with a tax levy of \$7.016 per thousand assessed value (i.e., \$105.60 increase per hundred thousand). The Board voted 4 to 1 to adopt the Final Budget with a 17.718% property tax increase.
- 3. Teleconference Meetings Terminated** — Supervisor Horton announced, "I do not want to have zoom anymore." He moved to go back to in-person meetings starting Tuesday November 10. Councilmember Glenn said, "People conspired on zoom...It's communism." Councilmember Long noted, "Supervisor Horton, the best thing you have done is to make meetings safely accessible to a wide audience...You have a large number of people on zoom right now who are putting thumbs down, shaking their heads, very upset with your decision." The board voted 4 to 1 to end public access to Town meetings via zoom.

Announcements:

- ❖ For Pandemic Info, see <https://forward.ny.gov/reopening-what-you-need-know>. Phase IV permits up to 50 people to gather with precautions. Executive Order allows teleconferences. "Coronavirus is still active in New York. We have to be smart. Wear a mask, maintain six feet distance in public and download the official exposure app, COVID Alert NY."
- ❖ "The US on Wednesday recorded over 100,000 new coronavirus cases in a single day for the first time since the pandemic began, bursting past a grim threshold even as the wave of infections engulfing the country shows no sign of receding." —*New York Times* 10/4/2020

Next Meeting:

Monthly Meeting: Tuesday November 10, 2020 7:00pm at Town Hall Only

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