

**VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES**  
**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2013**

In Attendance: Supervisor Schaffer, Board Members Fitzgerald, Milkovich and Majewski  
Absent: Councilman Marnicki

Also Attending: Comptroller Laura McKane, Recreation Director Sue Jastran, Town Clerk Emil Bielecki and several news media reporters.

**WORK SESSION** - Supervisor Schaffer convened the meeting at 11:30 AM.

**Introduction to the Budget Review Sessions**

Comptroller Laura McKane distributed to the Board members several packets of documents which will be used to review the 2014 budget requests that have been submitted by the Departments. The review level budget, as amended by the Board, will become the 2014 Tentative Budget that will be filed with the Town Clerk by September 30, 2013. The packet also includes multi-year capital spending requests submitted by each Department. The 2014 capital budget will be reviewed along with the operating budget.

Comptroller McKane noted that the packet also includes a summary of the most significant new spending items included in the review level budget as well as other spending items not included in the review level budget that should also be considered. As part of the review process, she will also be providing the Board with updated revenue projections.

In response to questions from the Board, Comptroller McKane provided the following information:

- A Fire Capital Reserve is being funded in the 2014 budget.
- We are anticipating our general fund balance to be about 15% of expenditures
- The County sales tax distribution is expected to increase.
- The cost of attending the Association of Towns Annual Meeting is increasing.
- The Water & Sewer Department has asked the Board to review some of the chargebacks.

**Recreation Department 2014 Budget Review**

Recreation Director Sue Jastran provided the Board with a folder containing the 2014 budget for the Recreation Department. The folder also included a summary of the spending changes from the 2013 budget as well as the projected 2014 revenue for each program.

Sue Jastran noted that the proposed 2014 Recreation Department Budget has a total spending increase of 2.28%. That increase is offset with a projected 2014 revenue increase of 2.39%.

During the review of the budget, Recreation Director Jastran made some of the following points:

- Pool expenditures are increasing by 4.26%. The pool is a costly service that will never be totally offset by fees. The pool fee rate is the Department's # 1 complaint.
- The increase in the minimum wage by \$.75 will have a meaningful impact on the budget.
- There is no charge to participate in the summer playground programs because the grant funding prohibits it and doing so would be impractical.
- We have an excellent working relationship with the Vestal School District which allows us to provide quality programming at a reasonable cost. We have a large aquatic program and the school does not charge us for the use of the indoor pool for swim lessons during the summer.
- Mark Johnson, the new Building Maintenance person, is doing an excellent job in maintaining

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the pool.

- In the future, it would be preferable for the School District take over the responsibility of scheduling the use of athletic fields.
- Several of the shelters at Arnold Park need to be renovated/replaced.
- It is extremely important to keep the wage scale for most of the Recreation employees above the minimum wage. Many employees need certifications which are expensive. A higher wage attracts a higher caliber employee allowing us to offer quality programs with few problems.
- There is no request for any capital items but that may have to be revisited.

In addition to routine questions during the line by line review of the Recreation budget, several Board members focused their questions on the proposed wage increases and the staffing levels at the pool.

The Work Session was adjourned at 12:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Emil Bielecki, Town Clerk