

Present: Supervisor F. Newlin; Councilmen A. Bax; S. Edwards, M. Johnson & E. Palmer; Dep. Sup. E. Elgin; Atty. J. Leone; Dep. Atty. D. Boniello; Finance Officer A. DiRamio; Dep. Clerk C. Schroeder; 2 press; 5 Residents

After a brief exchange between the Town Board and patrons of the Lewiston Library, the Supervisor called the budget worksession to order at 7:52 p.m.

The Supervisor directed the Budget Officer to read the list of proposed changes to the 2009 Budget. These reflect changes to the Supervisor's preliminary budget. The figures noted will reflect the actual line-item totals:

A-1000-0599	Appropriated Fund Balance	\$242,319
A-1220-0100	Supervisor Personal Service	78,832
A-1420-0100	Attorney Personal Services	66,950
A-1620-0100	Building – Personal Services	41,868
A-1620-0400	Building Contractual	77,500
A-1990-0400	Contingency	110,000
A-5010-0100	Highway Supt. Personal Services	97,650
A-5132-0400	Town Garage Contractual	90,200
A-7630-0100	Senior Center Personal Service	117,940
A-7630-0400	Senior Center Contractual	45,200
A-9020-0800	Medicare Tax	15,825
A-9030-0800	Social Security Tax	67,050
B-1000-0599	Appropriated Fund Balance	271,039
B-1990-0400	Contingency	110,000
B-7410.0400	Lewiston Library	368,000
SW1-1000-0599	Appropriated Fund Balance	12,455
SW1-1000-1001	Real Property Taxes	387,300
SW1-1000-2140	Metered Water Sales	1,060,000
SW1-1000-5031	Transfer From Other Funds	149,800
SW1-9710-0600	Serial Bond – Principle Payment	232,000
SW1-9710-0700	Serial Bond – Interest	305,100

Councilman Johnson MOVED to approve the changes to the 2009 Budget, as presented. Seconded by Palmer and carried 5-0.

The Supervisor noted that the preliminary budget reflects the actual budget request from the Police Chief. He turned the meeting over to Councilman Palmer to expand on that.

Palmer said he had an opportunity to discuss police services in the town with Chief Salada who enlightened him on some of the problems he has been having with manpower within the department. He spoke of alternatives to police services, specifically some sort of consolidation with the Village of Youngstown to provide for more efficient police services at this end of the county. We have the responsibility of answering calls in the Town of Lewiston that are dispatched by the Niagara County Sheriff's Department. Some of that responsibility takes these officers outside the Town of Lewiston; however, the communities they are serving don't necessarily pay for the services they are getting. We would like to see, sometime in the future, some sort of equal footing as far as payment. Those discussions are forthcoming.

Most recently, we talked about whether having part-time officers or full-time officers supplementing our police force. Chief Salada brought it to our attention that he would like to have restored a full-time police officer position which had been taken out of the budget last year upon the retirement of one of the officers.

The budget, Palmer said, calls for 40-hours per week of police service on a part-time basis, in-lieu of the full-time police officer. Part-time officers are helpful for manning special events and filling in for officers on vacation or extended sick leave. They provide a financial advantage to the Town because fringe benefits are not paid and scheduling is more flexible. However, full-time officers are more permanent members of the community and

the police department. They know the roadways and the people. They are better equipped to do the job because of the historical perspective they bring to the community. They are also better indoctrinated into the rules and regulations, policies and procedures of the Town making it less liable should an incident take place.

It's a question we have to weigh. Do we pay for the fringe benefits of a full-time officer or do we pick up the hourly rate of a part-time officer? Palmer said he would be in favor of a full-time officer. The advantages far out-weigh the savings to the Town of a part-time officer. However, this late in the game and without having the Commission's approval or the Village Board's approval of their 23% of the share, I think we should back down one step and take another look of the organizational chart of not only the Town Police Department but the area of police services, as well as what the duties, structure and responsibility of the Police Commission are.

Newlin said one of the problems the town grapples with is that because we are on the extremities of the county, we feel our residents could use full-time protection. We've had to take on the burden of a full-time force. There are other towns similar in size i.e. Lockport, that do not have a police force. They rely solely on the Sheriff's Department which is something everyone in Lewiston pays for but doesn't benefit to with the same degree as a town like Lockport or Porter. The Police Budget, because it is heavily personnel concentrated, has been faced with a lot of growth. In 2002, the budget was \$551,000. In 2009, it is \$1,094,000, of which \$842,380 (77%) is allocated in the town budget. One of the challenges the department has faced is the growth of special events – Artpark, Jazz Festival, Harvest Festival, to name a few.

Often, the police department is called to back up sheriff's patrol in the Town of Porter. That is great idea in theory but Town of Porter taxpayers are getting a service for which they don't directly pay for.

Newlin said the Town is seriously considering moving the headquarters of the Police Department to the former Administration Building on the Lewiston-Porter campus. That would be a great spot for a unified police district between the two towns and two villages. We'll be speaking more with the Town of Porter to see if they are interested. Costs are involved but we're trying to provide the best services we can for the community.

Councilman Bax said he is in full support of the additional full-time officer. Sometimes we're running one patrol instead of two. I would hate for a situation to arise where one of our cars, in that one car scenario, goes to cover back-up somewhere in the Town of Porter, and the Town of Lewiston be left without any patrol. I agree with the Supervisor in the sense that it is a balancing act. We have to do this in the appropriate way. I would like to see that we come to those negotiations relatively quickly with Porter and Youngstown.

Johnson agreed. Maybe after the first of the year we can get some closure on how this whole operation is going to be working. I would definitely be in favor of sitting down with the local communities of Porter and Youngstown to discuss the issue of putting this together and making it less of a burden on the taxpayers.

Edwards said he can appreciate the strain on the police department. As liaison to the highway department, we're currently working with one less man. The water department is working with one less man. We have to do a lot more with less. But when it comes to public safety, it's not the same as other departments. I'm all for consolidation with Porter and Youngstown.

Newlin closed the discussion on the police issue. Newlin said the budget, as amended, allows the town to put forth a budget with no town tax for the 4th consecutive year. There is no highway tax and they have been able to continue with the cheap power going to the residents rather than monetizing it and using it to offset current expenditures.

Before closing, Palmer questioned the \$159,565 Refuse Tax. Last year, we picked up the cost of the residents share of \$35.00 per household. This year, the actual tax will be passed to the residents thru a special district on their Town/County tax bill, correct? The Budget

Officer said the Town absorbed the cost the last two years as opposed to passing it on to the residents. It's a contractual responsibility, Newlin said.

Palmer then questioned the 90.2% increase in the Lewiston Water Improvement special district (SW1). Newlin said this is a result of the debt service that was incurred by a prior board for waterline improvements. In past years they have been able to use fund balance to apply to this debt. Newlin said this amount calculates to a tax of about \$30.00 a year to a house that is assessed at \$150,000.

Edwards noted that the Highway Supt. was directed to work on the median at Thornwood Drive at a cost not exceeding \$15,000. He asked if that money could be carried over into 2009 to finish that project. The Budget Officer said the monies should be encumbered from the 2008 Budget. Purchase orders would need to be on file in order to encumber the money.

Edwards said they are seeing some real increases in the Highway Budget – Snow Removal Contractual is up 42%; Personnel is up 25%. There wasn't any money budgeted for Permanent Improvements. The Highway Supt. requested \$425,000. When he gives us the list and the costs of the roads he is going to pave we will appropriate funds then. Newlin said monies would be appropriated from the Capital Improvement line in the "B" Budget. Also, Reiter requested \$270,000 for Equipment (Tandem Dump Truck and a roller or paver). As I get the information, Edwards said he would come back to the Board.

Lastly, Newlin said the Town has been taking a lot of steps to use attrition to try to backfill full-time positions with part-time positions to try and save as much money to the taxpayer as possible. The first move when I came in was Budget Officer. We moved that from full-time to part-time. That saves more than \$27,000 each year. A part-time Assessor saves \$35,000 each year. In Highway we're down one man saving \$68,000 each year. The Water Dept., thru attrition, is losing a full-time job going from four to three saving \$56,000 per year. As discussed earlier, the Police Budget has saved \$20,000-\$30,000. Those numbers add up. There are very few costs, relatively speaking, that Town Boards can control. We can't control the price of asphalt, oil or steel. But we can control the costs of how many full-time employees we have. It's the one real lever we have access to to control costs.

On a personal note, Newlin thanked board members for the time and effort they spent on the budget. I was able to meet with each one of them and I thank them for making themselves available and working together for making a good, responsible budget. I would also like to thank Alice DiRamio, budget officer, for her work on the budget.

At this time, Newlin acknowledged a member of the audience who questioned reduction in staff such as in the highway and police departments yet increased the Supervisor's pay by 37%. You're a part-time position but getting a full-time salary.

Newlin said when he took this job he had the barest of grasps of how town budgets work. Because we are a town with a village, we have two completely separate budgets. One is the A-Fund, the whole town including the village. And one is the B-Fund, that part of the town outside of the village. Revenues are different to them and expenses are different to them. One is in good shape, the A-fund. The B-fund, which funds the library, police and other departments is not such in great shape. Any dollar that went to me or any elected official comes from the A-Fund. As to whether or not my job is full-time, I can assure you I spend... With regards to my department, when I came here my job was part-time. I had a full-time assistant and a full-time budget officer. Since that time, we transitioned that budget officer's job to part-time which means there is now more on me than my predecessor's had. That job has saved us \$28,000 this year alone which more than pays for the increase to the Town Supervisor.

Johnson MOVED to adopt the 2009 Budget, as amended. Seconded by Edwards.

The Clerk was directed to poll the Board.

Councilman Bax – Noe
Councilman Edwards – Yea
Councilman Johnson – Yea
Councilman Palmer – Noe
Supervisor Newlin – Yea

Motion to adopt the 2009 Budget approved 3-2.

Newlin said this was the first time in the five years he has been on the Board that the budget has not been adopted unanimously. We've had a good record of working together on budgets before and if I had had a concrete suggestion from either one of the dissenting councilman it would have gone into this budget and changed. We're dealing with finite numbers and if you had a change that you would want to make to the budget we would have been amendable to it. I hope next year we can work as well as we have in years past and adopt the budget unanimously.

Palmer MOVED to adjourn. Seconded by Johnson and carried 5-0. Time: 8:25 p.m.

Transcribed and
Respectfully submitted by:

Carole N. Schroeder
Deputy Town Clerk