

2014 Budget
Town Board Review with Department Heads
November 14 & 15

Note: The Board will meet again on Nov 21 at 1pm in Town Hall to review the monetary impact of the changes discussed below as well as review revenue projections and other issues.

Parks and Recreation Department

Legacy fields. The \$20,000 line for part time help to check teams in and out and open and shut the gate has been eliminated. The clubs will be asked to monitor use of the fields. Because the gate is kept open, the fields are being used when teams are not scheduled. The department may consider locking the bathrooms when the fields are not scheduled for use. \$5,000 has been added to the budget for professional maintenance of the artificial turf which should prolong its life. The department anticipates this will be a recurring expense. Money is being set aside in a special fund for the eventual replacement of the turf.

Granite Knolls field should be ready for use this spring and is currently being maintained (mowed) by town staff. Councilman Murphy asked about the status of the original plan for the teams to mow the grass and maintain the fields, but Councilman Paganelli noted that the clubs have said that they do not have the proper equipment, adding “we were sold a bill of goods” regarding the club’s ability to maintain the fields

Playground upgrades. The surfaces of approximately six playgrounds have been replaced in order to enhance safety. If more money becomes available, the department would like to make improvements to other playgrounds.

Pools. Revenue was down, in part due to rainy and cold weather in August. Concern continues that the pool passes, especially the day passes may be too costly and Supervisor Grace thinks the rates may have to be reduced and that more marketing needs to be done to attract non Yorktown residents. The town opened up the pool to non residents this year for a \$750 fee, and with limited advertising about 20 people took advantage of the offer. Recreation Superintendent Gray believes that the pool could accommodate about 40-50 out of town passes. Councilman Paganelli noted that too large an increase would increase wear and tear costs. He said Sparkle Lake was an alternative for Yorktown residents who didn’t want to buy the pool pass. The department is looking into alternative pool pass options for next season, including a lower cost “twilight pass” and a summer sale price for August. Revenue will always be somewhat dependent on the weather. Regarding Junior Lake pool, the department has the tile needed for the coping, and will have to bid for the installation.

Summer camps. The day camps and specialty camps did very well, generating revenue in excess of projections. Youth programs were also popular.

Overall, the department anticipates revenue of \$1,080,000 for 2014, up slightly from 2013.

Equipment. The board had no issue with the \$100,000 in the capital budget for a chipper and a bucket truck.

Lakeland high school track. Councilman Bianco asked if a sign could be erected letting residents know that they can use the track when it’s not in use by the school district. The town paid 25% of the cost of rebuilding the track years ago and as part of that arrangement town residents have access to the track.

Court

The court will spend \$6,000 to purchase software that will enable personnel to track compliance with local traffic tickets. The software will enable the town to notify the state when tickets are not paid and the state will then be able to put notations in the registration file. There was no estimate as to how much money this might generate.

Based on current revenue from fines, both Justices Lagonia and Raniola were confident that the court would meet its 2014 revenue projection of \$650,000, up \$200,000 from 2013. Both the criminal calendar and traffic tickets are up to date.

Engineering

Acting Town Engineer Sharon Robinson questioned where the money for capital projects is/would come from. She noted that although the work has already been completed on the Greenwood St. bridge (\$120,000), the resolution that awarded the bid for the work did not identify where the money to pay the bill would come from. Commenting on the \$175,000 in the department's "special projects" line, she said the projects on tap included the Baptist Church Rd project, Lexington Ave culvert and Mohegan wall but that typically the funds for these projects came from separate capital project lines and were not part of the department's operating budget. The three projects are listed in the proposed capital budget, to be financed with Bond Anticipation Notes (Bans).

Councilman Paganelli questioned whether the proposed \$600,000 cost for the Lexington Ave project was adequate and Ms. Robinson responded that we won't know for sure until actual design work is done. When the councilman asked if Cortlandt should share in the expense, Ms. Robinson said she had been told by the highway department that that portion of the road was Yorktown's responsibility. (Note: Cortlandt is responsible for maintaining Lexington Ave from Amazon Rd to Route 6.)

Sewers

In response to Councilman Bianco's question regarding the Yorktown Sewer's \$547,620 special district fee to the general fund, Supervisor Grace said that the town had received a letter from the state comptroller's office stating that the way the town was calculating the 6% fee was acceptable. He said that after the state office received a complaint about the fees, the comptroller's office requested documentation from the town and after reviewing the documentation, concluded that the 6% fee was acceptable.

Ms. Robinson asked that the job title of two employees be upgraded. Both positions are funded 100% by the DEP and conform to DEP's request that the positions be filled by more qualified personnel. (When the positions were originally filled, the town decided to initially hire lesser trained staff and train and upgrade them if they proved satisfactory.)

In order to comply with new air emission permit requirements, the sewer plant will have to hire a consultant to monitor air emissions. The additional funds will be taken from another budget line.

In response to questions from Councilman Bianco regarding the need to replace pump stations, Ms. Robinson explained that three pump stations are more than 40 years old and need to be replaced. She ball parked the cost at \$1 million each. A brief discussion followed regarding how much of the district's fund balance should be used to finance the pump stations and how much should be bonded. Supervisor Grace said that if the money was kept in the fund balance, a plan was needed on how the funds would be spent. Funds for pump station repairs

put in the 2013 budget, as well as in past budgets, were not used for that purpose but shifted to other budget lines.

Ms. Robinson explained that the district will still incur costs for the sludge composting operation through 2014 and that the projected savings (the elimination of an HMEO and the 1/3 cost of the composting operation could not be eliminated until 2015. Councilman Paganelli, speaking as the incoming highway superintendent, expressed concern about the potential loss of income to the highway department and the continued cost of maintaining and operating “the beast,” the piece of equipment that turns logs into wood chips. He said he’d like to get rid of the equipment but Supervisor Grace said that if the town returned to adding dye to the chips, it would be able to sell them and generate revenue. In response to Mr. Paganelli’s concerns about losing 1/3 of sewer revenue, Ms. Robinson said she would work with Mr. Paganelli to work out appropriate cost sharing formulas for other shared equipment such as the flush truck used by both departments.

Town Comptroller Caporale explained that the \$300,000 reduction in debt service was a determination by the state Environmental Facilities Corporation. In response to a question from Councilman Bianco she called the reduction a “defeasance” and explained that the EFC required the reduction to be taken in 2014 and that it could not be spread out over the remaining years of the loan.

Sewer rents. Ms. Caporale said the \$50,000 revenue increase in sewer rents was calculated projecting revenue received to date over 12 months.

Planning Department

Planning Director Tegeder asked for \$6,000 more to hire temporary summer help.

The Board agreed that the projected \$60,000 in planning fees was reasonable but agreed to reduce the projected general development fee revenue to \$90,000 from \$130,000. The fee is paid before an approved site plan is signed. Mr. Tegeder estimated the following potential fees for 2014: Costco, \$21,000; Croton Overlook, \$18,000; Field Home, \$76,000; JV Mall \$5,000. Both Councilman Bianco and Patel suggested that because development activity varied from year to year, it might be preferable to use a 5-year average than just look one year ahead.

As part of a discussion of the department’s telephone expenses, Supervisor Grace said that the town needed to look into an alternate phone provider to replace the existing old system which he said was costly. He made the same point the next day.

Building Department

Building Inspector Winter reported that the department is doing considerably more inspections than had been done in recent years and that he needed more money for overtime. The Board agreed to consider adding \$5,000 to that budget line. In response to the question as to whether it was time to add another full time inspector, Mr. Winter said that given the uncertainties about the economy and level of building activity in 2014, he didn’t think it would be wise to bring on another full time person at this time. However, he did ask that two employees be upgraded: one a support staffer (money for that upgrade has already been put into the budget) and the fire marshal. In response to his request for more part time clerical assistance, Supervisor Grace said that town hall was down 2 ½ positions and that this would be looked into. (The need for additional help in town hall also came up in discussions with the tax office. See below.)

Legal Department

Councilman Bianco asked why the budget continued to include \$50,000 for a junior attorney when one wasn't hired in 2013. Town Attorney Koster defended the \$20,000 budgeted for foreclosures, saying that she hoped to do more in this area next year to collect unpaid taxes for 2010-2012.

Refuse & Recycling

Kim Angliss Gage explained that the \$50,000 budgeted for equipment was to replace a 2001 truck with 120,000 miles and also for a replacement used storage container used to store leaf bags. Overall, she said that dumping fees for kitchen trash were down, in part because recycling fees were up. Because the town gets credit for its recycling, the net change to the refuse district was a savings of about \$7,000,

A duplicate stipend line item of \$22,000 will be eliminated.

Looking ahead, she advised the board that the district might need additional funds to hire a consultant if it went out to bid for a new garbage contract; the current two year contract expires at the end of 2014 and preparing bid specs and reviewing proposals is a lengthy process.

She also asked that in response to a request from the highway superintendent, an additional \$1,000 be added to the district's share of the compositing costs.

Supervisor Grace initiated a discussion about the proliferation of used clothing collection bins throughout town. After Ms. Angliss Gage explained that the two licenses only two vendors: Goodwill and Ragas Unlimited which sends the town a check each year (she did not specify the amount), Supervisor Grace said that the town may want to consider licensing the other vendors as a source of revenue. He said his office has received complaints from some businesses where storage bins have been placed without the property owner's consent, although Councilman Paganelli noted that in some instances, the businesses agree to having the bins on their property in exchange for getting a share of the profits made by the collection vendors.

Central Garage

Ms. Angliss Gage advised the board that the vapor recovery equipment at the underground fuel storage tank at the police department died in April and \$9,000 is needed to replace it. She said the town would be liable for a fine if the equipment was not replaced by the time of the next county inspection took place.

On a personal note, Ms. Angliss Gage reminded that board that because she is still considered part of the CSEA and is not officially the department head for Refuse & Recycling and the Central Garage (she gets a \$21,112 stipend as the "acting" head), she is not getting the extra vacation days that department heads get.

Assessor

Assessor Kim Penner reported that this year was the first since 1976 that the assessment roll had been completed on time. She said that as long as the budget continued to include money for the part time hiring of the former assessor, she did not require any additional staff.

In response to her comment that the town's assessment roll declined by 1% in 2013, Supervisor Grace noted that Cortlandt's roll went down even more and that going forward this should mean changes in the equalization rate which should mean higher taxes for the Yorktown portion of the Lakeland School District.

Tax office

Barbara Korsak, who has been in charge of the office in the absence of Ms. Schmid, advised the board that if Ms. Schmid resigns in 2014, she would like to return to the past practice of having a 21 hour part timer for the department, in addition to a new full time person. When Supervisor Grace brought up the possibility of a floater, she said the office needed a regular person who was familiar with the software and could do more than answer phones and take payments.

In response to questions from Councilman Patel, Comptroller Pat Caporale said she was looking into online payments, but that the software had to be consistent with the town's bank (Chase) and its KVS financial software. She will look into whether an alternate finance software package is compatible with KVS. Ms. Korsak pointed out that the payer would be responsible for paying the credit card processing fee.

Nutrition/Programs for the Aged

In response to concerns raised by Councilman Patel, the Board agreed to add a new line to the budget, funded at \$2,000, to pay for paper and toner for the senior computer lab. When the program was set up in 2010/2011, no provisions beyond the initial supplies were provided for.

Ms. DeSilva said he would like a walk- in cooler for the program at a cost of \$14,000 and that additional maintenance projects, including kitchen ventilation, were needed. In response to her concerns about the need for a back up van to transport seniors, Highway Superintendent DiBartolo said that he has been, and will continue to, make an 18 passenger van owned by the Yorktown Funeral Home available to the seniors.

Ms. DeSilva advised that board that she is likely to retire sometime in 2014.

Highway Department

Highway Superintendent DiBartolo said that salt supplies were in "good shape" and defended the \$75,000 reduction in the salt line. Together with some other fund shifts, the money has been used to put \$250,000 into the paving line. When Councilman Paganelli, who will take over highway in January, questioned the wisdom of the cut, Mr. DiBartolo shot back that this was still his budget, that he was "calling the shots, and that he didn't want to be second guessed about what was needed in the department. Mr. DiBartolo said that while money could always be added the salt line if needed, once in the budget, it could not be taken away.

A discussion ensued on the merits of mixing rock salt with magnesium chloride to create a brine that is sprayed on the road. Mr. DiBartolo said that his mixture saves money, reduces the need or plowing, and is better for the environment. Mr. DiBartolo said that the brine operation was discontinued after a spill occurred a few years ago at one of the brine tanks stored at the water department in Shrub Oak. The spill entered the stream that feeds the Peekskill water supply. Mr. Paganelli said he would look into resuming the operation. The Board tentatively agreed to put additional funds in both the salt and paving line. (It was not clear if the addition was \$10,000 to each budget line.)

On the subject of trucks, Mr. DiBartolo suggested that the town agree to bond for two new trucks for the next five years. The department purchased six new trucks in 2013.

On the issue of bonding, Supervisor Grace explained that with the pool bond scheduled to be retired in 2015, if the town borrowed in 2014, there could be a one year overlap in debt payment. This could make the 2015 budget "tight," he said and possibly mean that some bonding should be postponed until 2016.

When Mr. DiBartolo suggested that \$89,000 would be an appropriate salary for the incoming highway superintendent and that Councilman Paganelli recuse himself from the salary discussion, a heated debate ensued between the outgoing and incoming superintendents. While Mr. DiBartolo said it was “crazy’ to give \$104,000 to an untested new person, Councilman Paganelli noted that when Mr. DiBartolo took over in 1986, he was also untested in the job but received the same salary as the outgoing superintendent. Mr. Paganelli said he was prepared to fight for what he believed was right and didn’t care how his request for a higher salary looked.

Library

With renovations of the children’s room underway Library Director Barresi advised the board that in the next few years about \$300,000 would be needed to renovate/refurbish the adult room.

In response to criticisms from the United Taxpayers of Yorktown about the size of the library’s fund balance, Supervisor Grace suggested that \$100,000 of fund balance be used in the 2014 budget. Library Director Pat Barressi explained that fund balance had increased in 2012 because of vacancies.

Water

Capital projects: Water Superintendent Rambo explained the need to complete the cement lining of water mains, a project that wa begun 10-20 years ago. The lining prolongs the age of the pipes and improves water pressure. Three sections of town remain to be done: portions of Hanover Street, Underhill Ave. and Strawberry Road. He would like to combine the first two projects for 2014 and do Strawberry in 2015. Each section will cost approximately \$600,000.

Other capital projects and expenses not in the budget include the need for a new generator, a new supply van that’s used to carry equipment used during water main breaks, repairs to an existing backhoe (instead of buying a new one), a fluoride injection system at the Catskill plant, a new boiler, a new roof on the small brick building on the site, new GIS software (\$60,000), a new FIOS line (\$40,000) that automatically lets the Joint Water Works read and adjust the water levels in the storage tanks.

In a question from the audience, it was noted that by including \$1.3 million for capital projects in the operating budget instead of simply transferring the money from fund balance to a capital projects line off budget as has been done in the past, the district’s administrative fee to the general fund, calculated at 6% of the total budget, increases by \$78,000.

Staffing. Mr. Rambo asked that the current 16 hour/week part timer be increased to 25 hours to provide better office coverage. (At 25 hours, the employee gets benefits.)

Water rate increase. At Mr. Rambo’s suggestion, the projected revenue from metered water sales was reduced to \$6.3 million from \$6.5 million. The increase covers the increase in the NYC pass through charge.

Water meter project. Mr. Rambo estimated that the district is losing \$750,000/year in metered water sales because the meters are, on average, only 85% accurate. He said that the \$3.4 million cost of installing the new meters would be paid off in 4.3 years.

Supervisor Grace said he wanted to wait until all 2,500 meters in Phase I of the project were installed before committing to Phase II and the remaining 7,500 meters.

Town Clerk (Digitization project)

The budget, which was prepared prior to the election, includes money for a special election if the Board decides to go that route for filling the councilman vacancy as of January 1.

The discussion focused almost entirely on the digitization plan that all agreed would save the town money. Given the cost of the project, which could reach \$1 million, it was suggested that the work be done in stages, beginning first with digitizing the current records in the building department and the clerk's office and then eventually digitizing other department records as well as back records. Ms. Roker said she would bring in a company that would discuss the program with town officials.

Ms. Roker also suggested that once current records and development applications were in the new system, that Board members be given tablets so that they could view the files. Supervisor Grace initially said that Board members should pay for their own tablets, but later said that perhaps the town should give them an allowance towards their own purchase. Ms. Roker added that the audio visual equipment would/should also be upgraded to accommodate the new material so that it would be available to the public.

Ms. Roker said that no outside grant money was available to offset the cost of implementing the program, which initially might cost \$750,000. The cost would be bonded.

Supervisor Grace noted that he has been talking about this project since taking office and that what was needed now was a commitment to proceed. Ms. Roker said that she would be having a vendor come to town to explain what the new software could do.

Building Maintenance/YCCC/Theater

The revenue line for rents at the YCCC was reduced.

Supervisor Grace explained that his plan to spend \$65,000 for a movie projector and screen for the theater was part of the lease renewal discussions with Barry Liebman who operates the theater. Mr. Liebman would be in charge of the program and free movies would be shown every weekend the theater was not in use. The goal was to bring people to downtown and to patronize other businesses. The Supervisor said that as long as there was no admission charge, there would be no royalty payments.

Police

Cars. The department currently has 30 vehicles, 18 of which are marked patrol cars. A new car, fully equipped, costs \$36,000. In 2013, the department purchased two new cars; the chief wants to use the remaining money in that budget line to upgrade some software. The Supervisor's budget includes \$90,000 for vehicles for about 2½ cars. A discussion ensued about where to find an additional \$21,000 in the department's budget to finance a third car. No decisions were made.

The Supervisor asked the chief to see if the department could use the supply van that the water department would like to replace. The van would replace an existing vehicle and trailer used to move barricades.

Staffing. Councilmen Murphy and Paganelli spoke about the critical need for a dedicated drug enforcement officer. The chief explained that several years ago when there were 58 officers, two were assigned to traffic and

one to drugs. When staffing levels were reduced to 55 officers, the traffic unit was eliminated and when the drug officer had to retire due to an injury, he was never replaced.

The board reached consensus to add an additional officer to the budget with the proviso that the officer be used exclusively for drug enforcement. (The officer would work with the county and could also be used outside of Yorktown, but county officers would also be available to assist in drug cases in Yorktown.)

Initially, Supervisor Grace thought that the new officer could replace a DARE officer, but other Board members felt that the program was important and should be kept and that the additional police officer would supplement the DARE program, as well as the school SROs and efforts of groups such as ASK. The Supervisor suggested that this additional officer to shown as a separate line in the budget in order to explain the additional cost.

Although each officer at full salary costs \$160,000 a year (salary, benefits, car), the chief explained that for the first year, a new officer would only cost \$70,000. As one senior officer retired in October, and another one might retire next year, he anticipated a temporary savings when one or both officers were replaced with new officers at a lower salary. (After four years, a new officer is paid at the top of the salary scale.)

Workers' Compensation

The budget will be adjusted to reflect 2012 workers' compensation costs that are not shown in the budget book.