



TOWN OF HILLSDALE

Public Hearing on Budget

November 14, 2023

A Public Hearing of the Hillsdale Town Board was held on November 14 2023 at 6:45 pm in the Hillsdale Town Hall and via Zoom with the following members present:

PRESENT: Supervisor Chris Kersten
Councilmember Joanna Virello
Councilmember Robina Ward
Councilmember Tom Carty

Councilmember Steve Tiger was not present for the Public Hearing

OTHERS PRESENT: Elizabeth Sheer, Town Clerk, Matt Cabral, Town Attorney, Mike Dvorchak, George Schmitt, Meg Wormley, Steve Bluestone, Kevin Hindes, Irwin Feld, Joyce LaPenn, Kathryn Levin, and other members of the public.

Present via Zoom were: Jamie Carano, Barbara Olsen Pascale, Shirley Bresler, and other members of the public

Supervisor Kersten detailed the 2024 budget. Total general fund appropriations are \$743,208, while in 2023 they were \$700,704. The 6.07% increase is mostly due to an increase in contingency and audit appropriation lines.

Highway fund appropriations for 2024 are \$1,429,529, an increase of \$73,485 over 2023, largely due to rises in wages and fuel costs.

There will be no increase in property taxes in 2024. The increase in appropriations is being absorbed by the use of the appropriated fund balance of \$211,313 in the general fund, and \$191,946 in the highway fund.

It is anticipated that the general fund will have a fund balance of approximately \$1.5 million at the end of 2023. This is an increase of approximately \$200K from 2022. The highway fund's anticipated fund balance will be approximately \$550K.

The sewer fund will have a projected fund surplus of approximately \$7500 at the end of the 2023 fiscal year. This will help lessen the negative fund balance of \$71,447 from 2022.

The sewer fund balance by year is:

2020- negative \$99,499

2021 – negative \$93,635

2022 – negative \$71,447

2023 – negative \$64,000 (anticipated)

Supervisor Kersten then asked the public to voice their comments or concerns. There being none, he asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn

A motion was made by Robina Ward, and seconded by Tom Carty, to adjourn the Public Hearing on the 2024 Budget,

Aye: 4 Nay: 0

The Board Agreed to adjourn the Public Hearing at 6:52



TOWN OF HILLSDALE
TOWN BOARD MEETING
November 14, 2023

A regular meeting of the Hillsdale Town Board was held on November 14 2023 at 7:00 pm in the Hillsdale Town Hall and via Zoom with the following members present

PRESENT:	Supervisor	Chris Kersten
	Councilmember	Steve Tiger
	Councilmember	Joanna Virello
	Councilmember	Robina Ward
	Councilmember	Tom Carty

OTHERS PRESENT: Elizabeth Sheer, Town Clerk, Matt Cabral, Town Attorney, Mike Dvorchak, Meg Wormley, Steve Bluestone, Irwin Feld, Patti Rohrlich, Augie Sena, Kathryn Levin, Joyce LaPenn, Brandon Lentine, George Schmitt, Kevin Hindes, Kathryn Levin, and other members of the public

Present via Zoom were: Jamie Carano, Shirley Bresler, Barbara Olsen Pascale, Phyllis Granat, and other members of the public

The meeting began at 7:02 PM with Supervisor Kersten leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Prior to public comments, Supervisor Kersten noted that the Emergency Management document was still being reviewed by Town Attorney Matt Cabral. It is possible that there will be a public hearing on the matter before the December Town Board meeting.

There were no public comments.

Resolution #56. Approval of the minutes of the Town Board of October 10, 2023

On a motion by Tom Carty, seconded by Joanna Virello, the Board voted to accept the minutes of October 10, 2023

Adopted Vote

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

Resolved to accept the Minutes of the October 10, 2023 Town Board Meeting

Supervisor's Report

Supervisor Kersten congratulated Mike Dvorchak on his election to the position of Town Supervisor, Jamie Carano and Irwin Feld to the Town Board, Robina Ward to the position of Town Clerk, Russ Immerigon and Bob Werner as Town Justices, and the re-election of Richard Briggs as Highway Superintendent and Joe Hanselman, Jr as Tax Collector. He further wished them great success in their work for Hillsdale.

As far as fiscal health, the General Fund maintains a balance of \$1,862,073, Third quarter deposits from sales tax revenue totaled \$147,028.49, and Hillsdale's share of County mortgage tax revenue is \$61,928.68 – the third highest in the county.

Town Hall Renovation – This is underway. MCT At will begin the exterior construction in the following week, and Empire Core will begin roof renovations shortly. Interior renovations will begin in the new year.

Streetscape – This project, which includes incorporating pedestrian sidewalks with associated road and drainage improvements on Anthony, Cold Water and Maple Streets, was scoped out a year ago. A Request for Qualifications will assist firms in submitting requests for the Department of Transportation's Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant. A motion to formally adopt this RFQ will occur later in this meeting.

Roe Jan Housing Task Force -The Supervisor noted that at the beginning of his term in office, he, along with Matt White, established the Roe Jan Housing Task Force, with representatives from Ancram, Copake, and Hillsdale. Supervisor Kersten will be stepping down from this role, to be succeeded by Meredith Kane. One of the initiatives of this entity is the creation of a County Land Bank, a public authority with special powers under Article 16. Its purpose is to return delinquent and abandoned properties to the tax rolls. the Land Bank has thus far been approved by the ECDC, and the Department of Financial Services and is awaiting a New York State Certificate of Approval. Supervisor Kersten stressed the importance of Hillsdale's continued representation on the Roe Jan Housing Task Force.

Highway Report – Superintendent Richard Briggs said that the Highway Department has been cleaning up leaves and setting up trucks for winter. The new truck has not been built yet, and the current truck did not pass inspection. It was in an accident and might be considered totaled by the insurance company. Superintendent Briggs offered hopes that a new truck could be purchased with insurance money.

Town Clerk's report

There was one death and one marriage in the past month.

Town Clerk Sheer asked that newly elected officials get her their contact information so that it could be put into the county database. Additionally, there is some information for them from the association of Towns, and she offered to scan and send this information as soon as she has email addresses.

Town Clerk Sheer requested that the Board permit an audit of the Town Clerk's books for the past year to assure that the incoming clerk is starting with a clean slate. This occur when the board is informed of the cost of such an audit.

Fire District Report – Joe Hanselman, Jr. was not present

Tax Collector's Report – Joe Hanselman, Jr. was not present

Sewer Report – Supervisor Kersten asked the Board for approval to adopt a 7% raise in sewer fees to pay for the clean out of the tanks, which would result in a cost of \$674.10 per EDU.

Motion to increase sewer district payment by 7% in 2024.

A motion was made by Steve Tiger, and seconded by Tom Carty to approve a 7% increase in sewer bills

Adopted Vote

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board moved to increase sewer district bills by 7 % in 2024.

Supervisor Kersten noted that the Board has been considering ways to help Kevin Hinds open his coffee shop. Construction on the whole system was approved in 2007. It is a closed and sealed system, which is inspected by the DEC each year. The Board has already addressed a \$188,000 debt from the sewer district with no additional cost to users. A lesson learned from that experience was that town funds cannot be used for sewer district debt. The Town would like to help with Mr. Hinds' dilemma; George Schmitt has been appointed to come up with some solutions.

Mr. Schmitt said that until there is a plan, none of the questions arising from Mr. Hinds' issue can be resolved.

Town Attorney Matt Cabral said that planning has to be prepared before the Board can move forward. The Town established a Special District, which is independent of the Town. The District itself was approved as currently constructed. The idea is to find a solution that is acceptable to the Department of Health with minimal impact on the district. The Sewer District may have to raise a bond, or borrow, but it cannot do anything without an engineer's report.

Mr Schmitt added that there is one possible scenario in which the DOH would grant a waiver, but not without an engineer's report.

Kevin Hinds asked why, if the plan was built as designed, and approved by the state, the state cannot fix it.

Mr Schmitt responded that the state does not do that.

Supervisor Kersten proposed a motion to engage George Schmitt to provide the Town with options to be discussed at the December meeting

Motion to engage CPL to undertake a study to determine a solution to the issues facing Kevin Hindes

A motion was made by Joanna Virello, and seconded by Tom Carty engage CPL to undertake this study

Adopted Vote

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board moved to engage CPL to undertake a study to determine options for correcting sewer district issues

Human Resources – Steve Tiger said there were no Human Resources issues

Infrastructure – Robina Ward brought up an issue of Brothers Landscaping performing maintenance at 7 AM outside of Hillsdale House. She said she spoke with them, and this will not happen again.

PARK – Joanna Virello said that the park signs are being ordered

COMMITTEES

HECDC – Tom Carty said that Joanna Virello Matt White and Todd Wohlforth did a great job on the unveiling of the mural on the side of the Hillsdale Supermarket.

A Resolution is required by NYSEDA for the change in personnel of the Climate Smart Communities. Councilmember Carty provided a draft of this resolution to appoint Paul Duerenberger to serve as the Coordinator of the Climate Smart Community Taskforce.

Resolution #57

A motion was made by Steve Tiger, and seconded by Robina Ward to appoint Paul Duerenberger as Coordinator of the Climate Smart Community Task Force.

Adopted Vote

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board resolved to appoint Paul; Duerenberger as Coordinator of the Climate Smart Community Task force.

Safe at Home Committee – Joyce LaPenn reported on Senior Chore Day. It was very successful, and the Safe at Home Coffee hours have been extremely well attended, and the Committee would like to invite the Town Board to one of their meetings.

The Committee offered thanks to Supervisor Kersten for his service to the Town, and would like their thanks to be enshrined in the minutes : they are appended.

Continuing Business

Motion to approve the 2024 Town Budget

A motion was made by Tom Carty, and seconded by Steve Tiger to approve the 2024 Town Budget

Adopted Vote

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board moved to approve the 2024 Town Budget

Motion to approve the RFQ for the Streetscape Project

A motion was made by Robina Ward, and seconded by Joanna Virello to approve RFQ for the Streetscape Project

Adopted Vote

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board moved to approve the RFQ

West End Bridge -- The Board should take this up in December. There is an off-site detour of 3+ miles. A temporary bridge would cost approximately \$150,000 A grant may be available in 2025, but the Town did not get a grant this year because there are other projects in the county that ate larger.

Log Home – Town Attorney Cabral said that a fiduciary had been appointed. He will be working with Lee Heim, Building Inspector, and that attorney to come up with a solution.

Supervisor Kersten noted that Habitat for Humanity is interested in the site.

Public Comments

A citizen asked whether it was too late to sign up for community solar through Climate Smart. Tom Carty replied that he believes it is still available.

Supervisor Kersten thanked Augie Sena and Bud Atwood for their counsel on sewer issues.

Executive Session

Motion to adjourn

A motion was made by Robina Ward and seconded by Joanna Vierello, to adjourn the Town Board meeting

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board adjourned at 8:05 PM

Resolution #58 – Abstract dated October 9, 2023 . The Board has approved the abstracts of the following:

General	\$17,231.19
Highway	\$298,781.86
Sewer	\$50.73
Parks	\$104.73
Lighting	\$0.0

Capital Fund \$0.0

Resolution #59 – Abstract dated October 25, 2023. The Board has approved the abstracts of the following:

General	\$7,667.16
Highway	\$9,134.23
Sewer	\$387.01
Parks	\$2,463.96
Lighting	\$0.0
Capital Fund	\$0

The next town Board meeting will take place at 7 PM on December 12, 2023

Statement From the Safe at Home Committee



The Safe at Home Committee thanks Chris Kersten for the support he has provided to the Committee and to Hillsdale seniors and caregivers. Chris was an original committee member in 2018 and was intimately involved with the initial gathering at Town Hall when the Committee initiated a needs assessment process that has informed its programming. He was involved in the two major workshops held at the Firehouse and has been a consistent cheerleader. We acknowledge his commitment to community and to his recognizing the importance of providing support to seniors so that they may safely age in place in Hillsdale.

Sincerely, the Safe at Home Committee,

Timi Bates, Lynda Brenner, Shirley Bresler, Lynne Colclough,
Deepak Crawford, Joyce Ferrentino, Beth Gordon, Rene Gibson,
Natalie Kahan, Mary Lou Kersten, and Joyce Lapenn, Patti
Rohrlich