

# **Board of Fire Commissioners**

Greenfield Fire District  
P.O. Box 103  
Greenfield Center, NY 12833

The 2011 proposed budget public hearing of the Greenfield Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners was called to order at Greenfield Center Company #1 by Chairman Kugler at 7:00 PM on October 19, 2010. The flag salute and a moment of silence were recognized for the departed.

## **Present were:**

**Commissioners:** B. Chouinard, Kugler, Robarge, Spackmann, Waite; Secretary Petkus, Deputy Treasurer V. Perkins.

Two residents and several Officers/members of the Fire District present (sign in sheet attached).

Chairman Kugler announced that in accordance with NYS Town Law §105, all Fire Districts must, prior to the adoption of their budget, hold a public hearing on their budget. He then also noted the following:

- This budget hearing must be held in such a manner as to maximize participation in the budget process;
- The purpose of this hearing is to discuss the contents of the budget;
- The Secretary of the Fire District has filed with this District an affidavit stating:
  1. That the notice of this public hearing was published or posted at least once, five days before the date specified for the hearing in:
    - The official newspaper of the Fire District,
    - The official signboard of the Towns where the District is located,
    - On the Fire District website,
    - On the town or towns websites where the District is located;
  2. The notice of public hearing specified the time and date when, and the place where this public hearing would be held;
  3. The Fire District Secretary also made available for inspection at least five days before the public hearing by any interested person during District office hours, copies of the proposed budget.
- The purpose of this public hearing is to allow members of the public to make comments on the budget. Any person may be heard in favor of, or against the preliminary budget or any item in it. Please note that this is only a proposed budget until the Board of Fire Commissioners adopts the final budget.
- Prior to the public comment portion of this budget hearing we will hear from the Fire District Deputy Treasurer, who will make a brief presentation about the preliminary budget to the Board of Fire Commissioners and the members of the public who are present. The Fire District Deputy Treasurer will be asked to submit the proposed budget to the Board of Fire Commissioners and members of the public who are here

this evening. The Deputy Treasurer should not answer specific questions during this time so as not to make this a question and answer session.

The Deputy Treasurer then read through the 2011 proposed budget (see attached). The total budget presented: \$1,384,600.00.

Chairman Kugler then asked anyone present wishing to be heard on this proposed budget to come forward so the person may be heard in favor of, or against the proposed budget or any item in it. He requested that if anyone wished to address the Board on the proposed budget, to come directly in front of them or raise your hand to be recognized. He also asked to clearly state your name and address for the record and to please limit comments to five minutes. All questions/comments should be directed to the Board or the Deputy Treasurer. He reiterated that this was not a question and answer session; the questions will not be answered when asked. The Board is looking for opinions on the budget, and what anyone is in favor of, or against in the budget. Questions will not be answered by the Board or the Deputy Treasurer until after the conclusion of the public comment period.

Chairman Kugler then announced that the public comment period would begin.

1. George Habig, resident, 4007 Route 9N, Greenfield Center, read a prepared statement that included the following (copy attached):
  - Thanked the firefighters for their service, has had several opportunities to visit the station fire truck areas, all of which are in great shape and this is a reflection on the Assistant Chiefs and Chiefs; gave them all a grade of A+.
  - Thanked the clerical staff for a great job this year considering all the numerous meetings that were held and the extra time put in, also gave an A+ grade.
  - Thanked the Board.
  - Has a few comments about the budget:
    - Has an issue with clumping, which muddles transparency. Gave the example of lights and heat as well as Purchasing Agent/office help under Personnel Services.
    - Noted the differential of the proposed budget is \$77,914.00 more than 2010 and in light of the recent decision to sell off some of the fleet, felt the Board could reduce the amount of Repairs to Apparatus by \$5,000.00.
    - Also noted that only \$8,012.22 out of the allotted \$80,000.00 was spent on Personal gear between January and September.
    - Phone bill: keeps going up with no end in sight.
2. Stan Weekes, 4 Ashlor Drive, Greenfield Center:
  - Really disappointed, the last meeting he came to you gave us all the indication that you were working really hard at this budget and you were really going to make every effort to trim this down and get it under control.
  - Considers an increase of 5.96% to be absolutely outrageous in today's economic climate.
  - Noted he is on social security, and there was no cost of living increase last year and none this coming year. We all complain about the Federal Government and state government spending money and we say there is nothing we can do about it, but if we don't start at the local level and don't recognize that we need to get things under control we are all going to be leaving this state.
  - He is terribly disappointed to see the kinds of numbers here, \$550,000.00 combined in the Building and Equipment, \$16,000.00 for Operations when last year it was \$6,000.00. There was no line last year for training and this year it is \$13,000.00. Looks like you are putting the Secretary on full time going from \$34,000.00 to \$44,000.00, doubling the

cost for the Purchasing Agent/Office help, that line for Personnel services is 44.5% higher than it was last year, those are numbers that are just out of sight as far as he is concerned, and then social security, accident insurance and unemployment goes up to compensate for those increased salaries.

- He will fight this as hard as he can because he thinks the Board is not seeing what is happening to this country, state and what will happen locally. We are in great shape in Saratoga County, but when we spend \$5.5 million dollars for a few dogs and cats, we really have to think about what we are doing to ourselves.
- Very supportive of things that need to be done but it seems to him that this budget is unreasonable in this increase.

Chairman Kugler asked if there were any other comments; there being none he then announced that the public comment period of this annual budget hearing is concluded. He then asked each member of the Board of Fire Commissioners present if they had any questions for the Deputy Treasurer. There were no questions or comments from the Board.

Chairman Kugler noted at this point that the Deputy Treasurer would answer any questions, if able to do so, discussed during the public comment period. Deputy Treasurer V. Perkins noted the Board could start and she would fill in answers as necessary.

Commissioner Robarge commented on Mr. Weekes' remark regarding the training, noting that training is a line item, was on last year's budget and was \$11,000.00. It was also noted by Chief Lant that it is in the budget every year.

Commissioner Spackmann commented on the following:

- Lights and heat were already addressed in a different meeting, they are pretty much 50/50 and there is no need to break it out;
- Gear account is \$80,000.00 because that is a procurement account, what Mr. Habig itemized was expenses for repairs and minor purchases, and the Board tries to take gear related expenses for repairs out of that account; in November gear will be ordered and so that money will be spent. It is about \$3,000.00 per firefighter to outfit with proper gear, which is why it is a sizeable amount.
- Phone account: The Chief this year did a good thing and got rid of a lot of phones and we will continue to look at that, but when you have a 200 employee organization, there is going to be overhead and one of them is phones.
- Regarding Mr. Weekes' statement of an unrealistic increase, he would have loved to have a 0% increase as well, but had he attended the various meetings the Board has had, he would have noted all the different effort that has gone into this budget, the Board has deliberated on the budget plenty of times, far more than any other fire district ever does. Mr. Weekes noted a couple of line items that went up, but he forgot to note the many instances where they went down, one of which he mentioned was Operations. Operations did go up, but the only reason it went up was because the Board eliminated company allotments from this budget, which were \$22,000.00, and there were some people who were unhappy with that idea, but they took a leap of faith in recognizing from the Officers standpoint, the need to be fiscally conservative in this time, and to their credit. A little bit of the allotment was taken and put into the Operations account because that is what the Board perceives as being used to purchase stuff previously purchased out of the allotment accounts, which no longer exist.
- Regarding the tax rate, it went up one cent. The Board spent a tremendous amount of time deliberating, and to go up one cent out of a thousand they felt was very comfortable.

- He encouraged Mr. Weekes to attend the meetings because he will realize how much effort goes into trying to hold the line, specifically the Future Plan Committee meetings, where they have talked about getting rid of trucks.

Chairman Kugler then asked if there were any more comments from the Board or Deputy Treasurer, and as there were none, asked for a motion to close the hearing.

Motion to declare the public hearing regarding the 2011 proposed budget closed was made by Commissioner Spackmann with a second from Commissioner B. Chouinard.

VOTE: All in favor, motion carried.

Chairman Kugler then asked for a motion to set the 2011 budget adoption date.

Motion to set the 2011 budget adoption date for the Commissioners Workshop on October 26, 2010 at Greenfield Center Co #1, 13 South Greenfield Road, at 7 pm made by Commissioner Spackmann with a second from Commissioner Robarge.

VOTE: All in favor, motion carried.

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Commissioner Spackmann with a second from Commissioner B. Chouinard.

VOTE: All in favor, motion carried.

Chairman Kugler adjourned the meeting at 7:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce A. Petkus  
District Secretary