

**SPECIAL VILLAGE BOARD MEETING
APRIL 28, 2015**

The Village of Gowanda Board of Trustees special meeting was called to order by Mayor Heather McKeever at 6:00 p.m. at the Municipal Hall. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Present: Mayor Heather McKeever
Trustee Carol Sheibley
Trustee Pete Sisti
Trustee Barb Nephew
Trustee Paul Zimmermann

Village Employees: Treasurer Cindy Lauer, Village Clerk Kathy Mohawk, Public Works Superintendent Jason Opferbeck

Media Present: Samantha McDonnell, Observer
Phil Palen, Cable Channel 22

Public Present: Supervisor Dennis Stopen, John Girome, Pauline Murphy, Eric Zielinski, Joe and Janet Vogtli, Jack Broyles

Mayor McKeever advised that the sole purpose of the meeting was to approve the 2015-2016 Village budget. She would not be taking any public participation at this meeting. Mayor McKeever commended all the Board members for all the time they spent on the budget at extra meetings and on weekends. She indicated the Village cut 6% out of the operating budget from last year. Janet Vogtli asked for a copy of the budget and Mayor McKeever advised it would be available tomorrow at the clerk's office.

Mayor McKeever read her budget message:

"Today I present a budget that helps set the stage for the Village of Gowanda to develop a long term financial plan. This budget reflects changes in where we have made cuts in an effort to allow us to be fiscally responsible while demonstrating our priorities. I would like to point out that this is a standalone budget. In 2014/2015 the board allowed for \$63,000 in Appropriated Fund Balance to help offset the tax levy and keep tax rates low. Our Independent Auditors' Report for year end May 31, 2014 stated in their findings "Although utilizing the fund balance to balance the budget is considered an acceptable practice, this practice should be coupled with a plan to balance future budgets at a time should fund balance fall below acceptable levels." Our corrective action plan moving forward states, "The Board will no longer appropriate fund balance as a continual practice to keep taxes lower. The Village Board will continue to pursue cost-cutting and/or revenue enhancing options. We are in the process of developing a long-term financial plan."

Based on the appropriated fund balance used last year, the Board started out this year's budget without this option in which last year helped to bring the tax rate down by 6.3%. Also take into consideration new mandatory line items for the upcoming fiscal year; 2009

flood bond – principal payment \$48,200 (4.8% increase), 2009 flood bond – interest payment \$34,627 (3.5% increase) and RAN for FEMA completion \$6,580 (.7% increase). When considering this a standalone budget with no appropriated balance being used this year and in comparison to last year's budget, I would like to point out that the increase in costs were over 15% when these stated items were included.

Our tax increase being presented for the 2015-2016 budget year is 9.53%; when considering the above, we as a board have cut 6% of our operating costs reflected in the proposed budget. We have worked hard to maintain services such as trash pickup. We do plan to develop a committee to explore cost saving options moving forward. Our budget also reflects that we are maintaining priorities such as public safety and road repair.

Moving forward, we will look to long term borrowing as the Board is committed to capital improvement projects throughout the Village. We also plan to expand our government efficiency plan to working with local municipalities and respective counties in an effort to continue shared services.”

Trustee Sheibley stated that it has not been an easy process. She is not happy personally with the budget but the Village needs to provide the current services.

Motion 30-15. Motion by Trustee Zimmermann, seconded by Trustee Nephew to adopt the 2015-2016 Village budget as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion 31-15. Motion by Trustee Sisti, seconded by Trustee Zimmermann to adjourn the special Village Board meeting at 6:15 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

The next Village of Gowanda board meeting is May 12, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen V. Mohawk
Village Clerk