

Town of New Scotland

Budget Workshop

October 13, 2016

The following Town Officials were in attendance:

Supervisor:	Douglas LaGrange
Councilperson:	William Hennessy
	Adam Greenberg
	Laura Ten Eyck
Town Clerk:	Diane Deschenes
Absent:	Councilperson: Patricia Snyder

**1. Call to Order**

Supervisor LaGrange called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. The fire companies have been invited to go over their requests.

New Salem Fire District page 172

Treasurer Tim Blow attended to present the New Salem Fire District budget. Mr. Blow advised that in 2016 they had to replace a lot of Scott Paks. It was something that was not budgeted. It was a \$70,000-\$80,000 expense. That's why you see the Firematic equipment unusually high in 2016. In 2017 they are anticipating a large expense on radios. That's a little bit unusual. They did have a big-ticket item in the fire hall having to replace the heating system. That's a significant increase in the repairs and maintenance of the fire hall. In the budget for 2017 is an expense for Station 2, which is down the road. It's kind of deferred maintenance for anticipating having to expand it as some of these developments come along.

Supervisor LaGrange asked if the radios have to do with the frequency change. Mr. Blow believed so adding as well that their stuff is very old. Supervisor LaGrange said that this is a 1% increase from the 2016 budget request. Supervisor LaGrange said he appreciated that because we are under constraints. The tax cap this year is 0.144. Every municipality is different. There is a calculation we go through, and last year we were less than 1%. This year we moved up a little, but we are getting crunched by the New Salem Water District. The increase to those folks who are paying on their bond counts against us in the tax cap. We are hoping that our Assemblywoman and Senator work on that for us. It wasn't intended to be that way initially. We are hoping that can be addressed so we don't take such a hit next time.

Supervisor LaGrange wanted to make the Board aware and the fire departments too that as you look at page 20 or page 172 of the budget, the request is for \$292,000 but we also have some other expenses that go toward the cap including LOSAP, our Internal Control Officer, Social Security, and Worker's Compensation which are all big issues that go on top of this. This year for New Salem it's up about \$889 which was a 2% hike. Supervisor LaGrange said that when he's asking the department to keep it tight it's because we have these additional expenses that go on top of it. We certainly appreciate the attempts made to keep things tight. He just wanted to make the Board aware of that.

Councilperson Hennessy asked Mr. Blow to explain the Firematic equipment again. He asked if that is loan payments on the trucks. Mr. Blow said no, it's basically expenses on specific fire equipment. They had about a \$75,000 expense this year. Mr. Blow said that he may be getting the terminology wrong, but he thinks it's the Air Paks. They only have a 15-year life and 2016-2017 was the end of the 15 years. It could have been staged over a couple of years, but they got a better price when they did all of them this year. We do have to follow that up with some expenses next, but it's something they had this year that they didn't budget for. In 2017 it's the radios. Mr. Blow thought about \$25,000 of that number is to replace some of their radios. Councilperson Hennessy asked about another expense for the fire hall. The heating is 2016, but what has to be done this year? Mr. Blow said that he knows they need to do something with doors, and there might be some design work, possibly the heating system. He mentioned in his cover letter that what they are planning is that as their debt rolls out in 2018 to replace that. By that time the various housing developments will be more online and they will need to expand Station 2 a little and possibly make it a two-bay building. They are getting estimates and trying to figure out what they need to do to make sure they can continue providing coverage on this end of town. That's in the longer-range plans. They are hoping the timing is so that when one debt rolls out, they can add the next one. They will probably be looking to get a sign-off on the tax-exempt nature of some kind of funding, something similar to what we did with the truck a couple of years ago. Right now, that's a ballpark for 2018.

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Supervisor LaGrange asked how much land is around Station 2. Mr. Blow wasn't sure, but it's enough to add on.

Mrs. Boehlke advised the Board that we did have to increase the levy for the district this year. Both fire districts will have very little fund balances through the end of this year. We raised that by \$10,000 this year. Supervisor LaGrange asked Mrs. Boehlke to give an overview of the reason for the fund balance we hold for each and how it's used. Mrs. Boehlke said that the reason we hold a fund balance is that we raise taxes for what we are able to supply to them. Whatever isn't used for LOSAP goes into a rainy-day fund. We have been relying on them for quite a bit over the last several years to balance the budget so we don't have to raise taxes for the taxpayers. We are getting to the point where we just can't do that anymore. Mrs. Boehlke estimated that at the end of 2016 the New Salem Fire Department will have \$10,000. She will still need to use \$4,162 to balance the budget which will leave them with \$5,970 (page 3) estimated for 2017. We went from \$330,949 to \$340,949. Mrs. Boehlke didn't anticipate this going down until something happens. While we're here, Mrs. Boehlke said she didn't raise Onesquethaw because there was a slight decrease in their budget. and she knows that that will be discussed. There was a \$15,096 fund balance, and she thought we'd need \$7,351 which would leave them with \$7,745 this year (page 3). There is a good chance we might have to raise that next year. Supervisor LaGrange said that, again, those fund balances are strictly for each district. They are not used in other districts, and we can't bring in money from other funds. This money comes from certain taxpayers.

Treasurer Blow said that if our budget is staying basically flat, which he thought it did last year, why would the Town need to use something? Mrs. Boehlke said it was because she used \$10,000 last year to balance their budget. Mr. Blow asked what she meant by balance. Was it because of the LOSAP? Supervisor LaGrange said that it was LOSAP and Worker's Compensation. Mrs. Boehlke said that last year their budget expenditures were \$341,000, and we raised \$330,000 in taxes. She needed to balance it. Mr. Blow said that their pieces were \$289,000, so the difference is the LOSAP and Worker's Compensations. Supervisor LaGrange said that he thinks this is something that the Board explained well in the past. Councilperson Hennessy commented that Worker's Compensation is almost 10% of the whole cost. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that if you look at page 20 you can see the actual in 2015 and the estimated in 2016. Worker's Compensation in 2015 was \$20,386, and for 2017 it's \$26,438. Mr. Blow said that they hadn't had any claims so why is that much? Mrs. Kavanaugh said that actually the fire departments have the majority of the claims. Mr. Blow asked about their particular department. Supervisor LaGrange asked have any of our insurances stayed flat. Mr. Blow said that Worker's Compensation is supposed to be experience-rated. Mrs. Kavanaugh said it is, but PERMA is like a self-insured pool. Our loss ratio hasn't been as good. They have a zero point which is the average. You get a discount if you're below that, and you pay more if you're above it. We were about 87% and now were at 96%. The State surcharges have also gone up. Supervisor LaGrange said that our policy is overall which includes our highway department, the fire departments, etc. It's not individualized. Mr. Blow asked if it was being allocated just based on bodies. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that fire is a separate thing on the bill. Then it's based on the number of houses. New Salem is a little bigger than Onesquethaw. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that she allocated highway. They have a different rate for snow, roadwork, trash, and clerical. Mr. Blow asked if Highway has some Worker's Compensation claims that build up the Town's experience number so the entire town pays. Mrs. Kavanaugh agreed adding that the fire departments are on with the town. Councilperson Greenberg stated that their cost goes up because of the highway claims. It's not separate in that sense. Mr. Blow said that the rate is a charge, and based upon the type of position it gets a different rating too. A fire might be considered riskier so it's already at a higher rate. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that the highest rate is fire and then highway summer. Clerical staff is a lower rate.

Councilperson Hennessy said that going back to the specifics of the Worker's Compensation, it looks like it went up 20% from 2015 to 2016, and we're budgeted 10% from 2016 to 2017. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that there was a big jump last year. Councilperson Hennessy asked if she thinks we'll be safe with 10%. Mrs. Kavanaugh said yes; she has the bill. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that she tried to keep it tight because it's a big bill. Mrs. Boehlke added that she also goes back and reallocates it based on actual. They do give us a refund. Mrs. Boehlke said that she just processed the one for last year, and it was \$0.50 or \$1.00 for each fire department. Mrs. Kavanaugh added that PERMA does a payroll audit, and we pay based on a projection. They base it on payroll except for the fire. She does an audit and sends them our quarterly tax filing and a bunch of other stuff, and we usually get a refund. Mrs. Kavanaugh budgets for the net, so when she pays the bill it looks like we're over budget, but that's because we're going to get a refund later on which will bring it back in. The refunds have been getting smaller. There was a big hike last year. Mr. Blow said that probably the Worker's Compensation was causing a lot of the fluctuation with the fund balance. He said he would think that the

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LOSAP would be fairly constant. Mrs. Kavanaugh agreed adding that the same is true of the cost of the audits and the Penflex fees.

Supervisor LaGrange said that the point of bringing all of this up is simply because he doesn't think we've really discussed it in the past so there is an understanding and we're all on the same page. Supervisor LaGrange thanked New Salem. We always appreciate them and their service.

#### Onesquethaw Fire Protection & Ambulance District page 176

Supervisor LaGrange thanked Onesquethaw for responding to the farm on Tuesday. The doctor at the emergency room was impressed with the report he received on the work done when Onesquethaw responded for his father. Supervisor LaGrange said that he's seen it in the past, and he appreciates it. Thank you.

President Lobdell said that we got our first letter on August 9<sup>th</sup> for the budget pieces. She was happy to say that their new kitchen is in. They're going into some of their reserves for that. That finishes up the hall, and they're pleased with that. Supervisor LaGrange asked if this was Feura Bush. President Lobdell said it was Clarksville. That's their main building, and if push comes to shove and they have something major going on in the community that's where a lot of community would come. The kitchen was 45-50 years old in that building, so it needed a renovation. They put a 9 x 27 addition on because they didn't have an inch of space in that place anymore. That should last them for quite a few years.

President Lobdell said that you can read in her letter of August 9<sup>th</sup> about the building and the grounds. That shows a decrease on that. They took from some of the thing that they were going to do like the air conditioning and what they didn't use in other areas for this addition. Personal equipment has stayed just about the same. They are still doing six sets of gear. Supervisor LaGrange asked if they've replaced the radios. When is that coming? It seemed imminent two years ago. Chief LaDuke said that it's still being talked about. The paid department in Cohoes and municipal department are getting it this year. Supervisor LaGrange asked if he could explain the system. Mr. Spaulding said that the County dispatch center is switching from the high-band or low-band VHF system that we use now. They got a state grant. The whole console is being switched over to the 800 series which will make all of the radios throughout the entire district null and void. When this does happen, it is going to be a major expense. There is nothing they can do. Supervisor LaGrange said that New Salem was talking about getting them in 2017. Mr. Spaulding said that \$25,000 is not going to replace what they need to replace. They are replacing radios that are obsolete now. A portable right now is \$400-\$500 and to go to the 800-series radio is going to be to the tune of \$4,000-\$5,000 per radio. There are multiple grants out there, and the Rural Chiefs Association is currently trying to secure a grant for the hilltowns to alleviate some of the cost. Councilperson Greenberg asked if Albany County is doing anything to help. Mr. Spaulding said that the County is going to give them one radio and then three mobiles for the entire department. Councilperson Greenberg asked how many trucks Onesquethaw has. Mr. Spaulding said that they have four Class-A trucks, a brush truck, an ambulance, and fire police vehicles. Councilperson Greenberg asked if they give one for each vehicle. Chief LaDuke said that you get one mobile if it's a registered truck. Chief LaDuke said that his truck and Mr. Spaulding's truck are used as Chief vehicles, but they don't count in the County system. Councilperson Greenberg asked if they will get 5-6 radios plus 3 extras for each truck from the County. Mr. Spaulding said no, three portable for the whole company. Mr. Spaulding said that they have 43 portables on the trucks. It's a little bit more advantageous for the police side of things because every car is listed, and with every car they get a radio. It's not going to cost the Sheriff anything to do this because their end of it is covered. Councilperson Greenberg asked how they decide who has a portable. Chief LaDuke said that right now it's their officers, their Chief, Assistant Chief, three Battalion Chiefs, and then there is a portable per seated position on each truck. On our Engineer there is a bank of six portables and there are six seats. Then the captain of the rescue squad and the two lieutenants of the rescue squad have radios. The fire police captains have a radio. Any of the officers have a radio. Councilperson Greenberg said that in terms of any grant applications to help out with that, is that something they do through the fire house? Chief LaDuke said that it's through the Rural Chiefs. Councilperson Greenberg asked if the town can help out at all. Chief LaDuke said that he didn't know. Assistant Chief Salisbury said that a letter of support when they apply again wouldn't hurt. Councilperson Greenberg said to let us know. Supervisor LaGrange asked how much they try to apply for. Assistant Chief Salisbury didn't know the total value. The District Chief of Westerlo actually wrote it; they just gave them the information. Supervisor LaGrange said that this sounds like an unfunded mandate.

President Lobdell continued on saying that they still have to get the new sets of gear. It's mandated every 10 years. They're keeping up nicely on those. President Lobdell advised that maintenance on the trucks is getting

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expensive. There have been some unforeseen repairs this year but hopefully we can keep them going. Sometimes these repairs go into the thousands of dollars even though we have maintenance plans in place.

Councilperson Hennessy asked Mrs. Boehlke if we keep an independent account for the reserve fund. They don't have reserves for trucks. They have reserves for building. Mrs. Boehlke said that we just have a fund balance; we do not have a reserve of any sort. Supervisor LaGrange asked if he was asking about a building fund or a truck fund. Chief LaDuke said that right now they don't have any truck fund. They are paying each year for the newest one they bought. They have an ambulance fund. Councilperson Hennessy asked if there was a balance that he could report. Chief LaDuke said that the ambulance fund is \$180,000, and the truck fund is \$0. The \$65,000 in the budget for the truck right now is the payment on the newest truck. It's getting so expensive now that we can't get a fund. The next one that has to be replaced will cost \$500,000. When this one is paid, they are going to start replacing the next one. Supervisor LaGrange said that it cost the town \$195,000 for a new plow truck. They are trying to alternate having two being paid for at once over five years. Councilperson Hennessy asked about a building fund. President Lobdell said that she didn't have the paperwork in front of her, but they pay \$25,000 once a year in September on that. Supervisor LaGrange said that that's on the new house in Feura Bush. It's a 20-year loan, and they're trying to pay a little bit extra every year. Councilperson Greenberg asked how much a new ambulance runs. Chief LaDuke said \$160,000-\$170,000. The last one they bought was \$140,000, and that was 10 years ago. Councilperson Hennessy asked if Onesquethaw could categorize the building fund differently from the ambulance fund. The ambulance fund is a fund whereas the building fund is really a payment. President Lobdell said that she would change it to say Building/Grounds payment. Chief LaDuke said that it was a fund until they built. Mrs. Boehlke asked that Truck Fund be changed to Truck Payment to be consistent.

President Lobdell then began to discuss the ambulance budget. We know the discussion on Voorheesville and the whole nine yards. It was asked that maybe they could do something with their line item to help out on that this year. The letter states that they can do up to \$20,000. Certainly they're not happy about it. Their membership is not happy, and the Board is not happy, but they're living with it. President Lobdell said that she just needed the Board to know that it's hard for them to swallow taking \$20,000 off their budget; however it probably comes at a time when it's at an easier point for them to do it this year. They have about \$180,000 in the fund which they're hoping will take care of a new ambulance. It enables them to leave the lines the same on the income that we see for the ambulance budget if they take off the \$20,000 and dip into their reserve fund for it. They don't know what a new ambulance is going to cost. It could cost \$210,000. Supervisor LaGrange asked about the life of an ambulance. Chief LaDuke said that it was 10 years. They are actually talking about having an Ambulance Committee in January, and it usually takes about a year to get one. President Lobdell did ask the Board that if they can go less than \$20,000 they would appreciate that. She added that they are waiting for the Board's final approval of the amount needed to help with the transition. The Board isn't at the end of the budget process yet, but if it turns out that the Board doesn't need \$20,000 let them know. If the Board does, they are willing for 2017 to give them as much as \$20,000. Supervisor LaGrange said that \$20,000 is specifically for the ambulance fund. President Lobdell agreed saying that it doesn't weigh into any of the other lines except for the ambulance fund line. Their fire and EMS budgets are separate. On the ambulance budget where you see percent signs, that's 25% of the ambulance budget and 75% on the fire budget. The percent signs mean that it's divided up that way. If you see \$1,000 on the ambulance budget for audit/attorney line and \$4,000 on the fire budget, that means that there is \$5,000 total. The percent on the ambulance is 25%. President Lobdell said that they are trying to help, but she didn't know what the outcome might be on Voorheesville's situation. Supervisor LaGrange said that he wished he knew. The last we heard was a letter we received saying that they would stop the service October 15<sup>th</sup>. We've contracted with the Sheriff to cover the Voorheesville Ambulance District for the remainder of the year, 24/7. As far as we know there is no more VAAS. There are a lot of loose ends to figure out. Supervisor LaGrange added that he requested that Onesquethaw entertain taking a one-year break from the ambulance fund because of where it stood and because of the many unknowns that we have. That will help us get through until we see what the knowns are going to be. Councilperson Hennessy asked if this is a result of the committee meetings. Councilperson Greenberg said that it came up there and he and President Lobdell talked about that with Mr. Miller. He added that other discussions that were had in terms of supplies and things, Mr. Miller had said that the county may have leftovers. Was there any follow-up? President Lobdell said that there was nothing. Councilperson Greenberg asked if President Lobdell should communicate with Mr. Miller about that. President Lobdell said that she assumed that if there was something he would be in contact. Councilperson Greenberg said that we should maybe tell him to do that. There was talk on that committee that the county had a lot of leftover supplies from emergency preparation for other events. President Lobdell said that anything helps, but obviously they can't take things that are expired. Councilperson Greenberg said that he would talk to Mr. Miller about that.

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Councilperson Hennessy said that he wished that the VAA was able to remain status quo. Four years ago this was just coming up. Councilperson Hennessy added that he wants to do all that he can to keep the volunteers going. The problem with this is that, even with the \$20,000 give back, the overall is still over \$10,000. Not necessarily theirs but the overall because of the Worker's Compensation. The overall budget last year was \$351,000, and it's \$361,000 this year. He thinks the biggest reason is the Worker's Compensation. There seems to be a little bit of a hole there of \$30,000 if we're giving back \$20,000 and we're over \$10,000. Mrs. Boehlke said that it went down \$16,000 from last year so that made a \$4,000 difference. Councilperson Hennessy said that in the 2016 budget, he has \$361,761 last year. Supervisor LaGrange said the budget as amended was \$368,158 and for this year it is \$353,000.39. Mrs. Boehlke said that that probably is the change in Worker's Compensation. Onesquethaw's Worker's Compensation last year was more than what was on the bill. Mrs. Boehlke said that the adjusted budget in 2016 was \$368,158.55. Mrs. Boehlke said that the Worker's Compensation was a jump of about \$4,000, and it's jumping again by \$2,500. It's a little less severe. Councilperson Greenberg said that it's a lot of difficulty not knowing what Voorheesville is going to do. They are dealing with their attorneys, and he doesn't know if they know yet which makes the budgeting process harder. Councilperson Greenberg added that it's tough for this Board too. President Lobdell said that they feel like they've tried to help by taking the line down. Supervisor LaGrange agreed. Councilperson Greenberg asked if the funds from ambulance and fire stay totally separate. President Lobdell agreed that they do.

Councilperson Hennessy asked if there was any update on the revenue recovery. President Lobdell said that that's a no-go for them. Supervisor LaGrange said that he spoke to Assemblywoman Fahy about that along with some other things. There are only a couple of situations around the state that really would be affected. President Lobdell said that until the law changes their hands are tied. If the law changes they would be willing to review it again. It was too expensive to do it before, and manpower would be a big problem. Supervisor LaGrange said that the added cost over their budget is \$77,000 in Worker's Compensation, LOSAP, etc. That added a 3% increase to things. Supervisor LaGrange said that he was telling them just so that they are aware of what the Board is dealing with on top of their normal budget. In closing, Supervisor LaGrange expressed the Board's appreciation to both the fire and ambulance districts.

#### SA4540 Special Paid EMT Program - page 182

Supervisor LaGrange said that this was the department request and it's subject to change. He doesn't think it will change very much. If there is a change, we are in a situation where the Voorheesville District with the potential dissolution of their assets would have to primarily go to the district residents in some form, whether it be the Sheriff filling in next year for what VAA has left. There could be some rate decreases if the Sheriff acquires one of the ambulances. We just don't know yet. It's going to be up in the air. Councilperson Greenberg said that we don't even know if it's going to go there. It could go to Delmar. Supervisor LaGrange said that from what little he understands so far, this Board and his focus is to get through the end of the year and cover that district with the lapse we have from this weekend to December 31<sup>st</sup>. Then we will meet with the Sheriff and discuss the opportunities for next year. We may have some more idea once October 15<sup>th</sup> passes as to where Voorheesville Ambulance stands with their process. There is probably some court action at some point. Councilperson Greenberg asked if Supervisor LaGrange had spoken to our attorney. Could this process take a year or should it be resolved by January 1<sup>st</sup>? Supervisor LaGrange said that because of getting the stuff together to fill in the last two and a half months that research has been put on hold. Now we will move forward and try to find out the parameters that we're under and that Voorheesville Ambulance is under. Councilperson Greenberg said that he just didn't know if it's a situation that once it goes through the courts that it could take two years. Supervisor LaGrange said that it doesn't seem like it from what he's heard, but again that's just speculation on his part. Once we get through this week, we can probably get a couple of other odds and ends out of the way. We're going to have to get this pushed forward in concert with the Village. The Mayor and I and their attorney and our attorney have met 2-3 times and we have another meeting scheduled. Councilperson Greenberg said that it's a good point that this \$71,396.83 in the budget is New Scotland's share. Supervisor LaGrange said no, that this is the town-wide EMS program that we've done in the past. The Voorheesville Ambulance itself, that district, is what we have to come to terms with as to how we split that 61%-39%. It will still be split that way but the assets and the coverage will have to take place on a 24/7 basis. Councilperson Greenberg asked if this \$71,396 is an assumption of 6AM - 6PM again. Supervisor LaGrange said that the assumption was that the backup would be what we've had for the whole area for the last couple of years. Councilperson Greenberg said that that includes 6AM - 6PM. Supervisor LaGrange said yes, and now they have to expand that another 6PM - 6AM for five days plus the weekends. That's the unknown right now. Councilperson Greenberg said asked if that number is going to change significantly. Supervisor LaGrange said that it was possible. It depends on how the assets are allocated. It depends on several things, and that's what

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we have to iron out in the next month or so. We're set to go into the next year. There is no lapse in coverage, and there won't be. It will be figured out. We have to remember that we had the Sheriff there to cover and backup both Onesquethaw and Voorheesville, and that's what this figure is. They were able to step it up because they had the manpower to cover 6AM - 6PM for five workdays for the Voorheesville district. That's one of the reasons why we have to continue the way we are with Onesquethaw and the Voorheesville districts. We've got to be able to reallocate those assets to those people that have paid for this. The difference is allocated toward that when they go full-time there instead of the backup they're used to. It's complicated. Councilperson Ten Eyck said that we have to budget for 2017, but we know how much money we're going to need because of these unresolved issues. How are we going to approve a budget without knowing what the outcome is going to be? Supervisor LaGrange said that we're doing that with almost every single budget item. This could be extreme; we just don't know. Councilperson Ten Eyck asked if we're going to have to put some kind of number in the slot based on our best guess. Supervisor LaGrange said that that's what's here now. Councilperson Ten Eyck said that this is based on not having to fill that. Supervisor LaGrange said that there was an increase from last year, but at the same time it's so hard to tell you when he doesn't even know, but we've had assurances from the Sheriff. Here's an example: Say during the dissolution of the assets from Voorheesville Ambulance the Sheriff acquires an ambulance. The ambulance is worth \$80,000. That could bridge the gap for a couple of years in the difference in the budget. Councilperson Ten Eyck asked if we're going on that assumption. Supervisor LaGrange said yes, and he suggested that. That's just for an ambulance. We're not talking about the potential if he has use for the hall itself. There could be many things, but it's all speculation. Councilperson Ten Eyck asked if some transfer of assets or use will offset the potential increase. Supervisor LaGrange said that that was correct, but there are so many unknowns. We don't know where Voorheesville stands today and just how those things will come together. Mrs. Boehlke said that the only thing she would add to that is that we have had some talk. We put in \$37,914 which is what we raised. If the worst case scenario was more, it does have a fund balance. Councilperson Greenberg asked if that was raised through revenue recovery. Mrs. Boehlke said that it was tax money. We intend to raise \$37,000 in this budget, as well, and from some of the conversations Supervisor LaGrange has had that's a potential number. They would get whatever they have, and the County could do revenue recovery. Councilperson Ten Eyck asked if that's what we're projecting now. Mrs. Boehlke said that we already feel kind of safe, but we do have a fund balance. Supervisor LaGrange said that the Sheriff projected \$50,000 more, but at the same time we have \$37,000 plus the village has their share. Councilperson Ten Eyck said that for a while I was thinking it was a total shot in the dark, but we're making a reasonable projection based on what we know right now. Supervisor LaGrange said we are hedging our bets and hoping for the best.

Mrs. Boehlke said that if you compare the SA, it went up about \$13,000 and the A4540 went up about \$3,000, so they have had some increases. Mrs. Boehlke then referred the Board to page 10 where we pay on ALS. The budget for 2016 was \$250,931.07, and the budget for 2017 is \$263,260.44. So it did go up but not by a tremendous amount. We haven't been billed for the second half of 2016 so Mrs. Boehlke's estimate is that they will bill us for the full shot. Sometimes they go over. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that the bill comes in close to what they tell us to budget.

Supervisor LaGrange advised that in regard to the New Salem ambulance, keeping it consistent in the budget is on page 185.

Mrs. Boehlke referred the Board to page 184 which is the email showing the estimates we got. ALS (Advanced Life Support) is \$253,260.44 which is in A4540.4 and \$71,396.83 for EMT is in SA4540.

LC5182 Clarksville Lighting - page 186

LD5182 Douglas Lane Lighting - page 188

Supervisor LaGrange advised that this is pretty well fixed. Councilperson Greenberg asked where we are with converting to LED. Supervisor LaGrange said that there are opportunities coming that were better than the one we had offered so far. The problem is that with most of the lighting districts, the lights and the fixtures are owned by National Grid. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that she did sit in on a webinar with Supervisor LaGrange, and they were just formulating a program. We haven't heard anything since. Supervisor LaGrange said that he personally believes that there is a state mandate coming, and National Grid was probably trying to get ahead of it and defer some of the cost onto the municipalities. We've talked with a couple of people about other potential ways of addressing it, and it just hasn't come together yet. A lot of the lighting, especially in the Clarksville area, is very inconsistent both in light tones and the way it spreads. It is something that we're staying on top of and he would love to get something done for the safety aspect of it. We're not charged for the electricity used; we're charged per fixture.

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#### Water & Sewer

Mrs. Boehlke advised that there is a large piece of that that they need to discuss. Supervisor LaGrange tabled this for now.

Supervisor LaGrange said that we have two areas to discuss. One is personnel and potential changes to salaries which, because of the discussion of individuals, that needs to be done in Executive Session. The other thing is the Board's consideration for the direction we might go as far as the options we've come up with to address the dwindling A fund. This first attempt at the budget was to try and address that in an extreme way, but it was the first opportunity we could see. Now we have four options. Option A might have 1, 2, 3, and 4 that we could draw from, too. The Board chose to discuss salaries first.

#### A1010 Town Board - page 32

Supervisor LaGrange said that this is a 9% increase, which is a large percentage, but, having said that, a few years ago at the request of the employees in the Highway Department and some in the Town Hall, he undertook an endeavor that resulted in our salary scale. There were a lot of unknowns, and our budget sessions went on for hours on end because there was no framework. We put together and approved a salary scale. We set up what we felt was correct, and we compared it to like towns, towns like Brunswick rather than Bethlehem or Guilderland. That would be like comparing apples to oranges. The Board at the time approved it and came up with numbers of what this town felt we should pay those designated jobs in five different levels. Those were taken care of along with some other things. One of the things I found in those discussions was that the Town Board member salaries were significantly behind the average of these other towns. As we have gained responsibilities and issues have come up along with the time that Board members put into it especially over the past five years, he feels that it's extremely warranted. He'd like to go higher, but he didn't want to go too far in one year. He personally believes that Board members in the Town of New Scotland should be somewhere between \$10,000 and \$12,000, and that would still be on the lower side of the average that he got when he did the salary scale. We had a slight increase two years ago of maybe \$500 per member. Again, he feels that this is still not enough, but it's continuing and maybe in another couple of years will be the time to bump it again. That's his rationale. We are always put in a tough position as elected officials because the first thing you hear on some of the levels is, "Yeah, they can just raise their own salaries." That's true and may be a problem in some areas, but when he sees what Board members put into these positions the Town of New Scotland has really sold their elected Board members short in their compensation.

Councilperson Hennessy said that his answer is pretty much the same for all of them. He's said it before when we've had COLA increases. If we are dipping into reserve funds to satisfy the budget, which sadly is now an every-year thing, he's not in favor of it. He wasn't even comfortable giving COLAs that much if we had to dip into reserve funds. He understands COLA for full-time employees, even part-time employees, but he wasn't so thrilled with it. He doesn't really support any of the increases - Town Board, Supervisor, DPW, or even Deputy Town Clerk, but that might be a step we have to take. Town Clerk Deschenes said that that's a step, but the Board doesn't have to take it. Councilperson Hennessy added that the Judges asked for 5% for them and their clerks, but that was turned down. Supervisor LaGrange said that that's because their clerks are at the top of the salary scale and the Judges are some of the higher paid justices in the area. Councilperson Hennessy said he wasn't disagreeing that our salaries are probably low. He personally thinks our hands are a little bit tied with the whole salary cap issue and the fact that our budgets have always been low or artificially low. He just thinks it's something that we're more married to than not. If we have surplus, he understands it. If we don't have surplus, he's not sure that we ever will with the salary cap, but he was reluctant to support any of them.

Councilperson Greenberg said that he kind of seconded that, but he supported a raise for the Deputy Clerk. He agrees with what Supervisor LaGrange said. If you look around, we probably aren't paid as much. He can't in good conscience ask a fire department to cut their budget and give himself a raise. If we're asking other people to do that, it would make more sense. It may be different next year or the year after, but this year we are asking people to make some sacrifices. Supervisor LaGrange said that we asked Onesquethaw to cut the \$20,000 of a reserve fund that they have \$180,000 in now. That would pay for an ambulance. We asked that in anticipation of the unknown of the VAA situation. They could acquire one of those ambulances. So, we're not asking any sacrifice. Supervisor LaGrange said that he wasn't going to force a raise on the Board. He was just trying to explain that when you have people committed to a job its fine. It's the Board's choice. We need to go through each one and not just a blanket over everything. Councilperson Greenberg said that it's a little bit of a blanket for me. He would disagree with Supervisor LaGrange a bit. There has to be a theory behind it. If the theory is that we had budget issues because of the 2% cap, because of the New Salem Water District, because VAA went

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under, then we have to treat the entire budget that way. We have to cut where we can and not spend more than has to be spent. That being said, he totally understands Supervisor LaGrange's position and agrees with it. The Supervisor is underpaid. He thought that if you compared it to other towns, that would be a fact.

Councilperson Ten Eyck said that she had concerns about raising salaries at the top. Her only background with people's salaries is at Indian Ladder Farms. They have about 10 people that are year-round crew and about 100 people right now. With the minimum wage increasing and the protected increase, everything is kind of thrown in the air. They're dealing with a salary increase issue all the time. In her experience, it's usually the people at the top who don't get the raises. It's the people underneath if anyone is getting more money. Even their management team, who are not highly paid, forego any kind of increase in order to do COLAs or merit-based increases for people who are further down the line. She always would feel uncomfortable increasing the people who are in the position to decide who gets an increase. Now, when we're dealing with the whole budget and dipping into the fund to balance the budget that just adds to it. In her own position which is a granted non-profit, she knows that a lot of people who are working are not getting any salary increases ever since the recession when employers discovered that their employees are going to keep their jobs no matter what. It seems like it goes against what's happening for the people in the community. They are not necessarily seeing raises. Councilperson Ten Eyck added that she hasn't had a cost of living raise at her job for probably four years. Nobody has because they're just trying to get by, so it feels a little uncomfortable to her. This is one thing that happens when you allow something to go along at a low level for too long. Then when you want to get where you should be, it's too big of a jump and it's never a good time. She thinks we're kind of at that. She thinks that the documentation that has been done regarding what other towns are doing is very valuable. Maybe a slower incremental creep up would be better. She'd be happy to discuss it in more detail. She just wanted to share how she is looking at it.

Supervisor LaGrange said that he couldn't speak for Councilperson Snyder although he knew she was thinking more in line with what he was thinking, but she's not here. Supervisor LaGrange said that he would at least like to see this get over the \$9,000 mark. Would the Board be opposed to a couple hundred dollars? It truly bothers him with the work he sees going on. He appreciates the Board's point of view on it, but we've also developed a budget where we can stay under the cap and in one scenario not use any reserve funds. In another scenario if we did use some reserve funds, they are plentiful in that regard. We're not putting this on the taxpayer but it's important that we compensate the people who are in the positions, and this is different from us, especially people that we've groomed in their jobs. We can do these things without using fund balance and without going over the salary cap. It's like Mrs. Boehlke mentioned before that this won't affect it a lot. Supervisor LaGrange said that he's given his point of view on it. Councilperson Hennessy and Councilperson Greenberg seem adamant about not doing anything. Councilperson Hennessy said that he was hard pressed to accept a 1% raise when not giving it to the others. Supervisor LaGrange said that we haven't even discussed COLA yet. Councilperson Hennessy said that he was talking about \$200. Supervisor LaGrange said that he's trying to get these salaries up to where they belong. Councilperson Hennessy said that Supervisor LaGrange suggested a \$200 raise and he's saying that that's probably 1% to 2%. He is hard pressed to suggest it when others are not going to get it, so he would say no. Supervisor LaGrange said that others have already been compensated to the level that we've found in other towns. His whole point was to try and bring this Board closer to that level. Councilperson Hennessy said that when you add the numbers up, he didn't think we should do that. Councilperson Ten Eyck said that it makes more sense to talk about the Town Board compensation at the end of the process when we've looked at everybody else's needs. The logic doesn't follow for her that he wants to consider the staff and everyone else first. That kind of influences this decision. Supervisor LaGrange said that we can move on. Councilperson Greenberg said that he stands by his original feeling. Councilperson Greenberg said that he thought he read something about Town Board's and Supervisor's salaries not going into effect until the next election or something. Supervisor LaGrange said that a term change can't go into effect until after the next election. Town Clerk Deschenes thought that there was some law about changing salaries one way or another if we had a newly elected official in January.

#### A1110 Justice Court - page 36

Supervisor LaGrange said that the Judges put in for 5% across the board. Again, our Justices recently had an increase and when looking at like towns they are paid very well. The two court clerks are at the top of their salary scales, so that's why we made those changes. Supervisor LaGrange said that we set the salary scale and we'd be going outside of what we set for those positions.

The contractual was left pretty much the same as requested. We increased it \$36 on the insurance for Constable.

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#### A1220 Supervisor - page 39

Supervisor LaGrange said that he put in the same increase for his position as he did the Town Board. He also asked Mrs. Boehlke to go to a full work week instead of 30 hours, and she agreed. This can be discussed in Executive Session if the Board chooses. Supervisor LaGrange said that both Mrs. Boehlke and Mrs. Kavanaugh spend a lot of their time outside the workings of our office helping other offices. It's appreciated. We have bookkeeping checks and balances that go on. The Town Clerk's office collects funds, and we have a good set-up now. Supervisor LaGrange felt that there is good interaction between offices now. Mrs. Boehlke helps with different things and to have her here those extra few hours a week will be a great step. Both Mrs. Boehlke and Mrs. Kavanaugh are at level 4 in the salary scale, and he's not asking for a change at this point. They are probably working at level 7. At this point, he would suggest that we just stay where we are but look to have that a full-time position. Supervisor LaGrange asked if the Board wanted an Executive Session on that part. Councilperson Greenberg said that supported Mrs. Boehlke going to full-time and asked if we have to change the job description. Supervisor LaGrange said no, but we have to be careful with what we call the position. Mrs. Kavanaugh said it used to be called Confidential Bookkeeper. It is the same thing but it's called Clerk to the Supervisor. It's still an appointed exempt Civil Service position. Councilperson Hennessy said that he thinks we will find that we need a full-time bookkeeper.

Supervisor LaGrange said that as far as the Supervisor's salary he thinks he's already heard from Councilperson Greenberg and Councilperson Hennessy. At the same time, you said that the full-time position should be where they belong. He hates to advocate for it because he's in the position, but it should have been done in the past. The last couple of Supervisors were in their retirement, and this was supplemental. It was good. Supervisor LaGrange said that he would be comfortable at this position for anyone for the amount Mrs. Boehlke put in for it. He added this it is very hard him me as it is for the Board when it comes to Town Board business. Frankly, it is a full-time position. He would be conservative in saying that he's probably here pretty much full days, at least 9 hours most of the time if you include meetings and everything else. Again, that's the position and maybe he treats it differently than it should be. It's a full-time position and at \$65,000 if you figure 9-hour days it's like \$26 per hour. He didn't think it was unrealistic for the position, but he also feels, with no reflection of past Supervisors, that you should be here more. He's had a learning curve, but there is still a lot to do. Councilperson Ten Eyck said that her concerns about salary increases at the leadership level is in no way a reflection of any concerns she has about the hard, high-quality work that is being done. The position is at the top. She thinks that he works extremely hard at an extremely demanding job, but it's all in relationship to everything else. It's a nuance situation. It's reflective of so many other factors. Supervisor LaGrange said that he needs a surrogate to talk about this. It should have been done in the past, especially over Supervisor Dolin's eight years where it really multiplied in the responsibilities. We are talking about the Chief Fiscal Officer. He's had people tell him that the salary should be in the \$70,000-plus range. It is a tough situation. Every responsibility for this town is in that chair, and thank God for a wonderful staff and a lot of good people in all of our positions. That's certainly helpful. We can come back to this as we do the Town Board.

#### A1355 Assessor - page 43

Supervisor LaGrange said that he would remind the Board when you see in the .4 that they request \$12,890, and we put in \$10,000 that was simply because of historical spending. We wanted to keep this tight in projected expenditures so we could match the revenue and be more accurate with our tax cap calculations. Supervisor LaGrange added that he spoke with every department head and they are assured that if something happens that they go over we're going to find it. We wanted for budgetary purposes to be as close as realistic as possible.

#### A1356 Assessment Board of Review - page 45

This stayed as requested.

#### Town Clerk A1410 - page 47

Supervisor LaGrange said that the Town Clerk has asked that Patricia Barber go up a step on her anniversary date. That would put her where the former deputy was. We certainly appreciated what Carol did when she was here. Patty may be a step ahead at this point and she has no problem in my part of this recommending that it stay as requested. Councilperson Hennessy said that he's trying to be move even across the Board. He knows that Mrs. Barber did the work while the Town Clerk was out and was doubled up on many duties. That alone is probably justification, but he wants to be consistent with his thoughts on the salaries. Supervisor LaGrange said that it's hard to be consistent when it's apples to potatoes. All of these scenarios are different. Councilperson Hennessy asked if that's the only step available. Supervisor LaGrange said yes, adding that he created the salary scale so it was a relatively modest step. Town Clerk Deschenes said that that is why she put it for it.

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Mrs. Barber took over all of the clerk's duties while Mrs. Deschenes was out. She feels justified, but she's open to the Board's thoughts if they feel she's moving her up too fast. Councilperson Greenberg asked how long she has been here. Mrs. Kavanaugh said about 3 years. Town Clerk Deschenes added that Mrs. Barber didn't start at the bottom of the scale either. Councilperson Hennessy said the Board can outvote him. He's just trying to be consistent with the A fund issues that we're having. Supervisor LaGrange said that we are in control and, depending on the options we choose, we're under the cap and potentially we wouldn't have to use any fund balance. Councilperson Hennessy said that he understands completely. Councilperson Greenberg said that theoretically he agrees with Councilperson Hennessy. He feels like we're having trouble and we're cutting other places. On the other hand, he thinks that Mrs. Barber did an amazing job when the Clerk was out. He feels like she should be rewarded for that. Supervisor LaGrange said that it's not necessarily a reward. Councilperson Greenberg said that it is a little bit. She did learn a lot and she did extra work that she really wasn't compensated for, so this seems to me like an unusual circumstance. Supervisor LaGrange said that she's at level 4, and the Town Clerk feels that she's at the top of her duties after three years. You're point is right in that she also learned a lot to get up a level. Councilperson Greenberg said that she can handle things like meetings now or if the Clerk is out of town. She deserves to be paid that way so that's a yes from him. Councilperson Ten Eyck said that she thinks this is a uniquely clear situation where she had clearly demonstrated an increased capacity and skillset, and it merits the increase. Councilperson Hennessy said that that's fine.

A1420 Attorney - page 51

This stays constant. Councilperson Greenberg asked how long the Attorney's rate had been at that level. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that this would be the third. Councilperson Hennessy thought that it was 4-5 years. Supervisor LaGrange said that the former Attorney adamantly opposed taking more compensation. Councilperson Greenberg said that he thinks Attorney Naughton does an amazing job and just the point that we're leaving that where it is, which he thinks we should, speaks also to the Board's salaries. Supervisor LaGrange said it was a compensation that we arrived at to be comparable to other similar situations as opposed to the Town Board's salaries.

A1440 Engineering Contractual - page 53

This stays the same.

A1450 Elections - page 55

This is just a "crap shoot."

A1460 Records Management - page 57

This is more historical.

A1490 Public Works Administration - page 59

Supervisor LaGrange said that with this fund and a couple right after this we probably need to go into Executive Session.

**Executive Session**

**RESOLUTION 2016-236**

Supervisor LaGrange offered the following motion and moved its adoption:

RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of New Scotland does hereby enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues.

Councilperson Greenberg seconded the motion. All present and voting, the motion carried (4 Ayes).

Councilperson Ten Eyck made a motion to adjourn Executive Session, seconded by Councilperson LaGrange.

Executive Session adjourned at 9:55 PM

There was no action taken during Executive Session.

**2. Adjourn**

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Supervisor LaGrange made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilperson Greenberg. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

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Diane R. Deschenes, Town Clerk