

October 3, 2017 2018 Budget Meeting

The Special Town Board meeting of the Town of Stony Creek was held on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017.

Supervisor Frank Thomas called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM with members present:

Councilwoman Doreen Ryan

Councilman John Thomas

Councilman Carl Thomas

Absent: Councilman Nathan Thomas

Counsel to the Town (was not required to attend)

Supervisor Thomas stated the purpose of the meeting tonight is for the Town Board to review the purposed 2018 Town Budget.

Supervisor Thomas reported that everyone got a 2% pay increase.

6:32 PM: The Town Board reviewed the Tentative 2018 Town Budget.

Supervisor Thomas stated that the amount to be raised by tax is \$763,447.00.

The town taxable decreased by about \$20,000.00. That gives you a tax rate of \$474.58 per \$1000.00 for the proposed tax rate for 2018. 2017 tax rate was \$458.221 which is a difference of \$16.35 which is an increase of 3.569% and SF is about 1.50% or a little better.

As far as the tax cap, the levy limit is \$766,043.00. The levy for 2017 was \$748,460.00, so we are \$2596.00 below the tax cap.

Councilman John Thomas asked how many years are left to pay off the highway garage.

Supervisor Thomas stated he thinks it's 2023. So it's 4 or 5 years. It's about \$100,000.00 plus interest.

Supervisor Thomas stated this is a 3½% increase. He will say the last three years and maybe four years the town has been going up a ½% each year and his opinion is we can't keep doing that. The sales tax has decreased. We are down \$25,000.00 on sales tax. We will make just about what we have budgeted. We have to start raising money as bad as that is or have to get rid of something. The inflation rate is like 1.84% so that helps. The growth factor was .5%, so if there were ever a year to do it with the tax cap this is the year to do it because next year they may be down to .6 or something like that.

Supervisor Thomas reported the following salaries:

Youth Director was \$13.00 and increased to \$14.00 an hour.

Assistant Youth Director from \$11.00 to \$12.00 an hour.

Youth Planner from \$13.00 to \$14.00 an hour.

Court Clerk, The judge asked for a \$2.00 an hour raise from \$11.00 to \$13.00. Supervisor Thomas stated he will say that's the first raise in about 10 years.

Life Guard from \$12.00 to \$13.00 an hour.

Board of Assessment Review from \$12.00 to \$13.00

The HEO, MEO, Laborers, Maintenance man and Recycling Custodian-Operator are all under the contract which is 2%. Supervisor Thomas stated he thought if he got the pay a little higher we could get someone interested.

Councilman Carl Thomas asked what they expect at the county level. Supervisor Thomas stated for an increase, they are up about a million dollars so they have to cover that somewhere but they are looking at about a 3% increase.

Councilman John Thomas stated the total taxable value has decreased of \$20,000.00 that's back to the State or some other tax doing that. Supervisor Thomas stated it's the transitional assessment, we're still transitioning. By his calculation of the \$16.36 increase and the tax rate \$6.66 of that is because of that. Councilman Carl Thomas stated we are down just a few years on that. Supervisor Thomas stated he thinks we are, that's what they keep telling him. If he reads it correctly its \$56,000.00 left that would be about three more years. Councilman John Thomas asked what happens then. Supervisor Thomas stated then the transitional is gone, that's the way he sees it. We did actually have some growth Peter had it up to 1%, it was like \$6,000.00 at 3.86 that would knock a couple dollars off the tax rate. Supervisor Thomas stated maybe it's a good time to reassess State Land. Councilman Carl Thomas stated you can't do much about it anyway. Councilwoman Ryan stated not for three years anyway. Councilman John Thomas stated what his question would be is talking with Supt. Bradley over the blacktop increase. Is there any good way of coming up with money for blacktop. We're falling behind every year mostly due to the increase in the cost of blacktop. Supt. Bradley told him it's about \$140,000.00 per mile for blacktop to fix, repair and pave it. At some point it's going to be, we have a lot of road that's not in good shape. The county does also, but at some point we have to try and figure out how we are going to correct it. There is no cheap alternative. Supervisor Thomas stated he knows he had a retirement we could eliminate a position that's \$40-\$50,000.00, its' probably not ideal but a relatively painless way. Councilman Carl Thomas stated it might be a regrettable thing this winter but it's a start. Councilman John Thomas stated you never know and stated he just wanted to know if anyone had any ideas. They talked about getting a smaller grinder rather than pay a company or someone to come in and do it. When you're figuring the maintenance on the grinder or whatever else it's a crap shoot, if you get a grinder that works you save and if you don't your back to square one. The price of stone, everything is going up, there's no place to actually cut corners to save and cut your cost. Supervisor Thomas stated unless maybe you get a few towns to go in together and buy one and pass it around and then you have the whole maintenance issue too. Councilman Carl Thomas stated maybe with all the fuel we have the price of blacktop will go down but that's not a very bright future. Supervisor Thomas stated it doesn't seem to. Councilman Carl Thomas stated there's a lot of expense right there. Supervisor Thomas stated he doesn't know, unless raising taxes to do it. Councilman John Thomas stated there really is no good way of cutting cost. The only thing he can think of is a grinder to grind it up if you can buy one used, but then it's a maintenance issue. Parts and teeth are expensive. Councilman Carl Thomas stated it's more to do with maintenance. The Town Clerk stated they have grants for everything else why don't they have something for the highway. Supervisor Thomas stated yes, they might. Councilman John Thomas stated good idea, Supervisor Thomas stated they have CHIPS money you can buy equipment with that. Councilman John Thomas agreed and stated he doesn't think the county has a grinder, they have a company come in and do it. Supervisor Thomas stated he tried to get them to get one but they didn't want to get one. Councilwoman Ryan asked how much would we save from the \$140,000.00 for a mile if you had your own grinder. Councilman John Thomas stated it depends on the size you get, they make smaller ones.

We're not talking major roads like County roads that are wider. It depends on the machine you get. You can buy a smaller grinder from \$50-\$100,000.00 but it depends, most of our roads they haven't had six courses of blacktop so you're not grinding up a huge amount like the County or State roads, so it may work better and last longer. He didn't think to check with Supt. Bradley on what he pays to have them come and grind, cost per mile. Councilwoman Ryan stated exactly so you could see A, B & C and see what you would be saving if you spent \$100,000.00. Councilman John Thomas stated like Supervisor Thomas said if you got a decent size and shared with other towns. Councilwoman Ryan stated if half of that was a grinder she would say yes that's a huge savings to do a road. Councilman John Thomas stated we use to crush our own gravel we really don't have a spot to get gravel anymore. Where we use to use gravel we use stone. Supervisor Thomas stated he doesn't think there is much left at the landfill. Councilman John Thomas stated there was a spot on the top of the hill but by the time you strip it what little bit you get it's not worth it. Councilman John Thomas stated so maybe a grant or shared services, see if there is something out there. Supervisor Thomas stated we can check around. He did try to get the county to buy one and they didn't have any interest in it because of maintenance. He still thinks it would still save money. Councilman John Thomas stated he will check and see what they charge per mile. See what there cost is. Supervisor Thomas stated he thinks it was around \$10,000.00 for the grinding. Councilwoman Ryan stated per mile? Supervisor Thomas stated he thinks so.

Councilman Carl Thomas stated it's really a small percentage of \$140,000.00. Councilwoman Ryan agreed and stated it would be 10 years to pay off a machine. Councilman Carl Thomas stated if you rent it for \$10,000.00 it's more practical then buying something. Supervisor Thomas agreed. Councilman John Thomas stated owning equipment is never cheap, the maintenance is never cheap.

Supervisor Thomas stated maybe we can save some on gravel. Maybe we should look into buying gravel from somewhere, then you have to crush it. Councilman John Thomas stated when Zack did it they use to borrow either Hadley or Town of Day's crusher. Supervisor Thomas stated the Town of Day's. Councilman John Thomas stated they would bring it down spend time down there get a big pile every two or three years, they'd get a big pile and have it. He doesn't know how many acres is left there that's cleared out, he thinks there's a pretty big chunk. Supervisor Thomas stated there is some down there. Councilman John Thomas stated on the upper side. Supervisor Thomas stated he doesn't know how deep it runs and he doesn't know if the Town of Day has a crusher anymore, they may have but you could probably rent one for a couple weeks. Councilman John Thomas stated Saratoga County did the Hadley Road and they used a lot of gravel on that. Councilwoman Ryan stated a lot of people had trouble with tires. The rocks got imbedded in the tires. Councilman John Thomas stated one of his renter had five tires flattened. Councilman Carl Thomas thought they did a good job with the gravel they worked it and rolled it, used a grader on it and leveled it. They did a good job on it so it should last. Supervisor Thomas stated he doesn't know what the answer is because it's so much money to raise taxes. Councilman John Thomas stated we'll have to go back to dirt roads. Supervisor Thomas stated yes, that might be the answer. At some point what are you going to do? Councilman John Thomas agreed. Supervisor Thomas stated he knows the State isn't really keeping up with it. Councilman John Thomas stated he doesn't know if anyone is. If you drive around Warren County. Supervisor Thomas stated the CHIPS dollars have been around \$95,000.00 and really hasn't increase much in the years he's been here.

Councilman John Thomas stated maybe the counties need to get on the State, get an increase to cover that cost. Supervisor Thomas stated they have this Big NY which is \$22,000.00, this is year three next year is four so after next year that goes away. Councilman John Thomas stated he is surprised we didn't have to use it on a bike path. Councilwoman Ryan stated what bike path, they go right in the middle of the road and they don't move over. Councilman Carl Thomas stated they own it. Councilwoman Ryan stated the taxpayers own it. Councilman Carl Thomas stated you better stay clear of them or you'll find out who owns it. Some of them don't give you room to go around hardly. Councilwoman Ryan stated they don't move. Supervisor Thomas stated we invite them here to ride bikes, he doesn't think we should personally, that's his own opinion because the roads aren't safe. Councilman Carl Thomas stated that's usually controlled. The problem is everyone that is practicing for it three months before it happens. Councilwoman Ryan stated when they are doing it they have twenty of them all spaced out, you're on the wrong side of the road passing because they are not moving over. Councilman John Thomas stated there is always one out in the road further then anyone else. Councilwoman Ryan stated and they don't move over, that is the problem, they don't move over and someone will get hurt. Supervisor Thomas stated the roads aren't built for it, not at all.

Supervisor Thomas stated if there isn't any changes we can adopt the Preliminary Budget and set a Public Hearing

110 -17. A resolution was made by Councilwoman Ryan seconded by Councilman John Thomas to adopt the 2018 Preliminary Town Budget as follows:

	Appropriations and Provisions <u>for other uses</u>	Less Estimated <u>Revenues</u>	Less Unexpended <u>Balance</u>	Amount to be raised <u>by taxes</u>
General	\$601,537.00	\$399,873.00	\$50,000.00	\$151,664.00
Highway				
Townwide	\$881,766.00	\$340,635.00	\$47,000.00	\$494,131.00
Fire				
Protection	<u>\$117,652.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>\$117,652.00</u>
Totals	\$1,600,955.00	\$740,508.00	\$97,000.00	\$763,447.00

and hold a Public Hearing on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 7:15 PM on the 2018 Town Budget along with the 2018 Contracts on the Stony Creek Historical Association, Stony Creek Free Library and the Stony Creek Fire Protection. Roll call vote, all in favor.

Supervisor Thomas reported that Peckham in Chestertown will be holding an Open House at the quarry plant on October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017 from 11:00 AM-3:00 PM.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Ryan seconded by Councilman John Thomas to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 PM. All in favor, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Harrington  
Town Clerk