

*******DRAFT*******

“A Public Hearing upon the 2022 Preliminary Budget for the Town of Forestburgh”

State of New York, County of Sullivan, Town of Forestburgh

November 4, 2021

Roll Call: Present – Daniel S. Hogue, Jr., Supervisor
Karen Ellsweig, Councilwoman
Susan Parks Landis, Councilwoman
Steve Budofsky, Councilman

Absent – None

Recording
Secretary – Joanne K. Nagoda, Town Clerk

Supervisor Hogue gave an overview of the preliminary 2022 budget and explained changes made to the budget. It is a 0.95% increase – less than a tenth percent of an increase over last year's budget. We have plans to put a roof on the town hall with a few other improvements. We are allowed to claim some of the American Recovery money for the years of 2019 and 2020 due to covid and the town lost money in state funding. This is one time funding; it is not something we can look forward to annually. This brings us in at the 0.95%, far below the 2% tax cap which is only actually really 1.2% for Forestburgh.

Vinny Galligan – what it would have been without the recovery funds? Supervisor Hogue stated the board also worked with unexpended fund balances, additional income. Basically, we were trying to hold it as close to zero as we could.

Jack Gold why is there an increase in the building department for \$75,000. Supervisor Hogue replied that is not on the building department it is on buildings, actual buildings, that's where the money for the roof is. The building department itself is under safety and inspections.

Katherine Barnhart – We've all heard a lot that we get nothing back for our taxes. I'm concerned that we don't have much, we get roads plowed, and what has been presented to the town has been decreasing over time, we used to have Forestburgh Day, the Forestburgh 5K Run which I know wasn't really run by us, we used to the summer program and the seniors center. The seniors are about the only thing we have left. I think this is a serious lack in our town. There isn't much of a feeling of community and I don't see anything being done to increase that. I think at the last meeting Richard Robbins spoke of a recreation center – you should start thinking about that and putting money aside for it. That way you could have places that people could come to, and I think we should be thinking about that. You talked about enclosing the pavilion but if we don't have camp or use the pool, there will be no use of the pavilion. It is an important cultural part of this town. I understand there were issues with the summer program, and it was disbanded because of those problems but it was an active and important part of this town for many years. I think you should work towards that and set money aside. I'm also concerned about the seniors. I know their money was cut back from \$5,000 to \$2,500 and other departments have been restored but they remain at \$2,500. I know there has been issue with what they do and where they go, but it's their money and they are one of the few organizations that support this town. So in looking

ahead, I think you should try to look ahead and see what this ton could offer. You should support our seniors and I don't know, and I don't understand what happened, but you should support this group and our seniors.

Supervisor Hogue asked if there were any other comments on the town budget.

MOTION by, Councilman Budofsky seconded by Councilwoman Ellsweig to close the public hearing at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne K. Nagoda,
Town Clerk

The Town of Forestburgh Town Board held their regular monthly meeting on **Thursday, November 4, 2021**, at the town hall.

Supervisor Hogue called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

Roll Call: Present – Daniel S. Hogue, Jr., Supervisor
Karen Ellsweig, Councilwoman
Susan Parks Landis, Councilwoman
Steve Budofsky, Councilman

Absent – None

Recording
Secretary – Joanne K. Nagoda, Town Clerk

Supervisor Hogue stated that Veteran’s Day is this month, Councilman Budofsky has written something and asked if he could read it during this part of the meeting.

“Let us honor the U.S. Veteran’s of War the unparalleled perseverance of the Armies of the United States through almost every possible suffering and discouragement for the space of eight long years, was little short of a standing miracle. General George Washington, 1783, in his farewell orders to the Continental Army – And so it has been since that time that the American Soldier, brave men and women, who defend our great nation have worn the stars of battle, both of the body and the soul, in service to America. With Veteran’s Day being next week, the 80th Anniversary of World War II next month, it is our duty to honor the soldiers. Whose courage on the battlefield is the only reason we are able to stand here tonight in freedom. God Bless the American Soldier.”

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

MINUTES – We have the minutes of the October 7th Board meeting. Motion by Councilman Budofsky, seconded by Supervisor Hogue. Vote: 3 ayes – 0 nays. Councilwoman Landis abstained. Motion carried.

GENERAL FUND VOUCHERS - # 202 – 226 in the sum of \$19,387.21 as set forth in abstract # 11 were audited for payment. MOTION by Councilwoman Landis, seconded by Councilwoman Ellsweig to pay General Fund vouchers. Councilman Budofsky abstained. Vote: 3 ayes - 0 nays. Motion carried.

HIGHWAY FUND VOUCHERS - # 126 – 137 in the sum of \$32,749.88 as set forth in abstract # 11 were reviewed for payment. MOTION by Councilwoman Landis, seconded by Councilman Budofsky to pay Highway Fund Vouchers. Supervisor Hogue abstained. Vote: 3 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

ESCROW FUND VOUCHERS - # 10 in the sum of \$240.00 as set forth in abstract # 4 were audited for payment.

Supervisor Hogue introduced our guest speaker – Mr. John Kiefer of the Sullivan County IDA. Mr. Kiefer gave a brief overview of his history being born and bred in Sullivan County and his occupational career and of the IDA. There are two types of programs that the IDA offers, a PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) program which is used to entice businesses to come to Sullivan County by offering real estate and sales

tax abatements. Their second program is financing of businesses. This is for expansion or start up and it is the sort of business that is bankable – we just funded a greenhouse for a mushroom farm, and we just approved funding a runoff pond for chicken waste after there are cleaned and processed to keep it out of the environment. Right now, we are focusing on entertainment/lodging, such as the casino, agriculture and solar. Those are our main focus areas now. Since Forestburgh prides itself on being a bedroom community, you are not interested in a large warehouse or distribution facility.

Sabina Toomey – I am glad the IDA is here, and it bothers me that the IDA in Orange County has become so corrupt. She asked who pays his salary – he stated it is taxpayer funded through the PILOT programs and loan interest.

Councilman Budofsky thanked Mr. Kiefer for attending and stated that Forestburgh has not had the best interaction with the IDA. Discussions were held on tax payments versus PILOTS, meeting local zoning, abandoned properties/projects. The board thanked Mr. Kiefer for his time and attendance.

REPORTS –

Supervisor Hogue submitted a report of financial activity for the month of October 2021.

Highway Superintendent – No report

Town Clerk – Clerk Nagoda submitted a report of Clerk fees and activity for the month of October 2021.

Building Department – Code Officer Glenn Gabbard submitted a report of fees and activity for the building department for the month of October.

Justice Court – Justices Carroll and Gunther submitted a report of court fees and activity for October.

CORRESPONDENCE – Clerk Nagoda stated we have one that was literally just handed to me. To the Forestburgh Town Board and Community: The Forestburgh Seniors were hoping the attacks on its member would stop once Susan Hawvermale and Gifford Shriver spread erroneously spread information about the senior club. Now is the time for Sabina Toomey and the Senior Membership to set the facts straight. The truth is that Gifford Shriver was negligent in her duties as club Treasurer and failed to file tax returns as required by law. Her failure to file has created the only financial issue the club has ever had. Susan Hawvermale falsely reported in the July 2021 minutes things that never occurred at the meeting. The club members were appalled at Susan Hawvermale's outright lies and unanimously voted not to accept her falsified minutes. The minutes had to be rewritten by the actual membership to reflect the actions taken by the club. Gifford Shriver tried to gain control over the club's finances and demanded that the debit card be handed over to her. The club by majority vote removed Gifford Shriver and Susan Hawvermale from their positions due to the dissatisfaction of the club of their actions which violated the clubs' bylaws and their attempts to take the club in a direction that was opposed to by the members. The club never voted to disband the Forestburgh Seniors as falsely reported. The letter goes on to state the club's intentions moving forward and is signed by the entire membership.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2022 BUDGET – MOTION by Councilman Budofsky, seconded by Councilwoman Ellsweig to accept the budget as presented. Vote 4 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

BOARD OF ASSESSMENT REVIEW VACANCY – We really have to try to fill this position. It will once again be in the newsletter and posted on the website. The outline of the duties of the position were given and it was recommended by Councilwoman Ellsweig to add this information to the newsletter and website. It is a three-person board and we have been at only two so we really need to fill this position.

NEW BUSINESS

CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS (SPECTRUM) FRANCHISE AGREEMENT – I thought we had adopted the franchise agreement before the pandemic started. We had discussed it, wrote resolutions and then the pandemic hit, and it was never adopted. At this point, I would like to recommend Councilwoman Ellsweig as a liaison to work on the franchise agreement. We'd like to see them expand in Forestburgh and provide better service to the town hall. MOTION by Supervisor Hogue, seconded by Councilman Budofsky to appoint Councilwoman Ellsweig as a liaison to complete the franchise agreement and Councilwoman Landis will assist in this matter and report back to the board. Vote: 4 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS –

Planning Board – Submitted a written report – they are working on fee changes/corrections. There was also an application for a lot line change that will be entertained at our November meeting, as well as an application for Birchwood Estates to create a single 2.3-acre lot from the parent parcel.

Zoning Committee – Our next meeting is this Tuesday, November 9 from 7-9 p.m. via zoom.

Fire Department – No report

Councilwoman Ellsweig gave a report on the Grateful Dead headers that 100 bulbs were planted at the Veteran's Triangle near the dove. We received a completion check for \$800 from Renaissance and thank you for having the pool house door fixed.

PUBLIC COMMENT –

Councilman Budofsky congratulated all who won election and looks forward to working together.

Bob Leone – Can we get a few words on Lost Lake? Supervisor Hogue replied that they applied for some building permits, and they are being reviewed. That's all I really have for that.

Sabina Toomey – Is that what the IDA man was referring to? Supervisor Hogue stated he did not know. Councilman Budofsky stated that residential communities are subject to IDA funding only commercial entities are. Supervisor Hogue stated that he was talking about Another Sky which is the campground on Tannery Road. It is my understanding that they are redesigning and will come back for the whole process again.

Jack Gold -Where is the money for Harris Beach coming from? I don't see it budgeted. Supervisor Hogue state it will come from the Attorney line, the Planning Board line, Escrow or ZBA. Depending on what it is used for. Mr. Gold stated he doesn't see it in the budget anywhere. Supervisor Hogue stated there is money in all of those lines for this. If an engineer has to review plans, that is not a taxpayer cost and would come from escrow funding. The applicant is the sole beneficiary of that review. Any subdivisions or projects establish an escrow account and any costs solely related to that project come from their

escrow funds. Depending on the size and scope of the project, typically consulting firms are hired to represent the town and review these matters at the applicant's expense. Councilman Budofsky stated he did not feel we should be discussing this any further, it could be pending litigation and we should not discuss this. Supervisor Hogue stated that we are not prepared to answer any further questions on this without representation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – MOTION BY Supervisor Hogue, seconded by Councilwoman Landis to enter into executive session for the purpose of personnel and litigation of tax certioraris. Mr. Gold asked why and what matters are they going into executive session for. Supervisor Hogue replied he can say all he can say with regard to executive session. Vote: 4 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT – MOTION by Councilwoman Landis to adjourn at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne K. Nagoda,
Town Clerk