



**HOPKINTON FIRE DISTRICT**

2876 State Highway 11B  
Hopkinton, New York 12965  
(315) 328-4682

Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting Minutes – Public Hearing October 18, 2022

Present: Joachim VanElls, Richard Powers, Ernest Wood, Carl Pitts, Sue Wood, Rob Stillwell,  
Earl McBride

Guest: Steve Parker, Deborah Rust, Susan Lyon, Vickie French, Peggy and Jeff Burnham,  
Will Votra, Rick Eakins, Dick Eakins, Greg Crump

The public hearing on the proposed 2023 budget was called to order at 7:05 p.m. Chairman VanElls reviewed the proposed budget:

- No changes in personnel services – stayed at \$2700 (secretary/treasurer/elections)
- Equipment went from \$19,200 to a\$26,700 (due to new turnout gear purchase)
- Contractual went from \$77,800 to \$75,800
- Capital reserve – added an additional \$36,810 due to payment on new station

Total budget amojuonts to \$184,420 with a planned carry over of \$11,500. This brings amount to be raised by taxpayers to \$172,920. This is a \$39,030 increase from last year and the tax cap is exceeded.

The floor was opened for questions.

Vickie French stated she is not against the new station as she understands the need. However, she feels the price is too high. The median income in Hopkinton is \$25,000 with 25% poverty. This is a 44% increase. This is quite a jump and we are possibly headed to a recession. How can people pay? She wishes that the commissioners would slow down to see if grants are available.

Joachim VanElls explained we are already at \$2.5 million due to a delay in getting this going. The original estimate was \$1.2 million.

Deborah Rust stated that food and gas prices are up while incomes are not. She feels the vote was not advertised and that the department could do more fundraising. She noted a recent fundraiser where the funds went to Parishville-Hopkinton school.

Joachim VanElls explained that all voters were sent a brochure explaining the proposed project.

Peggy Burnham asked how the capital reserve was figured. It has almost doubled in the past year. This should have been gradual and is worried what it will be in 2024.

Dick Eakins stated that people don't care until it hits the tax roll. What is the budget going to look like in a few years.

Deborah Rust stated that it appears the commissioners are paying bills on wishing and hoping money comes through.

Jeff Burnham questioned how long the district has been planning and why only \$42,360 has been saved. What happens when a new truck is needed?

Rick Eakins asked how long the mortgage would be? Chairman VanElls replied 24 years. Rick asked what is going to happen when a new roof or overhead doors are needed. Where will the money come from? It appears the engineer is getting 8% every time they are used. You are already spending money before the project starts. Has anyone looked at any other designs for different costs?

Peggy Burnham asked what the tax rate / thousand would be. Joachim VanElls stated he was not sure. Vickie French stated it would be a \$1.42/thousand.

Peggy Burnham also asked what will happen if the grant does not go through? Joachim VanElls stated that we will still go with the USDA grant and the taxpayers would have to pay \$110,000 for 24 years. He does believe the grant will go through.

Ernest Wood stated that we can hold all the meetings but many people just don't care.

Peggy Burnham stated that she is trying to say is that yes the vote was approved but isn't it time now to step back due to the economy and rethink at how to look at it a different way.

All stated that they do care but are concerned about the price. Deborah Rust stated that more fundraisers are needed.

Joachim VanElls stated that they are only looking at the demolition currently. There are no bids being asked for the building currently and won't be until spring.

Peggy Burnham asked what is considered as new equipment. Joachim VanElls replied nozzles, hoses, flashlights, etc.

Vickie French asked about the SCBA. Steve Parker replied that they have applied for a FEMA grant. SCBA have a lifespan of about 15 years and they are currently at 13 years. They are inspected every five (5) years.

Rick Eakins asked how the grant writer is working out? Joachim VanElls stated we haven't heard back yet.

Peggy Burnham requested that the commissioners take another look at the capital reserve.

Deborah Rust stated we need to look out for the taxpayers.

There being no further questions, Carl Pitts (Rob Stillwell) moved to adjourn the public hearing. All in favor; motion carried. The public hearing adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

The special meeting was called to order at 7:58 p.m. Richard Powers (Rob Stillwell) moved to approve the following:

**Resolution no. 1 - Override Real Property Tax Cap 2023:**

WHEREAS, the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Hopkinton Fire District, must adopt a proposed budget for 2023 and estimate of fund balance in preparation for the annual fire district budget hearing and do so in preparation for the budget hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Hopkinton Fire District held the annual fire district budget hearing on notice to the public on October 18, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Board has considered the proposed budget and comments received on the proposed budget on October 18, 2022 at said budget hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that the financial needs of the fire district and fire department for fiscal year 2023 cannot be supported by a budget that would comply with the real property tax cap established pursuant to Section 3-c of the General Municipal Law as the proposed budget for 2023 calls for a real property tax levy of \$172,920 and the 2022 real property tax levy was \$130,530, as said levy would exceed the real property tax cap permitting only a 2% increase in said tax levy, and

WHEREAS, Section 3-c of the General Municipal Law provides as follows:

*A local government may adopt a budget that requires a tax levy that is greater than the tax levy limit for the coming fiscal year, not including any levy necessary to support the expenditures pursuant to subparagraphs (1) through (iv) of paragraph g of subdivision two of this section, only if the governing body of such local government first enacts, by a vote of sixty percent of the total*

voting power of such body, a local law to override such limit for such coming fiscal year only, or in case of a district or fire district, a resolution, approved by a vote of sixty percent of the total voting power of such body, to override such limit for such coming fiscal year only.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Fire Commissioners hereby approves a determination to override the real property tax cap for the 2023 budget only in order to permit an annual real property tax levy of \$172,920 and an annual fire district budget as stated in the proposed budget to be approved; and

The adoption of the foregoing resolution was dully put to a vote and upon roll call the vote was as follows:

Chairman Joachim VanElls – aye  
Commissioner Carl Pitts – aye  
Commissioner Richard Powers –  
Commissioner Robert Stillwell – aye  
Commissioner Ernest Wood – aye

The adoption was thereupon duly declared to have been adopted.

Dated: October 18, 2022  
Hopkinton, NY

Richard Powers (Carl Pitts) made a motion to discuss the budget resolution before voting. All in favor; motion carried. Richard Powers stated that the audience had brought up good points and felt the commissioners should look at the capital reserve account. He would like the commissioners to consider moving this to \$25,000. Carl Pitts stated that this would only mean increasing it more next year. No further discussion was held.

### **Hopkinton Fire District Resolution No. 2: Approve Final Budget for 2023**

WHEREAS, the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Hopkinton Fire District must adopt a proposed budget for 2022 and estimate of fund balances in preparation for the annual fire district budget hearing and did so in preparation for the budget hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Hopkinton Fire District held the annual fire district budget hearing on notice to the public on October 18, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Board has considered the proposed budget and comments received on the proposed budget on October 18, 2022 at said budget hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that the financial needs of the fire district and fire department for fiscal year 2023 cannot be supported by a budget that would comply with the real property tax cap established pursuant to Section 3-c of the General Municipal Law as the proposed budget for 2023 calls for a real property tax levy of \$172,920 and the 2022 real property tax levy was \$130,560, as said levy would exceed the real property tax cap permitting only a 2% increase in said tax levy; and

WHEREAS, Section 3-c of the General Municipal Law provides as follows:

*A local government may adopt a budget that requires a tax levy that is greater than the tax levy limit for the coming fiscal year, not including any levy necessary to support the expenditures pursuant to subparagraphs (i) through (iv) of paragraph g of subdivision two of this section, only if the governing body of such local government first enacts, by a vote of sixty percent of the total voting power of such body, a local law to override such a limit for such coming fiscal year only, or in the case of a district or fire district, a resolution, approved by a vote of sixty percent of the local voting power of such body, to override such limit for such coming fiscal year only.*

WHEREAS, previously at this meeting this Board of Fire Commissioners passed a resolution to override the real property tax cap for the 2023 Budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Fire Commissioners hereby approves the Financial Budget for the Hopkinton Fire District for 2023 attached hereto in the amount of \$184,420, calling for a real property tax levy of \$172,920.

The adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly put to a vote and upon roll call the vote was as follows:

Chairman Joachim VanElls - aye  
Commissioner Carl Pitts - aye  
Commissioner Richard Powers - nay  
Commissioner Robert Stillwell - aye  
Commissioner Ernest Wood - aye

The resolution was thereupon duly declared to have been adopted.

Dated: October 18, 2022  
Hopkinton, New York

Two (2) certified copies will be submitted to the secretary, with one copy for the Town Clerk.

Discussion was held on the removal of the house. Chief Parker's suggestions will be incorporated into the bidding process. The bids will be opened on November 10, 2022. It was noted that Bill converse works at St. Lawrence County and is looking into a discounted fee if go directly to Rodman. Ernest Wood (Richard Powers) moved to proceed with the bidding process. All in favor; motion carried.

Carl Pitts (Rob Stillwell) moved to adjourn the meeting. All in favor; motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Minutes by Sue Wood, Secretary