

The Annual Budget Meeting of the Board of Trustees met in the Municipal Building, 14 Baker Street, Patchogue, New York on Monday, April 10, 2023 with public viewing through video streaming on YouTube and in person.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Mayor Pontieri with Deputy Mayor Krieger and Trustees Brinkman, Ferb, Keyes, McHeffey, Village Attorney Egan, Village Treasurer Krawczyk, Village Clerk Devlin, Deputy Village Treasurer Ruggerio, and Deputy Village Clerk Braile present. Trustee Carillo was absent.

The flag salute was made, and the safety message was given.

Mayor Pontieri thanked everyone for attending the 2023-2024 Budget Hearing. He then asked Village Treasurer Krawczyk to review highlights from the proposed budget.

Trustee Ferb asked the Board to authorize a Property Tax Levy in excess of the limit established in General Municipal Law Section 3-C.

Village Clerk Devlin read notice of a public hearing to authorize a Property Tax Levy in excess of the limit established in General Municipal Law Section 3-C.

Village Treasurer Krawczyk indicated that this action was taken to protect the Village in case a slight error was made in calculating the tax levy amount.

Mayor Pontieri asked if anyone from the public wished to comment on the public hearing. There was no response. Mayor Pontieri then asked for a motion from the Board.

Upon a motion by Trustee Ferb, seconded by Deputy Mayor Krieger, and unanimously carried, the Board granted approval to authorize a Property Tax Levy in excess of the limit established in General Municipal Law Section 3-C.

Village Treasurer Krawczyk noted that his comments would be brief since this was a good budget with limited increases. He reviewed increases to expenditures which included a health insurance increase of 15%; salary increases of 2.1% which were in line with the 2% increases in the union contract; and financial expenses increased by approximately 11%. Sewer salaries had increased by 14%, and the total sewer costs had increased by 5%. There had not been an increase in expenses to the Patchogue Ambulance Co. which was good news. As for reductions, retirement expenditures had been reduced by 1%; sludge removal costs had decreased by 12.5%; and a nice increase in interest of 100% had been obtained from bank account rate. A 20% savings had been obtained from electrical costs so far through the Johnson Controls project. Village Treasurer Krawczyk indicated that he expected those savings to further expand. He noted that some tax relief had been obtained through use of \$500,000 in surplus funds. This still left surplus funds in excess of \$4,000,000 which was approximately 26% of the total budget. Having this type of surplus was advantageous to the Village when bonds were sought. The increase over last year's budget was 1.91%. This translated to an approximate increase of \$35 per household. He noted that Deputy Village Treasurer Ruggerio had done a great job in creating a reasonable and responsible budget. Village Treasurer Krawczyk then asked if the Board had any questions for him or Deputy Village Treasurer Ruggerio. There were no questions from the Board.

Mayor Pontieri asked if anyone from the public wished to comment on the proposed budget.

John Bogack, Noxon Street, expressed appreciation that the proposed budget and tax roll information was available for review online after many requests made over the years for this to be done. Mr. Bogack then commented on potential revenue enhancements which might be available in the next budget cycle or even in this budget cycle. One potential source was a large COVID grant in the amount of \$52,000,000 which the Town of Brookhaven had received for infrastructure. Mr. Bogack inquired if the Village would be receiving any of these funds. Mayor Pontieri indicated that some of those funds would be used towards the engineering costs for the upgraded sewer plant.

Mr. Bogack noted that he had posted an article a couple of days ago discussing that Patchogue was considered an ecologically disadvantaged community by the State of New York. Village

Attorney Egan stated that the area in question had been described as East Patchogue in the media release. There seemed to be some type of discrepancy in the description provided. Mr. Bogack indicated that this concerned a large amount of funds available for environmental purposes from the State. While the article stated East Patchogue, the map clearly showed Patchogue Village. These funds could be used to provide a 35% boost to environmental improvement projects such as sewer construction. He suggested that this at least be reviewed. Village Attorney Egan concurred that this should be done. He noted that this box was generally checked on all grant applications due to the economics of the median incomes in the Village. Trustee Ferb indicated that these funds concerned ecologically disadvantaged communities, and based on the reports he had seen, there were many places that were worse off from an ecological standpoint than the Village. The water quality in the rivers and bay were relatively good. Village Attorney Egan noted that this was where the confusion stemmed from between economic and ecological disadvantage. This particular program was a social justice program. Economically impacted areas historically suffered from ecological disadvantage as well. Mayor Pontieri indicated that the Village had received \$10,000,000 in funds to add sewers to at least 100 more homes. Mr. Bogack inquired if River Avenue and Noxon Street would be receiving access to sewers. Village Clerk Devlin noted that this would be a question for H2M. Mayor Pontieri noted that the Village had been fortunate to receive these funds as well as additional grant funds to expand the sewer plant. The Village could not complain about lack of support in terms of funding from other government sources. Mr. Bogack agreed and complimented the Village staff on their hard work with obtaining grant funds.

Mr. Bogack then commented on the budget line which included fees for Noise Licenses. He observed that this revenue line had actually decreased. Deputy Village Treasurer Ruggerio stated that she had rounded the figure to reflect the actual amount that was expected. It had been over budgeted last year. Mr. Bogack noted that Suffolk County Police patrols on Main Street were limited because of budgetary concerns. Mayor Pontieri stated that this was correct. Mr. Bogack suggested that this was an area where fees could be raised that could then be used towards supporting additional patrols on Main Street. There was a definite need for increased police presence there since Code Enforcement Officers were more limited in the duties they could perform. Mr. Bogack questioned if the clubs seeking these permits had the ability to pay double or triple than the current fee structure, and he believed that they did. The smaller mom and pop businesses had been bought out by larger organizations, and he believed that there was a financial capacity for most of the clubs to pay additional fees. Mayor Pontieri thanked him for his suggestion.

Village Attorney Egan suggested that the Board review the fee schedule in a holistic manner instead of cherry-picking specific fees. Trustee McHeffey inquired if this could be done at any point during the year. Village Treasurer Krawczyk stated that it could. Mayor Pontieri noted that fees were passed through resolution of the Board. Village Attorney Egan noted that the State Comptroller's Office had been very clear that fees were not supposed to be revenue raisers, but rather to offset expenses for local government. Fees could not be raised based on income or success of businesses. However, there were expenses related to enforcement. He reiterated that a review of fees should be done, but it must be done with the mindset of offsetting expenses. Village Treasurer Krawczyk concurred with this observation.

Mayor Pontieri then asked for a motion on the proposed budget.

Upon a motion by Trustee Ferb, seconded by Trustee McHeffey, and unanimously carried, the Board adopted the proposed budget for fiscal year 2023-2024 as presented.

Trustee Brinkman thanked Village Treasurer Krawczyk and Deputy Village Treasurer Ruggerio for their hard work on the budget.

Trustee Ferb noted that every line of the budget was carefully reviewed.

Upon a motion made by Trustee Brinkman, seconded by Trustee Ferb, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Lori B. Devlin, Village Clerk