

Board of Fire Commissioners

Greenfield Fire District
P.O. Box 103
Greenfield Center, NY 12833

The 2012 proposed budget public hearing of the Greenfield Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners was called to order at Greenfield Center Company #1 by Chairman Spackmann at 7:05 PM on October 18, 2011. The flag salute and a moment of silence were recognized for the departed.

Present were:

Commissioners: Atwell, Barss, Spackmann, Waite; Secretary Petkus, Treasurer J. Bishop.

One resident and several Officers/members of the Fire District present (attendance sheet attached).

Chairman Spackmann announced that in accordance with NYS Town Law §105, all Fire Districts must, prior to the adoption of their budget, hold a public hearing on their budget. He then also noted the following:

- This budget hearing must be held in such a manner as to maximize participation in the budget process;
- The purpose of this hearing is to discuss the contents of the budget;
- The Secretary of the Fire District has filed with this District an affidavit stating:
 1. That the notice of this public hearing was published or posted at least once, five days before the date specified for the hearing in:
 - The official newspapers of the Fire District,
 - The official signboard of the Towns where the District is located,
 - On the Fire District website,
 - On the town or towns websites where the District is located;
 2. The notice of public hearing specified the time and date when, and the place where this public hearing would be held;
 3. The Fire District Secretary also made available for inspection at least five days before the public hearing by any interested person during District office hours, copies of the proposed budget.
- The purpose of this public hearing is to allow members of the public to make comments on the budget. Any person may be heard in favor of, or against the preliminary budget or any item in it. Please note that this is only a proposed budget until the Board of Fire Commissioners adopts the final budget.
- Prior to the public comment portion of this budget hearing we will hear from the Fire District Treasurer, who will make a brief presentation about the preliminary budget to the Board of Fire Commissioners and the members of the public who are present. The Fire District Treasurer will be asked to submit the proposed budget to the Board of Fire Commissioners and members of the public who are here this evening. The Treasurer

should not answer specific questions during this time so as not to make this a question and answer session.

The Treasurer then read the through the 2012 proposed budget (see attached). The total budget presented: \$1,424,433.00.

George Habig, resident, questioned the tax rate; Chairman Spackmann noted the tax rate for the Town of Greenfield is approximately \$1.02 per \$100 and approximately the same for the Town of Wilton.

Chairman Spackmann then asked anyone present wishing to be heard on this proposed budget to come forward so the person may be heard in favor of, or against the proposed budget or any item in it. He requested that if anyone wished to address the Board on the proposed budget, to come directly in front of them or raise your hand to be recognized. He also asked to clearly state your name and address for the record and to please limit comments to five minutes. All questions/comments should be directed to the Board or the Treasurer. He reiterated that this was not a question and answer session; the questions will not be answered when asked. The Board is looking for opinions on the budget, and what anyone is in favor of, or against in the budget. Questions will not be answered by the Board or the Treasurer until after the conclusion of the public comment period.

Chairman Spackmann then announced that the public comment period would begin.

1. George Habig, resident, Route 9N, Greenfield Center, read a prepared statement that included the following (copy attached):
 - Thanked the firefighters, Board and Staff for their service.
 - Has a few comments about the budget:
 - Regarding the A400 Account:
 - Installation/Inspection, aka “banquet” \$15,000.00. Felt this line is unacceptable in this economy. Would like to see the Board step up to the plate and rescind this item. Tires for trucks are more important. Felt the firefighters get a lot from the Greenfield tax payers including good trucks, building upgrade renovations, top quality gear and LOSAP.
 - Cut in District newsletter funding: Purpose of the newsletter was to keep taxpayers informed. Doing away with the mailing program does just the opposite and would like to see the Board reinstate the mailing program. Also there was no mention of the R-U-OK program in the newsletter.
 - Personnel Services: No problem with the Secretary or Treasurer wage increases. Has an issue with the Purchasing Agent, too much, too soon, too fast. Secretary received step increases over the years.
 - Repairs to Apparatus: more than doubled since 2006, although the Board got rid of old EL293 and two other trucks. Questioned if the trucks are being properly used, i.e. excessive speed.
 - Also noted that at meetings there seems to be too much “Peter pay Paul” juggling. Indicated that too much money is being spent or something is just not right.
 - Also mentioned saving money on sales of equipment. That money should be put aside to pay for stuff that is coming down the pike. If it is just in the fund you are going to use it up anyway with nothing to show for it.

Chairman Spackmann asked if there were any other comments; there being none he then announced that the public comment period of this annual budget hearing is concluded. He

then asked each member of the Board of Fire Commissioners present if they had any questions for the Treasurer. There were no questions or comments from the Board.

Chairman Spackmann noted at this point that the Treasurer would answer any questions, if able to do so, discussed during the public comment period.

Treasurer Bishop commented that when a vehicle is sold, it does go back into the reserve, not the General fund.

Commissioner Atwell commented on the following:

- The Board tries to pinch a lot of corners, he is one who always complains about the repairs to the trucks all the time, but the problem is there are only two or three places in the State that can service the apparatus properly. Our trucks require more service than a city truck simply because of the type of water that is pumped; it comes from the creeks with sand, dirt, debris. He has shopped around and has not been able to find a solution, but as long as he sits on the Board, he will continue to look. Maintenance of apparatus is unfortunately expensive.

Commissioner Barss commented on the following:

- Agreed with Commissioner Atwell's comments regarding apparatus maintenance. Disagreed with Mr. Habig's comment regarding excessive speed, noting he gets irritated that what the public sees is everything the firefighters do wrong; we are in a fish bowl.

Commissioner Waite commented on the following:

- Felt the Purchasing Agent has saved the District more money since he's been here, and worth every penny and he is not even through the entire inventory yet.

Commissioner Spackmann commented on the following:

- There are a lot of things the firemen do to give back to the community; the banquet is not a reward, but rather part of a process where they install the new officers and sit down as a team to start each year off right, and honor the people who we elect/appoint to lead in battle, and it is worth every penny. Understands times are tough, over the past year he has made decisions that personally he did not agree with regarding spending, felt they should have spent more but realizes times are tough. Would need to look really hard in this District to find excess in terms of spending dollars.
- Agreed with Mr. Habig that the newsletter probably should be mailed, but again, in trying to focus on dollars, the Board tried a different approach to distributing the newsletters by putting them in the Stewarts Shops and Town Halls. Can always go back to mailing directly if this does not work out.
- Purchasing Agent raise: Mr. Habig is correct that it is not a step raise like the Secretary's, but felt the Secretary's raises back then were inadequate, and fought hard back then with the Board but did not have the support. Felt that the Purchasing Agent position deserved to be handled the right way. You can begin to quantify how much will be saved by the inventory, but there is a savings that is hard to quantify, and that is the business etiquette of centralizing and organizing the inventory and creating more of a business organization that he believes will pay dividends down the road.
- Agrees with both Commissioners Atwell and Barss that speed is not a factor regarding apparatus costs. The District has recently started doing maintenance through the Town, and already there are bills coming in from them that have cost nothing more than the materials. Feels this is a huge step forward for both the taxpayers and this organization.

- Noted that \$300 has to be added to the Service Award Program fee, from \$5000 to \$5300, due to the recent notification from Penflex of their increased fee.

Chairman Spackmann then asked if there were any more comments from the Board or Treasurer, and as there were none, asked for a motion to close the hearing.

Motion to declare the public hearing regarding the 2012 proposed budget closed was made by Commissioner Atwell with a second from Commissioner Barss. All in favor, motion carried.

Chairman Spackmann then made a motion to set the 2012 budget adoption date.

Motion made by Commissioner Spackmann with a second from Commissioner Waite to set the date for the adoption of the 2012 budget with the change as noted above to the Service Award Program fee, for the Commissioners Workshop beginning at 7:00 PM on October 26, 2011 at Porter Corners Co #2, 405 Bockes Road, Porter Corners. All in favor, motion carried.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Waite with a second from Commissioner Atwell. All in favor, motion carried.

Chairman Spackmann adjourned the meeting at 7:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce A. Petkus
District Secretary