

INCORPORATED VILLAGE OF GARDEN CITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPECIAL MEETING  
VIA ZOOM  
APRIL 28, 2020

PRESENT:

Mayor Theresa A. Trouvé  
Trustee Robert A. Bolebruch  
Trustee Stephen S. Makrinos  
Trustee John M. Delany  
Trustee Louis M. Minuto  
Trustee Mark A. Hyer  
Trustee Colleen E. Foley  
Trustee Brian C. Daughney  
Ralph V. Suozzi, Village Administrator  
Karen M. Altman, Village Clerk  
Kenneth O. Jackson, Chairman, Board of Police Commissioners  
Irene Woo, Village Treasurer  
Joseph DiFrancisco, Superintendent, Department of Public Works  
Giuseppe Giovanniello, Superintendent of Building Department  
Thomas Stryko, Chief, Fire Department  
Paul Blake, Chairman, Board of Commissioners of Cultural and Recreational Affairs  
Kenneth Gray, Village Counsel  
Budget Review Committee Members  
Roger Canales  
William McAndrews  
Shane Pomeroy  
Yvonne Varano  
Robert Wolff

MAYOR TROUVÉ: Welcome, our meeting will now come to order. Please join me in the pledge of allegiance. Now a moment of silence for our men and women who are in the armed services both home and abroad and also for all of our first responders who protect our Village during this COVID-19. This is a budget meeting and so the agenda will go a little differently and I'm going to turn over the meeting to Irene Woo who's going to speak to us about the first new business under Finance on the Consent Calendar, a correction of errors. Irene?

IRENE WOO: Thank you, Mayor. This item is to correct the Final Assessment Roll for 2020, there was a parcel of land that is vacant land, that was foreclosed on by Nassau County. It was previously privately held and it was included in our Assessment Roll. It was foreclosed on by Nassau County back in September of 2019 although the Village was only recently notified of this transfer, therefore a correction to our Final Assessment Roll needs to be made to exclude this parcel because it is now tax exempt.

TRUSTEE DAUGHNEY: I'm trying to figure out where this is.

KENNETH GRAY: The property was owned by an LLC holding company by the name of 600 Triangle Road, it's the northwest corner of Ring Road, it's a very oddly shaped piece of property. They originally filed for bankruptcy last year, between my efforts and Nassau County's efforts we were able to get the bankruptcy petition dismissed, and then Nassau County issued its own Treasury Deed for the property, and now they sought an action for Quiet Title so they could have a clean title and sell the property to hopefully satisfy some of the outstanding taxes.

TRUSTEE DAUGHNEY: Where is this, is this near Ruth's Chris?

KENNETH GRAY: Yes, it's just west of Ruth's Chris.

TRUSTEE FOLEY: Behind the gas station?

KENNETH GRAY: No, not behind the gas station, west of Ruth's Chris as you go on Ring Road if you're heading westbound and it curves southbound, there's some vacant land there between the 600 building and then whatever is first heading south, I forget what it's called.

TRUSTEE MAKRINOS: Is that next to the Girl Scout Building?

KENNETH GRAY: Exactly.

TRUSTEE DELANY: Ken, that piece of property doesn't look like it's big enough to build anything on.

KENNETH GRAY: Nassau County has a different opinion of that, they think it's large enough to put up a small standalone building.

TRUSTEE DAUGHNEY: Do you know what it's zoned, do we know what it's zoned?

KENNETH GRAY: I apologize, I don't know that off the top of my head. I know they owe the County well over \$1 million, I think somewhere in the area of \$1.5 and they owe the Village \$1 million. I've been having conversations with the County attorney that we can enter into an agreement, so that if the property is eventually sold by the County we can proportionally share in the proceeds of the sale. There might be two other stakeholders that are owed some of the money as well.

TRUSTEE DAUGHNEY: Is there a priority, Ken, on this kind of thing, you say they're owed \$2 million, we're owed \$1 million, do they get their \$2 million before we get our \$1 million?

KENNETH GRAY: No, which is why I would enter into an agreement with the County at some point so that nobody claims a priority. But the municipal taxes are a priority over any other entity or party that might have liens on the property.

TRUSTEE MAKRINOS: Why haven't we sold the tax lien on this?

KENNETH GRAY: We actually have in the past, we have put it up, it's been for sale, and I think there will be one for sale this year. No, there won't be this year, will there Irene?

IRENE WOO: No, not for this, this has been sold, so not this one.

KENNETH GRAY: Right, that's why we're doing the correction.

TRUSTEE MAKRINOS: We're only attempting to get one year of taxes right?

KENNETH GRAY: No, we're owed many years.

TRUSTEE DELANY: A \$1 million worth of taxes would have to be a number of years.

TRUSTEE MAKRINOS: Right but if we sold the tax liens wouldn't we have recovered the money from the person that bought the lien?

TRUSTEE DELANY: Nobody bought the lien.

TRUSTEE DAUGHNEY: We didn't do that.

TRUSTEE MAKRINOS: You're saying that the lien wasn't sold this year but it was sold prior was it?

KENNETH GRAY: I think there may have been two years in which the lien was actually sold and we'd have to go back and these taxes go back at least ten years.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: I need a motion.

TRUSTEE DELANY: I make that motion.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: I'm not up to that yet, a motion to correct the 2020 Tax Assessment Roll to change a status from taxable to exempt. Who said that?

TRUSTEE DELANY: I did, Delany.

KENNETH GRAY: Mayor, I believe it's actually just a motion to accept the consent calendar.

KAREN ALTMAN: No, she's right, for this item, for the correction of errors.

KENNETH GRAY: Fair enough.

TRUSTEE MAKRINOS: I second.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: Second by Makrinos. All in favor, AYE. Are there any noes? That passed unanimously.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: At this point I am going to turn the meeting once again to Irene Woo, I'm going to open the public meeting.

KAREN ALTMAN: We need a motion to open the public hearing.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: I'd like to open the public hearing, do I have a motion?

TRUSTEE DAUGHNEY: I make that motion.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: Brian Daughney, and a second?

TRUSTEE DELANY: I second it.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: John Delany. All those in favor, AYE.

TRUSTEE BOLEBRUCH: Before we turn it over to Irene I just would like to make a statement about the budget. I wanted to introduce Irene.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: We're leading up to that, John.

TRUSTEE DELANY: It's not John, it's Bob Bolebruch.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: I'm sorry, Bolebruch. I'd like to open the public hearing, do I have a first?

TRUSTEE MAKRINOS: Yes, first and a second.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: Daughney first, and second Mark Hyer?

TRUSTEE MAKRINOS: Delany.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: No, we're going to switch it all around, second was Steve Makrinos, yes?

TRUSTEE MAKRINOS: Yes, that's fine.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: All those in favor, AYE. That passed unanimously. At this time, I would like to call on Deputy Mayor Bolebruch, Chairman of the Finance Committee.

TRUSTEE BOLEBRUCH: Good evening, Mayor. As Finance Commissioner, I would like to invite Mrs. Irene Woo, our Village Treasurer, to present the budget for the fiscal year 2020-2021. Mrs. Woo, along with Darcia Palmer, our Deputy Village Treasurer, have worked tirelessly with all members of the Finance Department to prepare our Village Budget. Over the last several months they have coordinated with the Department Heads, Human Resources, our Village Administrator, and Village trustees in order to present this budget to the Board for approval. I wanted to

thank all involved for their efforts and their flexibility during these challenging times. I will turn this over to Mrs. Irene Woo for her presentation.

IRENE WOO:

Thank you, Deputy Mayor Bolebruch. As noted, the Board of Trustees, Department Heads, and the Finance Department staff have worked diligently on this budget over the last five months. Various iterations of the budget have been presented, viewed and discussed over six budget work sessions. The budget proposed today calls for \$66.2 million in appropriation, which includes \$65.4 million in operating expenses and \$750,000 in termination reserves. This budget is relatively flat year over year, with only a 0.13% increase, or \$82,000, increase over last year. The proposed appropriations are to be funded through current year surplus of \$1.1 million, current reserves of \$750,000, other estimated revenues of \$12.1 million and through the tax levy of \$52.3 million. Once again, the tax levy increase at 1.78% is well below the legal tax cap. This budget also includes a \$16.2 million Capital Plan. The vast majority of these projects fall within investments in infrastructure, equipment and building improvements. Infrastructure includes roads, curbs, sidewalks, sewers and total about \$4.4 million. Equipment purchases in various departments total \$2.1 million. Building improvements of \$7.9 million include investments in HVAC, roof, Village Hall repointing, and St. Paul's Abatement, among other projects. As stated earlier, many discussions have been held regarding the budget, much more so than in previous years. Given the uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 Pandemic and the potential impact to the Village's finances in the upcoming fiscal year, this budget will be closely monitored with the intention to adjust plans at a future date as the Board deems necessary. Thanks again to the Mayor and Trustees, Department Heads, Ms. Darcia Palmer, and the rest of the Finance Department Staff for all their hard work.

MAYOR TROUVÉ:

Thank you, Mrs. Woo. Are there any questions, questions from the Board, questions from residents, do we have any questions this evening on the budget. Mr. Wolff, did you care to speak tonight?

ROBERT WOLFF:

Yes, please.

MAYOR TROUVÉ:

Mr. Wolff, I just wanted to explain that you can't speak on behalf of the CBRAC unless you have all of their permission.

ROBERT WOLFF:

Anything I say is my own opinion.

MAYOR TROUVÉ:

Very good, go ahead.

TRUSTEE DELANY:

Is there a four-minute limit, Mayor, for public comment?

MAYOR TROUVÉ:

Yes.

ROBERT WOLFF:

It's not going to be a long presentation. I've spent some time reviewing the Capital and Operating Budget, and Mrs. Woo basically explained the makeup of it. Looking at percentages, as far as the Capital Budget, what we are borrowing \$8.7 million which represents 62% of the Capital Budget. Of that \$8.7 million, St. Paul's Abatement Program is 23% of it, Village Hall Brick Pointing is 17% of it, Road Work Paving which I questioned to be bondable, is 13%, the Library HVAC and Roof comes to about 14%. All projects, which in my opinion, don't need doing, but that's not my decision to make. I'm concerned with the level of borrowing as opposed to the top half of the load. I'm also noting because people have asked me, how much have we spent on St. Paul's and I'm not sure what that is so I'm going to take a shot at it. I think prior to this year we allocated \$2.2 million, not all of which has been spent, and I think \$2 million in this year's budget. So if we basically borrow that \$2 million this year, we'll be up to \$4.2 million in money for St. Paul's, and yet there's nothing in any future budget for St. Paul's, I think if we're going to plan ahead we at least have to put a placeholder of some kind in there of some estimated amount as opposed to showing nothing

at all. You're spending \$4 million, and you look ahead and there's nothing there for it. The other issue is the firehouse, we borrowed half a million dollars in this fiscal year for construction planning and there's no provision for funding in next year's budget. In 2021-22 budget there's \$7.5 million for firehouse and \$1.6 apparatus, that's \$9 million for the firehouse coming up ahead. I'm not concerned basically with the payments of principal and interest, but basically we're going to really tie up the Village's cash. Then we're waiting for the younger residents, I'm a senior citizen and for me a 40-year bond means 10 years of my life. For somebody who's 25 years old, they'll be paying for this over the next 40 years, and I'm concerned that these are the residents who don't attend meetings, don't know what's going on, I appreciate all the work that everybody has done, I do this for a living and it's not easy, but I think we have to look at our debt service and how that works out over the years and we can do some what-if scenarios to see if we can take \$1 million from revenues and reduce funding, just to take a look at it another clean eye look at it. That's basically the point of what I wanted to say because the residents that I talk to, they say they don't tell you this on the website. Anything you want to know, do a little bit of digging and you'll find the information, it's just not jumping out at you. I guess that's always been that way because even though I'm in town over 40 years this is the first year I've gotten involved in any of the budgeting for the town. That's what I wanted to say, I know it's a lot of hard work, sometimes I disagree with some of your conclusions. Thanks again, Irene thank you very much, I know I've bothered you a few times, and Mr. Suozzi, we're glad you're working here with your team. That's it for me.

TRUSTEE MAKRINOS:

Bob, we want to thank you for all your work for CBRAC as well.

MAYOR TROUVÉ:

Are there any other people present who would like to speak? Would any of the Trustees like to speak this evening?

TRUSTEE BOLEBRUCH:

The only thing that I want to say is I will state that for the first time in seven years I will not be voting for the Village budget. I'm not going to reiterate all of my reasons, I basically had mentioned them during all four previous calls, but I basically feel that there are two different parts and the main reasons why I won't be voting for it. The first reason is that, in my opinion, these are extremely uncertain times and I believe that just like New York City, New York State and other municipalities we should take a more cautious approach and wait and see and reevaluate our Village probably in three to six months. Instead what we've done is we've decided to do all the projects and we've actually added several multi-million-dollar projects from future years to be brought forward to this year. My last point is that although the tax cap is set at 1.78 as Mr. Wolff had mentioned, we are really only accomplishing this by adding millions of dollars of debt to our overall Village debt. In my opinion, these are simply two actions that I feel I can't support so I will not be voting for the budget.

MAYOR TROUVÉ:

Does anyone else have any comments that they would like to make? I want to thank Mrs. Woo for doing a wonderful job with the budget and everyone else involved and wanted to say that it was an outstanding budget in the sense that we did think very, very carefully about bonding, and we did spend a great deal of time on it, six sessions, and what should be said here is that there will be a time when we get down to it, probably early fall, we will look at the budget again, and I'm not sure that we will stay with exactly what we originally planned. May I have a motion please to pass this 2020-2021 budget. Do I have a motion?

TRUSTEE DELANY:

I make that motion.

MAYOR TROUVÉ:

John Delany, and a second please.

TRUSTEE MINUTO:

I'll second.

MAYOR TROUVÉ:

Thank you, Trustee Minuto, and all those in favor, AYE. Anyone opposed?

TRUSTEE BOLEBRUCH: Myself, Bob, no.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: That motion passed, 7-1.

KAREN ALTMAN: Mayor, we need a motion to close the public hearing.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: May I have someone make a motion to close this public hearing.

TRUSTEE DELANY: I make that motion.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: Thank you and a second.

TRUSTEE MAKRINOS: I'll second.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: Makrinos, second. All those in favor, AYE. Is there anyone who is not voting yes on ending the meeting? Thank you. What we are going to do now is we are going back to the other agenda and we are going to put in a motion on a resolution which involves Adoption of the Budget, Collection of Taxes, Fix 2020 tax rate. May I have a motion?

TRUSTEE DELANY: I'll move all three of those things.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: And someone for a second please.

TRUSTEE HYER: I'll second it.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: Mr. Hyer, and all those in favor, AYE. That passed unanimously. Now would we adjourn the other meeting that I opened up at the beginning or are we finished here tonight?

KAREN ALTMAN: Finish tonight unless somebody wants to speak, just need a motion to adjourn.

TRUSTEE DELANY: I move to adjourn.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: A second please on the motion to adjourn.

TRUSTEE MINUTO: I'll second that.

MAYOR TROUVÉ: Thank you, Mr. Minuto. All those in favor, AYE. Our meeting is closed.