TOWN OF NORTHAMPTON 2015 PROPOSED BUDGET WORK SESSION October 1, 2014

The Town of Northampton held a 2015 Budget Work Session on Wednesday, October 1, 2014 at 3:00 PM in the Municipal Building, 412 South Main St., Northville, NY.

PRESENT: Supervisor: James Groff

Councilmen: William Gritsavage, Ivar Anderson, Darryl Roosa and Art

Simmons

RECORDING SECRETARY: Elaine Mihalik, Town Clerk

Other Town department representative in attendance was:

Bookkeeper/Budget Director- Nathanial Matthews

ALSO PRESENT: Warren (Skip) Taylor

Supervisor Groff: Nathanial Matthew, Budget Officer has provided the Town Clerk and Town Board a proposed Town of Northampton 2015 Budget. The problem is that we have some issues. I don't think that anybody here wants to raise Town taxes but it doesn't look very good.

Nathanial Matthews: We started off the year with a considerably budget deficit of approximately \$130,000 in the hole. Our main focus with this year and next is to try and close that gap. Limit spending every which way we can to make it work. Allocate things properly throughout the funds.

When I built this budget I decided to change the layout completely. We went to a comprehensive budget so that instead of .4 you will see .401, .402. .403 and so on. This is so you will be able to see where the money inside of each Fund is being expended such as supplies, repairs, fuel things of that nature. I changed the format itself.

Councilman Gritsavage: It is detailed enough that we have and opportunity so that can go back and understand it. I think that we will have a lot of questions for you at our next Budget Work Session.

Nathanial Matthews: I took in account of a 2% raise for most positions. The Board and the Supervisor are not looking for a raise based on a recommendation. There is a salary schedule in the proposed budget.

Councilman Gritsavage: We took a cut last year and I think that we can stick with that.

Nathanial Matthews: General A Fund Appropriations. On page 8 we added a new appropriation A1230. That is to cover the Secretary to the Supervisor expenses for the salary and if any equipment or supplies are needed.

Supervisor Groff: Was there "Secretary" in the current budget?

Nathanial Matthews: No, it was never budgeted.

It was lumped into another line item in the current budget and I have broken it out into its own line item.

Supervisor Groff: I took a budget cut last year and I did not take the Budget Directors \$4,000 pay either.

Nathanial Matthews:

General A Fund

Page 9

Budget-Personal Services A1340.1 it has been lowered from \$4,255.00 to \$3,000.00.

Page 10

Attorney Contractual Expense A1420.4 has been reduced from \$35,000 to \$27,500.00 which I feel is a comfortable amount. I don't expect to be spending that amount. It's always good to have a little bit there if you need it.

Page 11

Elections - A1450.4. We reduced that from \$14,000 to \$8,500.00 based on the estimates that are provided by the County. I put in a little bit of a cushion in case something comes up that we need extra for.

Buildings - A1620. The overall Buildings Fund was reduced from \$80,707.00 to \$64,300.00. This is based on the current estimates on what we are going to be doing, such as renovations, insurance, phone, supplies and materials repair and maintenance of equipment, fuel (heating), Electric, and miscellaneous for the town hall building.

Page 12

Special Items. There is an item called Unallocated Insurance A1910.4 that has now been removed because all the insurances have been allocated to the appropriate fund. Anywhere that we should be maintaining the insurance or where our insurance covers, that is where it is coming out of. Example: Highway equipment comes out of Highway now.

The Control of Dogs and Control of Other Animals all of A3510 and A3520.4 has been zeroed out. That has been allocated to the "B Fund" to B3510 and B3520 and not the A Fund anymore, because the Village provides for those services. Legally it should be in the B Fund because the Town isn't providing it. Townwide outside Village is providing it.

Page 15

Another thing I did also. Over the past several months I have had the Highway Crew keep track on a spread sheet of where they have been spending their time and how many hours in one area. So for the Highway salary are now going to be appropriately allocated

based on where they are actually working. Whether they are working in the Town Park or picking up brush or actually doing road repairs.

Parks - A7110. I have allocated a little bit there because of mowing of parks.

Youth - A7310.4. The Towns contribution to the Joint Youth Program has been removed from the "A Fund" and allocated to the "B Fund" to B7320.

Page 16-Home & Community Services

Planning - A8020 and Zoning - A8010. The Town does not provide Townwide - Planning and Zoning in the Village. They were moved to the "B Fund" B8020 and B8010. The Village has their own planning and zoning.

Page 17

Cemeteries. A8810.1 There is a 2% salary increase with three people working in the cemeteries. The Actual Budget of \$25,000.00 is not sufficient enough to cover their current salaries.

A8810.2 increase is to cover the purchase of a new lawn mower.

You will also find in the DPW salaries. The current budget does not have enough funds currently to support the salaries for the DPW. So we are going to have some transfers to bring that up.

Page 18

Employees Benefits. The overall Employees Benefits from the "A Fund" has a pretty significant decrease and that is due to allocating the fund more appropriately throughout all of the funds, the Highway Fund, Sewer, Water and the B Fund also.

There was a slight decrease in the Reserves amount that are planned for the upcoming year. Depending on how the year actually goes. I won't know if we will be able to fund them at the current levels that are being presented. That's depending largely on Sales Tax and also the taxes that the Board decides to approve.

Councilman Anderson: Why are we putting \$10,000 into Reserves for the building? We'll talk about that afterward.

Revenues

Page 19

There are not a lot of changes on the Revenues. The property tax budged this year was \$235,690.00 increased to \$274,393.00.

The Sales Tax distribution I increased to \$110,000.000 to close the budgetary gap. That is the maximum tax increase that I feel comfortable with.

Page 21

Mortgage tax I increased it from \$45,000.00 to \$50,000.00. That is based on my forecast and projections on the economy is starting to turn based on the last couple of quarters reporting that I have had and I was confident on increasing that to \$50,000.00

Tentative Budget General A Fund Year Ending December 31, 2015 for:

"A" General -Townwide Fund

Appropriations	\$680,425.00
Revenues	\$207,200.00
Less Appropriated Cash Surpluses	\$198,832.00
Raised by Tax	\$274,393.00

General B Fund

Page 22

Law Enforcement - B3120. You will see a budgeted amount of \$10,000.00. That is in case the Town decides they want to enter into contract for Law Enforcement Control of Dogs - B3510 and Control of Other Animals - B3520. These are new line items in the B Fund. This is where I transferred these from the A Fund to B Fund. Youth - B7320. This is a new line item in the B Fund. I transferred this from the A Fund to the B Fund.

Page 23

There was an increase in appropriations to cover any expenses that will be needed for Refuse and Garbage pickup. Currently they were not being expended out of the B Fund it was coming out of the A Fund. So it was moved.

Page 24

Employee Benefits which includes State Retirement and Social Security that was adjusted for allocation. It is pretty close to where it should be.

Revenues

Page 25

The Sales Tax you will see a slight decrease. It was put where it was really needed which is in the General Fund and the Highway Fund.

There is a new line item that was created, Franchise which is the Cable Franchise - B1170. That was always in the budget; however, it was under Miscellaneous Revenue.

Page 26

Permits - B2555. Building & Alteration. There is an increase to \$6,000 and it is now allocated to the proper line item.

"B" General –Outside the Village Fund

Appropriations	\$161,250.00
Revenues	\$122,075.00
Less Appropriated Cash Surpluses	\$ 39,175.00
Raised by Tax	\$ -

Highway DB Fund

Page 27

I allocated the personal services where I thought that they are really going to be expended. The other large increase is in paving & sealing. I tried to bring it up to the minimal level that the Highway Superintend requested. He would have liked \$20,000.00 more just to keep up the infrastructure that is currently deteriorating. Over all, his paving

budget is \$160,000.00. That would be the line item DB5110 and line item CHIPS – DB5112.

Machinery line item DB5130 has been increased slightly from \$65,000.00 to \$71,500.00 for equipment purchases and they are planning on purchasing a couple of things. Also, allocating personal services to when they are working on the trucks and machinery.

Page 28

Snow removal. I increased the "Personal Services". Also, we are projecting a 25% to 27% increase in Salt this year.

Page 30

Employees Benefit had a reduction based on the allocation from \$75,000.00 to \$62,000.00. The Reserve amounts that were proposed, we left in there as the same. They were not funded at all in 2011, I believe. No money has been put in the Reserves at all because it has been running in the red.

Page 31

Sales Tax on the Revenue side is up a little bit to help with some of these add ins because the Fund Balances are not where it should be to support the funds for the Budget that is presently proposed. That is where Sales Tax and Taxes are really going to come into play.

"DB" Highway-Outside the Village Fund

Appropriations	\$575,800.00
Revenues	\$445,500.00
Less Appropriated Cash Surpluses	\$130,300.00
Raised by Tax	\$ -

Fire Fund

Page 32

We just heard from Kennyetto Fire District for Fish House and their budget amount for the Town of Northampton is \$9,650.00. So, I will have to increase it from the \$9,000.00 and the Sales Tax will be increased there to cover that. That is the only difference for Fire. The Village of Northville Fire District is \$85,250.00

"SF" Fire District Northampton/Fishhouse Fire District Fund

Appropriations	\$ 94,250.00
Revenues	\$ 94,250.00
Less Appropriated Cash Surpluses	\$ -
Raised by Tax	\$ -

Sacandaga Lighting District

Page 33

The Lighting District is having some issues. The Taxes that are going to be raised for the District are not sufficient to cover the actual expenses that are being paid out. In addition to that, they have been behind for the last few years. Therefore, there is no longer going

to be sufficient Fund Balance without increasing taxes because of the actual lighting for the district. The \$20,000.000 that was budgeted isn't enough to cover the lights. I project that we are going to go over this year as well in there. I project it should be the \$23,000.00 right tight where it is going to come in at. The only thing that is funding the lighting district is the taxes and interest. Which interest is non-existing at \$5.00 budgeted.

"SL" Lighting District Fund

Appropriations	\$ 23,000.00
Revenues	\$ 5.00
Less Appropriated Cash Surpluses	\$ 2,198.00
Raised by Tax	\$ 20,797.00

Sewer Fund

Page 34

Sewer Administration - SS8110. Personal Service there has been a reduction from \$9,595.00 to \$6,400.00. The Salaries throughout have been adjusted to the salaries to where they are actually spending the money. The Administration is a salaried position and we know what that expense is going to be.

Sewage Collecting System - SS8120. We reduced the appropriations from \$71,308.00 to \$67,500.00. The main reduction was the equipment line from \$25,000.00 to \$20,000.00.

Page 36

Employee Benefits – those were increased to support the allocation from the General Fund and the Highway Fund over to the Water and Sewer where they actually belonged.

Revenue

Page 37

The State Aid DEC Grant was removed. That was budgeted for \$50,000.00. I'm not sure where that came in. But, as of right now I do not have any dollar figure for any Grants. I can always put that in later and be added as a receivable for the sewer.

Grants in general will have their own special operating "H" Fund. Anything that will be spent for the Grant will be in its own fund. It will not affect this budget.

"SS" Sewer Fund

Appropriations	\$251,450.00
Revenues	\$ 33,375.00
Less Appropriated Cash Surpluses	\$146,459.00
Raised by Tax	\$ 71,616.00

Water Fund

Page 38

You will see the same type of changes to the Personal Services. It was adjusted from \$4,421.00 to \$7,100.00.

The Source of Supply was pretty much left what it is.

Page 39

The real reduction was on the Engineering - SW8440 from \$29,400.00 to \$20,000.00. That is because we are at the tail end of the Engineering for the water meter project.

Page 40

Employees Benefits – You will see an increase based on the allocation of where the employees will be spending their time.

Page 41

There are slight changes on the Revenue side with the taxes that are going to be levied based on increase in points. Not an increase based on the rate per point.

"SW" Water Fund

Appropriations	\$209,350.00
Revenues	\$ 45,725.00
Less Appropriated Cash Surpluses	\$ 97,375.00
Raised by Tax	\$ 66,250.00

Discussion

Councilman Anderson: Based upon what you have right here. What will it do with the taxes?

Nathanial Matthews: It would be 9.85% overall levy increase. It would be a \$0.16 increase per \$1,000.

Approximate rate per thousand of assessed value

<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
.96	1.12

With the \$1.12 rate, we are utilizing the entire Fund Balance to fund this budget. We would have a remaining balance of approximately \$4,000.00 to \$5,000.00 in the General Fund. In the Highway Fund we would have approximately \$6,000.00. In the Lighting District we would have approximately \$400.00.

Councilman Simmons: If nothing is done today and nothing is changed we are looking at a 9.85% tax increase, correct? What is the tax cap?

Nathanial Matthews: The tax cap amount for us is 3.36

Supervisor Groff: In each of your packets I've given each one of you a letter dated 10/22/2012 to the Board from the previous Bookkeeper, Carol Roberts, which was trying to get the Town to raise the taxes. She predicted that this is going to happen and here we are. It fell on deaf ears and now we are behind.

Nathanial Matthews: Unfortunately, we have a lot of needs that are coming up. Replacing plow trucks, replacing pick up, things of that nature. Truthfully, the funds are non-existing. There isn't money in Reserve Fund for anything at this point. Even with the \$0.16 proposed increase we are going to be very tight and not be able to fully fund the Reserves that we should be doing at the moment.

Councilman Gritsavage: What was the projected Reserves Fund going to be last year? Does anyone remember?

Councilman Anderson: I think it was going to be under \$100,000.00.

Nathanial Matthews: The Highway Fund for machinery I am projecting for the end of this current year is \$15,600.00. You can't even buy a pickup for that.

Councilman Gritsavage: Or four tires.

Nathanial Matthews: The only Reserves that is actually being funded properly and are healthy are the Water and Sewer. The rest of them are nil. They are very, very low.

Councilman Roosa: Based on this tax increase, what is going to happen next year at this same point in time? Are the Reserves going to be any better or do we need to go more?

Nathanial Matthews: It is going to largely depend on Sales Tax, unfortunately. I am proposing the \$0.16 increase but that is not what I would recommend. If you are looking at exceeding the Tax Cap, and if, you are not looking at cutting the budget any further. I would recommend a higher increase of possibly \$0.20 per thousand. On a percentage side it sounds like a lot but on the dollar figure side it is not because the Town Taxes are so low. If you want to fully fund the Budget, all the Reserves get them up to where they should be and close the budget gap.

I spoke with someone on the street and they came right and said that you can double my town taxes and it won't bother me because it's \$96.00 dollars a year.

If you want to fully fund the budget, all of the Reserves, and get them up where they should be.

Yes, I am looking at a budgetary deficit. That is more easily closed than what is really alarming to me, is the fact, is that for the past at least three or four years expenses have exceeded Revenues. If you compare the General A Fund and the Highway Fund, the expenses have increased exceeding the Revenues every year just about. If you are looking at making up the difference, it has to come from somewhere.

We are losing Sales Tax money from Walmart. Projecting that to be a decrease of approximately to a \$110.000.00 to a \$120,000.00 decrease.

Hopefully, the new stores that have come in and that are coming in will help offset that. The budgeted figures that I have projected are at my maximum comfort level. I would be more comfortable budgeting at approximately \$610,000.00.

The budgetary gap was more of fixing through allocating properly and putting Revenues where I could. The bigger glaring problem is that we have been operating in the red \$30,000 or \$40,000 in the past however many years.

The \$.0.16 tax increase would bring the levy to almost net. So we are not going to gain anything and we are not going to lose anything. Keep in mind that those were the figures when they were operating in the red and were not funding Reserves. We are going from \$235,000.00 to approximately \$274,000.00. That is an approximate \$40,000.00 increase that I am projecting. If you want to fully fund the Reserves I would almost double it to \$0.20 or \$0.22 per thousand.

Councilman Anderson: There are some things that I want to add and there are some things that I want to deduct. I think that we should put money aside for a Re-valuation "reassessment" of properties.

Supervisor Groff: You want to raise taxes and do a Re-valuation? They'll hang us all.

Councilman Anderson: No you won't. You can raise just so much money.

Nathanial Matthews: There are ways of reducing the over-all percentage. If you are focused on a percent that are being projected as the over-all levy. We could reduce the amount of taxes that are being raised in water and sewer and compensate on the opposite side that with increasing the user fees.

Councilman Anderson: We are basically going to be doing that when we get the new rates with the water meters.

When we have Revenue that we could tap, we don't.

We have \$45,000.00 in the budget for the ambulance. If we bill those who have insurance we would wipe that out. With the number of trips charging \$440.00 a trip. I think that we should start billing. We're not cutting services we are just getting a new revenue.

Councilman Simmons: The figures on page 22 for Law Enforcement. Back when, I may have been one of the people that suggested that maybe we could contract with the Village for Police protection. Given what I am hearing from the Budget Director. I don't think this is the time to contribute. I feel that Councilman Anderson is wrong about a Revaluation.

Councilman Anderson: While collecting signatures for reducing the speed limit on County Hwy 152, I am hearing that they want Police protection over there. We've had the money in there and I think that we ought to leave it.

Councilman Gritsavage: We had \$6,000 budgeted in this fund last year.

Nathanial Matthews: I think it was a few hundred dollars. I'm not sure.

Councilman Gritsavage: Fortunately and I give the Supervisor credit for that because we never needed that. That had to do with the Houseman Street issue but it wasn't specifically for Houseman Street. That issue was addressed without having to spend any of the Enforcement money.

Councilman Anderson: I believe that Bob Ellsworth stated that the\$2,500 we original discussed wasn't enough for a weekend and we increased it to \$6,000.00.

Nathanial Matthews: I don't think that that \$6,000.00 ever made it into the budget.

Councilman Gritsavage: why did we even spend the time and voted on the budget then?

Councilman Anderson: This budget is very good. It's factual and it is here.

Supervisor Groff: Carol Roberts wasn't sitting in on any of the last few budget hearings was she? I think that she wasn't getting the information from you and you were getting the information from her.

Nathanial Matthews: There were so many cuts that the budget can't fund itself.

Councilman Anderson: It's been done and now we have to correct it. Discussion ensued on the Village of Scotia and the way they use readers to scan the vehicle license plates on people who have invalid registrations, lack of insurance or suspended licenses. They get a ticket and then they go to court. All that money stays within the Village.

Supervisor Groff: I know that the State gets a portion of that money if the judge fines them.

Councilman Gritsavage: I like the way the budget is broken out so I can understand the A Fund and B Fund a little better. I am concerned that so much came out of the A Fund that should have come out of the B Fund.

Councilman Roosa: Is there any area that we can look at decreasing?

Nathanial Matthews: Not really, if you were looking to decrease anything. It is going to hurt something substantially. The major areas where you would be able to decrease that would have a direct impact on the Tax Rate would be your infrastructure. Your roads you would not want to do. We are already at a minimum.

I was only able based on the current budget afford Kip to find approximately \$6,030.00 for paving which put him behind as well.

There is really not a lot of area that is able to be reduced. I do feel confident that there are sufficient appropriations to cover any upcoming unforeseen items. It is a budgetary cushion, not an actual expected cushion.

Councilman Gritsavage: How about increasing our fines and maybe a Casino? Is there any other thought to increase revenue in any way?

Nathanial Matthews: There is the utility tax which I don't think anyone is going to want to do. That is a tax that goes on all your Frontier bills, your National Grid bills. That is where you see all the state and local taxes. Those are taxes that are being raised and

given back to the Municipality. If you are afraid to tax somebody why would you do it in that form?

To fund an operating budget, there are no grants available. Operating budgets are what they are. So unfortunately, the Town doesn't really have a lot of areas to increase revenues besides Sales Tax. I don't know when renegotiations for the Franchise fee will be coming up. That might be a good time to get more revenues out of Time Warner. When you are behind and you are trying to catch up every little penny helps.

Councilman Anderson: You say our reserve fund is down. I would have liked to raise the Highway Machinery to \$30,000 and the Ambulance fund should be at \$30,000.00 because within two years they are going to be looking for a new ambulance.

Nathanial Matthews: You stated that maybe cutting the Law Enforcement to \$5,000 .00 instead of the \$10,000.00 and then I would take the extra \$5,000 and allocate it elsewhere. It is how you want to spend it is up to the Town Board. If the Town Board raises taxes \$0.16 now what would it mean for next year? Next year we would be theoretically holding the line because there were large projected increases of the dental insurance and 11% on the health insurance this year. There is fuel, salt you're talking large dollars. The State is not helping with the retirement contributions.

Supervisor Groff: On a \$500,000.00 assessment on a home they would be paying approximately \$480 a year in taxes based at \$.0.96 a thousand? If we raise it to \$0.20 we're talking about an increase of \$60.00 on a \$100,000 home?

Nathanial Matthews: If you went with an extra \$0.20 on a \$500,000 home it would be an extra \$100.00. I'm not sure how many homes are within that bracket.

Supervisor Groff: My County taxes and School taxes are three times that. We don't want to raise taxes. That is not the point. We have to be able to survive, to be able to pay our bills and do what we can. Does the Board want to look at the Budget and try to come up with solutions?

Councilman Gritsavage: I would like to review this budget.

Supervisor Groff: The tax rate is a lot higher in the Village of Northville but the Village has a lot less taxable properties than the Town does with a same type of budget. I think they did well over the years and they have good reserves. They are in great shape. We were left with a mess.

Nathanial Matthews: The Salary schedule is in the back of your proposed 2015 Budget with a 2% increase for everybody.

Councilman Simmons questioned the Landfill Attendant amount. Response: That is with the contemplation of the increase of the minimum wage. Currently it is \$8.43 and at the end of the year minimum wage is going to be \$9+. What we did was put him up to the lowest laborer.

Councilman Roosa: I think that no one at the Cemetery has had a raise in three years. Stu needs train someone to do his work.

Supervisor Groff: Now that we have Town Cemeteries, do we need to have a cemetery crew when Mr. VanNostrand decides to retire? You may need one or two people to do the work but you may not need a person to run the cemeteries or maybe have a person to run the cemeteries and one to work with him.

Councilman Gritsavage: Or maybe it can be run by the Highway Department.

Supervisor Groff: The Town Highway crew mows the cemetery in Gifford Valley and the one on County Highway 113. Does the Town need a separate Cemetery Crew? There are other cemeteries that the Town has taken over and if King Cemetery closes the Town will take over that too.

There was discussion on possibly sharing the Village mowers.

Councilman Roosa: There is obviously grave work that needs to be done and coordinating of the burials.

Discussion ensued on the amount of cemeteries in the Town.

Does the Town want to cut Garbage Services? Maybe you could have someone pick up garbage one or two days and then do the cemeteries. Discussion ensued.

Elaine Mihalik: You have me as the Records Management Officer at \$3,000. In the 2014 Budget the \$3,000.00 was a line item budgeted for a Deputy Clerk.

Nathanial Matthews: Right, now that is not going to be for that. When the Supervisor and I were talking it that amount was going to be in place of your 2% increase.

Elaine Mihalik: So that would mean that I would not get my \$3,000 budgeted for a Deputy Clerk?

Nathanial Matthews: Correct. Was there a line item for that?

Elaine Mihalik: When I first started as Town Clerk the line item for Deputy Clerk, Carol Roberts and it was placed under the Town Clerk with the salary that she was paid.

Supervisor Groff: Well if you want to hire a Deputy Clerk from the Village then they will do that position for nothing.

Elaine Mihalik: They have enough to do.

Nathanial Matthews: I don't mind putting that line item in the budget.

Supervisor Groff: That's if the Board decides if the Town Clerk needs help.

Nathanial Matthews: The line item can always be added at another time. It always can be amended.

Skip Taylor: The Town uses the Roosevelt Terrace Road to clean the Sewer Plant. I'm asking for the Town to help pay for the snow plowing along with the other 9 neighbors who live along the street. I'd like the neighbors to chip in \$1,000 a piece and the Town \$4,000.00.

The road has not been paved in over 20 years. The estimates appear to be approximately \$40,000 to pave the road.

Supervisor Groff: I don't have a problem will it. I know that they have talked about it in the past. I know that this has been a problem back when Ted Collins was Supervisor as far as having residents being a participant. I know that we need to get in there and use the road. I don't think that would be too much to ask. Mr. Taylor's problem is getting his neighbors on board.

Councilman Gritsavage: Is that something we should ask our Attorney about? Supervisor Groff: We can check with our Attorney Cathi Radner to find out about this and be a 100% sure it's okay.

The 2015 Budget work session will be held on Wednesday, October 15, 2014 at 6:30 PM followed by the Regular Town Board meeting and Public Hearing for Local Law #01 of the Year 2014 at 7 PM.

A Public Hearing on the 2015 Budget will be held on Wednesday, November 12, 2014 at 7 PM.

Having no further business come before the board, Councilman Anderson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:28 PM, seconded by Councilman Gritsavage, and passed by, 5-Ayes: Groff, Gritsavage, Anderson, Roosa, and Simmons 0-Nays

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Mihalik, Town Clerk