

TOWN OF COPAKE
PUBLIC HEARING/TOWN BOARD MEETING
November13, 2008

At the public hearing of the Town Board of the Town of Copake the following were present: Supervisor Crowley, Councilman Sacks, Councilwoman Gabaccia, Councilman Tompkins, Councilman Kiernan and Attorney Thiemann.

Supervisor Crowley opens the hearing at 6:45 pm with 15 people present.

The purpose of the hearing is to review Local Law # 3 for the year 2008 to provide for an exemption from Real Property Taxes for real property owned by Veterans who rendered military service to the United States during the Cold War.

The board decided to go with the 15% of the property's assessment.

Town Clerk Hotaling read Local Law#3.

Assessor Kane said people who already have exemption will not receive this; it is just for the ones who served from 1945 – 1991.

The following resolution was offered Councilman Tompkins seconded by Councilwoman Gabaccia.

WHEREAS, Section 458-b of the Real Property Tax law authorizes a limited exemption from real property for residential real property owned by veterans who entered military service to the United States during the "Cold War"; and

WHEREAS, Section 458-B of the Real Property Tax Law authorizes municipalities to establish maximum exemption amounts; and

WHEREAS, in regard to "Cold War" veterans who own residential real property within Town of Copake it is the desire of the Town Board of the Town of Copake to authorize the "Cold War" veterans exemption and establish maximum amounts;

SECTION 1. In accordance with the provisions of Section 485-b of the Real Property Tax Law of the State of New York, residential real property owned by veterans who rendered military service to the United States during the

“ColdWar” shall be partially exempt from Town taxation in accordance with the percentages set forth in Section 2 hereof,

SECTION 2. Pursuant to Section 458-b (2)(a)(ii) of the real Property Tax law said maximum exemption allowable from Town real property taxation shall be fifteen percent of the property’s assessment, not to exceed twelve thousand dollars, or the product of twelve thousand dollars multiplied by the latest final state equalization rate, whichever is less.

SECTION 3. Additionally, pursuant to Section 458 b (2)(b) of the real property tax law, where a Cold War veteran received a compensation rating from the United States veterans affairs or from the United States department of defense because of a service connected disability, qualifying residential real property shall be exempt from taxation to the extent of the product of the assessed value of such property, multiplied by fifty percent of the Cold War veterans disability rating; provided however, that such exemption shall not exceed forty thousand dollars or the product of forty thousand dollars multiplied by the latest equalization rate, whichever is less.

SECTION 4. This local law shall take effect immediately upon its filing with the Secretary of State

November 13, 2008
Resolution # 19

Supervisor Crowley	yes
Councilman Sacks	yes
Councilwoman Gabaccia	yes
Councilman Tompkins	yes
Councilman Kiernan	yes

A motion was made by Councilman Tompkins seconded by Councilwoman Gabaccia the public hearing be closed at 7:00 pm. Motion carried.

Supervisor Crowley asked for a moment of silent prayer in memory of Harold Boice.

Supervisor Crowley opened the regular meeting at 7:30 pm with 48 people present.

The following correspondence was read:

1. Krista Goodace – Two vacancies on Park's n Rec's Commission, resignation from Sue Streeter.
2. John Keeler – Suggestions on cost cutting for town.
3. Habitat for Humanity – Completing two houses in Hudson on Mill Street, pursuing sites for our 2009 build. Dedication ceremony on October 26th at 2 pm at 234 Mill Street.
4. Youth Court in Columbia County – Permission to order robe for students, cost between \$160 and \$200.
5. Stanley Gansowski – Letter of resignation from Zoning Board of Appeals effective December 31, 2008.
6. Columbia County Office of Aging – Inviting Town to collaborate with them in an outreach initiative to older citizens who may struggle with heating their homes this winter.
7. Assemblyman Molinaro and Senator Saland – Notified by DEC that on November 5th they completed the requested soil testing at Copake Valley Farms. The results on any contamination should be available in approximately one month. It is our understanding our offices will be informed of the results and, as such, will communicate same to you.

Public Forum

Michael Salvatore – President, Young at Hearters asking the board to reconsider contribution to them in the budget.

Carmela Biondi from Young at Hearters said she met Monday with Town Clerk and Supervisor when they found out they were cut from the budget. They were told by Councilman Sacks and Councilwoman Gabaccia that they would help in getting them money in the budget. Supervisor Crowley said that Copake was broke and the town will have an 8% tax increase, the club will have to go to their resources. In two years we will be broke. Mrs. Biondi said, I feel that leaving us out of the budget was an insult.

Harvey Weber – The town should restore the \$1,500 to the Young at Hearters . These are fathers, mothers, and grandparents of many of our citizens.

Fran Miller – I saw no one at the budget hearing from the Young at Hearters, many aspects were discussed and it took about 20 minutes.

Chris Quinby – I was at the budget hearing and I didn't hammer on the money that was cut for Copake Day. You have a 160 members that average out to \$9.00 a person everyone was cut.

John Keeler – Thanked the Town Board, Larry Proper and the tax payers who found the time to attend these budget hearings. I found it interesting as explained by Chris Quinby why \$15,000 was shown in appropriation and again

in revenue. It must be concluded that this is not the board's budget but is the budget of concerned citizens who attended these work shops and were willing to speak up and be heard.

Do I fully agree with the budget, NO, having attended these workshops I fully support this budget; I feel it is the taxpayers duty to get involved. Job well done.

Karen Hallenbeck – Young at Hearters, I'm sorry your budget got cut, if we had this many people there it might not of been cut, we had to make many difficult decisions. Suggest you do something to raise money.

Jeff Nayer – Police Commissioner for the town, our budget was cut \$20,000, everyone was cut and we have to learn to live with it this year.

George Filipovits – Suggested that if someone is appointed we do a back ground check.

Supervisor Crowley – We have no right to run a criminal history on anyone. Certain agencies are required by law to do it.

Carol Gansowski – The Halloween party was never funded by the budget.

Councilman Sacks – Said him and Councilwoman Gabaccia were not at the budget hearing due to sickness.

Councilwoman Gabaccia - I was under the impression we would be voting on the budget tonight. I feel that the Young at Hearters provides a service that the town does not provide. If I had been there I would have made a case that we put at least \$2,000 in the budget.

Supervisor Crowley – For last two years we had a senior committee and Harvey Weber worked hard to provide services and no one showed up. Other groups that received money in the past got nothing, we set aside a sum of money to the EAB if you have something that is going to benefit the town you make a application to the EAB. The budget is a bare bones budget everyone got cut.

Councilwoman Gabaccia - The difference between the Young at Hearters and CAT is in many towns and cities they have programs and provide for the elderly, we don't have such a program, we contract with the Young at Hearters to provide that service.

Jeff Nayer – Two budget meetings ago when I asked you if you were attending you said there's nothing to talk about, Linda you were at the budget hearing when it got cut to \$1,500 now you're talking about \$2000. It's grandstanding.

Councilwoman Gabaccia – Yes I was at budget meeting when we cut it to \$1,500, after that I attended an event and got to see the work they were doing.

Unfortunately I was ill and not able to attend the budget hearing which I again will say I did not believe we were voting that evening, imagine my surprise when I found out we did.

Attorney Thiemann read the public notice for public hearing of preliminary budget. (See Attached)

Councilwoman Gabaccia said in the October minutes page 5 we passed a resolution that the public hearing on the budget would be tonight.

Supervisor Crowley said according to NYS Law the public hearing must be held no later than the first Thursday after election day, it may continue. It was very clear on the public notice.

Councilwoman Gabaccia said that was the public hearing on your preliminary budget, you have till November 20 th to approve the final budget. It would have been a courtesy to your other board members if you had waited to vote on it.

New Business:

Received two bids for the 1996 Chevy caprice

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| 1. Ronald Ernest | \$401.00 |
| 2. Michael Bradway | \$100.00 |

A motion was made by Councilman Tompkins seconded by Councilwoman Gabaccia to accept the bid of \$401.00 from Ronald Ernest. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Gabaccia seconded by Councilman Tompkins to authorize James Blass from Youth Court to purchase a robe for student to be assigned student judge. Motion carried.

Supervisor Crowley read the following proposal to board from John Keeler and Larry Proper:

1. to buy on state bid a new American four door sedan with 25 MPG (\$13,000)
2. With gas at \$3.25 gallon , .13 per mile – at present the town is paying .50 per mile to private cars, a savings of .37 cents per mile.
3. Ed Ferratto doesn't feel comfortable in driving his personal truck when visiting Zoning violations.
4. All departments to use this car along with the road supervisor in place of private cars.
5. Pay for this car in the following manner
 - a. sell one police car.
 - b. One fire truck
 - c. One pick up
 - d. One dump truck
 - e. One flat bed
 - f. Sell 750 yards of top soil, top fill and any other surplus mulch etc.
 - g. Balance to be paid from scrap metal sales.

Councilman Tompkins said the fire truck is used for ice rink.

Councilwoman Gabaccia said she supports a town car as long as we keep a log.

Supervisor Crowley said he would like to see figures.

Carol Gansowski asked why not sell a police car if they aren't putting many hours on the road.

Supervisor Crowley said they will have the same amount of hours.

Commission Nayer said the old cars are being used to keep the mileage down on the new cars.

Supervisor Crowley said we hope to go two or three more years before we buy a new car.

John Keeler suggested the board authorize to sell the old equipment, and check on state bid for a car.

Supervisor Crowley will talk to Highway Superintendent Proper see what he can get for the vehicles and discuss next month.

Old Business:

John Meyers, Columbia Volunteer Fireman Association, one of the fundraisers is the clothing bin. Last month a letter was sent asking the town if they could put a bin at the town hall. Mr. Meyers said the bins are picked up weekly and are policed by people who pick it up also if there is garbage they take it. An 800 number is on the bin to call for service.

Supervisor had a picture of a bin in Ancram that had been vandalized. Mr. Meyers said it will be pulled.

Harvey Weber asked if it could be put at town dump.

Mr. Meyers asked the fire company they declined.

Councilman Tompkins suggested checking with county.

Supervisor Crowley recommended contacting Solid Waste to see if it could be place at transfer station.

Charles Knox said there are three bins at the Town Hall now, why doesn't the fire company want it.

Councilman Sacks will ask the firemen why they declined to have the bin there.

Supervisor Crowley said the firemen should support the Volunteer Fireman Association.

Attorney Thiemann said the appraisal for the West Copake Fire House is not in yet.

Councilwoman Gabaccia spoke with NYSEG and will have an appointment next week for the audit.

Supervisor Crowley said the Accountant is talking with the Parks treasurer on the money situation at the park, should be worked out in the near future. Councilwoman Gabaccia said the money is still there in trust and agency and accounted for, it's just a question of how the vouchering against it is handled.

Councilwoman Gabaccia said she would like to revisit the four day work week. It doesn't make sense to be close one day and then open back up, it makes more sense to put together two consecutive days.

Councilman Tompkins suggested half day Saturday and open at 12:00 pm on Monday.

Town Clerk Hotaling said that Monday is a very busy day and the taxpayers for years have been used to this. Friday is a slow day. Monday is very busy with court and the Assessors.

Councilman Sacks said see what NYSEG says after the audit.

John Keeler suggested closing down Friday, Saturday and Sunday and open two Saturdays a month. By closing and opening you won't be saving.

Councilman Tompkins made a motion seconded by Councilwoman Gabaccia to advertise for cleaning of the park building, police station and town hall at a salary of \$15,000.00 per year, the person will need to have background check. Motion carried.

Committee reports

Economic Advisory Board: Charles Dodson reported on student internship with Taconic High School - twelve students in line, associated with businesses.

Supervisor Crowley - when summer approaches the county also hires summer interns.

Environmental Committee: Harvey Weber - the committee will be meeting Monday at 7 p.m. Letter from Mr. Prentagast from DEC, thank Marcia Becker for copy of letter. Two lakes in Copake consider impaired one Robinson Pond.

Park Building: Lisa DeRocha: Building will be closed November 18 thru 23 for cleaning of floors. Spaghetti dinner on Friday, Holiday lights parade December 13th.

Police Commission: Jeff Nayer meeting the 2nd Wednesday in December.

Councilperson reports:

Councilwoman Gabaccia, I would like to extend my thanks to the Young at Hearters for inviting myself and Councilman Sacks to be judges at their annual Halloween party. Well over one hundred members were in attendance. Thank you Mike Salvatore and all for a wonderful afternoon. This vital group serves an important function in our community by linking our seniors together and providing social connections and outreach. I was sorry to hear we cut them from this year's budget.

Thanks also to our Copake/Ancram VFW for their annual candlelight vigil held at the park building this Tuesday in honor of Veterans Day. Councilman Tompkins and I were in attendance and I extend our thanks to the post for their invitation. We should all take some time to remember those who served and to continue our commitment to caring for and honoring them, not only on Veterans Day but everyday.

I spent today in court in Hudson where the hearing involving contempt charges against Sal Cascino and his numerous violations of the TRO is being heard before Judge Nichols. Several witnesses for the Town of Copake were heard today and we will be continuing tomorrow at 9 am at the Courthouse in Hudson. The proceedings should be concluding tomorrow. Additional court dates have been set tentatively for February 25th and 26th.

Councilman Sacks said its an interesting experience three hours of boring stipulations but once it got going interesting, we've had a long going relationship with Mr. Cascino. It seems like we're coming to some sort of a conclusion, I hope. Invite you all to come tomorrow - the cross examination of the towns Zoning Officer is first on docket.

Supervisor Crowley said Congresswoman Gillibrand's office they will be meeting here, keep eye on paper for date.

Councilwoman Gabaccia asked to amend the following in the October 9, 2008 minutes:

page 1 - asked for amendment of September minutes, of break in at park was told there wasn't one then I asked to add that Supervisor Crowley said there was a break in.

page 6 - add back my comments regarding the exemption on real property taxes for veterans where I inquired as to the time frame for definition of cold war.

page 6 - comments put back in when the park commission inquired about the money being turned over to town that at that point I did inform them that we had a Trust and Agency account where all the monies are still sitting.

A motion was made by Councilman Kiernan seconded by Councilman Sacks the minutes of October 9, 2008 be approved with the amendments. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Councilman Kiernan seconded by Councilman Tompkins to go into executive session on personal and litigation matters. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Kiernan seconded by Councilman Sacks the bills from general abstracts #10 and highway abstracts #10 be paid. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Councilman Sacks seconded by Councilman Kiernan the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,