

PUBLIC HEARING
December 17, 2020

Minutes of the Public Hearing of the Parish Town Board held December 17th 2020 at 2938 E. Main Street, Parish, NY in the Village Gym and by Zoom. The Public Hearing was called to order by Supervisor Phillips at 6:00 pm.

Present:

John Dunham, Councilor
Doug Jordan, Councilor
G.R. Horning, Councilor-Zoom
Supervisor Phillips, Supervisor-Zoom
Kelly Reader, Town Clerk

Absent/Excused: Gary Wood, Councilor

Also Present: Craig Petit, Hwy Sup't; L.J. Harvey, Fire Chief; Paul Baxter, Tug Hill Rep. Jim Bernys, CEO.

Also Present by Zoom: Jay Grasso, Grant Writer and Robin Eaton-Novacs, Deputy Supervisor.

The purpose of the Public Hearing was to discuss the purchase of a new plow truck for the Parish Highway Department and the USDA Community Facilities Loan/Grant Financing requirements.

PUBLIC HEARING OPEN:

Jay Grasso, Grant Writer was present to explain how the USDA process works. The Public Hearing is to notify the public that it is a possibility that a snowplow could be purchased with the aid of USDA Community Facilities Loan/Grant Financing. No one had submitted questions or comments prior to the Public Hearing.

Mr. Grasso reviewed the USDA Community Facilities Loan/Grant Program process.

It is a program for municipalities to purchase any number of things, one of those things is Highway Department vehicles. The loan portion of this program is for the expected life of the equipment. If the average truck lasts 15 years, then it is a 15 year loan. If it is 20 years, then it is a 20 year loan and so on. There is no prepayment penalty if you pay the loan off early. There is no interest charge or penalty like a bond or bank loan. The interest rate right now and he will double check was sitting at 1.75% and below. Typically, there is a grant portion that USDA will give the town. We are actually in the right time of year to be doing this as their fiscal budget year started October 1, 2020. That budget has been passed and USDA has been funded. So it's not like there's a shut down or anything like that. They have their funding for this year. If we were to wait until summertime, we might not get it because the funding wouldn't be there. We are in a pretty good position right now if the Board decides to move forward. The USDA Grant is more affordable than a bank or bond and you can get a grant on top of it. It's a great program and should be utilized a little more. The Median Income Survey had already been completed a few years ago and Jay was able to utilize it in the grant application. The Median Income Survey showed that the community is at hardship and that is what determines the grant funding. Mr. Grasso thinks we will be ok as far as grant funding goes. Eric Johnson in Watertown, the USDA Rep. is well aware of what we are doing. Mr. Johnson has been fantastic and helpful. The Highway Sup't and the Town Clerk have been fantastic in getting Mr. Grasso any information that he has needed for USDA.

Mr. Grasso thanked everyone and said he would answer any question anyone had.

Supervisor Phillips asked about the lifespan of trucks as unfortunately with a few of the trucks we have, the life span wasn't very long.

She asked how can you judge the lifespan when you don't know how long the truck is going to last?

Mr. Grasso responded that it was based on an industry standard.

Supervisor Phillips asked, so what are we looking at?

Mr. Grasso's response was his guess would be around 10yr-15yr low interest loan.

Supervisor Phillips asked how much money was he talking about?

Mr. Grasso responded that they had some different quotes and he doesn't have them in front of him.

Mr. Grasso responded approximately \$250,000.

Supervisor Phillips asked for a truck?

Mr. Grasso said and the Highway Sup't would be able to answer that question better. When you start adding all equipment needed for plowing and salting, they are not cheap.

Supervisor Phillips responded that we are looking at possibly funding one truck for the Town of Parish with a USDA Grant.

Mr. Grasso stated it is a Community Facilities Loan/Grant Program. Jay can e-mail a link to the website.

Supervisor Phillips asked what would the grant cover?

Mr. Grasso responded that there is no good answer to that until we start the application process and speak to Eric Johnson. They won't tell you what the formula is prior to applying. His educated guess on a vehicle like a snowplow is somewhere between \$20,000 and \$30,000 that the town could be receiving toward the price of the truck. Mr. Grasso will be seeking the maximum amount and the fact that we are considered a hardship may increase the amount. Mr Grasso likes to be conservative in his estimates.

Supervisor Phillips asked if anyone had any questions?

Supervisor Phillips asked if the town gets to specify what kind of truck would be purchased?

Mr. Grasso responded that we are required to supply 3 estimates for the USDA Application. Craig has secured those estimates and Jay has those. He can e-mail them to the Supervisor tomorrow. They are what is standard for the industry. When you start getting into the add-ons and things like plows and sanders, there can be various manufacturers. Mr. Grasso is working on a grant right now for a fire truck that is \$250,000 and he compared the interest rates with banks. He took it to two banks as that is a requirement of USDA. The interest rates at the banks were more than 1.75%. You do not want to pay more interest for a shorter period of time. The banks do not give a 10-15 year loan on a truck of this type. The nice thing about USDA, you would pay less interest in a longer time span which helps the taxpayers. Banks do not give grants.

The last group of trucks that were purchased for the town were purchased on a 7 year loan.

A Resolution had been passed prior to allow Mr. Grasso to pursue the application for the purchase of a Snowplow.

Mr. Grasso will send a form to the clerk to certify that the Public Hearing was held.

The Supervisor asked if there was any timeline to find out if this was going to workout for us?

Mr. Grasso responded that the application is essentially done. He needs to review it to make sure all the I's are dotted and T's crossed. Mr. Grasso will not submit the application until he talks to the Board. If the Board would like to look over the application that is fine. Then we would submit the application. These are pretty quick. The only thing is that the town is going to wait 10 months to a year to get a truck. Even if everything is approved by USDA, it takes awhile to get the truck and that is typical.

The Supervisor asked if it would have any affect on the Water District Grant?

Mr. Grasso responded no as it's two separate programs through USDA.

All Board Members were in agreement with pursuing the grant.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED.

A motion was made by Councilor Dunham, seconded by Councilor Jordan to adjourn at 6:21 pm. Roll taken...motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Reader
Parish Town Clerk