

**Village of Buchanan  
Mayor & Board of Trustees  
Special Meeting & Budget Hearing  
April 5, 2023**

**PRESENT: (This meeting was held in person and via zoom)**

Mayor Theresa Knickerbocker  
Trustees Anthony Capicotti, Steven Laker, Daniel Stewart and Robert Wheeler  
Village Administrator Marcus Serrano  
Village Attorney Stephanie Porteus  
Village Engineer George Pommer  
Village Clerk, Treasurer Cynthia Kempter  
Deputy Clerk Sharon Murphy  
Police Chief Shane Farrell  
Highway Foreman Scott Horton  
Wastewater Treatment Operator Todd Travis

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Mayor Knickerbocker called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

**2. PRESENTATION BY CHRIS KOPF AND VIBHAVARI KONDAPURAM OF  
PKF O’CONNOR DAVIES REGARDING THE AUDIT**

Chris Kopf and Vibhavari Kondapuram updated the Board on the 2022 audited financial statements. They spoke about management responsibility, the auditor’s responsibility, major revenues, major expenditures, cessation grant, fund balances and debt service.

**3. CONSIDER A MOTION TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING  
THE IMA TOWN SEWER AGREEMENT**

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Laker, with all in favor.

Mayor Knickerbocker stated that the Village has been working on an intermunicipal agreement with the Town regarding our sewer treatment plant. There will be a connection point across the street from St. Christopher’s Church and will go to the train station. Once it connects to our pipe, it will be gravity fed to the sewer plant. The other part of the agreement is that the Town will be able to hook up the 99 acres in Verplanck. This will benefit the Town because they will be able to develop different areas. The

original agreement was 32 properties in the Montrose Business Development and then it bloomed from there. The Village will get a 30% surcharge from the Town. They will pay a fair share of capital costs and repairs, they must adopt our sewer code and abide by our rules, and they will put in their own infrastructure. There is a reopener in the contract so if there is an issue going forward we will be able to open the contract and renegotiate. They are allowed 100,000 gallons a day and if we get another tank they are allowed 25% of that capacity. This means that the Village will be able to access our portion of the \$15,000,000 Entergy money, and will be eligible for many more grants. The Village will be able to upgrade the sewer plant to the new technology and upgrade the Albany Post Road pump station. There will grant money available if another tank is needed at the plant. Village Engineer Pommer stated that this is the end product of a long process and a lot of work by many people. Trustee Capicotti thinks this is good for the Village and the Tri-Village area and will help the Village in the future.

Gary Bell asked if there would be pump stations if the pipe went to the train station and also to the acreage in Verplanck. Village Engineer Pommer stated that yes at that point they would need pump stations and the Town would be responsible for that. Mr. Bell stated that the most important thing the Village has is the 200+ acres at Indian Point. He can foresee condominiums, townhouses and a marina and is concerned if our plant will have enough capacity. Village Engineer Pommer stated that the Village has requested the DEC to upgrade our permit for expansion. Gary Bell asked if we are upgrading the sewer plant for the Village residents or to make this project come through. Mayor Knickerbocker replied that we are under a DEC order to upgrade the plant. The new technology is a better process and we will also be eligible for grant money to get another tank. Eileen Absenger asked which train station they are talking about. Trustee Capicotti replied that it will go as far as the property we used to know as Bobby Talls. Eileen Absenger questioned if hypothetically, Cathy Hochul gets her way with the budget and gets 800,000 affordable houses, what if they take that land for affordable houses since it is ½ mile from the train station. If that happened, would that be connected to our sewer treatment plant. Mayor Knickerbocker replied that the Town of Cortlandt would have to make that decision. Trustee Stewart stated the Town will be held to 100,000 gallons a day.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Stewart with all in favor.

A motion for the Board to authorize the Mayor to sign the IMA with the Town of Cortlandt for their connection to our sewer system was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Laker, with Trustee Wheeler abstaining and Mayor Knickerbocker not voting.

**4. CONSIDER A MOTION TO OPEN PUBLIC HEARING ON 2023-2024 TENTATIVE BUDGET:**

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Mayor Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Stewart, with all in favor.

Village Administrator Serrano gave an overview of the tentative budget. The proposed budget is a 1.91% increase to the tax payer. The issue is the Holtec PILOT and the cessation fund that are decreasing over time and will go away in a few years. Hopefully, there are negotiations going on with Holtec to get a new PILOT, but are planning ahead and being proactive not to have substantial increases in taxes in three or four years. In order to spread that out over time, assuming the worst-case scenario, that would be an additional 6% increase. If we get a new PILOT arrangement before next year's budget, then that 6% increase can go away. We are anticipating the 6% increase to go on for the next few years, in order to make sure we cover the outstanding \$1,600,000.00 loss between the PILOT and the cessation fund. Village Administrator Serrano thanked the department heads for being at this meeting. He said they are fantastic to work with and kept a very tight budget understanding the impact to our taxpayers. Village Administrator Serrano spoke about the water rates. He is recommending that we decrease the resident rate from \$9.00 to \$8.00 on the first level, and going from a six-month bill to a three-month bill. That will be less consumption and keep the residents at a lower rate. He would also like to do an industrial rate to actually have them subsidize the water bills a bit.

Mayor Knickerbocker questioned a few account items. Trustee Stewart asked how often we go out to bid on insurance. Village Administrator Serrano stated that our broker goes out for bid every year. Trustee Laker questioned a few account items. Village Administrator Serrano said that we should have a workshop to talk about capital projects. Mayor Knickerbocker talked about the additional 6% increase due to the loss of the PILOT. She would rather not add the 6% increase because of the legislation that we have for the spent fuel casks. She feels it would be difficult for Holtec not to give us some type of a PILOT.

Mike Wenz, 202 First Street, questioned the \$95,000 decrease in the police budget. Village Administrator Serrano replied that that was due to the temporary hiring of a police officer. Mike Wenz stated that as a supporter of the police and a taxpayer, he thinks the money should stay in the budget and consider hiring another police officer. Mayor Knickerbocker asked what the increase would be if we did hire another police officer. Village Administrator Serrano said that would be a 6.25% increase without the 6% and with the 6% it would be a 12.62% increase.

Police Chief Farrell would like the Board to consider adding another police officer. He stated our officers are working 12-16-hour tours and consecutive days in a row when someone is out. They have to adjust investigations and put things on the back burner for priorities. Police Chief Farrell is looking to protect both the Village and the officers. Being overworked is a health detriment and a safety concern. The Police Department hasn't grown in 20 years. With our community growing and new projects on the

horizon, we should be a step ahead. Police Chief Farrell said that they are not getting the backups they need because every department is in the same situation. Police Chief Farrell asked that the Board take this into consideration and have a discussion. He has a responsibility to ask for consideration to protect the residents and keep up the safety and well being of the officers and take some liability precautions. Trustee Capicotti had spoken with Chief Farrell to know more about hiring another officer. This is an asset in our community. Trustee Capicotti thanked Chief Farrell for coming to the Board and requesting another officer. Trustee Capicotti will take this into consideration. Trustee Stewart asked how much the \$107,000 overtime in the budget would go down with another officer. Chief Farrell replied to be conservative he would say it would go down to \$70,000. Chief Farrell stated there would be improved visibility, faster response times, more times to be on focused patrols, enable expansion of community related events, allow the officers time to spend additional necessary times on investigations, reduce overtime costs, pro-active policing, and increased trainings.

Eileen Absenger, of Tate Avenue, made public comment concerning the Holtec PILOT and the unresolved PBA contract.

A Motion to adjourn the Budget Hearing until April 25, 2023 was made by Mayor Knickerbocker and seconded by Trustee Wheeler, with all in favor.

5. **ADJOURNMENT:**

At 8:55PM a Motion to adjourn this meeting was made by Trustee Knickerbocker, seconded by Trustee Wheeler with all in favor.