

**Village of Buchanan**  
**Mayor & Board of Trustees**  
**Special Board Meeting**  
**Public Hearing on Budget (continued)**  
**April 29, 2014**

**PRESENT:**

Mayor Theresa Knickerbocker

Trustees Richard A. Funchion, Nicolas Zachary, Duane M. Jackson and Cesare Pasquale

Village Administrator Kevin Hay

Village Board Secretary Susan F. Matthews

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Mayor Knickerbocker opened the meeting at 7:30 PM, welcomed everyone, informed them of the fire regulations and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Knickerbocker announced that the Board has to finalize the budget this evening. It has to be approved by May 1. She said that the Board hashed out a lot of things. They came to a point where they needed information. They needed to further discuss setting money aside in a Capital Fund for vehicle replacement. Currently we are at an 8.51% tax increase. We are still working on that. The Mayor gave some of the things that caused the tax increase. They include a \$40,000 loss due to a decrease in our special franchise assessments, Con Edison being one of the biggest. We had a \$25,000 increase in the police overtime budget to cover vacations, sick time, holidays and training. We had a \$25,000 increase in our health care benefits. We needed to add \$33,000 to the Water Fund to replace the water meter at the Peekskill water pit and to refurbish the last two water valves at the Broadway water pit. Last year, there were water main breaks and a lot of leaks. We needed to replace some of the meters which were quite old. Doing that will finish up that project.

**CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED BUDGET**

At 7:34 PM a MOTION to resume the Public Hearing was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Jackson with all in favor.

Eileen Absenger, 138 Tate Avenue, wanted to confirm that once it is passed, the comments will not be relevant to the budget. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that there can be comments from the floor or from the Board.

Ms. Absenger wants everyone to be aware of the Spectra/Algonquin gas line and West Point Partners and the effect on Entergy; specifically to the PILOT program if Entergy has an impact

and how that might affect how they want to do their tax roll or PILOT which will also impact our schools. Concerning the proposed 90 unit complex of affordable housing, she wonders if Mr. Griffin has advertised this to another industrial possibility. She commented that it is private property so we cannot request what she is presuming but she feels it is an interesting question to ask if it is possible. She commented that just because the Master Plan says it is a great place for an apartment complex does not mean that it is suitable. She wanted to know if the Board will be getting regular periodic assessments on how they are doing with their budget projections for the following year. She noted that it has been brought up in the last few years but she does not remember anybody really discussing that. Numerous Board members have asked for it. She commented that after watching the Board go through the budget line by line it seemed to her that they were surprised at some things. She wanted to know if that type of report was already on their agenda. She wanted to know if they are going to look at and analyze the effectiveness of each department and employee so that as people leave and go to another job, they are really qualified for it. She recalled that Trustee Funchion had noted that one of our unions is the highest or next to highest paid. She would like to see everyone utilized to the maximum efficiency without the Village having to pay for outside services and for having people receive the training they need in a timely fashion so that we do not have a budget where we are looking at an 8% increase and trying to cut corners. She commented that she is sure that all the Board members have thought of that and that she is just reiterating from her standpoint.

Mayor Knickerbocker said that she is going to speak to some of Ms. Absenger's points at the Workshop. We are going to have a developer come to speak. It is someone who is interested in doing something with the Griffin property. Everyone is welcome to come to the Workshop. The Mayor advised that the Board does get budget reports. She said that the Village Administrator is very good about supplying them. The Board looks to see what lines are over or under and to judge what is happening at that time in the different departments and if we have enough budgeted for that line and if it is going over, what the problem might be. The Mayor advised that we will be talking about a lot of things at the Workshop. She commented that things are changing. It is a tough budget. We are very tight about it. We will be discussing future plans tonight, including vehicle replacements. That was the sticking point on why we did not resolve the last proposed budget. We are trying to resolve to see where we can start a base for that. There are many vehicles that need to be replaced. The worst one is in very bad shape and will be replaced this year. It is at the Sewage Treatment Plant. It is rusted out and falling off the chassis. We are going to address that this year. We are going to get a pickup truck with a snow plow. We need to look forward at what else needs to be replaced and to have a plan. Concerning the effectiveness of every department, the Board will be talking about that and looking at different things. We have a lot to discuss. Our May Workshop is going to be very busy. The Mayor appreciated Ms. Absenger's input.

Trustee Funchion commented that when we are looking at the line items, he thinks it is kind of educational for the Board. It takes a long time to get into what exactly they are talking about. That is why we might act surprised at something. He commented that the budget is laid out more for the lines of an auditor. He commented that for an average person who is not an accountant, it is like trying to pull apart hangers in the closet. You are trying to figure out what we are spending money for on that line versus this line. He said that what has happened to him is that he has seen that not that much money was used in a line. Recreation is an example. A lot of the Recreation budget gets used right now, probably after we sign a budget. For example, in the month of May we are getting the swimming pool ready to use in the summer. He understands what Ms. Absenger is saying. He commended Village Administrator Hay for keeping the Board up to date all the time. Trustee Funchion said that whenever they go in to sign vouchers, if there is any question the Village Administrator is always there to explain what the expenses are. The Board is pretty much on top of that. He commented that as the Mayor says, we cannot control some of the other things. It is not just Con Ed that got a reassessment. There were also other businesses. We are the losers.

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that we are looking at an 8.71% increase, not 8.51%.

Ms. Absenger commented that she is very supportive of all the Board members. She does not bring any of this up in criticism. She does not want them to get that impression. Mayor Knickerbocker said that they did not. They appreciate her comments. Ms. Absenger commented that it is because she is the only one who is ever here. She is sure that the Village Administrator has done everything that has been asked of him. She said that as residents we are not privy to hear that, even at the Workshop. Her point was to let the residents know that the Village Administrator has given the Board the information to analyze and question. The same thing with the vouchers. She wanted the residents to know that the Board members are on top of it.

Trustee Zachary wanted to point out that when you do a budget it is impossible to nail everything right on the head. You have to estimate costs. There are a lot of different expenses. Different things come up every day. There are surprises that affect the budget both positively and negatively. The Village Administrator has to make up the budget projecting it as realistically as he can. But nothing will ever be 100%. You can and will be over or under on some lines. The budget process allows that at the end of the year you can transfer between lines so the things that you over-budgeted can be used to offset those that you under-budgeted. It really gets down to estimating as best you can, and at the end of the year is the total that you anticipated in your budget above or below what you spent. The fund balance at the end of the year, how much is left or how much is over-spent, the fund deficit or fund balance is the key thing. The only way we have to look at that is the annual audit which Trustee Zachary finds to be like reading legalese. You are going to be off on certain lines. We are going to get it as close as you can.

Mayor Knickerbocker asked for any other comments from the Board before they discussed vehicle replacement and what we would like to put into a Capital Fund.

Trustee Zachary asked the Village Administrator about the police overtime. He said that from what he understands a good bit of that comes from when our police direct traffic at Entergy who reimburses us. He wanted to know if in the past year, they have gone to a double shift requiring more police coverage. Village Administrator Hay advised that during the outage there are two crossings. It is not at all times. Trustee Zachary commented that a good part of the police overtime increase in the budget is due to the coverage at Indian Point for which we get reimbursed. He noted that the Village Administrator budgeted \$60,000 in revenue from Entergy reimbursements for police overtime. That is less than was budgeted the previous year. The Village Administrator advised that we did not make that amount so he pulled it back a little in this budget to make sure we hit the revenue lines. We are getting about \$15,000 per quarter when we ask for reimbursement. That puts us at \$60,000 for the year which he felt we could reach. Last year we came up a little short. He wanted to be sure that we hit all our targets on the revenue side rather than come close. Mayor Knickerbocker agreed and commented that Village Administrator Hay has been very conservative throughout the whole budget.

Trustee Jackson commented that the \$25,000 for traffic control at Indian Point is basically a wash because we are getting reimbursed for it. So it has nothing to do with the \$25,000 in overtime for the Police Department. The Village Administrator advised that part of that increase is because as people have more time here they have more vacation time to use. Almost half of that police overtime line comes back to us in reimbursement from Entergy. He commented that the number looks artificially higher than what it really is because we get a good portion of it back on the Revenue side. Trustee Jackson commented that the \$25,000 precisely is a set number that is incurred in house. It has nothing to do with Indian Point. The Village Administrator advised that we had an overage in the budget this year. We are trying to make sure that we budget appropriately for next year's. The Police Chief has asked for a little more on the overtime because as the officers are here longer they get more vacation time. Trustee Jackson commented that has to be taken into the calculation as we go forward. Trustee Zachary commented that is what the Village Administrator has done in his estimate here. Trustee Zachary was asking about this to better his understanding.

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that the Board has gone through the budget page by page and tweaked what we could. We are basically down to determining what we are going to put into the Capital Fund. Village Administrator Hay has looked into the leasing of vehicles. He has talked to other municipalities. The Mayor asked him for an update.

Village Administrator Hay advised that he asked other municipalities at the Administrators' lunch last week. Of those who were there, it was about 50/50 between those who put it into their

General Fund and pay for the vehicle that year and those who use the Bond Anticipation Notes [BANs] because the interest rates are currently so low. He found only one municipality who leased some of their police vehicles. About 50% are using the BANs like we did with the roadway. You can roll it over for up to five years. The interest percent we were getting was 1.5%. You do not have to make a principal payment in the first year of a BAN. So for example with a \$100,000 BAN the interest payment that first year would be \$1500. Village Administrator Hay advised that after reviewing vehicle leasing and the list the Board sent to him, he compared some numbers using the price for a dump truck, \$52,000. The leasing cost over five years, the maximum for which a BAN can be rolled over, would be \$61,105. The BAN would cost \$56,780, or about \$4,000-\$5,000 less. He noted that it would depend upon the payments that we were making per year because with the BAN you are hopefully still getting 1.5%. But you pay \$10,000 or \$15,000 or whatever you did in the first year - you are now taking the BAN off on \$80,000 - so 1.5% of that is less than \$1500. Trustee Zachary commented that those are basically options on how to finance it. The Village Administrator advised that 50% of the municipalities were just going to put it into their budget and pay for it out of the General Fund that year as a purchase. He commented that is dependent on need and the vehicle cost. It is easier to put \$32,000 into your General Fund for one year for a pickup truck than \$150,000-plus for a garbage truck. It depends on what your leasing costs are, what you want to put into your budget and how long you want to spread it out. He noted that by the end of the 5 years, a police car might be ready to be retired but if you look at our history with pickup trucks and dump trucks, we are getting close to 20 years from them. It is a matter of how the Board chooses to do it. He advised that if we want to do a yearly thing, even if we did a transfer into a Capital Fund, we could still use the BAN money to pay for the principal and interest payments.

Trustee Jackson commented that the Board still wants to hear what the Fire Department does in terms of their leasing. The Village Administrator advised that to calculate his comparison he used the web site for the same leasing company they use. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that Reed Outhouse had spoken about that to the Board at the previous meeting. The Village Administrator advised that currently the leasing company's interest rates are a little higher than the BAN but those could vary too. The Mayor said that the Board will discuss further the different options for financing when the time comes to replace these vehicles.

Trustee Zachary wanted to know if we are still trying to get a bucket truck. The Village Administrator advised that we are still looking. It is a hard thing to find because many of them have very high mileage. He commented that it is unfortunate that the best one we found so far was too big for the garage. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that Reed Outhouse spoke about that as well at the last meeting. He works for a company that uses bucket trucks. He explained that they are very valuable in the used vehicle market. He told us that basically, they run them into the ground. The Mayor commented that the \$30,000 we have budgeted for one is probably not enough to get a decent one. The Village Administrator advised that we looked at a new one

which was just under \$100,000. It was more bucket truck than we needed. The Mayor noted that we are looking for one so that we can save quite a bit of money by changing the bulbs in street lights ourselves instead of having an outside contractor. Trustee Zachary commented that we have a different person changing our lights right now and the fee is a little less than we were paying before. The Village Administrator advised that it went down from \$150 per light to \$120 per light. He sent out to four different electrical contractors. This company had the best price. He noted that we could bid it out each year to get the best price. Trustee Zachary wanted to know if we have other occasional uses for the bucket truck. The Village Administrator advised that there is tree limb trimming and other things. Trustee Zachary wanted to confirm that at the last meeting, it was determined that the vehicle we most needed was a utility pickup truck. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that it is for the Sewage Treatment Plant. Trustee Zachary wanted to confirm that it was needed now more than a bucket truck. He noted that the list of vehicle replacements over the next five years does not include a bucket truck. He wanted to know where that fits into our priorities. Mayor Knickerbocker commented that she has other thoughts on how we can get a bucket truck. It is on her list of vehicles to get. She feels that there are some creative ways that we can get one.

Trustee Funchion wanted to know about the medical and if that was not funded. The Village Administrator advised that he will check. He believes that we only pay for the employee positions that are filled. Trustee Funchion commented that the medical would vary depending on how many people we have. Trustee Zachary commented that if the position was filled, the medical would go up.

Trustee Zachary commented that at future Workshops he would like to get an understanding of how our budgets have been running by going through the audits. He feels that would shed some light on this process. He would like to discuss fund balance and dedicated funds. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that we could discuss that in June because our May Workshop is already packed.

Trustee Zachary wanted to know where the seed money for the LEDs is in the budget. We are going to start with \$10,000. He wanted to know what budget line that is under. Mayor Knickerbocker advised that on May 15 there will be a meeting about grant money for NYPA customers for those types of things. The Village Administrator explained that it appears as though they have released more money to municipalities that are serviced by NYPA or LIPA. He received this information from the LED representative. They are having an all day seminar on May 15. The Village Administrator is being sent the information with location, etc. He will forward it to the Board members. The Mayor asked Trustee Zachary to attend if possible. The Village Administrator advised that we are moving closer to the pilot. The LED representative was speaking with the supplier of it. They are going to work on a Google Earth rendering of it. The pilot will be three lights right outside Village Hall on COBRA heads. He was looking for

feedback on the light we have out here now. Village Administrator Hay feels that the feedback has been positive. He thinks that the light is as bright as, if not brighter than the high pressure sodiums we have been using. He will keep everyone updated.

In response to Trustee Zachary's question, the Village Administrator advised that the budget line is 5182.460 on page 6. It was \$10,000. It has been increased to \$40,000 so that if we are successful in finding one, we can buy a bucket truck. He noted that he moved this down and kept \$10,000 more than we were originally budgeted for. The Village Administrator advised that the LED representative said that these grants would probably be more for the overhead full replacement units like the COBRA heads. He advised us that we have around 50 of the lamp style like those in the Circle. The purchase price for that would probably be \$10,000 or less. So we would be able to purchase all the bulbs and hopefully have our people do it or have a contractor do it. He thought it was simple. All you have to do is bypass the ballast and the bulb basically just screws in. The Village Administrator noted that our people may be able to do it because it does not require a bucket truck. It could be done with just a ladder. Trustee Zachary wanted to know if it requires a licensed electrician. The Village Administrator will look into that. The LED representative told us that some of his customers do it themselves.

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that where we left off at the previous budget hearing was in trying to decide how much money to put in to replace our aging equipment. The Village Administrator has done a detailed list of our trucks with the year and condition of each. We have some things that need to be replaced in the next five years. Following discussion at the last budget hearing, the Mayor's proposal was for \$15,000. She is looking to keep the increase as low as possible and still plan for the future. She commented that we still have not come out of this economic down turn. At \$15,000, it will bring the budget down to a 5% increase this year. Trustee Funchion is in favor of \$15,000 based on the research into other possibilities for monetary help to purchase the vehicle which we are in dire need of at this time. He feels that makes it feasible to put in \$15,000 this year versus the higher amounts that were discussed. The Mayor commented that at the last meeting, the Board got into a good discussion, a very passionate discussion. She commented that we do not always vote the same way but that everyone's heart is in the right place as far as doing what we think is in the best interest of the Village.

Trustee Zachary noted that right now the budget is showing an 8.7% increase. He asked the Mayor to explain how \$15,000 would bring it down to 5.7%. Mayor Knickerbocker said that we have \$80,000 that is available from an unfunded job. Trustee Funchion noted that the Mayor had said 5%, not 5.7%. Trustee Zachary wanted to know the exact amount of the unfunded position. The Village Administrator advised that the MEO position was \$86,692. So it is short of a full position but is pretty close. If you take out \$80,000, then add back in \$15,000 for a vehicle replacement or transfer to a Capital Fund, as the Board may decide, it brings it down to a 5.03% increase.

Trustee Jackson advised that at the last budget hearing, he had suggested a compromise of \$18,000 which he commented was not necessarily a half way point but would give it more money. The Village Administrator advised that would be an increase of 5.19%. Trustee Zachary commented that for him, the bottom figure would be \$30,000. He commented that the estimates we came up with for the vehicles is well over \$325,000 which on a 5 year plan would be \$65,000 per year. Allowing for the possible purchase of a used vehicle, allowing for some grant money, he is willing to say that at a stretch we would only need half of that, which he could accept. That would still be \$30,000 per year. Trustee Jackson commented that if we went to a leasing program that calculation would also change.

Trustee Funchion commented that he is confident that part of that vehicle replacement money could come from the Recreation Fund. That fund is for the increased use of recreational areas. In order to maintain that use, he believes that we have to have more vehicles than we had to before those three communities were developed. He feels that has to be taken into account as revenue that we would put toward a vehicle replacement. Second, we got a list of our vehicles but no one has ever determined how many are necessary, how often they are used and how much mileage is put on each per year. He commented that a police car is going to have more miles because it is in constant use whereas with a pickup truck, they may use one on one day and another on another day. He wants the tax increase to be as minimal as possible since we have an alternative place for money to replace a vehicle at this time, and to give the Board time to determine how many vehicles we need and what we need them for so that when we say that something lasts for 5 years or 20 years we know why. He feels those are questions that are there without just putting money aside to the fund. He feels that \$15,000 is sufficient at this point in view of other money that can be gotten in the budget.

Trustee Jackson commented that we had been talking about possibly raising recreation fees at some point in the future. Mayor Knickerbocker said that is something to be looked into.

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that reviewing the list of vehicles, the police vehicles will need to be replaced in the next two to three years. The next closest to reaching the end of its life is the 1978 leaf vacuum. That has a 1-3 year remaining life and parts are getting more and more difficult to find. She commented that Trustee Funchion made a good point about looking into this list and being more specific about what needs to be replaced and when. She commented that these are good estimates but how often are these vehicles used, other than the police vehicles which we know are used every day. We need to look more into this. She commented that she understands what Trustee Zachary is saying, that we want to have that money available when the time comes.

Trustee Jackson wanted to know if the Village Administrator could calculate based on a 5.3% increase, approximately what would be the increase be per household. The Village Administrator advised that it would be a \$12.15 increase in the tax rate. With an average assessment of \$5,000, it would be a \$60 increase in taxes. Mayor Knickerbocker noted that would be \$5 per month. Trustee Jackson said that he will go along with the \$15,000 for vehicle replacement. He commented that as the Mayor said, we are not out of this economic doldrum yet and making the smallest increase as possible at this time for the residents is paramount in his mind. He said we also need to keep in mind that with the Entergy situation coming forward, he would like to think that we will have more than the last deal that was made. He feels that just in the cost of doing business we should be looking at an increase. We should hold them more accountable to a more fair balance on their part going back to what it was before we went to this program.

Trustee Zachary commented that he is not going to support the \$15,000. He would like there to be no tax increase but he does not want to pass a budget that has a tax increase but still ignores the inevitable expenses that we know we will have. He noted that we budgeted \$30,000 last year for a bucket truck and we did not get it. He said that does not mean that we are going to have \$15,000 on top of that \$30,000 set aside because we do not have a dedicated vehicle replacement fund. We are just throwing it into the General Fund. That leaves it to the discretion of this Board or whatever Board is here in five years as to what to do with it. They can ignore problems and balance the budget. He commented that to him, 99% of this is a great budget. He is proud of it and salutes Mayor Knickerbocker and Trustees Funchion and Jackson who have done a lot of work over the last few years to trim this budget. He commented that we have worked hard to keep it where it is. There are a lot of expenses that are not in our control that are passed down from the State. He commented that he had made up his mind that because we know that there are expenses coming, as much as he wants to keep the increase to a minimum he does not want to pass a budget that he feels ignores the inevitable. He respects everyone's right to disagree but that is his opinion.

Trustee Funchion commented that he believes Trustee Zachary will get the amount he wants this year by using the Recreation Fund and other funds. We have looked into it and it is very viable. He commented that in addition, as Trustee Jackson said, by this time next year he would hope that Entergy will be more responsible to the community and fund it more so that they would realize that expenses like medical benefits and retirement have all gone up. He fully supports Trustee Zachary and understands where he is coming from but he feels that we have to be realistic and look at expenses. He thinks we could be covered for one year because not using the Recreation Fund, our recreational demands increased and part of our increase should involve part of the equipment it takes to run new or those with increased use recreational properties. He advised that they checked with the Village Attorney. He described it as a sort of a toss up. He thinks that we should put it out there for this one year and purchase the vehicle. He commented

that if the auditors look at this and say that it is a capital repair, not a capital increase for the Recreation Fund, we will still have our one vehicle and Trustee Zachary will still basically have his amount for this year because he will have taken that one vehicle cost off the total. Trustee Funchion believes they are basically in the same place, just arguing over where the funds are coming from. He commented that Trustee Zachary may see it as we will not be guaranteed that, but that is our money. He said that as the Board of Trustees, we have to make a decision on that without having to bring everybody in. If we are wrong, we are wrong. If the auditors tell us next year that we cannot do that, that it is considered a repair, then we will not do it. He thinks that Trustee Zachary gets the figure that he wants and that hopefully next year with Entergy coming to a more reasonable point with the taxes that we will then be able to put aside the amount that Trustee Zachary wants every year.

Mayor Knickerbocker commented that she respects Trustee Zachary's opinions. She said that we all have our opinions and the Village's best interests at heart. She feels that we have always been fiscally responsible. This is a tough decision. It is only one piece to the puzzle. She commented that we are talking about road work. Last week she was out with the Village Administrator, the Village Engineer and the Highway Foreman. We need to put a lot more money into roads as well. We have money in there. There is going to be road work this year. She commented what is the delicate balance here. There is so much that needs to be done. There is something at the Village Hall that she would like to see done; painting the soffits on the building. It is not looking good. That is \$10,000. She commented that she did not put that into the budget this year. She had to let that go. It is something that needs to be done and she hopes that we get some money together some time during the year. She commented where do we put this money? Where is the biggest bang for our buck? We are saving for the future here for things that we need to have done. We are starting here. We have some seed money for that. We are working on roads and infrastructure. The Mayor advised that we will have an Executive Session at our May meeting. We have started talks with Entergy. They are very preliminary but we have started some dialogue at this point. She would like to start this Capital Fund this year. She is not looking to put a lot of money into it this year but to start it and we can look again at where we have to be closer on a lot of these items that need to be purchased over the next 3-5 years.

Trustee Pasquale wants to keep the tax increase as minimal as possible. He agrees with Trustees Funchion and Jackson on the proposed vehicle replacement amount being \$15,000. Mayor Knickerbocker commented that we will look at this again during the year and for the next budget year we will see where we need to be with it.

Trustee Zachary commented that again, he thinks that it is a good budget and that the Board has done a good job. He commented that he is hung up on this one point because he believes that we should be looking at a 5 year plan. It is not just vehicle replacement. It is the LED conversion.

He is happy that we have the seed money for that. It is planning other expense increases that we know we will have in there and trying to develop a strategy to set aside on a yearly basis for things that we know will be occurring in the long term. He commented that it is okay if he does not vote the same as everybody else. He has a different opinion on this.

Mayor Knickerbocker said that she would like to set aside time at each Workshop to talk about 5 year plans on different subjects and what we need to do. We have started with the vehicles. She commented that we could do everything in one year and raise the taxes 200%. We are trying to be fair and respectful and considerate of people. She commented that this is tough. The budget is one of the toughest things that the Board has to do. They try to do their best and try to represent all the residents of the Village.

Eileen Absenger commented that she has read that in the next two years that the price of LED lights will be cut in half. She does not know if that means for the lights only or for the inserts that we would need. Trustee Zachary advised that the cost of the fixtures has been steadily coming down. He is sure that will continue. He explained that what Ms. Absenger is referring to are the LED bulbs that people use in their homes. What will not come down is the cost of the labor to retrofit. You have to change and replace the fixture that is there with a new and different one. The materials are decreasing in cost but the labor is not. He advised that once installed, typically the investment takes 5 to 7 years to be recouped. Then you will be saving 75% of your power. He noted that at the last budget hearing he compared it to refinancing your mortgage. You have to lay out money to do the refinancing then you start saving on a monthly basis. Ms. Absenger explained that her question was if this was pertinent to the commercial LED devices. Trustee Zachary commented that once they are in, you are saving so much electricity that he does not see sitting by and waiting for the price to drop further. They have dropped a good bit and he hopes that we will get a good price on them. Mayor Knickerbocker noted that there was an article in the newspaper today about rising energy costs. She noted that this was Trustee Zachary's idea and that it was a good one. She commented that hopefully on May 15 we can get some grant money going for that.

At 8:28 PM a MOTION to close the Public Hearing was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Jackson with all in favor.

#### **RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2014-2015 VILLAGE BUDGET.**

Mayor Knickerbocker read the Resolution (*copy attached*).

Mayor Knickerbocker advised that the budget increase is 5.03%. The Village Administrator advised that the new tax rate is \$254.31. That is up from last year which was \$242.13. The Mayor noted that last year the budget increase was 7.64%.

A MOTION to adopt the resolution as presented was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Jackson with Mayor Knickerbocker and Trustees Funchion, Jackson and Pasquale in favor and Trustee Zachary opposed.

**COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD:**

Mayor Knickerbocker thanked the Board for their hard work. She noted that we have met twice on this budget and have really gone through it line by line. Every one voted in what they felt was in the best interests of the Village. She commented that we do not always agree but that we do always agree to do what is the right thing for our Village.

Trustee Jackson referred to Ms. Absenger's comment concerning the proposed Griffin project. He commented that he has some reservations about it. He wanted to go on record that just because the zoning is there for that potential project as it goes through our Planning Board process he thinks it is out of line with the character of the Village in terms of the type of housing. He commented that we are probably 98% single family homes. He has some serious reservations about the type of housing along with the age limit which he had mentioned at previous meetings. He thinks that regarding their analysis of what the market would bring about that if the project did go forward, we raise that age limit.

Trustee Jackson commented that he has discussed manpower utilization with the Village Administrator in terms of our current work force and if we are getting the best bang for the buck. He would like to see multi-tasking or whatever the case may be. He commented that our people are paid very well. It is not like we are at the bottom of the scale on that. He thinks that as we move forward on that, the analysis of that is very prudent. Trustee Jackson thinks that the budget review process needs to be clearer. Perhaps we need a 4 or 6 month review of our actual versus our estimates. He thinks that because the documents come across in a legalese or an auditors' type of thing it is not easy for the Board members to zero in on what that means and how it breaks down. He commented that clarity and transparency is a hallmark of making sure that we are spending the taxpayers' money effectively. He would like to see partnerships with other municipalities with even the smallest budget line items, which could be office supplies for example. He commented that he had been talking about gasoline and oil and that the Village Administrator advised him that we are already at the lowest rate because of the way that we go about that. He wants to look in all places to make smarter purchases and drive down costs. He understands that we are strapped with State mandates over which we have no control. He hopes that as Trustee Funchion said that going forward we get a better deal from Entergy. He commended the Village Administrator for his diligence in bringing information to the Board. Trustee Jackson described Buchanan as the hidden jewel of the Hudson Valley.

**COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR:**

Eileen Absenger commented that there was an article about a community garden going in at Meahagh Park. She wanted to know if the land that was in dispute at Lent's Cove Park near the Tropiano Trail is still unusable. Trustee Zachary advised that it would take considerable work because there are rocks and debris there. People have illegally dumped there over the years. Trustee Funchion commented that could be something that the Recreation Fund could be used for. Ms. Absenger commented that with all these community gardens coming up and sustainable farming that might be something the Village could look at. Mayor Knickerbocker likes the concept but her big concern is the deer. Ms. Absenger commented that she has ideas about that.

Ms. Absenger commented that with the PILOT with Entergy, she would like the Board to err on the side of caution. She wants to see us get as much as possible. She commented that everything is coming from the headquarters in Louisiana. She is not certain how much authority the local plant management has to say anything. She commented that when the Board thinks we are going to get more to go with less and hope for more. Trustee Zachary commented that he is not sure how much negotiating they will do while they are not yet relicensed.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

At 8:38 PM a MOTION to adjourn this meeting was made by Trustee Funchion, seconded by Trustee Zachary with all in favor.