MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF NEW LEBANON HELD ON OCTOBER 15, 2026

Present:	**Tistrya Houghtling, Supervisor** **Joanne Amlaw, Councilmember** **Chris Patterson, Councilmember** **Steve Powers, Councilmember** **Susan Tipograph, Councilmember**
Recording Secretary:	**Marsha (Marcie) Robertson, Town Clerk**
Others Present:	**JoAnna Phillips, Comprehensive Plan Committee Member** **Mary Young, NL Rep to CC Office of the Aging & Traffic Safety** **Ted Salem, ZRC Chair, ZBA & Comprehensive Plan Committee Member** **Hazel (Cissy) Hernandez, ZEO, Deputy CEO, & Admin.** **Lorrie Wechter, Town Justice** **Monte Wasch, Town Justice** **Elizabeth Brutsch, Planning Board Chair, ZRC & Comprehensive Plan Committee Member (1:35pm)** **Members of the Public**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Special Meeting was called to order at 1:03pm by Supervisor Houghtling. The meeting was held in person at the New Lebanon Town Hall, 14755 State Route 22 North, New Lebanon, NY 12125 with members of the public also being able to view the meeting at the following link: https://townhallstreams.com/towns/new_lebanon_ny

2027 COURT BUDGET DISCUSSION:

Monte Wasch, Court Justice addressed the Town Board, the Court understands the situation the town is in with the upcoming 2027 budget. He stated, the court is in agreement with the strategy laid out for them. However, they believe that the buffer put in for staff hours is insufficient for both the Court Clerk and Deputy Court Clerk. Monte stated, the court is requesting an increase in the buffer. He went on to explain why the court feels an increase is needed, they have old unpaid fines that need to be addressed in 2027 that could result in an increase in revenue from the court. The court has spent this year working on the no shows, reducing it from around 400 to about a dozen.

Monte stated, their request is to increase the Court Clerk from 30 hours to 50 hours, and the Deputy Court Clerk be increased to 25 hours.

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Supervisor Houghtling asked the Justices about how many unpaid fines they are looking at. The Justices responded, about a filling cabinet drawer. Discussion continued between the Justices and the Town Board.

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling to revisit the salary lines for the Court Clerk and the Deputy Court Clerk as well as the revenue lines in June of 2027, and increase the salary lines including the normal work plus any additional workload for the back fines and the amount of revenues being increased. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Amlaw.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilmember Powers -	Aye
Councilmember Amlaw -	Aye
Supervisor Houghtling -	Aye
Councilmember Tipograph -	Aye
Councilmember Patterson-	Aye

RFQS RECEIVED – (ATTORNEY, ACCOUNTING, ENGINEERING, & CLEANER):

Supervisor Houghtling reported, we received one RFQ for an HR Attorney who is our current HR Attorney; received one for Town Attorney also our current Town Attorney; nothing received for ZBA and Planning Board Attorney, it has been extended one week; received one for cleaner, our current cleaner Jody Brewer; received three for Accountant; and received five for Engineering, who we are all currently using. The board held discussion. It was decided to schedule interviews with the Town Board for Accountants, and to schedule interviews for the Engineers with the Town Board, Planning Board Chair Brutsch, and Ted Salem.

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling, seconded by Councilmember Tipograph, and approved unanimously to schedule a Special Meeting for October 26, 2026 at 3:30pm for the purpose of interviewing town accountants for 2027 and ask that the Town Clerk email the notice.

2027 PZ CLERK HOURS BUDGET DISCUSSION:

Planning Board Chair, Elizabeth Brutsch stated, she Ted Salem, and Cissy Hernandez met and their two budget concerns are staff hours and legal services. They are requesting more hours for the PZ Clerk, and Elizabeth referenced the cut in the PZ Clerk hours in the Tentative Budget.

Supervisor Houghtling clarified, the PZ Clerk hours did not get cut in the Tentative Budget. She reported that the PZ Clerk is budgeted for $7,900 in 2026, and she is on track to work $2,700. In 2025 year to date the PZ Clerk worked $2,600. They have been over budgeting the hours worked each year and the Comptroller's opinion is not to do this. The town needs to start budgeting closer to the hours actually worked. Supervisor Houghtling explained she looked back at 2025 and 2026 year to date and added in a small buffer.

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Further discussion took place. It was agreed that they were going to go back and verify with the PZ Clerk that she can and will work more hours than she has been and that there is sufficient work to warrant the additional hours and report back to the Town Board for the October 26th budget workshop meeting to revisit.

PLANNING BOARD ATTORNEY (LAND USE):

Planning Board Chair, Elizabeth Brutsch addressed the Town Board regarding her Planning Board attorney budget request. She discussed the topic of using escrow funds for attorney fees, and she is suggesting that the town amend their escrow code and fee schedule to clarify using escrow for all of their applicants and expanding what services can be paid out of escrow funds.

Planning Board Chair, Elizabeth Brutsch reported, that their current attorney will not be submitting an RFQ now and as of January, they will be in need of legal services. She will put out some feelers and hope to find someone who is interested.

Discussion took place with the Town Board, this will be revisited at the October 26th budget workshop.

2027 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BUDGET DISCUSSION:

Supervisor Houghtling stated, she accidentally did not put anything in the Tentative Budget for the Comprehensive Plan Committee. The budget request for that committee was $3,000 and it came on Cissy's budget request. Supervisor Houghtling had not heard from Ted Salem on the budget request and what the $3,000 was allocated for.

The Town Board held discussion with Ted Salem, Comprehensive Plan Committee Chair regarding the budget request. Per Ted, it would be used for printing expenses. Further discussion took place. In conclusion, after discussion, the budget line A-8010.41 will remain at $0 and any printing needs will be done in house.

UPCOMING BUDGET WORKSHOP AGENDAS:

Supervisor Houghtling commented, for upcoming budget workshops, she has the Highway Department on October 21st, on October 26th the LV Seniors and revisiting the Building Department, and she would like to have the Summer Camp Program at one of those two budget workshop dates.

2027 LVPA BUDGET DISCUSSION:

Supervisor Houghtling stated, at the last meeting they talked about discussing today and either voting to increase the LVPA's overall budget by $18,000 or ask for another meeting. She reported, at the last meeting she asked Ed Godfroy for year end balances for 2023, 2024, and 2025, she received them and sent them to the rest of the board. Discussion took place among the Town Board. Supervisor Houghtling suggested another meeting with the LVPA regarding their budget to answer some questions and have some more clarification, and Councilmember Powers suggested that their accountant come to the meeting. Councilmember Amlaw commented, she feels that funding the LVPA is an essential thing

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but if the rest of the board have more questions, okay. Councilmember Tipograph commented, she agrees but another meeting for some clarification is not a bad idea. Supervisor Houghtling will reach out to schedule another meeting with the LVPA.

SHATFORD PARK RESERVE ACCOUNT:

Supervisor Houghtling mentioned, the more she thought, she remembered that they have a Shatford Park reserve account that has $45,500 in it that has not been touched since the money was put in there. She was thinking they could take the $7,300 for the basketball court resurfacing from that reserve account by way of passing a resolution. She also brought up the fencing in the park by walking paths, and the softball field fence.

Councilmember Patterson commented, he is all for resurfacing the basketball court but does not feel they should spend money on the fencing. He opened up the discussion on what the board thinks should be done about the softball fencing, repaired or removed. Councilmember Amlaw commented, she thinks they should try to remove the fencing and mentioned the light poles need to have something done with them at some point. She thinks with the help of the highway department and volunteers they could take care of the fencing. The board was in agreement that the softball fencing should be removed.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Supervisor Houghtling stated, Town Clerk Robertson will forego the $1,000 in her budget for training and put it towards raises if they are considered; she has to make an adjustment to the health insurance, one of the plans is 100% not 80%; and she has to add the landfill monitoring, an expense and a revenue.

Councilmember Powers thanked Michael Carey for donating nine useful bikes to the bike program.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling, to adjourn the special meeting at 2:55pm. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Amlaw.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilmember Powers -	Aye
Councilmember Amlaw -	Aye
Supervisor Houghtling -	Aye
Councilmember Tipograph -	Aye
Councilmember Patterson-	Aye

Respectfully submitted,

Marcie Robertson
New Lebanon Town Clerk

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