



Pursuant to NYS Executive Order 202/2020 issued by the Governor, the Town Board of the Town of Cortlandt is holding meetings virtually via a platform known as Zoom. The public can observe the meetings in real time and they are recorded as usual and posted on the Town Website.

A **Special Meeting** of the Town Board of the Town of Cortlandt was conducted on December 7, 2020 via Zoom, with the following elected officials and appointed staff in attendance:

<b>LINDA D. PUGLISI</b>	<b>Supervisor</b>
<b>FRANCIS X. FARRELL</b>	<b>Councilmember</b>
<b>DEBRA COSTELLO</b>	<b>Councilmember</b>
<b>RICHARD BECKER</b>	<b>Councilmember</b>
<b>JAMES CREIGHTON</b>	<b>Councilmember</b>

Also present:

<b>TOM WOOD</b>	<b>Town Attorney</b>
<b>MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM</b>	<b>Assistant Town Attorney</b>
<b>LAROUÉ ROSE SHATZKIN</b>	<b>Town Clerk</b>
<b>CHRISTINE B. COTHREN</b>	<b>Deputy Town Clerk - ABSENT</b>
<b>PATRICIA ROBCKE</b>	<b>Comptroller</b>
<b>MICHAEL PREZIOSI</b>	<b>Director, DOTS</b>
<b>CLAUDIA VAHEY</b>	<b>Human Resources Coordinator</b>
<b>STEPHEN FERREIRA</b>	<b>Director, DES</b>

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**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Supervisor Puglisi called the meeting to order at p.m.

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**PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**

Supervisor Puglisi led all in attendance in a Pledge to the Flag.

**ROLL CALL**

On a roll call attendance taken by Laroué R. Shatzkin, Town Clerk all Town Board members indicated their presence.



## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

1. Public Hearing to consider the adoption of the 2021 Budget.
  - a. Close Public Hearing
  - b. Adopt 2021 Town Budget
  - c. Authorize the Library Budget

The Public Hearing was opened at 7:54 PM.

Supervisor Linda Puglisi explained that the Town Board and Supervisor have discussed the budget at Worksessions and that by State Law, the Supervisor is required to present a Budget for the following year no later than October 31. The Supervisor stated that she has met that requirement faithfully and works closely with Comptroller Patty Robcke and the Department Heads to come up with the Final Budget.

Work on the budget really begins in July and there is a presentation available on the Proposed Budget with all its details and particulars on the Website. The Town of Cortlandt has an excellent records, and for 30 years on average, there has only been a one percent Town tax increase. The budget has always been balanced and there has never been a deficit. Over the last 30 years, the savings account (fund balance) of the Town has more than tripled, and currently sits at 20 million dollars. There is an annual surplus at the end of each year and the Town has extremely low debt.

A Capital Project is any project over 50 thousand dollars and the town has done approximately 160 million dollars of Capital Projects over the last 30 years, while maintaining our excellent finances. There is additional revenue coming in at the end of this fiscal year, with a conservative projection of \$665,000. additional monies. \$330,000. comes from sales tax, and \$335,000. from mortgage tax. This will go towards projects and paving. The Town of Cortlandt is a not-for-profit entity and takes any leftover monies from each fiscal year to help keep Town Taxes low.

Comptroller Patty Robcke announced that there is no increase in 2021 with the Proposed Budget. The levy remains the same as 2020 at \$21,786,747., which is well under the NYS Tax Cap of 1.56%. If you live within the Town of Cortlandt and are within the Cortlandt Consolidated Water District, the average Town tax per household is roughly \$1,700 per year. The Villages do pay a small portion for services provided by the Town. In the Village of Buchanan, the average resident pays under \$200. per year. In the Village of Croton-on-Hudson it is around \$230. per year. Village residents will not see an increase in their Town Line in 2021, with the exception of an approximately \$3. Increase in Buchanan, which is for the Hen Hud Library. There is a net spending increase of 1.83% covering contractual increases such as Information Technology, Health Insurance (2% for 2021) the NYS Retirement System costs and other items.



The Town has about 6.1 million dollars in debt, about 1% of our allowable debt limit set by New York State. The Town could borrow over 400 million dollars. The Town was upgraded by Moody's in 2019 and was reconfirmed in 2020 to have a AA1 Bond Rating. Some of the credit for that is due to the Town's efforts to prepare for the closure of the Indian Point. The Indian Point Pilot revenue will decrease in 2021 by about \$90,000. The following year, we will be applying for State Funding from the mitigation fund to offset that loss.

There is currently \$400,000. of Fund Balance set aside to offset the loss of Indian Point, and the Town will continue to set aside \$100,000. per year. The Supervisor mentioned using savings to keep Town Taxes low, and that is called Appropriated Fund Balance. The budget uses a little under 2 million dollars to balance the budget and offset taxes this year.

In 2019 Westchester County passed an additional one percent sales tax and that has translated into 1 million dollars of additional sales tax revenue. We are increasing sales tax revenues by \$700,000. for the 2021 Budget, and increasing Mortgage Tax by \$40,000. This helps to offset the small percentage of annual spending increase.

Supervisor Puglisi re-affirmed the Town's status as a not for profit and how funds are used to give back to residents in the form of low taxes.

Comptroller Robcke explained that property taxes make up about 50% of the budget and other revenues are important.

Supervisor Puglisi interjected that the Town's finances are weathering the storm of the pandemic well. Despite the pressure, sales and mortgage tax are doing well. There is a cheery outlook for the coming years.

Comptroller Robcke thanked her team for their group effort.

Supervisor Puglisi closed by discussing a letter received from Comptroller Tom DiNapoli in which he congratulated the Supervisor for her years of service and commented on the Town's excellent fiscal record. It is a reflection on our entire government and community.

Councilman Becker made a motion to close the Public Hearing, adopt the 2021 Town Budget and authorize the Library Budget, seconded by Councilwoman Carter with all voting AYE.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:50 PM

**RESOLUTION NO. 295-20 RE:** Adopt 2021 Town Budget

**RESOLUTION NO. 296-20 RE:** Authorize the Library Budget.



2. Public Hearing to consider the Benefit Unit Assessment Roll of the Town of Cortlandt.
  - a. Close Public Hearing
  - b. Receive Draft Benefit Unit Assessment Roll
  - c. Approve Cortlandt Boulevard Unit Benefit Assessment Rolls (AS AMENDED)
  - d. Establish the Dickerson Pond Benefit Unit Assessment Roll (AS AMENDED)

Tom Wood explained that this is a first for the Town since it's founding in 1788. Over the last 3 years the Town Board saw the wisdom in establishing three new sewer areas in the Town. One is the Cortlandt Boulevard Central, Cortlandt Boulevard West, and based on a petition of the residents of Valeria, the purchase of a Sewer Treatment Plant on behalf of the Dickerson Pond Sewer District. The next step is to establish the manner in which the billing will occur. The modern trend in New York State now with sewer and water facilities is to charge not based on assessed value, but on the actual use of water. The Benefit Unit Assessment Roll establishes what the flow is for each Benefit Unit. The Engineering Department, Comptrollers Office and Water Department have worked to develop the Benefit Unit Roll presented to the Town Board this evening. For example, a single-family home has been assessed one Benefit Unit. Certain commercial uses may be assigned more depending on their needed flow.

An annual Public Hearing will be held for anyone who feels too many Benefit Units have been assigned to them to come and make their case to the Town Board. All the property owners will be receiving a welcome letter from the Town far in advance of their first billing. This is not part of the April tax bill, but will be included in their water bill, and will so be broken up into quarterly payments. In the case of Dickerson Pond as was discussed during the Public Hearing to purchase it, all the property owner's rates will be maintained next year, and the Town is able to honor an existing agreement in which existing units pay \$95. and new ones pay \$120. and still have sufficient funds to manage the system.

For Cortlandt Boulevard, the improvements that have been done will extend the life of the Westbrook Drive Sewer Main, cure a choke point behind the Community Center, and allow the expansion of Commercial enterprises on Route 6. The commercial Development expansion on Route 6 will absorb 75-80%, so it's a win for the Town.

Supervisor Puglisi announced that she lives at Valeria and asked Attorney Wood if this was a generic item or if they should be voted on separately. Attorney Wood advised that because the Supervisor is listed specifically, the items should be voted on separately.

Councilwoman Carter made a motion to close the Public Hearing and Receive the Benefit Unit Roll, seconded by Councilman Becker with all voting **AYE**.

Councilman Becker made a motion to Approve the Cortlandt Boulevard Benefit Unit Roll, seconded by Councilman Creighton with all voting **AYE**.



**RESOLUTION NO. 297-20 RE:** Approve Cortlandt Boulevard Unit Benefit Rolls. (AS AMENDED)

Councilman Becker made a motion to Establish the Dickerson Pond Benefit Unit Assessment Roll, seconded by Councilman Creighton. The Board was polled as follows:

Councilwoman Costello	AYE
Councilman Creighton	AYE
Councilman Farrell	AYE
Councilman Becker	AYE
Supervisor Puglisi	RECUSED

The motion passed 4-1.

**RESOLUTION NO. 297A-20 RE:** Establish the Dickerson Pond Benefit Unit Assessment Roll (AS AMENDED)

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Receive and File the following:**

1. Memorandum from the Director of DOTS regarding the purchase of the Dickerson Pond Sewage Treatment.

Councilman Becker made a motion to receive and file the above, seconded by Councilman Creighton. The Board was polled as follows:

Councilwoman Costello	AYE
Councilman Creighton	AYE
Councilman Farrell	AYE
Councilman Becker	AYE
Supervisor Puglisi	RECUSED

The motion passed 4-1.

**RESOLUTIONS**

1. Appoint German Cruz to the title of Deputy Receiver of Taxes ~~from the Civil Service List~~, AS AMENDED.
2. Appoint seasonal employees in DES.

Councilman Becker made a motion to approve the above resolutions, seconded by Councilwoman Carter. All voted **AYE**.



Director of Human Resources Claudia Vahey commented that there are 7 employees included in the Seasonal appointment resolution. The Seasonal Employees will mostly be working in Sanitation since the workforce has been affected by Covid.

Director of DES further added that the extra help is really necessary, especially with Winter coming in and with occasionally losing a few people at a time to quarantine situations.

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA** - NONE

**ADJOURNMENT**

Councilman Creighton made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Farrell with all voting **AYE**.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

**NEXT TOWN BOARD MEETING**

December 15, 2020 at 7:00 pm  
Town Hall Web Site address: [www.townofcortlandt.com](http://www.townofcortlandt.com)

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Laroue Rose Shatzkin  
Town Clerk**