

NOVEMBER 09, 2011

**TOWN BOARD MEETING
TOWN HALL, MAHOPAC, N.Y.**

A Regular Meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Carmel was called to order by Supervisor Kenneth Schmitt on the 9th day of November, 2011 at 7:15 p.m. at Town Hall, 60 McAlpin Avenue, Mahopac, New York. Members of the Town Board present by roll call were: Councilman Ravallo, Councilman Lombardi, Councilwoman McDonough, and Supervisor Schmitt.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was observed prior to the start of official business and a moment of silence was observed to honor those serving in the United States Armed Forces.

Supervisor Schmitt welcomed newly elected members of the Town Board, Jonathan Schneider and John Lupinacci and congratulated them on their victories.

PUBLIC HEARING HELD REGARDING THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2012

Supervisor Schmitt asked the Deputy Town Clerk to read the following Notice of Public Hearing as published in the Town's official newspaper:

LEGAL NOTICE
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
TOWN OF CARMEL
PRELIMINARY BUDGET NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the Town Board of the Town of Carmel will conduct a Public Hearing on the 9th day of November, 2011 at Town Hall, 60 McAlpin Avenue, Mahopac, New York, at 7:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as can be heard, in regard to the Preliminary Budget for the fiscal year 2012 including the General Town Fund, Highway Funds as well as all Water Districts, Sewer Districts, Park Districts, Fire Districts, Fire Protection Districts and Lighting Districts, and
BE IT FURTHER NOTICED that pursuant to Section 108 of the Town Law, the proposed salaries of the following officials for fiscal year 2012 are hereby specified as follows: Supervisor: \$94,882.00, Town Council Members (ea): \$18,490.00, Town Clerk: \$80,280.72, and Highway Superintendent: \$101,808.72;
AND BE IT FURTHER NOTICED, that the Preliminary Budget for the Town of Carmel has been completed and filed in the Office of the Town Clerk, Town Hall, 60 McAlpin Avenue, Mahopac, New York, where it is available for public inspection from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

At said Public Hearing any resident may be heard in favor of or against the Preliminary Budget as compiled or for or against any item or items contained therein. The Town Board will make every effort to assure that the Public Hearing is accessible to persons with disabilities. Anyone requiring special assistance and/or reasonable accommodations should contact the Town Clerk.
By Order of the Town Board of the Town of Carmel
Ann Garriss, Town Clerk

With no one objecting to the public notice as read, Supervisor Schmitt opened the Public Hearing for public comment at 7:20 p.m. Approximately thirty-two (32) people were in attendance.

Patricia Kaufman, Director of Mahopac Public Library, read the following letter that was previously sent to Supervisor Schmitt regarding the funding for the Mahopac Public Library:

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3 November 2011

Kenneth Schmitt
Town Supervisor
Town of Carmel
60 McAlpin Avenue
Mahopac, NY 10541

Dear Mr. Schmitt,

I am writing to address the Town of Carmel proposal to cut the 2012 fiscal support for Mahopac Public Library and your explanation regarding this cut.

Although Mahopac Public Library has the ability to tax, it may only tax the residents of the Mahopac Central School District (MCSD). There are more than 3,000 people who live in the Town of Carmel, including parts of Mahopac, who do not pay MCSD school taxes. Over the years the Library has contracted with the Town of Carmel to serve all of these Carmel residents at a fraction of what the MCSD residents pay.

I would also remind you that MCSD residents effectively support two libraries through their taxes: the school district taxes that are levied to support Mahopac Public Library, and the Town of Carmel taxes that support Reed Memorial Library.

Each year a copy of the Mahopac Public Library Annual Report is provided to the Town of Carmel as requested. While this report provides a great deal of information, I would like to bring some important points to your attention:

Mahopac Public Library year-to-date statistics (January-October 2011):

- Attendance: 254,364
- Circulation: 248,460 items

The Library continues to maintain a level of fiscal responsibility with respect to staff salaries; over the past three years the average salary increase was 0.75% annually – less than a 1% raise per year.

The collective purchasing of material throughout the Mid-Hudson system is a cost-effective measure that enables libraries to share circulating items without sacrificing the quality and quantity of material available to patrons.

Finally, Mahopac Public Library has partnered with the New York State Department of Labor, Putnam Workforce Partnership, and other agencies to provide job information and computer training workshops, as well as online and print resources, through the Library's Job Information Center and the Public Computer Center. This essential service has assisted many unemployed and under-employed individuals learn new skills, update their resumes, develop job seeking strategies, and gain networking experience in order to successfully navigate the current job market and secure employment.

Board of Trustees

*Regina Morini
President*

*Thomas Honohan
Vice-President*

*David Gagliardi
Secretary*

*Anthony Battista
Kristine Bunyea
Frank Del Campo
James Fitzpatrick
Joseph J. Tock
Alice Walsh*

*Patricia Kaufman
Library Director*

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I urge you to consider these factors and to reinstate support for Mahopac Public Library in the 2012 Town of Carmel budget.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Patricia Kaufman
Library Director

Library Use Value Calculator

Updated figures, Feb. 2011

What is your library worth to you?

How much would you pay out-of-pocket for your library services?

- Enter in the left hand column the number of times **per month** you or your family use each service.
- Estimated retail value of each service (if purchased) will be calculated on the right.
- Total value of your library use is shown at the bottom of the worksheet.
- **Tip:** Tab between entries and do not use commas.

Value of Library Services		
Input Your Use	Library Services	Value of Services
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Books Borrowed	\$ <input type="text" value="17.00"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Paperback Borrowed	\$ <input type="text" value="7.00"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Children Books Borrowed	\$ <input type="text" value="12.00"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Audiobooks Borrowed	\$ <input type="text" value="10.00"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Interlibrary Loan Requests	\$ <input type="text" value="30.00"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	eBooks/Audiobooks Downloaded	\$ <input type="text" value="15.00"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Magazines Borrowed	\$ <input type="text" value="5.00"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Movies Borrowed	\$ <input type="text" value="5.00"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	CDs Borrowed	\$ <input type="text" value="9.95"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Museum Passes Borrowed	\$ <input type="text" value="20.00"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Magazine/Newspaper Use in Library	\$ <input type="text" value="7.50"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Meeting Room Use per Hour	\$ <input type="text" value="50.00"/>
<input type="text" value=""/>	Auditorium Use per Hour	\$ <input type="text" value="0.00"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Adult Programs and Classes Attended	\$ <input type="text" value="10.00"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Children's Programs Attended	\$ <input type="text" value="6.00"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Computer Use per hour (i.e. Internet, MS Word, etc.)	\$ <input type="text" value="12.00"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Reference Questions Asked	\$ <input type="text" value="15.00"/>
TOTAL		\$ 231.40

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Facts and Figures for Town Board

For the past 3 years, the Town has given us \$51,300. Prior to that, they gave us \$50,000. The additional funds were to match the Gates grant (2009, 2010) and to add an exterior camera (2011). The \$51,300 represents 1.9% of this fiscal year's budget. The \$50,000 that we asked for to factor into our 2012-13 fiscal year's budget will be an even smaller percentage.

However, as I have explained to Mr. Schmitt, it is important that the Town fund us this token amount as a matter of equity. We serve all residents of the Town, not just Mahopac Central School District residents who, in effect, are supporting two libraries with their taxes.

Next fiscal year, the loss of this \$50,000 will present a double burden. Since the 2% tax cap will go into effect, and I doubt that the Board will wish to go higher, we can only raise about \$45,000 - not even enough to cover the loss of the Town funding - and therefore effectively resulting in almost \$100,000 worth of tax revenue.

Another writer asked for some statistics. Of the 3000 or so people who are identified as Town of Carmel residents, more than half of them have library cards from Mahopac Public Library. Of the 26,000 or so people who are identified as MCSD residents, only about 70 have library cards from Reed.

Year to date (January-October) attendance - 254,364 and 248,460 items checked out.

Regina Morini, President of the Board of Trustees of the Mahopac Public Library, spoke regarding the importance of the library to the residents of the Town of Carmel. She reported that approximately 255,000 people visited the library so far this year and that 249,000 materials were in circulation. She also reported that they are in the process of building a retaining wall which is very expensive and that they have received \$250,000 from the government as a federal grant for the computer center. Ms. Morini went on to point out that the staff of the library was underpaid and that most did not receive any benefits. She remarked on how proud she was of the staff and the volunteers and that they are owed our complete appreciation. Ms. Morini asked the Town Board to restore the \$50,000.00 that has been cut from the budget for the Mahopac Public Library.

Louis Naclerio, resident of Carmel and Director of the Public Computer Center at the Mahopac Public Library, spoke regarding the work they do at the computer center helping the unemployed and the underemployed improve their computer skills to increase their success in the workplace. He reported that the computer center has assisted over 1700 people since February. Mr. Naclerio expressed his concerns that cutting funding to the library may have on the staffing of the computer center.

Joseph Tock, resident of Carmel, small business owner, member of the Board of Trustees of the Mahopac Public Library and father of three, spoke in support of funding the library. He indicated that the library is the cornerstone of the community and the most utilized building in the county besides Putnam Hospital Center. He reported that approximately 25,000 people per month use the library building and he spoke about the hours of operation and the many programs going on in the library at any given time. Mr. Tock urged the Town Board members not to eliminate funding to the library and to go to the library to observe what goes on there. He mentioned that Putnam County has increased their funding. Mr. Tock noted that every aspect of this community is touched by the library and concluded that it is not a luxury but a vital necessity of the community.

Lisa Aker who runs a knitting group at the library stated that she agrees with the comments made by Joseph Tock. She said she feels that the library provides a necessary service to the town and noted that the library is always crowded and being utilized. She further stated that the funding should be increased not decreased.

Marsha Waldman, resident of Mahopac and Vice President of the Friends of Mahopac Public Library reported that 2.5 million people have visited the library since the new library opened and that over 2 million items have been circulated since that time. She stated that the library is more than a place to borrow books it is a community center

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offering approximately 2,000 programs per year meeting the needs of every segment of the community especially in this difficult economy. Ms. Waldman concluded that there is no logic in cutting services that are in such demand.

Ms. Wadlman questioned the logic of the premise that just because the library can levy taxes that they shouldn't receive funding from the town as well. She noted that the library faces the same 2% tax levy cap as the town and that they will not be able to make up the funding. She asked the Town Board to please reinstate the funding to the library.

Mark Jones, resident of Mahopac for twenty years and father of two graduates of Mahopac High School passed on a message from his children who were surprised and concerned that funding to the library was in jeopardy of being cut.

Frank DelCampo, member of the Board of Trustees of the Mahopac Public Library, spoke regarding the importance of the library. He remarked on the prudence of the library stating that they watch every penny. He acknowledged the hardships on the taxpayers but asked the Town Board to reconsider and replace the entire amount to the budget noting that once funding is cut it will never be put back.

Mr. DelCampo wished Councilman Ravallo good luck on his retirement and thanked him for his service to the town.

Beverly Seader, member of the Board of Trustees of Reed Memorial Library, spoke regarding the devastating effect the proposed cut would have on the library as it represents 20% of their entire budget. She explained that they already watch every penny they spend and would hate to have to cut services or not be able to maintain the historic building they occupy. Ms. Seader reiterated that \$50,000 is a huge cut for them. She pointed out that the library was used during the recent storm for people to come get warm, use their computers, or charge electronic equipment. Ms. Seader asked the Town Board to reconsider cutting their funding from the town's budget.

Alice Walsh, member of the Board of Trustees of Mahopac Public Library and President of the Putnam County Library Association, read the following letter addressed to Supervisor Schmitt from Jean Ehnebuske:

Mr. Kenneth Schmitt, Supervisor,
Town of Carmel
60 McAlpin Avenue
Mahopac, NY 10541

Dear Mr. Schmitt:

When I heard that your 2012 tentative budget for the Town of Carmel entirely eliminates funding for the Mahopac Public Library, I was sure there must be some mistake. So I checked the facts. Incredibly, I found out that what I had heard is correct.

Last February, before the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the library's new Public Computer Center, I heard you speak earnestly about your library experiences and what a profound difference they had made in your life. Like others in the audience, I was particularly taken with your comments about discovering all the treasures the library offered when you were nine or ten years old. You told us how you came to spend your summer vacation days at the library and how much that meant to you. Because I had heard you speak with such sincerity about your own library experiences, I cannot fathom that you now propose a budget that would severely limit those same kind of experiences for others.

I understand that the impact of the two-percent tax cap, unfunded mandates and the economic downturn forces you and the Town Council to make some tough budget decisions, but I find it unbelievable that you propose to completely pull your support for the Mahopac Public Library. Zero funding—really? As you may know, Mahopac Public Library is one of sixty-six member libraries in the Mid-Hudson Library System, a region that covers five counties. With the exception of the Supervisor of the Town of Southeast—who proposed zero funding for the Brewster Public Library both this year and last—no other Supervisor but you in that entire five-county area has proposed such a harsh cut. I can't imagine this is the kind of distinction you want to have or the sort of legacy you want to leave.

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Everyone appreciates your past support for the Mahopac Public Library. That support acknowledges that you understand the library provides services residents find essential—now more than ever. I know I speak for many others when I ask that you please reconsider making this cut that would drastically curtail those essential services. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jean Ehnebuske
Fax: 270-818-7592

cc: Councilpersons Frank D. Lombardi, Susan McDonough, Robert J. Rovallo

Jeanne Buck, Director of Reed Memorial Library, stated that Reed Memorial Library desperately needs the funding from the town and that it would be a huge cut that they would not be able to make up elsewhere. She explained that losing the \$50,000 from the town would be devastating to the library and that it equates to three months of keeping the library running or one year's worth of books. Ms. Buck reported that they were trying to become a voting district but it was not an easy process. She further stated that the library is one of the few services that the town supports in that area.

Kristine Bunyea, member of the Board of Trustees of Mahopac Library, said she believes the library is the place that many children, especially Middle School or High School students, may go to as a safe place.

Tom Honohan, Vice President of the Board of Trustees of the Mahopac Library, indicated that he has been on the board for a long time and that the library has come a long way in that time. He spoke about the Museum Pass Program that the library offers and commented that the library is more than just books. Mr. Honohan stated that the library might have to close 2 ½ days due to the proposed cuts and asked the Town Board to reconsider cutting the funding for both Mahopac Public Library and Reed Memorial Library.

Lynne Eckerdt, member of the Board of Trustees of Reed Memorial Library for seventeen years, stated that cutting funding to either library was not in anyone's best interest. She expressed her concern that it was penny wise and pound foolish. She noted that in the Town of Southeast they were actually increasing the funding to the library as that was what the people wanted.

Gabrielle Buck, employee of the Reed Memorial Library for four years, remarked that she had witnessed first hand the warmth of the library. She noted that it was not just a place full of books and that the library provided a place for people to go. She asked where will these people go if the funding to the library is cut.

Janet Ohles, member of the Board of Trustees for Reed Memorial Library, stated that she has been a library administrator for over twenty years and that she was aware of the importance of library staff. She mentioned how impressed she was with the staff of the Reed Memorial Library.

John Babich, a Carmel High School Senior, stated that from a young age he has been a frequent patron of Reed Memorial Library. He talked about his experiences visiting the library and explained how through those experiences he learned the value of reading and the power of writing. He said he understood that cuts had to be made but questioned why cut the funding to Reed Memorial Library as it is such an important place especially to children. He pointed out that funds should be allocated to organizations that benefit children of today because they will determine how the future unfolds.

Michael Barile, resident of Mahopac, reminded everyone that the hearing was regarding the whole budget not just the libraries. He spoke of the importance of video taping all

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the various town meetings and of the keeping the Architectural Review Board. He wondered what the motive was for cutting the Architectural Review Board as they make money. Mr. Barile pointed out that if the Reed Memorial Library lost 25% of their funding it would put them out of business.

Mr. Barile stated he was glad that the positions that had been slated to be cut were now reinstated but that there were still serious issues to deal with. He noted that the two newly elected Town Board Members have a lot of experience with numbers and they should be included in important discussions and executive sessions at this point. He went on to say that he hoped there would not be any surprises in the next few weeks regarding contracts being entered into without the input of the full board.

Mr. Barile also pointed out that this was the second election cycle that proved that political signs do not work. He stated that they are trash and an eyesore.

Louis Panny, resident of the Town of Carmel for forty-four years, said that he loves the library but that everyone has to cut back.

Chad Collesian, local business owner and taxpayer for twenty years, stated that he was having a hard time understanding how \$50,000 will break the bank and destroy the library with a budget of two million dollars. He said that the taxpayers are dying and that he is paying \$1,000 per month in taxes now and that something has to be cut. He suggested that if each of the visitors to the library donated one dollar they would have the \$50,000 that was being cut in two months. Mr. Collesian then made the gesture of donating the first dollar.

Dave Nicholas, resident of the Town of Carmel for thirty years, said that he agrees with Mr. Collesian regarding cutting the funding to the library. He said that he doesn't use either library and that the taxes should be lowered not raised. He suggested that everything should be cut across the board. He said it was insane to override the governor's tax cap and that he will campaign against it.

Jerry Ravnitzky, resident of Mahopac for thirty years, stated that he does use the library, especially the computers that are available and that he feels it is essential to the community. He noted the long list of things available at the library and the fact that the parking lot is always full. He said the library helps to determine what kind of community we have and that there is a need to provide those types of services. He noted that it was not a large amount of money and that perhaps the funds could be cut elsewhere.

Supervisor Schmitt thanked everyone who spoke. He explained how difficult this budget process has been and how hard he has worked with Mary Ann Maxwell, Town Comptroller, going over the budget line by line. He acknowledged that he knew that the proposed cuts would not be popular but that he felt a responsibility to all the taxpayers knowing that many are struggling to put food on the table and some are even losing their homes.

Supervisor Schmitt thanked the library saying that he appreciates the services they offer and didn't want to cut their funding but that he has a fiduciary responsibility to make cuts, reduce expenditures and reduce costs. He explained the difficulty of keeping to the 2% tax cap legislated by the state which he felt was short sighted and problematic due to no unfunded mandate relief. He further explained that the state did give the town the ability to override the tax cap with the approval of at least 60% of the Town Board while the school districts needed 60% approval from the people.

Supervisor Schmitt expressed his feeling that he owed the taxpayers a budget under 2% and he did that, now the board would deliberate and must adopt a budget on or before November 21st. He reported that one option would be to adopt the budget with the 2% tax cap or one of four other options which have over a 2% increase all of which Mary Ann Maxwell, Town Comptroller, would be going over during the Town Board Work Session to follow the public hearing. He explained that he had tried his best but he had to reduce the funding to come within the 2% increase as the revenue sources were no longer there and if they restored the funding they will go over the 2%.

Councilman Ravallo spoke regarding the funding to the libraries saying that he was still open to the possibility of restoring the funding. He explained that the two libraries needed to be approached differently. Fifty thousand dollars is a significant portion of the funding for Reed Memorial Library and that it was a huge amount to cut. He suggested that they identify other sources of funding and that although it might be very difficult for them to form a library district it was not impossible. He indicated that the town may be able to help create the boundaries of the district. On the other hand he felt that Mahopac Public Library would be able to deal with the cut. He also suggested that Reed Memorial Library should have elected members to the Board of Trustees as opposed to using volunteers.

Councilman Ravallo questioned what good is a 2% tax cap on the levy when it produces a tax rate increase of over 5%. He concluded that the tax cap was not the most important thing but that the financial health of the town was much more important. He explained that if you do not have a sufficient fund balance the town could lose its credit rating which could really hurt the town financially in the long term.

Councilman Lombardi pointed out that this is not the final budget and they would consider the input from the people. He noted that \$50,000 is $\frac{1}{4}$ of the budget for Reed Memorial Library. He acknowledged the valuable services that the libraries provide noting that is part of the reason why people live here. He also acknowledged that he has a financial responsibility to the tax payers and that he doesn't want to raise taxes but it would be irresponsible to use the reserves.

Supervisor Schmitt asked the two newly elected Town Board Members for their input. He noted that 2013 and 2014 will be even more difficult and that they must prepare for it. He said the Town Board is trying very hard and looking for funds. They are doing the best that they can and understand that the taxpayers are hurting. He stated that he wants the library services in the town noting that library use is up in a declining economy. He concluded that they would restore their funding if possible.

All agenda items having been addressed, on motion by Councilman Ravallo, seconded by Councilman Lombardi, with all members present and in agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m. to the scheduled work session.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis Bourges, Deputy Town Clerk