

TOWN OF CONSTANTIA  
**MINUTES –BUDGET MEETING – October 2, 2025**  
6:00 pm Constantia Town Hall

Present: Frank Tomaino - Supervisor  
Ronald Chapman, Michael Donegan, Thomas Moran – Council Members  
Clare Haynes – Town Clerk  
Michael Dineen – Constantia Fire District, Commissioner  
Dillon Kinsey – Constantia VFD, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief (802)  
Erin Zehr – Park and Recreation Commission

Absent: Daniel Poné - Councilman

**CALL TO ORDER:**

At 6:00 pm Mr. Tomaino called the meeting to order with the pledge of allegiance.

**HIGHWAY:**

Before starting discussions on the 2026 budget Mr. Tomaino would like to discuss the quote from Handy Charlie to upgrade the existing heating system at the highway garage. After advertising with a legal notice no additional bids were received. Mr. Tomaino made the motion to accept the quote from Handy Charlie for \$8,833.32 for the upgrade of the heating system at 60 Railroad St, Bernhards Bay, seconded by Mr. Chapman.

Carried: Ayes: Chapman, Donegan, Moran, Tomaino

**2026 BUDGET DISCUSSION:**

Mr. Tomaino asked representatives from both the Constantia and Cleveland Volunteer Fire Departments to come to tonight's meeting to discuss any issues with their budgets. Mr. Dineen tried to keep the budget down as much as possible for Constantia VFD, originally Mr. Dineen thought he was going to need to put in a substantial increase. After looking at the budget again, he was able to keep the Fire District budget at 2% increase and the protection district at 4.5% increase. Mr. Dineen would like to get both the district and the protection district closer in tax dollars collected. It was always thought that the protection district was given a break as they are farther out, meaning the trucks would take longer to get there, that is not necessarily the case. The major concern for any VFD is the cost of replacement vehicles, the last vehicle that was purchased was \$650,000 new ones are \$975,000. Constantia has been putting \$65,000 away in their capital reserve at the current rate this will not be enough, this line was increased to \$90,000.

Mr. Moran asked about the OSHA demands that were going to be put into place for this year, Mr. Dineen responded they have been put on hold. For smaller department it would be almost impossible to keep up with the financial cost, not to mention the training standards that would be required.

Mr. Tomaino is surprised that Mr. Hines from the Cleveland VFD is not here, as Mr. Hines originally requested to attend a budget meeting.

Mr. Tomaino brought up the Constantia/Cleveland Protection Districts, (SF2-3410.4) in the past these lines have been the same. The thought process was that each protection district has about the same number of residents and cover approximately the same road miles. A few years ago, there started to be a difference, Mr. Dineen would encourage the board to adopt that process again. With no Cleveland members present, the board decided to keep the lines as submitted.

**PARK AND RECREATION:**

Mrs. Zehr created a new form for the park and recreation payroll as there are less staff than before. Mr. Chapman pointed out that minimum wage will be going up, Mrs. Zehr believes there will be enough to cover the difference, but she will make the necessary changes. Mrs. Zehr did reach out to West Monroe to verify they will be sending their children to the park program next year. Mr. Moran asked how many children attended the program, 170 registered, 75-100 attend a day, of that 37 are West Monroe children. Mr. Tomaino reminded the board they did not ask to increase the amount the Town of West Monroe reimburses Constantia for their children attending in 2025. The time to discuss an increase is now for the 2026 budget. Mrs. Zehr will reach out to ask for \$17,500. for the 2026 summer program.

The bathroom issue seems to be fixed as it is much better but would still like to keep this on the list as something that might need to be fixed in the future. Mrs. Zehr would like to purchase a new lawn mower, the one they have is used to haul seaweed and needs to be replaced. Mrs. Zehr will get bids together for approval.

**HISTORIAN:**

Mr. Tomaino would like to revisit the historian line again, after speaking to Mrs. Kieffer, our historian, the Town will be participating in the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the declaration of independence. The plan is to coordinate the celebration along with the fireworks the Town puts on. Mr. Moran is concerned that Mrs. Kieffer is implying she wants to take care of Town records, this is not her responsibility, constitutionally it is the responsibility of the Town Clerk. After discussion it was decided that the historian line will be kept the same \$1,000. Mrs. Kieffer should reach out to Oswego County as they might have some revenue that can be sent to towns from the new Air BnB tax or from the youth bureau.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION:**

Mr. Moran is concerned that the board is putting too much on the front page of the budget under Less Fund Balance & Appr Reserve. By doing this, it lowers what the taxpayers are required to pay. Not too long ago Mr. Moran and Mr. Chapman had a meeting with Mr. Laird Petre who is a retired auditor from New York State Comptroller's office. Mr. Petre did an audit of the bookkeeper; Mr. Petre is not concerned yet but is concerned that soon by using the fund balance in this matter might put the town in financial jeopardy.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Thursday, October 9<sup>th</sup> at 6pm is the next scheduled meeting to discuss the highway fund.

**ADJOURN:**

At 7:00 pm the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:

*Clare Haynes*  
*Town Clerk*