WEST SENECA COURT ROOM
1250 Union Road
West Seneca, NY 14224

TOWN BOARD PROCEEDINGS
Budget Work Session
September 28, 2026

ROLL CALL: Present: Supervisor Gary Dickson
Councilmember Scott Robertson
Councilmember Mary Sherman
Councilmember Robert Breidenstein

Absent:

SUPERVISOR CALL TO ORDER

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Fire Safety Notification
3. Roll Call

NEW BUSINESS

1. 2027 Tentative Benefit Basis Budget

Director of Finance Megan Wnek gave a presentation which will be posted to the Finance Department's webpage.

Supervisor Dickson made the following comments:
- Inflation has caught up with the town
- Salary and overtime costs have only increased 2.5%; employee benefits increased 6% due to health insurance costs and the NYS Retirement System
- Appropriations for the town's budget increased 2.16%; entire town tax levy increased less than 1%
- The budget is under the tax cap

Supervisor Dickson stated Town Board members can make amendments to the budget being presented today.

<u>Town Board</u>
No change.
Councilmember Breidenstein stated there will be a new Town Board member after the November election and that individual would most likely need training.

<u>Town Justice</u>
Katie Almeida, Administrative Clerk for the Courts, stated the budget is decreasing due to retirements and salaries are starting at Step 1. Supervisor Dickson stated he proposed a 3% increase for the Judges and across all stipends.

<u>Supervisor</u>
Supervisor Dickson stated he did not increase the Supervisor's Salary. The Deputy Supervisor's salary was increased by 6%. There is a slight reduction in continuing education and a slight increase in equipment.

<u>Finance Department</u>
Director of Finance Wnek stated she budgeted the Director's salary at 30 hours per payroll to reflect her current average. The department has added one full time Account Clerk. The salary of part-time Clerks was decreased to reflect the current titles and roles.The supply lines across the departments will more accurately reflect the departments' supply costs.

Independent Auditing
Director of Finance Wnek stated the amount accurately reflects the current contract. The 2025 Actual amount reflects the town's lack of preparedness.

Assessor
Supervisor Dickson stated he provided Town Assessor with a 3% increase, to match the White Collar Contract. Town Assessor Finbar stated there is a Shared Services agreement with the Town of Lancaster and pays a portion of his salary. The salary increases for his staff are contractual and the part-time Clerk line was increased to allow for a raise.

Town Clerk
Town Clerk Newton requested that the Town Board reconsider the stipends for the Deputy positions. The responsibilities of the 1st and 2nd Deputies are substantial and essential for the office. In prior years, there was a reduction in the salaries and Town Clerk Newton stated that, in her opinion, that was not reasonable given the responsibilities of the positions. The increases in the 2026 budget are reflective of the appropriate annual adjustments that were not made over an extended number of years. Further, the calculations do not account for the effect of compound increases that would have occurred had annual adjustments been made. Town Clerk Newton requested that the Town Board consider an increase of $3,250 across 6 positions to bring them to:
Deputy of Vital Statistics $2,500 (the additional $500 equates to: $500/year; $42/mo; $9.60/week; or $0.27/hour)
2nd Deputy of Vital Statistics $1,000 (the additional $500 equates to: $500/year; $42/mo; $9.60/week; or $0.27/hour)
Deputy Town Clerk $3,000 (the additional $250 equates to: $250/year; $21/mo; $4.50/week; or $0.14/hour)
2nd Deputy Town Clerk $1,000 (the additional $500 equates to: $500/year; $42/mo; $9.60/week; or $0.27/hour)
Deputy Receiver of Taxes $2,500 (the additional $500 equates to: $500/year; $42/mo; $9.60/week; or $0.27/hour)
2nd Deputy Receiver of Taxes $1,000 (which equates to: $1,000/year; $83.33/mo; $19.23/week; or $0.55/hour)

Town Clerk Newton thanked the Supervisor and Councilmembers for the increase given to the Bingo Inspector, noting that the salary had not increased in many years.

Town Clerk Newton referred to the Postage budget line and stated as she previously advised, the 3rd party vendor will no longer mail receipts for the tax bills they process, and the town will need to absorb the additional costs. The $1,000 increase will not be sufficient to cover the expenses which are currently estimated at $25,000 annually. Supervisor Dickson stated the town does not have to mail receipts and that it was M&T Bank that decided to mail receipts. Further, the receipts are available online or residents can request copies from the office. Town Clerk Newton referred to the Association of Towns publication "Tax Collection in Towns" which states: "If a taxpayer escrows their taxes, the collecting officer must mail or transmit electronically a receipt to the taxpayer within three weeks from when the MII (Mortgage Investing Institution) paid the bill, Real Property Tax Law Section 955 [3]."

Town Attorney
Supervisor Dickson stated the salaries of the Town Attorney and Town Prosecutors are increasing 3%. Mr. Trapp stated the increase in the Equipment line is related to the Prosecutors mailing of pleas.

Personnel
Supervisor Dickson stated the Municipal Director of Human Resources Florea was not present due to illness and stated the salary is reflective of the contract and a 3% increase. Deputy Supervisor Greenan spoke to the increases as she understood them: Computer Software is for Swipeclock; and $1,000 for Supplies.

Town Engineer
Supervisor Dickson stated there was a very small increases.

Central Printing and Mailing
Supervisor Dickson stated the supplies have been allocated to each department. The Computer /Software Maintenance reflects the benefits of the town and Police Department using a single provider.

Special Items
Supervisor Dickson stated insurance costs and grant writing services have increased.

Code Enforcement
Code Enforcement Officer Schieber stated that he requested an increase for the part-time Fire Inspector and would like to purchase a tablet for the large Costco project.

Supervisor Dickson mentioned the small increase for Veterans Services.

Recreation
Director of Recreation Cox stated he requested $75,000 to restart the full day camp program in addition to the half-day camp program. An income report from the pool will be available at the next Town Board meeting. Director of Recreation Cox stated revenue has exceeded revenue target for swim lessons and daily pool charges that help to offset pool costs. Supervisor Dickson stated the projected revenue for 2027 is $500,000.

Councilmember Sherman referred to the revenue projection and asked if Director of Recreation Cox was comfortable with this amount. Director of Recreation Cox confirmed that he is comfortable with the amount and stated the department will be expanding program offerings.

Celebrations
Councilmember Breidenstein stated residents have indicated that they would like to have a More Perfect Union on Union event next year and continue to beautify the town. Additionally, discussions have begun about a Boys and Girls Club in the town and he would like to plan for this in the budget. Councilmember Breidenstein questioned if the Celebrations line should be moved to Community Development.

Senior Citizens

Director of Senior Services Lignos requested that the Cleaning Supplies line be reinstated at the amount of $7,000 and explained that the computer software, maintenance of fitness equipment, and other items are paid for through this line. Supervisor Dickson asked what expenses the Repair & Maintenance line is used for. Director of Senior Services Lignos stated the funds are used for the repair and maintenance of vans.

Councilmember Sherman asked for information about the My Senior Center Program. Director of Senior Services Lignos explained that it is used for many activities across the Senior Center. Supervisor Dickson stated it might be desirable to create a line more appropriate for this expense.

Supervisor Dickson asked if the projected revenue of $100,000 is achievable. Director of Senior Services Lignos stated that amount should be achievable, but the closure for renovations this year will impact this year's revenue.

Councilmember Robertson asked what expenses are paid from the Fitness Consultant line. Director of Senior Services Lignos stated this is for the person that conducts fitness classes.

Historical Preservation Commission

Councilmember Robertson stated he would like to reinstate funds in the amount of $10,000 for Professional Services as the commission continues to work toward designating properties as Historical Landmarks.

Supervisor Dickson stated debt services have been trending down and sales tax revenue is steadily increasing.

Councilmember Breidenstein referred to the large increase in unemployment insurance and asked why it tripled. Director of Finance Wnek stated the amount is based on the current unemployment bills from NYS.

Councilmember Sherman referred to the decrease of $50,000 for Workers Compensation Insurance and asked what that is attributed to. Supervisor Dickson stated the amount is what the town predicts will be spent on the expense and commented on the decreases in the General Fund and Highway Fund over the last 7 years.

Police Department

Chief Cosgrove discussed the Overtime line and the personnel staffing circumstances that significantly increased the costs.

Councilmember Breidenstein asked what the budget to budget increase was. Chief Cosgrove stated he is requesting 3 new Police Officers. One of the officers would be a School Resource Officer and the West Seneca Central School District would pay 80% of their salary for 40 weeks of the year. Police Officers' roles have expanded, and Chief Cosgrove is requesting two additional officers to meet the department's needs. Additionally, the Police Community Policing Program was combined under Overtime. Councilmember Breidenstein asked where the Mental Health Clinician's salary was allocated. Chief Cosgrove stated this position is under Other Expenses.

Disaster Preparedness

Remained the same. Chief Cosgrove stated the town is under a contract with the Code Red system.

Highway Superintendent Adams addressed the following:

General Fund lines
Buildings
- No substantial changes but there are small increases based on trends and price increases
- Community Center: Added an "Equipment Repair and Maintenance" Line for HVAC monitoring and maintenance
- Traffic Control - no change
- Electrical Department - overtime and contractual salary increases

Supervisor Dickson stated the Salary of the Dog Control Officer was increased by 3%.

- Superintendent of Highways - Salary increase for Superintendent was included
- Increase in Overtime line
- Highway Garage - Increase in Repair & Maintenance line
- Buildings and Grounds - Contractual salary increase and additional full time employee for the evening shift
- Ice Rink - Small increase in Repair & Maintenance line
- Buildings & Grounds Pool - Does not anticipate repairs and maintenance
- Cultural Center and Historical Property - Small increases utility costs
Councilmember Breidenstein asked if security cameras are placed at the Community Center and Library. Highway Superintendent Adams stated there are security cameras and are investigating upgrades.
- Building & Grounds Senior Center - Increase to Repair & Maintenance as equipment is aging.
- Sanitation - Salary of Labors should indicate 16. Councilmember Robertson referred to the Longevity and Incentives line at $0. Highway Superintendent Adams stated Sanitation employees do not receive this.
- Recycling - Increase for purchasing replacement totes.

Highway Superintendent Adams stated that the town was not awarded the NYS Plays application, but would like to proceed with the Harlem Road Park replacement next year.

Highway Fund
Supervisor Dickson stated there will be large equipment replacements the Highway Department will need.
- Significant increases for Blacktop Paving, Parts, and Salt and Chemicals lines

ADJOURNMENT
Motion by Supervisor Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Robertson, to adjourn the Budget Work Session at 5:31 P.M.

Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Motion Carried