

**PUBLIC HEARING**

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**Local Law to Override Tax Levy Limit**

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Town of Ulysses

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August 14, 2018

Audio of the minutes are available on the website at [ulysses.ny.us](http://ulysses.ny.us).

The meeting was held at the Ulysses Town Hall at 10 Elm Street, Trumansburg.

Notice of Town Board meetings are posted on the town's website and clerk's board.

**ATTENDANCE:**

TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Supervisor- Liz Thomas

Board members- Michael Boggs, John Hertzler, Nancy Zahler, Rich Goldman

Deputy Town Clerk- Sarah Koski

OTHERS PRESENT: Anne Schneiderman, Steven Valloney, Louise Terry, Sarah DelRosso, Anne Koreman, Will Conroy, Mairead O'Sullivan

**OPENING THE HEARING:**

Motion to open by Ms. Thomas at 7pm, seconded by Mr. Hertzler.

**Supervisor Elizabeth Thomas read the following statement:**

*Welcome. My name is Elizabeth Thomas and I am the Supervisor of the Town of Ulysses. I am conducting tonight's public hearing on behalf of the Town Board of the Town of Ulysses.*

*The subject of this public hearing is the proposed Local Law to override the tax levy limit established in general municipal law 3-C.*

*Specifically this local law allows the town of Ulysses government to have authority to set the tax levy at a level it finds to be appropriate to provide the proper services that will keep residents safe and provide for a thriving community—otherwise stated as preserving the Health, Safety and Welfare of our community as dictated by the law. During the budget season from the end of September to the end of October, the Town of Ulysses board will be reviewing expenses and revenues, and if they should find that more funds need to be expended or put into reserves for future needs, this override gives the latitude to do so. The Town Board fully intends to stay within the cap if at all possible, but not all costs are in our control, for example last year, health care costs increased ~5%. The cost for Fire protection and EMS will likely significantly increase—a cost that can be nearly 20% of the tax levy, with the decision under the full control of the Village of Trumansburg.*

*Historically, the highway equipment fund has been underfunded for years and money simply must be put into this reserve to ensure equipment is replaced on a reasonable cycle. Contributions to other important reserves have not been made in recent years to stay within the tax cap, but these reserves, including bridges, snow and ice removal, emergency road repairs due to flooding, etc., are important to keep adequately funded.*

***Copies of the proposed Local law are available at the back of the room.***

*The date of this public hearing was set by resolution of the Town Board on July 25, 2018 and a notice of this hearing was published in the Ithaca Journal on Saturday, July 28.*

*The purpose of this public hearing is to afford the general public an opportunity to make statements and comments about the Local Law. The hearing will remain open until all members of the public who are present at the hearing have been given an opportunity to make statements or comments on the proposed local law.*

*We welcome the public to ask questions about the budget anytime to myself or Town Board members directly, or during the budget process in September and October. A public hearing on the budget will precede its adoption, but it is best to engage before the public hearing.*

*Next I will address some administrative matters by noting the presence of the following documents:*

- 1. The PH notice that was printed in the Ithaca Journal on July 28, 2018*
- 2. The proposed Local Law.*

**COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:**

**Louise Terry**, Maplewood Road. Question: if the board passes this law, is there a limit as to how high the budget will go? Ms. Thomas answered that there is no limit, but historically the Town Board has worked hard to keep the budget as close to the cap as possible. The Board does need to fund reserves to upgrade equipment for the Highway Department as well as plan for other long term financial needs of the town.

**Anne Koreman**, Tompkins County Legislature. Ms. Koreman shared that the county legislature passed a similar resolution regarding the tax cap override. She reiterated that this is the standard procedure for local governments.

**Anne Schneiderman**, Hinging Post Road. Question: Is there a multi-year plan to add to the Town's reserve funds? Ms. Thomas said yes, there is a 12 year plan for equipment reserves. There are also long term plans being developed for bridges, culverts and employee benefits. Ms. Zahler clarified that the Town can only budget for one year at a time but can plan for many years into the future. Ms. Thomas feels that the Town's reserves are underfunded. Ms. Thomas said that the State government provides the Town about \$ 80,000 for the highway department annually and about \$30,000 for the town to spend at their discretion. The Federal Government gives the town next to nothing in the way of funding, so the vast majority of the Town's budget comes from local taxes.

**Sarah DelRosso**, Maplewood Road. Question: Is the Town Board asking for a tax cap override but hopes not to use it? Ms. Thomas replied that is correct; that the Town Board works hard to not go over the tax cap when budgeting.

**CLOSING THE HEARING:**

Mr. Goldman moved to close the hearing at 7:22pm; seconded by Mr. Boggs.

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*Respectfully submitted by Sarah Koski on 8/21/18.*