

FREWSBURG WATER DEPARTMENT

PO BOX 497 / 1725 WAHLGREN RD

FREWSBURG NY 14738

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9/13/2017

BACKHOE BID PRICES

NIAGARA FRONTIER

NEW HOLLAND

PRICE – \$ 93,634.00

TRADE - \$ 26,500.00

FINAL PRICE- \$ 67,134.00

MONROE TRACTOR

CASE

PRICE – \$ 97350.69

TRADE - \$ 27,000.00

FINAL PRICE- \$ 70,350.69

FIVE STAR EQUIPMENT INC.

JOHN DEERE

PRICE – \$ 88,550.00

TRADE - \$ 22,000.00

FINAL PRICE- \$ 66,550.00

WE WOULD BE REPLACING A 2008 NEW HOLLAND
BACKHOE

Town of Carroll Swim Program

The Town of Carroll Town Board has been studying the Town of Carroll Swim Program for the last several months due to concerns that have been raised regarding funding and income issues. Over the last ten years the cost of the program has been stable at a total budget cost of around \$16,000.00 per year. Part of this cost was slated to be covered by user fees (swimming classes and open swim registration money). This program has been under the financial and personnel oversight of the Town of Carroll with a part time Director who is responsible for scheduling and supervision of lifeguards and the programming. Typically, a staff member at the school processed registrations and collected much of the registration money, assigned students to sessions and generated a roster for each session which was then given to the Director and moneys turned in to the Town Clerk for deposit. Additional moneys were also collected by the director at lessons and open swim sessions, which were also periodically turned in to the Town Clerk. Anna Gifford served as director from 10/2007 to 8/2013. Allison Chitester served from 9/2013 through 8/2015. Anna Gifford was again hired for the position in August 2015 and served for 2 years until August 2017.

In February of 2017, Ms. Gifford presented the board with a proposal requesting to be switched from her \$100 per week salary (\$5200 per year) to an hourly wage from January to May of each fiscal year and again from September to December with no pay during the summer months of June to August. The board agreed to look at the program and discuss any proposed changes.

In March of 2017, Ms. Gifford came to the board to discuss the idea of Red Cross Certification for the program and other options. The board authorized her to spend \$300 to apply for the Red Cross licensure. In March the Town Board also held a work session with Ms Gifford to further discuss the swim program and financial issues. At this meeting, she stated that the program brings in approximately \$3,000 per session with three sessions normally held per year. For a total of around \$9,000 per year plus some income from open swim. Total current program expenses are \$16,000 per year to pay for director salary and lifeguard payroll. The board agreed to Ms. Gifford' request to switch to hourly pay of \$15.00 per hour with no pay for June-August. It was agreed that the directors total pay could not go over the \$5,200 limit for the 2017 fiscal year. We would look at proposals for any possible budget increases for the 2018 fiscal year. When we began to investigate the total income received by the Town for the swim program we realized that the actual deposits were less than half the amount of money per year than what Ms. Gifford indicated to us. She also had stated that she kept careful records of program participation. Councilwoman Ekstrom contacted Ms. Gifford to request copies of her records so that we could research further. This request was met with hostility and lack of cooperation. Councilwoman Ekstrom then turned to the school to ask for copies of the school's records from the swim program and was told that they had recently been cleaned out and all that were available were the records from the current session.

Ms. Gifford attended the May Town Board Meeting. She turned in some registration forms from April 2016 to April 2017 but admitted that she had no receipts for money turned in to the Town Clerk, and no rosters for any of the sessions that indicated numbers of paid participants. She admitted that she had recently destroyed (burned) all the old records since she didn't think it was necessary to save them. Board minutes

indicate that she stated \$11,741.30 had been brought in from Sept. 2016 to May 2017 toward the swim program against a yearly budget of \$16,000.00. (Upon further investigation, it was determined that this amount represents money turned in from all of fiscal year 2016, part of fiscal year 2017 and included deposits that were not money's collected from the swim program.) Supervisor Jones instructed Ms. Gifford to retain all records and receipts for moneys turned in for the future.

In May Ms. Gifford also put in two FOIL requests for information from the town for records indicating the number of participants in the program, how many workers, hourly rates, income and payroll for the program. Some of this information was information she destroyed and did not provide to the Town. It could not be provided to her since she had not provided it to the town. Income and payroll information was currently under audit and she was notified that it would be provided once the audit was completed. On August 9, 2017, at the regular Board meeting, Ms. Gifford attended and requested an update on when she would receive the Budget numbers for the swim program so that next year's budget could be planned. Supervisor Jones indicated that the information would be available in the very near future. A new registration process and method of handling money directly by the Town Clerk was discussed for upcoming registration for the September session. Supervisor Jones informed Ms. Gifford that she would be going back to a weekly salary in 2018 since under the hourly structure, much of the director salary was expended by May and she filed for unemployment for June-August which added more unanticipated cost to the program. A work session was held with the board and Ms. Gifford on August 16, 2017 to try to gain more insights into how the program was managed, work out a registration system that can provide more accountability for the money collected, and discuss future plans for the program. At this meeting supervisor Jones presented Ms. Gifford with expense and payroll reports for the program that she had requested. Ms. Gifford presented us with a budget proposal that proposed doubling both her Salary and life guard costs for 2018 with a total Town Budget of \$32,000 per year compared to the current \$16,000. We discussed how the income deposited appears to have been less than half of what she estimated it was for the last few years and that we needed to get some numbers for what the program is currently bringing in under the new structure before committing to more expenses. Ms. Gifford was initially quite disrespectful in her tone and demeanor when talking to the board and was warned by council members about her attitude. Things improved and we thought that we had an understanding going forward. but the meeting ended with Ms. Gifford resuming her disrespectful attitude with the board and even challenging whether one of the board members was qualified to serve. Supervisor Jones dismissed the meeting and set up a special board meeting for the following week.

On August 23, 2017 a special board meeting was held where the board decided to relieve Ms. Gifford of her duties and to appoint Sara Moller as new Swim Director. The board reluctantly arrived at this decision due to the problems experienced at the work session held the previous week and the repeated insubordinate attitude expressed by Ms. Gifford toward her employers. This was also coupled with her lack of cooperation with the board on researching the programs records and her destruction of town records. It also became very apparent that we could not meet her salary demands on a tight Town Budget. It has been expressed by Ms. Gifford and others in social media and elsewhere that the board had secretly decided back in May to replace her with Ms.

Moller. This is not factual. While, the board was aware that Ms. Moller might be interested in the position if it ever became available, the decision to replace Ms. Gifford was not made until late August. We are committed to providing a quality swimming program for the town as we move forward and will continue to work toward that goal.

FYI - The only income we can find as reported by Kevin Honey is:
2015: \$3,280 Total
2016: \$4,534 Total
Receipts for 2017 so far (1st half) are \$3,927.30

I have had the opportunity to encounter Ms Gifford on five separate occasions since January of 2017. All of these encounters were at public board meetings. Ms Gifford addressed the board on each of these occasions re: the taxpayer supported swim program she runs at the FCS pool. I have seen her respond to her employer, aka the Board with distain, disrespect and defiance. When asked to respond to the fiscal viability and process aspects of her program she became defensive and at the very least unprofessional. She elevated her voice and talked over those who were trying to instruct her on what was needed to evaluate her request for expansion of the swim program. She was unable to provide adequate documentation of the monies collected, or spent on the program, and the number of participants. All required elements of a tax funded program.

I was also present in January when Ms Gifford pleaded with board to allow her to collect an hourly wage in lieu of her yearly salaried amount. In exchange for this she would waive her salary for June, July and August. This allowed her to collect all her wages in the first quarter of 2017 and file a claim for unemployment during the summer months when she was not working. Since the Town is self insured this came directly from the tax payer and not unemployment insurance, and therefore adding to the expense of the program.

As elected officials the board is entrusted with the responsibility to execute the appropriation of tax dollars within their jurisdiction. My observance of Ms Gifford's behavior did not provide me with a feeling of confidence that she was the appropriate person to serve as director of a tax funded program.

I think the Board acted in the best interests of the taxpayers of the Town with the dismissal of Ms Gifford as program director. I say this because I was witness to the situation as it was unfolded and without the emotion presented in its reenactment.

Judy Bloomzeist
33 Water St
Freeburg NY 14738
9-13-2017

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