

**TOWN BOARD MEETING
Tuesday March 17, 2020**

A regularly scheduled Town Board Meeting was held on March 17, 2020 in the Town Hall, 1 Town Hall Way, Ulster Park, NY with the following persons in attendance:

**Supervisor Shannon Harris
Councilperson Evelyn Clarke
Councilperson Jared Geuss
Councilperson Kathie Quick – via video conference
Councilperson Chris Farrell**

Administrative Recorder: Holly A. Netter, Town Clerk, RMC

** Due to the COVID -19 emergency, Governor Cuomo’s Executive Orders temporarily suspended and modified laws relating to the Article 7 of the Public Officers Law through April 11, 2020. This meeting was held without permitting public in-person access to the meeting. The meeting was televised live on Public Access Television on Channel 23, streamed on Facebook Live, a conference number was provided to call in comments and listen to the meeting and comments posted to the live stream were read and questions were answered. DIAL IN TO LISTEN: (425) 585-7569 PRESS * THEN 6 TO ASK A QUESTION/SUBMIT A COMMENT

All members present were distanced 6 ft apart to abide by the social distancing rule.

Supervisor Shannon Harris called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

PLEDGE

PUBLIC COMMENT –

Stephanie Lettieri – Called in to confirm the public could hear and the number was working. Many other commented on Facebook to confirm video was working. There was a delay between the phone and video. This issue will be looked into for the next meeting.

Patricia Barnett – Facebook messaged “people need a paycheck, will they be paid as if they worked their regular hours? The response was yes.

COVID-19 DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS

Town Hall is closed to the public in the interest of public health and safety.

Government personnel has been reduced to 50%, hours of operation are 10 am -2 pm M-F. All departments are available by phone or email. Each office will have one person; some will be working remotely from home with laptops connected to the Town server. The Highway and Water/Sewer departments are also operating at 50% everyone is on standby if they are needed. Water/ Sewer are “Essential” they will have coverage with half man power but everyone is on standby in the case of an emergency.

Ulster County COVID-19 Hotline:

845-443-8888

Monday – Saturday | 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

NYS Coronavirus Information Hotline:

888-364-3065

Ulster County website has a link at the top of their page for COVID - 19 information.

Supervisor Harris said this may be the last in person ZBA and Planning Board meeting for a while. This may also be the last in person Town Board meeting during this health crisis. Teleconferencing can occur to keep projects happening. Staff members will continue to have their employee meeting via zoom, there may be a mix of workers spread out and dialing in.

This virus is preparing us for the long term on how we conduct business. A lock box is being purchased and installed so people can drop off their payments for taxes, water sewer & court fines. Supervisor Harris said for phase two she would like to have the tax office converted to have a walk up window with someone to greet people, give out necessary paperwork and buzz people into the building to be able to see the appropriate office.

ECERT MISSION STATEMENT

Supervisor Harris said it is the intent of the Town of Esopus to have a trained and organized volunteer response team that supports our community and strives to effectively and efficiently utilize all resources made available to provide safety and neighborly assistance to the residents of the town in the event of an emergency. The group would be called (“ECERT”) Esopus Community Emergency Response Team.

Mission: It is the mission of the Esopus Community Response Team (“ECERT”) to prepare, respond, and assist our community in coordination with town officials and employees before during and after an emergency, crisis or disaster.

ECERT needs a leader and to become an Ad Hoc committee member which will update the Board. Resident Stephanie Lettieri, who participates in emergency response at the County level,

joined by phone and explained how the County level program worked. She said they meet once every 6 months, sub committees meet weekly or monthly. Some examples of subcommittees were given: shelter, food supply and communications.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILPERSON KATHIE QUICK TO SUPPORT AND ADVANCE THE ECERT GROUP AND THEIR MISSION STATEMENT. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY EVELYN CLARKE. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

The next step will be to develop a survey based on the mission statement to identify skills of each member and their intensions. This will allow the members to be appropriately categorized and put people on certain tracks for education.

Councilperson Geuss said an Ad Hoc committee will need to be formalized stating the number of members. The Board will need a list of names of who will be appointed, interest, intentions, few subcommittees and what would be represented. Information should include background, expertise and multidisciplinary profile. The Board will formalize it and determine who will be part of the group such as a representative from each hamlet, background and expertise so that if a person leaves we can fill the position with a similar person. For example a nurse.

Supervisor Harris thanked Stephanie for her participation and information.

EFC GRANT EVALUATION

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILPERSON CHRIS FARRELL TO AUTHORIZE SUPERVISOR HARRIS TO SUBMIT PAPERWORK REQUIRED TO CLOSE FINANCING FOR DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND PROJECT #18744. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON JARED GEUSS. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR.

DEC LAND PURCHASE

Supervisor Harris received a letter from NYSDEC stating their interest in acquiring several properties in the Town currently owned by Scenic Hudson Land Trust. These properties are land locked and will be added to Black Creek State Forest. These parcels contain several state-regulated wetland, habitat for the northern cricket frog and a state list of endangered species.

If acquired, the DEC will manage these lands for watershed protection, the production of timber and other forest products, to protect and enhance wildlife habitat and biodiversity and to provide opportunities for public outdoor recreation. Recreational activities that will be available on these lands include hunting, fishing, trapping, and bird watching. The proposed John Burroughs Black Creek Trail corridor will cross two of the parcels, offering unparalleled recreational opportunities for hikers. Overall the project will continue the ongoing efforts being

made to protect the Black Creek watershed and preserve it's unique resources. Currently these parcels are off the tax rolls.

SUPERVISOR HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO SUPPORT HER ADVOCATING FOR THE DEC TO ACQUIRE THE PROPERTY FROM SCENIC HUDSON AND TO PUT THE PROPERTY BACK ON THE TAX ROLLS. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON CHRIS FARRELL. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

Updates:

COVID-19 Update. All non-essential board meetings have been cancelled until April 1, 2020. Town Hall is closed to the public until further notice but departments are open and all services will be provided by phone and email.

The updated **Town Hall deed** was received from the County Clerk's office, confirming the new address as 1 Town Hall Way. We are getting a sign from DOT and it will be installed.

NYS DEC issued the permit for the Hardenburgh Culvert project #48925.

AOT Annual Finance School training sessions May 14 & 15

The Dept. of Taxation and Finance sent a letter determining the tentative special franchise full values for special franchise companies.

Ulster County District Attorney David Clegg sent a letter appointing Town **special prosecutors** David L. Steinberg and John Ventosa to prosecute Town Code matters and Matt Jankowski to prosecute traffic violations.

The Board members continue to work in their special groups for critical projects:

A) *Spectrum contract* renewal negotiations, Supervisor Harris will keep the Board informed of progress being made

B) *Employee handbook* policy - continue update,

C) Plan and data inquiry to fix *assessment equalization* - Supervisor Harris said they will wait to see if the COVID -19 pandemic affects the housing market. Potentially if there is a recession the equalization rate may correct itself.

EVENTS & KEY DATES:

Mon, 3/30: POSTPONED until further notice - EBA Spring Mixer.

Mon, 3/30: Port Ewen Fire Department public meeting, 7 PM at PEFD Headquarters (old Moose Lodge).

Wed, 4/1: Park pavilion rentals open for non-residents and monthly kayak storage rentals open for all.

Sat, 4/4: Esopus FD Chicken Parm Dinner at the Esopus Firehouse.

Sat, 4/12: DECISION DELAYED UNTIL 4/1 ON WHETHER TO HOLD - Esopus Children’s Egg Hunt.

Sat, 4/18: Port Ewen Fire Department public meeting, 11 AM at PEFD Headquarters.

Tue, 4/21: Port Ewen Fire Department public referendum vote, 6-9 PM at PEFD Headquarters.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS March 2020

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Town Board of the Town of Esopus, County of Ulster as follows:

WHEREAS, the Town of Esopus has been presented with vouchers for payment and these vouchers have been examined and approved by the Town Board,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the following vouchers be approved for payment:

GENERAL FUND	201092 - 201150	\$ 60,126.10
HIGHWAY FUND	202031 - 202063	\$ 190,910.92
STREET LIGHTS	206001	\$ 5,850.08
PORT EWEN SEWER FUND	203025 - 203044	\$ 31,396.45
PORT EWEN WATER FUND	204040 - 204063	\$ 20,424.39
Capital (30)		
		TOTAL \$ 308,707.94

A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE PAYMENT OF VOUCHERS.

OFFERED BY: Councilperson Jared Geuss
SECONDED BY: Councilperson Kathy Quick

Councilperson Evelyn Clarke	AYE
Councilperson Jared Geuss	AYE
Councilperson Kathie Quick	AYE
Councilperson Chris Farrell	AYE
Supervisor Shannon Harris	AYE

ALL TOWN BOARD MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILPERSON CHRIS FARRELL TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:15 PM TO DISCUSS THE EMPLOYMENT HISTORY OF SPECIFIC PERSONNEL AND A POSSIBLE LITIGATION MATTER. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON JARED GEUSS. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILPERSON CHRIS FARRELL TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:52 PM. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON JARED GEUSS. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

PERSONNEL MATTER ACTION:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILPERSON CHRIS FARRELL TO APPOINT ALEX DEAN AS COMMUNITY OUTREACH COORDINATOR AT AN ANNUAL SALARY OF \$34,088.60 WITH HEALTH BENEFITS INCLUDED. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON EVELYN CLARKE. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

LITIGATION ACTION: NONE

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILPERSON CHRIS FARRELL TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:55 PM. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON JARED GEUSS. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectively Submitted,

*Holly A. Netter
Town Clerk*