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**TOWN OF ESOPUS
TOWN BOARD WORKSHOP
MARCH 22, 2021 – Starting at 4:30 PM**

This was a Special Town Board Workshop Meeting held at 1 Town Hall Way, Ulster Park, NY on March 22, 2021 at 4:30 PM. Notice of the meeting was given to the Daily Freeman, posted on the Town website and noticed at Town Hall. It was available via zoom and Live Streamed on the Town of Esopus Facebook page with the following persons in attendance:

**Supervisor Jared Geuss
Councilperson Kathie Quick
Councilperson Chris Farrell
Councilperson Evelyn Clarke
Councilperson Laura Robinson**

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

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

PUBLIC COMMENT (limited to 3 minutes)

Gloria Van Vliet Doris St –previously served on Town Board for 20 years. Why did the applicant (Shannon Harris) submit her resignation from her Supervisor position on 3/2/2021 saying she needed to be with her children, had time constraints and now 2 weeks later is applying for the Full Time Assessor position? The Town Board seems to have called a very hasty meeting not usual time or day. Gloria has submitted a FOIL request to the Town Clerk for all qualifications and documents including qualifications available from the state and tax people for this applicant; they must be made available to the public. Transparency is questionable here. The Board should not vote until all documents are available. Questioned how a new appointed Town Board member can make a valid educated decision on this appointment when she has only been on the board for a week.

Barbara Jankowski Anna Lane – here as a resident and taxpayer. She said, "as most of you know I have worked for the Town as Deputy Town Clerk almost 7 years and for those who don't know I will be moving on to a fulltime job less than two weeks so my time is short here." She said she'd like to echo some of Gloria's comments. Barbara said we always speak to transparency and this meeting that was only called a few days ago for this Assessor's position; she didn't think was very transparent. She does not recall seeing any new want ads online for

the past several months. We have been without an Assessor since June 2020. A consultant came in during the October timeframe to help. She said she did not have any details on that and was unaware if Patty (Deputy Assessor) had much contact with him to help her through on a day to day basis. She asked, "Where are the requests for applications? We haven't seen any postings since the job was advertised during the summer." To have someone come into a meeting tonight and possibly get appointed without any other applicants being able to come in to apply for the position which may have additional qualifications. The State is very clear on the minimum qualifications that an applicant must have. It would behoove the Board to open up to accept more applications before they appoint someone this evening.

Donna McCauley Ulster Park, - previously served on Town Board for 4 years. Donna said, " I would like to know what her (Shannon Harris) qualifications are. The applicant needs six months validation of real property experience to be appointed to the position. I'd like the applicant to describe her 6 months of experience in detail during real property evaluation and minimum qualifications for the job.

Guy Brought – Horton Lane- Asked if the Town will continue to pay Dan Baker \$3500/ month to train a new Assessor while paying a \$42,000 salary to the Assessor; seems to be a lot of money out of pocket for the Town. Asked, does the applicant (Shannon Harris) have the qualifications and any kind of background in this type of work? He would like to see transparency in the Town.

Kristin McDermott- Lampman Ave - She had been in the Assessor's office for the past 7 years until this summer. She worked with the Assessor as Clerk with assessments, filing exemptions, how to file, and familiar with the Real Property System. Over the summer she was transferred down to the Building Department. She was open to learning something new even though she was very comfortable in the Assessor's Office. She has learned the combination of working in the building department and the assessor's office; the departments go hand to hand and she feels it makes her a stronger candidate for the possibility of the Assessor Position. She had emailed her resume in October to be considered for the Assessor Position. She said she didn't have an interview and no one really spoke about it. Kristin said along with the 7 years of experience, she has been a resident of Town for almost 40 years and has relationships with employees she has been working with here. She is open to taking courses and growing that experience she said she felt she would be a stronger candidate because she had been working in the Assessor's Office for 7 years and doing the procedures; knowing where to pull info and how things work.

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Brenda Wolfeil, Dick Williams Lane - Why the critical meeting today, at an unusual time when people can't come because they are working, for an Assessors job, when 9 months have gone by and nothing was heard about it or posted. She said there should be new postings with interviews. If the previous Supervisor learned the job from the Assessor from Kingston that was being paid, who was running the Town when that was being done.

Patty Kowatch Bowne St. – She said she would add to everyone else's comments. It seems like a quick turnaround for someone who has just left a position do to the lack of time. She did not want to see an immediate decision. For the sake of the Town and for the Board she asked them to make sure the "I's are dotted and T's crossed" before a final decision was made. She hopes the decision is not made in a hasty way.

Bernice McNierney, Main Street- "There is no mentor in the office. Everyone that has come into a town position had a mentor, Holly learned from Diane, I learned from Pat Huber, Joanna learned from Edie and Dan. So many assessments are needed right now and we all have learned from someone."

SUPERVISOR GEUSS MADE A MOTION TO CLOSE PUBLIC COMMENTS. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON FARRELL. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

Agenda

TOWN ASSESSOR – review and potential appointment of Town Assessor applicant.

Councilperson Chris Farrell made a Motion to post the Assessors Position for the next two weeks to allow anyone who would like to be considered time to apply. This motion was NOT seconded by anyone.

SUPERVISOR GEUSS MADE A MOTION TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 4:55 PM FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING CANDIDATES FOR THE POSITION. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN EVELYN CLARKE. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

A MOTION TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMAN CLARKE AT 5:10 PM AND WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN FARRELL. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

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ACTION:

The Town Board decided to hold open the candidacy for the Assessor Position and will accept applications until 3/31/2021. Interviews will be conducted on April 1, 2021 at the Town Board meeting.

Supervisor Geuss reviewed a timeline of the Town's Due Diligence:

May- Joanna Mignone submitted her resignation

June – The Town posted Assessors' position, circulated to NYS Assessor's Association/ Ulster County Assessor Association

July – received 6 applicants

August- They had one very good candidate who declined the offer, went back to offer more money and the applicant declined again; could not come to agreeable terms. Assessor trainee position job description was posted on Facebook. Patty Smith was appointed as Acting Assessor.

Sept- interviewed candidate who seemed to want to work more on a PT basis - a couple days a week. Board decided not to go in that direction.

Nov – Dan Baker was hired as consultant to assist Patty

Jan - Dan Baker gave Assessment report to Board. Shannon was coordinating with Dan, had SCAR Hearings that needed to be done in a timely manner. The Facebook posting for the job expired.

Feb - Acting Assessor term expired

Supervisor Geuss said they had inquiries from the state to follow up on and needed to move quickly on this meeting. The Board will accept applications until 3/31 and interview candidates on 4/1 at The Town Board meeting.

Sleightsburgh

Supervisor Geuss said many meetings have been held relating to this topic. Sleightsburgh Residents Association (SRA) asked the Board members to attend a meeting with them.

Councilperson Farrell reviewed some highlights from the meeting:

* Sleightsburgh Residents want signage prior to April 1

*Still concerned about access and want access to be only Dawn to Dusk.

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*Requested a letter written to the DEC and Sheriffs and SRA told them DEC wants the signs to say violators will be prosecuted so it can be enforced.

*Resident's feel they shouldn't be in there duck hunting

Kathie Quick

*Residents request Sleightsburgh Park parking marked better for trailers

* Stop sign by Third Ave.

*Portable speed sign to make people aware of how fast they are going

*Signs for big boats at top of hill

*Cement barrier by Jay and Sue Van Vliet's home to stop fence damage.

Councilman Quick said she felt these could be done, money was in the budget last year to order the signs.

Kathie Quick said the residents were upset because they were told these items would be done and it is not done yet. Board had money in the budget for speed signs and new signage signs.

Evelyn Clarke asked how many sportsmen have keys – 14, 2 kayakers and emergency/ staff also have keys. She also asked about the letter whether it was requested by the DEC. She said the residents told the Board members at the SRA meeting that even if they call the DEC or Sheriff they are unable to go in without the letter. Supervisor Geuss said he did not receive any communication requesting a letter from the Sheriff's or DEC. Law enforcement needs a list of the rules so they know what is allowable. Town Clerk Holly Netter said she was not given any background for this meeting. She said if she had a list she could share it with the current key holders so they were aware of the rules. Supervisor Geuss said it was a list of general ideas and had not been agreed upon by all Board members. The list was put together so the members meeting with the SRA would have an idea of what the Town was thinking of.

Supervisor Geuss said soft opening for April 1, he has to work out the times with the bailiffs for opening and closing the gates. Supervisor Geuss said keep things as is for now relating to keys but no new keys will be given out.

Zoom comment Sharron Jones – She said she thought they had a pretty decent meeting down in Sleightsburgh on Sunday and thanked the 3 Town Board members for coming down to talk to them and listening to the residents. She said she thinks things have gotten mixed up. They desperately need their signage with the wording that was approved last year, but then it stopped. The wording was put together by both sides. "Also I'm still concerned that there are

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still keys out to the duck hunters and kayakers. If there are keys to nobody else except emergency then they should not be using their key to go into to the park when no other kayakers can do this. Duck hunting, we are not concerned with that and we are not concerned with the sportsman to the degree that the Town put us". Our position here was safety, stopping the drug deals and for the Town to start managing this very neglected park that you all seem to think contributes a lot. It may contribute a lot to you but down here it is not contributing to anybody except for an unsafe environment. "I'm Grateful keeping keys down to dusk and don't think any keys should be out there outside emergency personnel. DEC/Sheriff grateful they go down there but Sherriff Figueroa said they need a letter from the Town saying if they see something outside the normal they can proceed to stop it. This letter has been requested many times and has never happened. Neighbors do not want to deal with the night life and want their homes and family safe". She said she really wants it done this spring; it's been going on for 4 years. Supervisor Harris said the keys were going to be collected on December 22, 2021.

Supervisor Geuss getting signs straight, and getting DEC /Sheriff on the same page and keep as is for now. Town Clerk Netter asked for clarification about the key holders. Councilman Quick said the keys were only for duck hunters. Town Clerk said she did not have the minutes but it was determined that others stating a need and being identified could obtain a key for after hour use because we would have control on who would have keys and the cameras. The majority of key holders have been key holders for years, she clarified that she didn't need to get the keys back. Councilman Evelyn Clarke said no, I don't think you need to get the keys back, they are out. Kathie Quick said with the electronic gate system it will be just a little different. Councilman Kathie said with the electronic gate system we would know who was coming in and out. Supervisor Geuss said as we do now with the camera system. Councilman Quick said anyone with access not following the rules can have their privileges revoked. Councilman quick said she really wants everyone to enjoy that park; it's special in a lot of ways.

Supervisor Geuss said keep as is for right now, he should have time line by Wednesday and will share information regarding the research he does with the gate and Sheriff's department.

Councilman Clarke said walking trails need to be repaired. Logs and trees are down over the trails. Supervisor Geuss said Matt Roger from Laberge was currently working on the LWPR update and are identifying all the trails. He also said they would also be looking for volunteers to help with the cleanup and to add signage preventing people going too far where it becomes dangerous. Supervisor Geuss said there is a lot of work to be done in Sleightsburgh, they have budgeted for it, prepared for it and are moving on it.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN EQUIPMENT LEASE
BY THE ESOPUS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
FOR THE TOWN OF ESOPUS IN ULSTER COUNTY, NEW YORK**

Supervisor Geuss introduced the following resolution, which was seconded by Councilman Kathie Quick, who moved its adoption:

WHEREAS, the Town of Esopus Highway Department is in need of a new paver;

AND WHEREAS, Town of Esopus Highway Superintendent Michael Cafaldo has researched and found a replacement paver suitable to the Town's needs – a 2021 LeeBoy 8520B;

AND WHEREAS, Superintendent Cafaldo has contacted the appropriate vendor, Hoffman Equipment Rental, to request more information, and has since received a sale price and financing plan;

AND WHEREAS, the Esopus Town Board has received and reviewed said information;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That Highway Superintendent Michael Cafaldo is hereby authorized to lease a 2021 LeeBoy 8520B Paver from Hoffman Equipment Rental at the total price of \$202,694.00 with an annual payment due of \$41,224.62.

The foregoing resolution was voted upon with all Councilmen voting as follows:

Councilman Laura Robinson	AYE
Councilman Evelyn Clarke	AYE
Councilman Chris Farrell	absent**
Councilman Kathie Quick	AYE
Supervisor Jared Geuss	AYE

** Councilperson Farrell excused himself earlier to return to work.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SUPERVISOR GEUSS TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:40 PM. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN CLARKE. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectively submitted,

Holly A. Netter
Town Clerk, RMC