

**TOWN OF ESOPUS
TOWN BOARD WORKSHOP
May 6, 2021 – Starting at 7:00 PM**

A regularly scheduled Town Board Meeting was held on May 6, 2021 in person at 1 Town Hall Way, Ulster Park in addition to being available via zoom and Live Streamed on the Town of Esopus’ Facebook page due to the ongoing pandemic. The following persons in attendance:

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

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

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Public Comment:

Chris Marta –

Thank you getting the gate installed wire still hanging; assumes someone will be back to fix it. Senator Schumer noted the Town of Esopus will be allocated approximately \$960,000 for the American Rescue Plan. Mr. Marta asked what the Board is going to do with the funds and how the information would be shared with the residents. Supervisor Guess said at this point the State has not given specific guidelines through treasury on how we can spend the money. Infrastructure, tourism and infrastructure for broadband was mentioned. It was very vague on what it can be used for. It will be a great opportunity for the Town.

Mr. Marta said a few weeks ago it was decided that the park hours and special access a half hour before and after for key holders. He has heard some rumblings that there may be reconsideration or adjustment to those hours. They were excited that the Board made a decision and is taken back that it may be reconsidered. A vote is a vote if you start to consider a revote I think we are setting ourselves up for a lot of unresolved back and forth for another period of time. He appreciated the time and effort that the Board took to make that last resolution 2 meetings ago and he hopes the Board sticks to their decision.

Simeon Swinger, Mount Community bought a gift of maple syrup from their elementary school to thank everyone. We all survived COVID and we hope to find many ways to work together during the coming year.

Jay Van Vliet

Locks were changed on the gate “I don’t know where the hunters got their information from. No one down here changed the lock”. It was changed by the Parks and Recreation Department. After they changed it they asked Jay if he still had his key and the key was swapped out with the new key. Jay said it was miss information and he wants an apology.

Jay said his fence is not on Town property. Jay talked to the Code Enforcement Officer, Highway Superintendent and Town officials. He said he wants an apology for that too. “We are not being the bullies down here; the hunters are. They want what they want I need for the Town to set hours on the park.” The Van Vliets talked to Scenic Hudson today and were told they have no idea where they got their information from.

MaryJane Schwark – Technical difficulties no comment made.

Esopus Climate Smart Committee

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMAN KATHIE QUICK TO REAFFIRM THE CLIMATE SMART COMMITTEE WITH MEMBERS: STEPHEN CERINI, CHRIS DECICCO, MARK ELLISON, CYNTHIA MCVAY, LAURA PETIT, AND NOEL RUSS AND APPOINT LAURA PETIT AS TOWN OF ESOPUS ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD MEMBER TERM TO EXPIRE 12/31/2022 AND CLIMATE SMART COMMITTEE COORDINATOR PER REQUEST OF ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD CHAIRMAN MARK ELLISON. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN CHRIS FARRELL. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

The CSC will be working on several action steps to receive points for certification that will make the Town eligible for additional funding. One of the action steps is appointing a Climate Smart Coordinator previously held by Stephanie Erwin. Laura Petit was willing to step into this position which is an uncompensated volunteer position and a mandatory action step.

New Paltz Rescue Squad

The New Paltz Rescue Squad, Inc (“NPRS”) is applying for an expansion of its operating territory into the Esopus, Gardiner, Marbletown, Plattekill, Rochester, Rosendale and Shawangunk, each in Ulster County. Although this expansion seeks to add new territories to their operating certificate, NPRS has been actively serving the residents of these areas for many years on a much needed, mutual aid basis.

John Mathiasen, TEVAS Chief, wrote a letter of support for the expansion. TEVAS will still be the primary ambulance covering the areas mentioned. The proposal was made to provide further assistance in EMS coverage for our town.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMAN KATHIE QUICK TO AUTHORIZE SUPERVISOR GEUSS TO WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE NEW PALTZ RESCUE SQUAD EXPANSION INTO THE TOWN OF ESOPUS BASED ON INPUT FROM OUR TOWN OF ESOPUS AMBULANCE SQUAD. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN EVELYN CLARKE. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

CLIMATE-ADAPTIVE DESIGN STUDIO – LAURA PETIT

Laura Petit shared the following information. Esopus has an opportunity to host several workshops that will be held with NYSDEC and students from Cornell University Department of Landscape Architecture's Climate-adaptive Design (CaD) Studio as part of their project. Laura explained this project is to address rising waters. We do have tidal waters along the Hudson River and Rondout Creek. The parks over the next decade or two could lose land mass because of the rising water. Looking for the students to come in and tell us how we can design a way to retain these areas, specifically Sleightsburgh Spit and Light House Park. There is no cost to the town. Several outlying communities have taken advantage of these workshops including the City of Kingston, Red Hook and Rhinebeck.

Councilman Farrell asked if they would only be looking at Town owned property or private parcels as well. Laura said they would like to do both but may be difficult to get cooperation. If a private person had a bulkhead, it would benefit them as well. There are letters of support from the Esopus Business Alliance, Diane Dintruff, Scenic Hudson, Riverkeeper and Maritime museum. It fits well with LWRP update that is going on. Councilman Clarke said it was a wonderful opportunity and we should take advantage of it.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY JARED GEUSS TO APPROVE SENDING OUT THE DRAFT LETTER OF SUPPORT TO CORNELL UNIVERSITY INDICATING THE TOWN OF ESOPUS AS A POTENTIAL HOST FOR THE 2021 CORNELL UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE'S CLIMATE-ADAPTIVE DESIGN. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR.

LABERGE GROUP

The Town would seek funds to construct kiosks and interpretive way finding signage. We can seek up to \$10,000 in grant funding. The 50 % match can be in-kind, cash or both. Hours spent by staff to construct the kiosks would be what we are looking for. Greenway will offer three opportunities to apply for this grant. Due to this item not being in the budget, the bookkeeper has recommended waiting to submit the application until November 8, 2021. Environmental Board put in the \$1,500 for this. The Town Board has to sign off on \$5,400 to pursue the grant from here.

Authorize the paperwork to be signed for the November 8th Greenway Grant. Councilman Clarke asked Why the wait.? Supervisor Geuss said it was not a budgeted item, yet it fits within the line of improvements to the parks and waterfront. We should have money to move in the fall but waiting till then would be beneficial. Letters of support from the officials can be updated and Laura Petit has already secured. Everything can be written up by Laberge so it is ready to submit.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SUPERVISOR GEUSS TO PUT THE GRANT APPLICATION TOGETHER WAITING TO SUBMIT THE PAPERWORK UNTIL THE NOVEMBER 8, 2021 DEADLINE. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN EVELYN CLARKE. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

BQ Energy

BQ is ready to move forward with their expansion of the solar farm at the Transfer Station. The original project at the Transfer Station was installed for the town to offset the bills from the Town. This second phase leases the land to BQ who will build an additional 2000 KW field and provide energy to town residents and others. It has taken time to get the information and approvals through Central Hudson. This next phase will be a little more than 3 times the size of the last project and will be constructed this year.

Paul confirmed the insurance would be provided showing the Town as additional insured. A draft of the contract which has been revised several times reflects the decommissioning segment of the contract. The lease is for 20 years and allows for two 5 year renewals for a total of 30 years. When entering into agreement for the last 5 years the Town can mandate an escrow to cover decommission if the contract is not going to be renegotiated.

Paul Curran said he projects solar farms will continue longer than 30 years: solar is not going away. To put up funds now to decommission it is short sighted and impossible to estimate how much it would cost to decommission it in 2052. Paul said it is not logical and therefore BQ is not agreeable to setting up an escrow at this time. It makes more sense to set it up in the final 5 year period. BQ is fully responsible for taking it down and they do not dispute that but to put funds up now for 2052 does not seem logical. The contract will need to be updated and reviewed by Paul Kellar once the changes have been made.

Councilman Evelyn Clarke - Any way the lease ends early? Once it is built, there is very little operating cost; biggest cost is mowing the lawn and will operate for quite some time. What if more efficient panels come along? Paul explained once it its built, with zero cost fuel (sun) BQ would not be inclined to remove the panels.

BQ has been paying the town for the past 3 years for the option to lease the remaining area to build this project. Once the revised contract has been reviewed, it will be put before the Board to vote on.

Truck Purchase – review and potential approval of the purchase of 1 Freightliner and 2 Western Star trucks for use by the Highway Department.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN EQUIPMENT PURCHASE
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 Chris Farrell**, who moved its adoption:

WHEREAS, the Town of Esopus Highway Department is in need of three trucks; and
WHEREAS, Town of Esopus Highway Superintendent Michael Cafaldo has researched and found trucks suitable to the Town’s needs – a Freightliner Truck with Plow equipment and two (2) Western Star trucks with Plow equipment; and

WHEREAS, Superintendent Cafaldo has contacted the appropriate vendors, Mercedes-Benz Financial Services doing business as Daimler Financial, to request more information, and has since received a sales price and financing plan for the three aforementioned trucks; 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 enter a financing agreement with Daimler Financial to purchase a Freightliner Truck with Plow equipment, with \$18,926.68 due annually for a period of 7 years, ending 4/22/2027; and is hereby authorized to enter a financing agreement with Daimler Financial to purchase two (2) Western Star trucks with Plow equipment, with \$59,130.62 due annually for a period of 7 years, ending 4/22/2027.

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

Resolution duly adopted

Parks Reservations –

A request for permission to use Ross Park on Wednesday nights between the hours of 5:30 and 9 pm was made by the Shire of Nordenhal. The group is a not – for – profit educational organization that teaches people about history pre 16th century. They are looking to use the open field for martial art activities. The average turn out is 6-15 participants. This group has done demos in Port Ewen in the past at the Apple Festival. They usually use the Port Ewen Reform Church but have not been able to use the hall due to COVID. Insurance has been provided listing the Town as an additional insured. The Reform Church said they have been great tenants. All concerns that were raised were addressed. They will begin using the park on May 12th.

Narcotics Anonymous has requested to use the pavilion at Freer Park on Wednesday night between 6-7pm to hold their meetings from May 5 – Labor Day.

Town Board supported the use of these parks with waiving the fee for these not for profit groups.

National Business Technologies

Town Clerk Holly Netter and Bookkeeper Debra Kain met with the National Business Technologies because our existing lease ends in May. New Equipment and terms were negotiated and state bid pricing was requested. The 5 year lease will provide new equipment and will save the Town money. They will also be onsite to do an evaluation of other matters.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SUPERVISOR GEUSS TO AUTHORIZE TOWN CLERK HOLLY NETTER TO SIGN THE CONTRACT WITH NATIONAL BUSINESS TECHNOLOGIES. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN CHRIS FARRELL. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

UPDATES

Drinking Water Source Protection Program – New York State has announced a new Drinking Water Source Protection Program, which will develop programs to address specific threats to drinking water supplies for over 40 communities, including the Town of Esopus. Councilman Clarke was skeptical because she could not see what they are specifically going to do. Councilman Kathie Quick said a Group of Towns have more power than speaking out alone.

Summer Camp – Students entering 7th and 8th grades are now eligible to register for Summer Camp. Early-bird discounts for Town residents are available until 5/31. Discounts are also available for families with more than one camper registering. Councilman Clarke reviewed issues that have been previously discussed in addition the eves panel needs to be replaced. No

one has applied for scholarship. If people need a scholarship now is the time to apply. They have a number of 7th and 8th graders that are interested in participating. A signup day will be held in the community center. The YMCA will coordinate with the Clerk's office to arrange a date. Town Clerk Netter suggested placing the Y on the agenda so they can reach to public because in previous meetings Councilman Farrell asked if we are going to get some kind of assurance that no child will get turned away for financial reasons.

Now Hiring – Two open positions for Seasonal Maintenance Workers in the Town Parks, Buildings & Grounds Department – first position beginning ASAP, second position beginning June 1st. Also there is one open position for Fire Inspector in the Building Department, beginning ASAP. Email applications to outreach@esopus.com with the subject line “Parks Application”, or view our job postings on Facebook or Indeed. For more information, visit our website.

Parks Cleanups – Clean-up initiatives were held at nearly every Town-owned park the weekend of May 1. Special thanks to Councilwoman Quick, Legislator Petit, our Waterfront Advisory & Environmental Boards, Riverkeeper, Mount community and all local volunteers who ensured a fantastic turnout. Collection data was reviewed and pictures will be shared on our Facebook page.

Sleightsburgh Spit Park – security gate installed on Thursday, 5/6.

Executive Session

SUPERVISOR GEUSS MADE A MOTION TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:19 PM FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING WORK HISTORY OF A PARTICULAR INDIVIDUAL TO DISCUSS THE HISTORY OF AN EMPLOYEE IN THE BUILDINGS/GROUNDS DEPARTMENT. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

A MOTION TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMAN CHRIS FARRELL AT 8:39 PM AND WAS SECONDED BY SUPERVISOR GEUSS. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

NO ACTION TAKEN.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMAN CHRIS FARRELL TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:40 PM. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectively submitted,

Holly A. Netter
Town Clerk, RMC