

**TOWN BOARD WORKSHOP/BUDGET MEETING
OCTOBER 15, 2013**

A regularly scheduled Town Board Workshop/Budget Meeting was held on Tuesday, October 15, 2013 in the Town Hall 284 Broadway Port Ewen, New York at 7 PM with the following persons in attendance:

Absent: **Supervisor John Coutant**
 Councilperson Gloria VanVliet
 Councilperson Wayne Freer
 Councilperson Donna McAuley
 Councilperson Kyle Barnett

Administrative Recorder: Diane L. McCord, Town Clerk
Highway Supt. Michael Cafaldo
CPA Brian Pickard
Deb Kain, Bookkeeper

Supervisor John Coutant called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM.

Public Comment: None

1. Boundless Energy NE, LLC

“Boundless Energy NE, LLC is proposing to construct an electrical transmission project in eastern New York State as part of Governor Cuomo’s Energy Highway initiative. Boundless is an independent transmission developer with significant prior transmission development experience in New York.

On October 2, 2013, Boundless filed with the New York State Public Service Commission its initial Application for an Article VII Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) in the Commission’s Energy Highway Initiative Proceeding. The Initial Application is for the proposed Leeds Path West AC Transmission Project which would help achieve the Energy Highway’s objectives of providing relief from congestion in a critical power corridor, enhanced system reliability, and reduced environmental impacts.

As required by Title 16 of the NYCRR, Boundless is providing you with a copy of this initial Application. All initial Application files are on the enclosed CD in PDF format.

The proposed additional transmission capacity will include upgrading and rehabilitating existing transmission facilities in Albany, Rensselaer, Columbia, Greene, Ulster and Orange Counties, using existing utility rights of way.

Boundless will work with the Public Service Commission and all other interested parties in this proceeding commenced as a result of the Energy Highway Initiative.”

Supervisor Coutant said the Boundless Energy people are placing a cable for Central Hudson or their new owners under the Hudson River. The CD is available. The Supervisor had concerns about the Hudson

River being dug up to bury this cable and the last time this happened the PCB's showed up in our water. If they are placing the cable up and down the Hudson River, will our water be affected? We will have Supt. Don Kiernan view the DVD prior to the Town Board's viewing.

2. Hudson River Improvement Fund

The Hudson River Improvement Fund support projects that promote the enhancement of public use and enjoyment of the natural, scenic and cultural resources of the Hudson River and its shores. The improvement fund has a proposal deadline for applications of Friday, November 1, 2013. Awards are focused on physical projects that require capital construction, development or improvement. The Fund is particularly interested in projects that will have a lasting impact on waterfront access, education and habitat restoration. We will contact Marion Zimmer to help us with this application.

3. 24th Annual Fall Senior Dinner Dance – Ulster County Community Action

We received a letter from the U. C. Community Action Committee asking candidates to participate in the 24th Annual Fall Senior Dinner Dance to be held on October 24, 2013 in the Midtown Center in Kingston.

4. Employment Agreement – Timothy Keefe

The Town Board reviewed the Employment Agreement with Timothy Keefe, our Building Inspector. Supervisor Coutant thought this agreement parallels the previous agreement. Councilperson Wayne Freer was concerned with the additional \$1,500 to be provided for vehicle and other expenses associated with Zoning and other duties associated with the office of Building Inspector.

5. Aleo – Transfer Documents

Councilperson Kyle Barnett has reviewed the documentation concerning Dr. Aleo's transfer. We can move forward at our Thursday evening Town Board Meeting.

6. Town of Esopus Code 96-3 – 189 Hasbrouck Avenue – Overgrown Grass

Neighbors have asked the Town to do something about the overgrown grass at 189 Hasbrouck Avenue. This is the first time, since passing a local law, we have had to act and have our employees cut the lawn and bill it back to the homeowner. There will be a vote on this at our Town Board Meeting.

7. Extended Producer Law

The company that recycles our computers and televisions at the Transfer Station called to tell us a law has been passed called the Extended Producer Law and this law will force our Regional Company to charge us for the service at \$.25 per pound. The Supervisor will have a public announcement at our Town Board Meeting. We will have to place signage at the Transfer Station about this public charge. Councilperson Donna McAuley believes we should only charge to cover our expense. Supervisor Coutant disagreed stating we have spent \$2,800 to cover this recycling project and he believed an amount should be charged to cover the entire expense. Councilperson Freer will call to see the amount others are charging for the service.

8. New Mower

The new mower is working well.

9. Check from Steve Aaron

We received a check from Steve Aaron's personal account to pay for the electric bill of the Birchez pump station in the amount of \$6,773.56.

There was a recess in the meeting while we waited for our CPA to attend.

10. Budget Review for 2014

CPA Brian Pickard stated his biggest fear with the 2014 budget is Ulster County will take our sales tax and use it to pay for the Safety Net costs. At this point, if we do not cut our spending, we will have a twenty-one percent increase in taxes. The question was asked what can we cut down on? Do we see anything in the expenses where we are over spending asked the Supervisor? Brian Pickard said we have \$100,000 left over in 2013. The Supervisor said all departments are pretty serious about being tight. Can we use funds from our balances or do we have to raise taxes? Councilperson Barnett asked what is in our contingency? What will we have left over at the end of the year? Brian Pickard answered \$100,000 left from 2013. What can be taken from the Highway Fund? After we pay for salt at \$60 a ton for 90 tons there will be \$35,000 left. At the end of 2012 there was \$400,000 left, however we used \$168,000. The Supervisor asked where we are going with the equipment? We are heading in the right direction but where do we go until things are fixed? Buying this loader places us in trouble. The taxes will have to go up two or two and one half percent.

Discussion continued about lowering our spending. Twenty thousand was taken out for a new Building Inspector when and if our Building Inspector resigns and ten thousand was taken out for the repair and refurbishment of our drainage pond. It was suggested there be no raises, however, if the Highway Dept. receives a two percent raise there is the possibility the remainder of the employees will unionize. Supervisor Coutant said whatever we do it must be across the board. The two percent raise will cost the town \$4,000.

There was discussion about the bare bones budget and we need additional revenue sources. The cable franchise fee may have to be considered next year. It would bring in about \$94,000. None of the Town Board Members thought this was a good idea, however, this would be the only revenue stream we have. Our property tax base is going down. Scenic Hudson just bought more land which will be off the tax rolls. Our Safety Net budget for welfare is up this year and we need to budget \$200,000 for next year. We do have \$289,000 in our Capital Improvements Budget but the Supervisor had real concerns about spending this money since he wanted it for the development of ball fields and recreation behind the present Town Hall. We also need to have a new building for the Recreation Dept. since their building is falling down and that will come out of the Capital Improvement Fund. We do not want to use the money to offset our budget, however, we don't have an alternative. We will have to worry next year about the increased cost in health insurance. Brian Pickard suggested using some of the Capital Improvement Fund.

It was suggested the Recreation Building could be cut back to perhaps \$35,000. Councilperson Freer suggested applying for grants and Supervisor Coutant believes grants are being cut back. Highway Supt. Mike Cafaldo will get prices. Deb Kain suggested the Highway Dept. go back to last year's figures and there is \$12,000 in contractual. Brian Pickard will review the budget and have it finished by Thursday and then we can decide what we want to do. Supervisor Coutant said if \$50,000 is taken out of the Capital Fund and \$125,000 from the General Fund and \$125,000 out of the Highway Fund and with a two percent increase in taxes we should have some wiggle room. We will have another meeting to discuss the budget. This budget is not final.

We will discuss the Tim Keefe Agreement at our Town Board Meeting. Highway Supt. Cafaldo said they need an oil separator. When Art Cross was in office there were drains filled in with concrete. Now they cannot use those drains for the oil separator. The separator will cost \$5,000. It was suggested we get better prices. Board members agreed the separator is necessary.

A Motion to adjourn was made by Councilperson Kyle Barnett and seconded by Councilperson Wayne Freer at 9:14 PM. All Town Board Members present voted in favor. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

**Diane L. McCord
Town Clerk, CMC, RMC**