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**TOWN OF ESOPUS  
TOWN BOARD MEETING  
November 21, 2024, 7:00 PM**

A regularly scheduled Town Board Meeting was held in person on November 21, 2024, at 1 Town Hall Way, Ulster Park. The following persons in attendance:

**Councilman Laura Robinson  
Councilman Evelyn Clarke  
Councilman Kathie Quick  
Councilman Jared Guess  
Supervisor Danielle Freer**

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

**4 WAYS TO GIVE PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- 1.) **In-Person – Attend the Workshop**
- 2.) **Phone in:** Leave a voicemail on 845 331 0676 before the meeting
- 3.) **EMAIL – [lreynolds@esopus.com](mailto:lreynolds@esopus.com) with the subject line “Public Comment”**
- 4.) **MAIL – mail written comments to:**  
*Town of Esopus, P.O. Box 700  
Port Ewen, NY 12466*

**Supervisor Danielle Freer called the meeting to order at 7 pm.**

**PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Rob Hare, a Town Resident, has been following the application for the project on Hudson Lane. He wanted to speak of the process from his experience working on ZBA and the Zoning Review Committee. He said it appears we take an endless amount of time, up to 1 year and 9 months. It affects everyone, neighbors, and clients: expensive lawyers, endless hours of planning and zoning board times, plus their lawyer. Applicants must hire engineers and attorneys. His suggestions: Encourage the Building Inspector, when he sees a project needing four variances, to go back and look at the plans to see how they fit with the neighborhood and how it impacts housing density. Mr. Hare is aware that people are looking at affordable housing, and he suggests that instead of changing zoning, use accessory apartments and focus on that before playing with zoning.

**Lorine Karabec, Hudson Lane** – Asked a question regarding the agenda item for the Assessment Board of review and what the function was of that Board.

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**SUPERVISOR FREER MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC COMMENT. COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON SECONDED THE MOTION. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR AND THE MOTION CARRIED.**

**CAS LANDI PARK PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT DISCUSSION**

The Town Board sent an RFQ for Park Equipment for Cas Landi to a list of companies offering larger playground equipment. They were looking for a large, singular piece of playground equipment to fit within the 5,000-square-foot area (including the safe zone). The equipment must include ADA-compliant components. A nature theme in earth-tone colors was preferred. The quote requested information and options, including equipment cost, installation fee, and delivery fee. Three companies submitted quotes: Playground Boss, All Things Recreation, and Willy Goat. The Board discussed the pros and cons of the various proposals and agreed that Playground Boss was the best bang for the buck. The unit was larger and naturally colored, and they would professionally install it. The funding will come from ARPA and needs to be earmarked by the end of the year. As a reminder, Ulster County ARPA funds will pay \$50,000 of this cost.

**SUPERVISOR FREER MOTIONED TO CONTRACT WITH PLAYGROUND BOSS FOR THE PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT AT CAS LANDI PARK USING ARPA FUNDS OF \$ 104,882.00. COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON SECONDED THE MOTION. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR: MOTION CARRIED.**

**DISCUSSION – DIGITAL UPGRADES**

Kingston Creative has previously worked with the town on digital and creative needs. The intent is to revamp the website and eventually allow individual departments to update their information without using a third party. This process will also make the site mobile-friendly and easier to navigate. Kingston Creative will also assist with our location issues for the Town Hall and the misdirected directions given when people use GPS. A separate contract will be used for marketing, social media support, and new content development.

**SUPERVISOR FREER MOTIONED TO CONTRACT WITH KINGSTON CREATIVE, PROPOSAL #1490, FOR A RESPONSIVE WORDPRESS WEBSITE/LOCATION AUDIT AND DIRECTORY SUBMISSIONS; \$16,000 PAID BY ARPA FUNDING CONTINGENT ON ACCEPTABLE PROGRESS. COUNCILMAN JARED GEUSS SECONDED THE MOTION. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR: MOTION CARRIED.**

**SUPERVISOR FREER MOTIONED TO CONTRACT WITH KINGSTON CREATIVE, PROPOSAL #1492, FOR MARKETING PLAYBOOK & NEW CONTENT; \$8,500 PAID BY ARPA FUNDING CONTINGENT ON ACCEPTABLE PROGRESS. COUNCILMAN JARED GEUSS SECONDED THE MOTION. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR: MOTION CARRIED.**

**APPOINTMENT ASSESSMENT BOARD OF REVIEW**

**SUPERVISOR FREER MOVED TO REAPPOINT HENRY PITTNER TO THE BOARD OF ASSESSMENT REVIEW, WITH A TERM EXPIRING ON 9/30/2029. COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON SECONDED THE MOTION. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR, AND THE MOTION CARRIED.**

**Resolution**  
**NYS Local Retirement System**  
**Standard Workday and Reporting Resolution**

**Be It Resolved**, the Town of Esopus/30561 hereby established the following standard workdays for these titles and will report the officials to the NYS and Local Retirement based on their record of activities:

Name	Title	Term	Standard workday	Report of activities	Pay frequency
Danielle Freer	Supervisor	1/1/24-12/31/25	7	27.96	weekly
Kyle Barnett	Justice	1/1/24-12/31/27	6	5.03	monthly
Jared Geuss	Town Council	1/1/24-12/31/27	6	.67	monthly
Holly Netter	Town Clerk	1/1/22-12/31/25	7	26.73	weekly
Appointed officials					
Jill Shufeldt	Dog Control	1/1/24-12/31/24	6		weekly

**Offered by: Supervisor Danielle Freer**  
**Seconded by: Councilman Kathie Quick**

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

<b>COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>COUNCILMAN EVELYN CLARKE</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>COUNCILMAN KATHIE QUICK</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>COUNCILMAN JARED GEUSS</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>SUPERVISOR DANIELLE FREER</b>	<b>AYE</b>

**Resolution duly adopted.**

**SOJOURNER TRUTH DAY RECOGNITION**

# **Town of Esopus**

*Town Board*

## **PROCLAMATION of 2024**

**WHEREAS**, Sojourner Truth is “a daughter of Esopus,” and lived the first 28 years of her life as an enslaved person in what is now known as the Town of Esopus. She was born circa 1797 as property of Col. Johannes Hardenbergh in Swartekill, now Rifton, in Ulster County, New York, to enslaved parents, Bett and James Baumfree. She was given the name Isabella, and would later take the name Sojourner Truth in acknowledgment of her role as an emissary of justice and truth, and

**WHEREAS**, this daughter of Esopus, whose exact birth date is unknown because enslaved Africans were not regarded as human beings, lived an extraordinary life of struggle, determination and achievement – a distinctly American tale of perseverance against difficult odds, and

**WHEREAS**, Isabella was forced to stand on the auction block upon the death of her owner, Col. Hardenbergh in 1806, and sold for \$100 along with a herd of sheep. She was cruelly separated from her brother and her aged parents, and sold to John Neeley, an English shopkeeper on the Rondout Creek, where Isabella endured brutal beatings because she spoke Dutch and could not understand the Neeley’s commands, and

**WHEREAS**, Isabella was subsequently purchased for \$105 by Martinus Schryver, owner of the Jug Tavern located on the corner of Broadway and River Road, in what is now known as Port Ewen. As an enslaved young child, she had to walk without shoes in all seasons to the Rondout Creek and take the ferry from Sleightsburgh to Kingston to perform various errands, along with carrying packages of liquor and supplies back to the tavern, and

**WHEREAS**, in 1810, at the age of thirteen, Isabella was sold for \$175 to John Dumont who owned a farm overlooking the Hudson River in what is known as West Park. She remained enslaved until 1826 when Dumont rescinded his promise to free Isabella a year earlier than New York’s decreed emancipation date, and

**WHEREAS**, Isabella walked away to freedom across Shaupeneak Ridge in the pre-dawn hours carrying her infant daughter, Sophia, and a few meager belongings. She was forced to leave her other children enslaved. Fortunately, she encountered the Van Wagenens in Rifton, who were anti-slavery, and who purchased Isabella and Sophia’s freedom for \$25, and

**WHEREAS**, a few months after celebrating New York’s emancipation of slavery on July 4, 1827, Isabella learned that her 5-year old son, Peter, had illegally been sold out of state. In response, she walked barefoot 5 miles each way from the Van Wagenen’s in Rifton to the courthouse in Kingston and brought a successful lawsuit for her child’s return, and

**WHEREAS**, following these events, Isabella would adopt the name Sojourner Truth, take her story, and journey the East Coast of the United States preaching peace, justice, persistence, and rights for women and men of all colors. To this day, we are inspired by Isabella’s remarkable contributions and encouraged to use our voices to support social justice in our time, and

**WHEREAS**, in recognition of her efforts and significance to the history of the advancement of women’s suffrage, equal rights in regard to race, and the moral character of her nation, the Town of Esopus has erected a statue in Port Ewen, depicting Sojourner as a child, a reminder of the existence of slavery in New York and the global atrocity of the enslavement of children that continues today, and

**Therefore, Be It Resolved**, that, in the spirit of celebrating the lasting contributions and continued relevance of Sojourner Truth’s life story, the Town Board of the Town of Esopus, hereby proclaims Tuesday, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024, as ‘Sojourner Truth Day’ in the Town of Esopus and urge all residents to recognize that this is a day for people of all races, creeds, and backgrounds to join together in celebration of the legacy of Sojourner Truth.

**OFFERED BY: COUNCILMAN EVELYN CLARKE**  
**SECONDED BY: COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON**

The Board was polled.

<b>COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>COUNCILMAN EVELYN CLARKE</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>COUNCILMAN KATHIE QUICK</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>COUNCILMAN JARED GEUSS</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>SUPERVISOR DANIELLE FREER</b>	<b>AYE</b>

**Resolution duly adopted.**

**Liaison Lightening Round:**

**Supervisor Freer** recapped that she declared a state of emergency and issued an executive order for a burn ban on October 23, 2024, because of the continued dry conditions and wildfires throughout the area, which required first responders to travel out of town. The Fire Chief, our Code Enforcer, and the Ulster County Department of Emergency Services were all consulted. A couple of days later, the State finally declared the same, allowing our town executive order to

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expire. She thanked all the first responders for what they have done and will continue to do for our community, and she will continue to monitor this situation closely.

Ulster County Area Transit (UCAT) and the Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC) have partnered on a UCAT Route Optimization Plan this year to examine how the existing bus system can be improved to serve the public better. The study has produced 2 preliminary scenarios for how transit service could change in Ulster County. The scenarios are available for public review and comment through December 20, 2024, through an online Maptionnaire tool. They provided a link to learn about the preliminary routes and to provide feedback.

**Councilman Geuss:**

Water & Sewer—Letters are being sent out again to water customers who did not complete the EPA and NYSDOH-mandated “Lead Service Line Inventory.” Although Water Superintendent Nick Butler knows there are no lead pipes and that copper lines are in use, the NYS Department of Health requires a letter to be sent to all property owners in the water district to complete this work. Anyone with questions about this is advised to call the Water Department at 845-331-5900.

Planning Board—The previously approved Paige Project on Mountainview Road is waiting for the County Department of Health to finalize and sign off on it, after which it will be ready to break ground.

**Councilman Clarke:**

EDC—Esopus Holiday Tugboat Trail, December 7th. The event is in memory of the late Diane McCord, past Town Clerk and Supervisor of the Town of Esopus. There will be a craft and vendor fair at the Esopus Town Hall, a craft and bake sale at the Mount Academy, and many local businesses throughout the town offering specials, samples, and various activities. Supervisor Freer said she was grateful for all the work Marjorie McCord put into developing the event.

Environmental Board—There are a few vacancies; Chairman Mark Ellison has talked about stepping aside or asking if there is the ability to have a co-chair. They are partnering with the Esopus Library to work on the Ecological Grant to restore the pollinator garden at the library. They also intend to have another Honeybee Jubilee in the fall of 2025. The Repair Café will be at the Ascension Church on 11/23 from 10 am – 2 pm. Jenna Ice and the climate-smart committee are working on getting the town the points we need for our certification to become a bronze-level Climate Smart Community. Chris Decicco is looking into the charging station project; they can be private groups, not only for the public.

**Councilman Quick:**

Zoning Board – Considering a variance.

Waterfront Advisory Board: The state provided extensive feedback on the LWRP submission, and the board will meet again in December and January to continue its discussions.

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Assessor’s Office - Shannon Harris spoke to the seniors at the November 18<sup>th</sup> Senior meeting about exemptions they may be eligible for.

Esopus Seniors—The seniors will have their Holiday Luncheon Party on December 13th at the Stonehedge Restaurant. The cost is \$28 for members and \$38 for non-members.

**Councilman Robinson:**

Parks & Rec—Winter Wonderland parade 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec 7th; rain date, Dec 8th. Hot Chocolate, music, and Santa.

**BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS NOVEMBER 2024**

**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 budget adjustments, which the town board has examined and approved.

**Therefore, Be It Resolved** that the following budget adjustments be approved for payment:

<b>AO.0599.000 Fund Balance</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>AO.5182.401 \$16,963.65</b> <b>Esopusol &amp; Central Hudson</b>
	<b>to</b>	<b>AO 8011.400 \$2,994.12</b> <b>Legal Fees</b>

<b>OFFERED BY:</b>	<b>SUPERVISOR DANIELLE FREER</b>
<b>SECONDED BY:</b>	<b>COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON</b>

<b>COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>COUNCILMAN EVELYN CLARKE</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>COUNCILMAN KATHIE QUICK</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>COUNCILMAN JARED GEUSS</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>SUPERVISOR DANIELLE FREER</b>	<b>AYE</b>

**Resolution duly adopted.**

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS NOVEMBER 2024**

**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	241938- 241999	\$105,051.39
HIGHWAY FUND	242246-242282	\$84,701.94
STREETLIGHTS	246006	\$7,733.93
PORT EWEN SEWER FUND	243159-243175	\$96,639.91
PORT EWEN WATER	244176-244199	\$52,384.95
Capital Water		
ARPA	247017	\$4,396.00
ESCROW		
Total		\$350,908.12

**OFFERED BY:** SUPERVISOR DANIELLE FREER  
**SECONDED BY:** COUNCILMAN KATHIE QUICK

COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON	AYE
COUNCILMAN EVELYN CLARKE	AYE
COUNCILMAN KATHIE QUICK	AYE
COUNCILMAN JARED GEUSS	AYE
SUPERVISOR DANIELLE FREER	AYE

**Resolution duly adopted.**

**KEY UPCOMING DATES**

- 11.23 Esopus Repair Café hosted by the Environmental Board
- 11.26 Sojourner Truth Day
- 11.28 & 29 Town Hall Closed: Thanksgiving
- 12.5 Next Town Board Workshop 7pm
- 12.7 Winter Wonderland Parade (*rain date 12.8*)
- Shop Local Tugboat Trail Event hosted by the Economic Development Committee

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES (FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM) FOR MORE INFORMATION.**



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**SUPERVISOR FREER MOVED TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 7:56 P.M. TO DISCUSS CURRENT LITIGATION. COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON SECONDED THE MOTION. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR, AND THE MOTION CARRIED.**

**SUPERVISOR FREER MOVED TO EXIT THE EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 9:12 P.M. COUNCILMAN JARED GEUSS SECONDED THE MOTION. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR, AND THE MOTION CARRIED.**

Action: none

**ADJOURNMENT**

**SUPERVISOR FREER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:12 PM, SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN JARED GEUSS. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR, AND THE MOTION CARRIED.**

*Respectively Submitted,  
Holly A. Netter  
Town Clerk, RMC*