

TOWN BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING

October 14, 2014

A regularly scheduled Town Board Workshop Meeting was held on Tuesday October 14, 2014 in the Town Hall 284 Broadway Port Ewen, New York at 7:00 PM with the following people in attendance:

Supervisor John Coutant
Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet
Councilperson Wayne Freer
Councilperson Diane L. McCord
Councilperson Kyle Barnett

Recording Administrator Holly A. Netter, Town Clerk
Debbie Kain, Bookkeeper
Brian Pickard, CPA
Margaret Yost, Planning Board

Supervisor John Coutant called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Budget

The Town Board continued to discuss the budget. Although the Board has diligently made cuts to the expenses, the revenues are down. The mortgage tax is expected to be \$50,000 less than was budgeted. Many towns in Ulster County are having difficulty staying within the 1.56% tax cap.

The Board made a commitment to purchase the parking lot property from the Presentation Church and they have been waiting for the grant approval to come in. Supervisor Coutant said he received a copy of the letter from the New York State Dormitory Authority confirming there were funds still available, however it was not the approval letter. Supervisor Coutant was told this is the last communication that will be made from the Dormitory Authority and the next step is receiving the check. Father Karl needs to check to see if the Archdiocese needs to sign off on this transaction. The Town Board wants the figures on what it would cost to finance the purchase if they do not get the check from the Dormitory Authority in a timely fashion.

Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet asked if we had definite charges from the SPCA or a contract. There are several questions the Board has to address before a contract can be drawn up.

\$50,000 was funded from the Capital Account in 2014 to pay for the payment of the Town Hall.. In 2015 the payment has been budgeted so it does not deplete the Capital Account. The Capital Account balance is currently \$249,000.00.

The Board is diligently trying to make the necessary changes to the budget to adhere to the tax cap. Brian Pickard will update the budget and offer the Town Board two options of how they can achieve this goal.

A motion was made by Councilperson Wayne Freer to call a recess for 10 minutes at 8:35, the motion was seconded by Councilperson Diane McCord.

A motion was made by Councilperson Wayne Freer to call the meeting back to order at 8:45, the motion was seconded by Councilperson Diane McCord.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Margaret Yost, Planning Board Member, attended the meeting. She advised the Town Board that she has been contemplating resigning from the Planning Board. Over the past 6 to 8 months she has not been happy. The animosity, pettiness and lack of control during the Planning Board meetings have taken a toll on everyone. Margaret shared her concerns involving personnel and the lack of control during meetings. At the last Planning Board meeting the Board was talking about minutes and members of the Board kept going off on tangents. Margaret stated, she repeatedly said lets discuss the minutes and no order was being called. The meeting was out of control and she walked out.

Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet questioned why Mike Minor was voting “present” at the last Planning Board meeting. That should not have happened. Councilperson Kyle Barnett recapped what Margaret had said and asked if she believed there was a problem with leadership. On several occasions Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet has reported a problem with the lack of structure and organization.

Margaret said some members have expertise in certain areas. Fred Zimmer deals with highway issues, Darren Dekoskie storm water management, and she feels Mike Minor is extremely logical and gives the Board the balance it needs. Margaret feels Mike is instrumental in trying to help both the Board and applicants understand the issues at hand.

They need to have strong leadership and Margaret feels it should not be up to her to constantly try to regain order in the meeting. She feels they need more communication between the Building Department and Planning Board. Fred Zimmer has recently been asked to be the liaison between the two departments to enhance communication.

Margaret volunteers her time and thoroughly reads and researches each case that is before her. If she has questions she asks someone with more expertise in the field. She said she

became a Planning Board Member to represent the Community of Esopus, not herself. However she feels sometimes other people forget that is their role.

It is Margaret's opinion that Mike is feeling disrespected. Councilperson Freer recalls Mike Minor, Planning Board member, attending a meeting at which he was extremely disrespectful to the Town Board. Councilperson Freer said the situation got to a point where Mike Minor had offered his resignation to the Board and feels the majority of the Board would have accepted his resignation had it been put to a vote.

Councilperson Kyle Barnett recaps Margaret's concerns and shares the same concerns. Margaret wanted to make clear she is not taking sides and that she can see the wrong in each side. We need to move on and make sure we do the best job possible for the people of Esopus. The Board told Margaret they appreciate the work she has done and feel she is a valuable member of the Planning Board.

Randolph Horner

Randolph Horner, Solar Project Manager, came to review concerns that Town Attorney Paul Keller had with the Sun Edison Contract. Randolph and Supervisor Coutant will meet with Attorney Keller to go over the concerns.

Town of Esopus needs to enter into contract with SunEdison by November 1, 2014 in order for NYSERTA to award the subsidy to SunEdison. At the end of the 20 year contract we will have residual value on the project. The intent of this solar project at the landfill is to stabilize the cost of electric for the town over the course of the next 20 years. After the 20 year contract is over, the Town Board at that time will have the choice to continue or purchase the solar field at a fraction of the cost. However, they are not obligated to purchase it.

Randolph Horner attended a meeting which discussed Community Aggregation plans. In the future, the Town could have a micro grid and the opportunity to install additional solar fields. These fields would generate electric to flatten escalation costs which could be purchased by our residents and business owners.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a disciplinary matter regarding a personnel issue in the Planning Board at 10:14 pm by Councilperson Kyle Barnett and Seconded by Supervisor John Coutant. All Town Board members voted in favor. Motion Carried.

A motion was made to come out of Executive Session at 10:25 pm by Councilperson Wayne Freer and seconded by Councilperson Kyle Barnett.

The Board authorized Councilperson Kyle Barnett to send a letter to address the personnel issue. All Town Board members voted in favor. Motion Carried.

Town of Llyod Request – Transfer Station

The transfer station is another area where the town is losing money. Cost of operating the transfer station needs to be reviewed. Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet said based on newspaper articles, communications and emails, it is possible that there will not be roll off service available to the towns. The RRA will increase their fees in July 2015 which are unknown at this time. Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet and Councilperson McCord are concerned that we have not discussed or budgeted for the increase. Councilperson McCord asked if we could close the landfill and would it save the town money. Councilperson Freer said you will be taking a service away from a good portion of the town residents. The majority of town people pay for their own private pickup. The residents of the town are subsidizing those who use the transfer station. Supervisor Coutant feels the RRA is operating in the black and he does not feel they will get the approval by the legislative body to increase these costs. The question was posed, Why are we putting money into our transfer station this year, when there is at possibility we may have to close it in the future?

The Town of Llyod is looking to close their transfer station and would like to arrange a meeting with the Town of Esopus to see if they can utilize ours. Supervisor Coutant and Councilperson Freer will schedule a meeting to see what they are offering. Councilperson Barnett said we have to look at the cost and look at all options and revisit the topic at a future meeting.

The charge for bulk Household Waste and Construction Debris needs to be raised from \$.08 to \$.12 per pound. This rate increase will go into effect on November 1, 2014. A motion will be made at the Town Board meeting on October 16, 2014. Town Clerk, Holly Netter, will notify the transfer station of the increase and provide them with signage.

Scenic Hudson

Scenic Hudson had a meeting with Supervisor John Coutant to review their plans for property that they have purchased. Scenic Hudson does not pay taxes on the land they own however they have made a commitment to make a \$5,000.00 contribution to the town in January 2015.

Cornerstone

We are currently out of contract. Town Clerk, Holly Netter, will further research information regarding cost and availability of caller ID for Town Hall, Highway and Water/Sewer.

Halloween Curfew

A resolution will be made for a curfew of 7pm at the Town Board meeting.

Riverview Cemetery – Diane McCord

As discussed in a previous Budget Workshop, the Riverview Cemetery requires the Town's financial help to postpone them from abandoning the cemetery and it becoming the obligation of the town. Riverview has \$20,000 which they are able to use toward mowing and upkeep of the cemetery. When that money is exhausted they will need to officially abandon the cemetery. According to the Association of Cemetery and the NYS Cemetery law, all other funds will be transferred to the town to assist the town in the upkeep of the cemetery.

Court Bailiff – Joseph R. Murray Jr.

Court Bailiff Joseph R. Murray Jr. resigned from his position of Court Security Officer on September 30, 2014 in order to meet the NYS retirement guidelines. Mr. Murray has asked to be reappointed and Judge Robert Grieco has recommended the Board to rehire him. A motion will be made at the Town Board meeting to reinstate Joe Murray.

Miscellaneous

Decisions need to be made regarding the Dog Kennel. The towns that have contracts with the Town of Esopus will be sent a letter advising them we are considering closing the kennel effective January 1, 2015.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at 10:26 PM was made by Councilperson Diane McCord and seconded by Councilperson Wayne Freer. All Town Board members voted in favor. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

**Holly A. Netter
Town Clerk**