

Town of Austerlitz
Regular Town Board Meeting
October 11, 2012

Roll call. Present: Jeffrey Braley, Supervisor, Jon Mesick, Carol Pinto, Bryan Geel, Matthew Verenazi
Town Board Members, Robert Meehan, Highway Superintendent, and Susan Haag, Town Clerk.

Regular Meeting called to order at 7:04 p.m.

Moment of Silence in memory of Phyllis Palladino, followed by the pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

A motion to accept the September 13, 2012 Regular Town Board Meeting, September 28, 2012 Budget Workshop, and the October 4, 2012 Special Town Board Meeting minutes was made by C. Pinto and seconded by J. Mesick.

J. Braley: yes

B. Geel: yes

C. Pinto: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

J. Mesick: yes

Motion unanimously carried.

Auditing of Accounts and Claims

A motion to approve General Fund #372-406, in the amount of \$13681.95, and Highway Fund #190-212, in the amount of \$17486.52, was made by B. Geel and seconded M. Verenazi.

J. Braley: yes

B. Geel: yes

C. Pinto: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

J. Mesick: yes

Motion unanimously carried.

Reports

Monthly cash disbursements for the month of September 2012 were presented. Supervisor Braley noted that since it is the end of the year the money is starting to roll out. Payments are coming up for the Bryarcliffe bonds, and the highway truck and cleanup bond. The 2013 Annual Town Budget preparation is taking priority. Supervisor Braley is attempting to stay within the 2% cap and is hopeful that the tax rate should not go up since assessments went up. Supervisor Braley gave appointees a small raise. As in years past, retirement and medical costs are issues, but J. Braley believes he has a handle on them.

On a County Level, Supervisor Braley noted that the County Board of Supervisors denied the vehicle transfer that was to be for our Code Enforcement Officer. The reason behind the denial is that the County Board of Supervisors felt that since this is a County owned asset, it should go up for auction, and not transferred without reimbursement. J. Braley noted that the Town can still pursue a vehicle at auction for our benefit. The Columbia County 2013 budget is aiming for a 0% increase again. Payroll

contracts with Unions were signed at a 2% increase. Supervisor Braley missed this month's County budget meetings due to illness. More budget meetings coming up next week that he will attend.

Town Clerk Report for the month of September 2012 submitted.

Highway Superintendent Robert Meehan advised that the repair work to the #7 truck is just about done giving it another 5 years of use. It is a 1990. Two of the three easements needed to be taken care of for the stream clean-up in Austerlitz behind the Fire House are in. The Town is still waiting on Sanchez'. Engineer for the Town, Patrick Prendergast, has been consulted on the culvert on West Hill Road that is in the creek. Within 2 weeks the Town will probably be able to go out to bid for a new culvert to replace this. Once all the easements are in, Highway Superintendent Meehan can work in the creek and clean out and fix the culvert at same time. The NYSDEC will not let the Town do too much, but the Highway Crew can do something to relieve some of the flooding issues. R. Meehan has walked the creek with the NYSDEC representative who explained what could be done and what can not.

Columbia County Highway Department has been doing some blacktop patching over by St. Peter's church this morning and they dropped some black top in front of the Town Hall. More needs to be put down, but what is there will hold it over for the Winter.

Planning Board Report for the month of September 2012 submitted.

Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee Report for the month of September 2012 submitted. Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee will handle the grant issue.

Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Report for the month of September 2012 submitted. New Building Inspector Lee Heim is working out fine, learning and picking up quickly.

Justice Hogencamp Court Report for the month of September 2012 submitted.

Justice Lagonia Court Report for the months of August and September 2012 submitted.

Dog Control Report for the month of September 2012 submitted.

Zoning Board of Appeals Report for September 2012 submitted.

A motion to accept the above reports was made by C. Pinto and seconded by J. Mesick.

J. Braley: yes

B. Geel: yes

C. Pinto: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

J. Mesick: yes

Motion unanimously carried.

Correspondence

No Correspondence

Unfinished Business

Richard Madonia requests that the Town Board assist him in his effort to reduce the speed limit on State Route 203 in the Hamlet of Spencertown from 40 mph to 30 mph by adopting a resolution in support of lowering the speed limit. In addition to the documentation already given to the Town Board, R. Madonia submits the following: A petition signed by 193 people, a letter of support from Assemblyman Steven McLaughlin, a letter discussing traffic calming devices from town resident Steve Somlo, an email from previous Town Board Member Charles Vander Weit explaining his past efforts in this regard, a letter written to NYSDOT Acting Regional Director William Groton by R. Madonia requesting that the speed limit be lowered, a letter from NYSDOT Acting Regional Director William Gorton explaining why the request to lower the speed limit has been denied, and a 1983 traffic manual that the NYSDOT still refers too. R. Madonia also advises that town resident Cheryl Roberts will offer her services after the November election.

R. Madonia argued that the NYSDOT is using an outdated traffic manual, and is not taking into consideration factors that are unique to the Hamlet of Spencertown. In addition, R. Madonia makes note that surrounding towns all have a 30 mph speed limit thru their hamlets, and the Columbia County Sheriff's Department needs to patrol more in Spencertown.

Supervisor Braley and the Town Board commend R. Madonia on the amount of time and effort he has put in on this project. Town Board Member Verenazi noted that R. Madonia's letter to W. Groton was well written and that the Town Board will help him in attempting to lower the speed limit through the Hamlet of Spencertown on State Route 203. Town Board Member Geel advised that as far back as he can remember every Town Board has tried to reduce the speed limit and in fact, previous Town Board Member C. Vander Weit put in a lot of work and got so far as to have the NYSDOT come and do reviews. At that time, the NYSDOT advised that they would in fact lower the speed limit, but at the last minute pulled this request off the table without explanation.

R. Madonia would like to wait until the November election is past and then he will come back to the Town Board for a resolution of support. R. Madonia feels that the 'Politicians' will have pull more with the NYSDOT and get this resolved so he would like them to be the lead agency in this endeavor.

Austerlitz Fire House Representatives Jay Choon and Dave Savage come before the Town Board to follow-up on the time table for work to be completed in the stream behind the Austerlitz Fire House. D. Savage questioned whether the stream clean-up and the culvert replacement are 2 separate projects or will they be completed at the same time. Highway Superintendent R. Meehan would like to complete both at the same time, but time is ticking. R. Meehan noted that the stream can still be completed this fall, and he would like to have the new culvert in as well, but this part may have to wait until Spring. Engineer for the Town Patrick Prendergast has looked at the area and a bid for the culvert replacement will go out in a couple of weeks. Then there will be an additional couple of weeks to receive bids. Once a bid is accepted, a new culvert can be purchased and installed. If the weather stays mild, R. Meehan will finish this project up this fall. Jay Choon questioned whether work can be done in the stream if there is water flowing. Highway Superintendent Meehan noted that ideally drier is better, but his crew will work in the water if they have to. The stream can only be widened a couple of feet. J. Choon asked if the Highway Department can put in a berm on the north side by West Hill Road. R. Meehan noted that the NYSDEC said the Town can bring up the ground level, but no berms.

Discussed other work the NYSDEC is doing in the Town of Austerlitz. D. Savage questioned what stream cleaning will be done in the Green River. R. Meehan notes that the NYSDEC needs to come out and walk

the stream and advise. Any work done there will need easements as well and the money the Town received for this area was to move trees, not gravel.

Highway Superintendent Meehan advised that he is still waiting on an easement from Sanchez', but will follow-up with this. Dave Savage and Jay Choon thank R. Meehan for his efforts.

The County owned bridge on Upper Hollow Road is still being worked on.

2013 Town of Austerlitz Budget: Supervisor Braley continues to work on the 2013 Tentative Budget with the goal of staying within the 2% tax cap and finding money to buy a new highway truck and grader. A budget workshop will be held on October 23, 2012, at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall. The Town Board discussed grader and truck options.

New Business

Board of Assessment Review Appointment: Bridget Arnold's term has ended September 30, 2012. B. Arnold was appointed to the unfinished term of Gerald DeBona. Because B. Arnold did not complete a full term, the Town Board has decided to reappoint her for a new 5 year term.

A motion to appoint Bridget Arnold as a Board of Assessment Review Member with a term running from October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2017 was made by J. Mesick and seconded by C. Pinto.

J. Braley: yes

B. Geel: yes

C. Pinto: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

J. Mesick: yes

Motion unanimously carried.

Local Law #1-2012, a local law to override the tax levy limit established in General Municipal Law 3-c

Supervisor Braley present Local Law #1-2012 and advised that the Town has no intention of going over the 2% cap. This override law is just to cover the Town for unseen events or mistakes.

A motion to set a public hearing for Local Law #1-2012, a local law to override the tax levy limit established in General Municipal Law 3-c, for November 8, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. and to set a public hearing on the 2013 Preliminary Budget for November 8, 2012 at 6:45 p.m., was made by J. Braley and seconded by B. Geel.

J. Braley: yes

B. Geel: yes

C. Pinto: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

J. Mesick: yes

Motion unanimously carried.

Change in pay status Code Enforcement Officer Position: The new Code Enforcement Officer Lee Heim has requested to be paid every two weeks instead of once a month.

A motion to change the pay status of the Code Enforcement Officer Position as stated in Resolution #14-2012 from “per year payable monthly’ to “per year payable bi-weekly”, was made by C. Pinto and seconded by M. Verenazi.

J. Braley: yes

B. Geel: yes

C. Pinto: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

J. Mesick: yes

Motion unanimously carried.

Town Board Member Verenazi requested that Supervisor Braley write a letter to the NYSDOT concerning the condition of State Route 203 and urging that they resurface the unfinished section. Supervisor Braley has sent a letter to Hudson, but will send one to Albany as well.

Town Board Member Pinto would like to discuss the work to be completed in the Park at the next Town Board Meeting and have the project plans all set up to have the work done in the Spring. The Town Board discussed what needs to be done and what decisions the Town needs to make. Work will concentrate on the retaining wall and the parking lot. Highway Superintendent Meehan noted that the tennis court will need some work next summer as well.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by C. Pinto and seconded by M. Verenazi.

J. Braley: yes

B. Geel: yes

C. Pinto: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

J. Mesick: yes

Motion unanimously carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan A. Haag, Town Clerk