

Town of Austerlitz
Regular Town Board Meeting
September 13, 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 7:00 p.m.

Moment of Silence, followed by the pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

A motion to accept the August 9, 2012 Town Board Meeting minutes 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.

Auditing of Accounts and Claims

A motion to approve General Fund #335-371, in the amount of \$18427.44, and Highway Fund #175-189,
in the amount of \$38300.69, was made by B. Geel and seconded J. Mesick.

J. Braley: yes

B. Geel: yes

C. Pinto: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

J. Mesick: yes

Motion unanimously carried.

Town Board Member Geel questioned the Patrick Prendergast bill since it referenced work done by a
subcontractor, Clark Engineering and Surveying, P.C. Highway Superintendent Meehan explained that
Clark had done a topographic survey for the Austerlitz Fire House which P. Prendergast used to save our
Town money. Highway Superintendent Meehan explained the drainage and culvert issues.

Reports

Monthly cash disbursements for the month of August 2012 were presented. Supervisor Braley noted
that FEMA money is in increasing our deposit totals to over \$800,000. J. Braley advised that a couple
bonds still need to be paid by the end of the year and this amount also includes playground money.
Roughly \$400,000 will be going out. The court revenues are over what was budgeted.

Supervisor Braley advised that the Town Hall will be repainted inside and out by inmates coordinated by
the Columbia County Sheriff's Department. Work will begin next week. The Highway Department will
fix the plaster damage over the windows that was caused by leaking. Town Board member Geel can
provide a pressure washer free of charge.

Supervisor Braley continued by advising that the new town hall custodian has started and is doing well.

On a County Level, Supervisor Braley noted that the Supervisors are working on the annual budget. Board of Supervisors Chairman P. Gratten thought it would be wise for everyone to be involved in the process. The Board of Supervisors is shooting to have a zero percent increase in the budget. A negative SEQRA was filed for the Railroad Ave. renovations. Columbia Greene College passed their budget.

Town Clerk Report for the month of August 2012 submitted. Discussion explaining lack of revenues for hunting licenses, noting that young people are not hunting anymore, Massachusetts hunters are fewer because of regulations concerning chronic wasting disease, many of the senior hunters were sold lifetime licenses a few years ago, etc..

Highway Superintendent Robert Meehan advised that the Highway Department has been replacing culverts, and cutting brush and weeds on some roads. The Upper Hollow Road Bridge is being worked on by the County, replacing some beams. Engineer Pat Prendergast has been advising concerning the West Hill Road culvert which is crushed down at least half way. Replacement of this culvert will need to be put out to bid. The Town Board discussed types of allowable culverts per NYSDEC specs. The culvert on Elm Street needs to be replaced and R. Meehan is working with NYSEG concerning this since the culvert is right by an electric pole. The roads will need to be graded for winter and one of the plow trucks is being worked on. R. Meehan is also going to try and fix the culvert on Reed Road. Pierson Road culvert also needs to be replaced.

Planning Board Report for the month of August 2012 submitted. They have not met for 4 months.

No Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee Report for the month of August 2012 submitted. Chairman T. Stalker will be asked to clarify why the reporting paperwork for the Berkshire Taconic Grant is late. Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee Member Shawn Hancock is responsible for the grant.

Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Report for the month of August 2012 submitted. On budget for fees.

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

Dog Control Report for the month of August 2012 submitted.

Summer Recreation Report for the 2012 Season submitted. Town Board Member Geel noted this is a well run program.

A motion to accept the above reports 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.

Correspondence

NYSORPS Columbia County C.A.P. #1 Final Equalization Rate for the Town of Austerlitz: 100%.

Unfinished Business

Playground: Report from Morris Associates noting that that a survey has been performed and a map created.

Code Enforcement Officer Appointment: Code Enforcement Officer Applicant Lee Heim has accepted the position and is ready to start September 17, 2012. The Columbia County Sheriff's Department advised that the promised car will be forthcoming once the title issue has been resolved.

A motion to appoint Lee Heim for a term to expire at the Organizational Meeting in January 2013, at an annual salary of \$35000.00 a year 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.

Highway Grader: Town Board Member Mesick has done research on available graders for purchase, both new and used. J. Mesick presented the Town Board with a couple of options he found and the Town Board discussed the particulars. One grader can be rented. Town Board Member Geel feels that the prices were high and wanted to look at something cheaper. Member Mesick advised that extensive searching was done and he presented the Town Board with the best deals available. Supervisor Braley advised that there are two highway bonds currently with payments of \$8200.00 per year until 2018 and \$46000.00 per year until 2013. Funding issues were discussed and the advantages/disadvantages between buying and leasing.

Highway Truck: The Highway Department has a truck with the body ready to fall off. Highway Superintendent Meehan will spec out the purchase of a new or used replacement.

Austerlitz Fire Company: Rich Nesbitt Sr., Jay Choon, and Dave Savage, representing the Austerlitz Fire Company, came before the Town Board asking for an update on the stream cleanup between the Austerlitz Firehouse and Town owned land. There have been many discussions over the last year between the Firehouse Representatives, Highway Superintendent Meehan, and Supervisor Braley concerning who will do what, when, and how, with R. Nesbitt understanding that the Town of Austerlitz will handle the stream cleanup. R. Nesbitt feels that the ball has been dropped by the Town and is concerned about the firehouse flooding should another heavy rain hit the area because the stream is filled with debris. There was an open window of time, following Hurricane Irene, given by the NYSDEC when work in streams could be done with little red tape and the Town has missed this opportunity.

Highway Superintendent Meehan advised that he has already begun clean-up further up the stream. In the area behind the Austerlitz Firehouse, there is a culvert that is crushed and needs to be replaced. The condition of this culvert is causing much of the flooding issues. Purchase of a new culvert will need to be bid, and permission granted by land owners for the Highway Department to enter the stream in areas that do not belong to the Town. The Town must also work with the NYSDEC. When the Town submitted paperwork to F.E.M.A., this area of the stream was included, but F.E.M.A. decline to give any money for this section.

Town Board member Mesick noted that the Austerlitz Firehouse has been flooded many times over the years and stream cleanup is not the responsibility of the Town.

Supervisor Braley advised that the Town has money to correct this problem. Highway Superintendent Meehan would like to have a plan in place that not only includes stream clean-up, but culvert replacement and elevation changes. Representatives from the Austerlitz Firehouse have asked that the gravel taken out of the stream during cleanup be used to build the grade behind the firehouse.

Superintendent Meehan is planning on starting this project this fall, but his first responsibility is to the roads in the Town of Austerlitz. R. Meehan tries to help when he can, but the replacement of 35 culverts on Town roads has consumed a great deal of time over the past year. R. Nesbitt questioned if money was available for the Town to hire an outside firm to handle this project. Supervisor Braley noted he had not considered this option. Supervisor Braley explained in more detail the grant program that was offered to towns by the State for money to be used to clean out streams congested with debris by Hurricane Irene. Earlier in the year, Highway Superintendent Meehan and Highway Crew Member Fitzpatrick walked the streams in Town taking pictures to substantiate damage for the grant application. There is a great deal of wood in the streams throughout the Town. Roughly \$50000.00 was offered to the Town for stream cleanup, with specific sections of certain streams noted to use the grant money towards. Unfortunately, the area behind the Austerlitz Firehouse was not included for funding, only a small section on the Town owned portion. Supervisor Braley feels that the Town does have some responsibility to help in the cleanup of this stream. Again Superintendent Meehan reiterates that this cleanup project is scheduled for this fall.

R. Nesbitt requests that the Town Board consider hiring this work out to make sure that it is completed as it has been put off for a year at this point. Town Board Member Geel questioned whether or not the Austerlitz Firehouse could secure a permit themselves directly from the NYSDEC for this cleanup work as the Spencertown Firehouse did earlier this year. Member Geel offered some contact information should this be a route the Representatives from the Austerlitz Firehouse wish to take.

Easement paperwork to be signed for the Highway Crew to work in the stream was discussed. Supervisor Braley will get the necessary forms to Dave Savage to process.

New Business

Town Hall Feasibility Study: Supervisor Braley noted that the Town Board needed to decide a direction for the new town hall project because funding is available this fall. Long term plans need to be put in place that utilize specific needs J. Braley has compiled based on conversations he has had with the different town departments. The Town Board discussed space needed, what the town would look like in the future, options available, etc.

Deputy Town Clerk Appointment: Town Clerk Susan Haag explained she had been summoned to Jury Duty the same day and time that election materials were required to be delivered to the polling sites. Janet Paul delivered the materials in her place. For future conflicts, Janet Paul has been chosen by Town Clerk Haag as deputy for election purposes.

A motion to appoint Janet Paul as a deputy for election purposes 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.

2013 Budget Meetings: Supervisor Braley advised that Budget season is here and the 2013 Tentative Budget is being worked on. The Town Board set a budget workshop on 9/27/12, beginning at 6:30 p.m., and a Special Meeting to present the 2013 Tentative Budget on 10/4/12, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Resolution 30-2012 Speed Limit Reduction State Route 203: The Town Board discussed the feasibility of trying to reduce the speed limit on Route 203 through the Hamlet of Spencertown once again. This has been tried several times in the past without success. Richard Madonia is spear heading this initiative and has placed speed reduction petitions in the Town Hall, the Spencertown Country Store and the Spencertown Post Office. The Town has not received these petitions to date. Town Board Member Geel feels that time would be better spent looking into mobile signs and traffic calming devices. B. Geel will look into mobile speed signs. The Town Board decided to table Resolution 30-2012 Speed Limit Reduction State Route 203 until petitions provided.

Resolution 31-2012 Columbia County Planning Board Appointment

WHEREAS Tim Stalker has served the Town of Austerlitz zealously as a Planning Board Member and Chairman of the Austerlitz Planning Board, and

WHEREAS T. Stalker has represented the Town on the Columbia County Planning Board for many years,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Austerlitz hereby asks that the Columbia County Board of Supervisors reappoint Tim Stalker to the Columbia County Planning Board representing Canaan, New Lebanon, and Austerlitz.

A motion to adopt Resolution 31-2012 Columbia County Planning Board Appointment was made by J. Braley and seconded by J. Mesick.

J. Braley: yes

B. Geel: yes

C. Pinto: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

J. Mesick: yes

Motion unanimously carried.

Public Comments

John Burlingame noted that any speed signs that are put up will be ineffective without a patrol component. Supervisor Braley explained the Columbia County Residential Deputy program noting that the Town Board can choose where the Deputy Sheriff sits. Currently a lot of patrolling is being done on back roads.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn 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. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan A. Haag, Town Clerk