

Town of Austerlitz
Town Board Meeting
February 26, 2015

Present: Robert Lagonia, Supervisor, Matthew Verenazi, Greg Vogler, Jon Mesick Town Board Members, Robert Meehan, Highway Superintendent, and Susan Haag, Town Clerk

Bryan Geel absent.

Workshop called to order at 5:34 p.m.

Supervisor Lagonia advised that there are key projects coming up this year: the Town Park revisions, the new Town Hall renovation, and bonding discussions.

Town Park: Supervisor Lagonia has spoken with Jack Shear representing the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation and the Town is now ready to put together a formal bid packet for renovations at the March Town Board meeting. The Town currently has roughly \$163000.00 to spend on this project.

The Town Board discussed the pavilion area layout and specifications for the actual pavilion such as power outlets, bump out for kitchen, timber frame look, pavilion and covered area flooring, etc. In addition, there needs to be lighting in the parking area and on the path from the parking area to the Academy.

Highway Superintendent Meehan advised that before any paving is done on State Route 203, NYSDOT needs to plan for drainage issues by the entrance to the Town Park. This has been discussed with them before. There are also drainage issues around the tennis court area that may be taken care of in house.

Supervisor Lagonia will move this project forward with Morris Associates.

New Town Hall: The closing on this property took place February 10, 2015 and the Town now owns the building next door to the current Town Hall. Previous owner, Martin Parker, will be removing the small shed once the weather is better. The larger barn on the property still needs to be removed. The Town Board discussed how this could happen. The Town Board will put out an RFP for the purchase and removal of this barn and its foundation.

Supervisor Lagonia toured the new Town Hall with Jack Shear this past week. The Kelly Foundation has pledged an additional \$300000.00 this year for renovations. R. Lagonia has investigated and was advised that as long as donated funds are used for this project, prevailing wage does not have to be paid. But, if the Town goes this route, the entire project must be paid for through donations. Supervisor Lagonia would like to hear from all department heads to establish what their needs, wants and desires are for the new Town Hall. Once the Town Board understands what the needs are, an architect can provide a rough conceptual drawing getting an idea of cost. The Kelly Foundation would like to see this building left intact as much as possible.

The current Town Hall will probably still be used. Town Board Member Vogler would like to get a handle on all infrastructure issues as well.

Both Town Board Member Verenazi and Highway Superintendent Meehan advised that Architect Joe Iuviene, a resident in the Town of Austerlitz, should look at the project. J. Iuviene was in charge when the new Highway Garage was built and did a great job. Supervisor Lagonia will speak with J. Iuviene and Engineer Paul McCreary.

In view of paying bills that will be forthcoming for the renovation work on the new Town Hall, the consensus of the Town Board was to pay these upfront, and be reimbursed in October by the Kelly Foundation.

Highway Superintendent Meehan noted that the drainage in the Hamlet of Spencertown also needs to be considered by the NYSDOT before any paving of State Route 203 is done.

Next steps for this project will be to remove the small shed, an RFP for the removal of the larger barn, and have Architect Iuviene and Engineer McCreary in to look at the building.

Supervisor Lagonia would also like to do some Spring cleanup around the building to make it look more presentable. R. Meehan noted that the Highway Crew can take care of this. Town Board Member Mesick would also like to help.

Paving State Route 203: NYSDOT reached out to Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee Chair Tim Stalker concerning the paving of State Route 203. The Town has not been officially notified that the paving will happen, although the correspondence to T. Stalker advised it will. Chair Stalker asked Supervisor Lagonia if the Town could hold a public forum so the residents in the Hamlet of Spencertown can have a voice for their concerns and wishes in connection with this project. The concerns would then be forwarded to the NYSDOT. If a public forum is going to be held, it needs to happen fairly quickly because the paving is set to begin in May or June.

The consensus of the Town Board was to hold the public forum before the March Town Board Meeting. Supervisor Lagonia will email T. Stalker as to the timing of the public forum.

Highway Superintendent Meehan again advised the Town Board that before any paving was done, the drainage along State Route 203 needed to be fixed.

Bonding: Supervisor Lagonia would like to discuss the rebonding of current bonds with new needs. Currently new Highway Equipment needs to be purchased, and a new salt shed needs to be built.

Town Board Member Vogler would like to see a list of Highway needs that would include equipment, road repair work, culvert replacement projects, etc so that the Town Board can start to plan for the capital outlay for these projects in future budgets. Supervisor Lagonia advised that the current budget only supports maintenance of roads and equipment, not replacement. The Town Board needs to start considering these issues and plan instead of being on the defensive.

Supervisor Lagonia asks R. Meehan to give the Town Board is list of roads and condition of each so it can start to working on a financial plan. Town Board Member Vogler would like to see a workshop just for this issue. Highway Superintendent Meehan advised that most of his budget goes towards roads.

Highway Superintendent Meehan advised that he may run short of salt and sand the year. There are several roads that have spots that will need to be repaired. The new highway grader has been taken back by Cat and it probably will not be returned until March sometime. The grader is being fit with a scafire which needed to be ordered. If it comes down to it, Cat will bring the grader back ahead of time.

Supervisor Lagonia will also look into the different alternatives for a new salt shed. The focus currently though is the Town Park renovations and the new Town Hall.

The Town Board discussed budgeting bonding options, and options for moving forward.

A motion to close the Town Board Workshop was made by R. Lagonia and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 4:1. Workshop closed at 6:45 P.M.

Regular meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Moment of Silence, followed by the pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

A motion to accept the January 15, 2015 Regular Town Board Meeting minutes was made by J. Mesick and seconded by G. Vogler.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 4:1.

Auditing of Accounts and Claims

The Town Board discussed an invoice that the judges want to submit for a lunch meeting they held with their clerk. The consensus of the Town Board is that this is an inappropriate use of taxpayer funds, the money is not in the court budget and there is no extenuating circumstance to hold a lunch meeting instead of a meeting in the Town Hall.

A motion to pay General Fund, #22-56, in the amount of \$22410.56, and Highway Fund, #5-24, in the amount of \$19825.38, was made by G. Vogler and seconded by J. Mesick.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 4:1.

Reports

Monthly Cash Disbursement and Supervisor Report

Supervisor Lagonia noted that the Town Board received a preliminary draft of the 2014 Annual Financial Report done by Account for the Town, Nelson Furlano. The Town saw the expected draw down of savings of \$50,000.00, which was better than the full amount predicted of \$150,000.00. Town Board Member Vogler noted that the budget was watched very closely and the Town came in around where it was estimated it would when the 2015 budget was drafted. The Annual Financial Report will be filled in a timely fashion.

Supervisor Lagonia noted that the Enhanced Patrol has not been used yet this year. The Austerlitz Fire District has been paid their portion of tax revenue.

NYS Office of the Comptroller's Audit: The final audit from the NYS Comptroller's Office has been received and an exit interview completed. Supervisor Lagonia, Town Clerk Haag, and Highway Superintendent Meehan attended this meeting. Supervisor Lagonia feels that the Town came through this process in good shape since many issues that were noted were already corrected by the time the audit was done. There were two areas that were written up in the final audit: internal controls over payroll and Highway Department fuel inventory.

Supervisor Lagonia noted that the current system for fuel control is antiquated and does need a fix, but a fix is very expensive. The Comptroller did note that as long as certain controls are in place, what is being used is fine. Highway Superintendent Meehan would like to update this system, but again, it is very expensive. Supervisor Lagonia advised that the auditors were not on a witch hunt and they were very helpful. R. Lagonia did send a response on behalf of the Town that will be included in the final audit.

Town Park: Supervisor Lagonia noted that the plans for the renovations to the Town Park are basically set and will be out to the Town's Engineer to put together a bid package which should be out next month. No taxpayer money will be used for this project.

Highway Grader: Supervisor Lagonia noted that the new Highway grader is at the dealership awaiting a part and should be returned to the Town by March.

2015 Projects: Supervisor Lagonia noted that the Town will be tackling the renovations at the Town Park and the new Town Hall and State Route 203 will be paved in the Spring. There will be a public forum for residents who live in the Hamlet of Spencertown to voice any concerns they will have in connection with this project.

New Town Hall: Supervisor Lagonia advised that the closing for the new Town Hall purchase was in early February so the Town now owns the building next door. No taxpayer money was used for this purchase. The Ellsworth Kelly Foundation donated \$300,000.00 and the seller, Martin Parker paid for the closing costs. Supervisor Lagonia met with Jack Shear, representing the Kelly Foundation, and an additional \$300,000.00 for the 2015 year has been pledged to begin renovation work. The Town will start meetings with the Engineer for the Town, Morris Associates and Architect and Town of Austerlitz resident, Joe Iuviene. Come Spring, the area around the building will be cleaned up, and both side buildings will be removed.

Bonding: Supervisor Lagonia noted that the bond for the Highway Garage will be paid off in 2017. The Town Board will be discussing road repair and culvert work, the purchase of new Highway equipment and options for a new salt shed. All projects will be considered for bonding.

The Town had an NYSEG Energy Efficiency Audit done in the Town Hall and the Highway Garage. There would be too long of a payback time period to recoup any money spent to upgrade the areas where the Town would save money. This will be put on the back burner for now unless a Town Board Member would like to take this project on. No volunteers.

Austerlitz Fire House: Bids for the building of the new Austerlitz Fire House were sent out and the bid award went to Supervisor Lagonia's brother. R. Lagonia wanted to make it clear that this is not a Town project, and he had no interaction in this transaction. The process was completely handled by the Austerlitz Fire Company.

Plowing of the Town Park parking lot for use by the Spencertown Academy: Supervisor Lagonia noted that the Town has never plowed on a regular basis for events for the Spencertown Academy. This is an added expense to the Town. The Spencertown Academy asked to have plowing done for an event to which the Town Highway Crew accommodated them. But, the Town continued to plow for additional events. Supervisor Lagonia asked if the Town Board wanted to be responsible for future plowing for Academy events. R. Lagonia does not want to use Town material and man power for this. Town Board Member Verenazi agrees and notes that he does not believe it is the Town's place to plow for events not under the Town's jurisdiction. Highway Superintendent Meehan advised that he does not have a problem with his crew plowing if the Academy gives him ample notice and it does not interfere with the normal Highway duties. If a snowstorm comes though, Town roads are the main priority. Since R. Meehan has been Highway Superintendent, he has plowed at least once a year for the Academy. Town Board Member Vogler would like the Town to be as accommodating as possible to institutions that are part of the Town, as long as they call ahead of time. Supervisor Lagonia noted that the Town will continue to plow as best as they can, but no plowing will be done in between events. Next year the Academy will need to give the Town a list dates and times of scheduled events understanding that there is no commitment at this point to plow, and that the Town roads come first.

Columbia County Senior Citizen of the Year: Constance Mondel was one of two senior citizens recognized for their hard work and dedication and awarded Columbia County Senior Citizen of

the Year. Town Board Member Vogler submitted an application on behalf of the Town. There will be a ceremony May 5th. The Town Board congratulates Constance Mondel.

Town Historian Position: Supervisor Lagonia advised that Town Historian, Sally Light has turned over the Historical records she had in her house and they are currently at the Austerlitz Historical Society temporarily. At first, the Town was told this was all the records Historian Light had, but during an inspection of the records by an outside company, Historian Light advised that she still had Town records in her home.

The Town Board has been given a report submitted by K Sickler and Murphy, outlining their findings when examining our Historical Records. In the report it was noted that the records that Historian Light kept were not records that the Town had to keep under the jurisdiction of the Town Clerk, but rather interesting facets of the Town's history. Some of the records present had no real historical value. K. Sickler and Murphy advised that since the Town has an active and thriving Historical Society, the Town Board may want to house these Historical records with the Austerlitz Society, understanding that they would still belong to the Town, and be available for inspection. It was advised that it would cost thousands of dollars to preserve these records. Supervisor Lagonia would like to come up with an agreement with the Historical Society for the housing of these records. R. Lagonia is not sure if the Town needs a Historian at this point. R. Lagonia asked the Town Board to read over the report and consider what it would like to do.

On a County level, the Board of Supervisors listened to presentations made by 2 out of 3 companies chosen to possibly purchase Pine Haven out of the bids submitted. After the presentation was made to the Supervisors, both the Supervisors and the public were given the opportunity to ask questions. There will be a vote in the near future to select one of these companies to purchase Pine Haven, privatizing it, and taking over management.

Highway Superintendent Report

Highway Superintendent Meehan reported that the Highway crew has been plowing a lot of snow. Both the plow trucks and the guys are tired. The #7 truck slid backwards down Stonewall Road with some rear end damage. The #5 truck is at Sunnyside. There are some mailboxes to repair. The sand reserves are very low and there is no more available to purchase at Colarussos. The Town will probably have enough for the rest of the season, but it will be really close. The Town Board needs to be aware that there will be a large bill in the fall when the sand purchase is made to replenish the supplies for next year.

The amount of overtime this year is quite a bit over last year. Last year the Town received money from the State to help cover overtime; hopefully they will do the same this year.

Supervisor Lagonia commends Highway Superintendent Meehan and the Highway crew for all their hard work. They have been working extremely hard and have put a great deal of effort in. The Town Board thanks them for them for doing a great job. Supervisor Lagonia rode around with one of the Highway Crew during a snow day and the noticed so many things. The public does not realize the amount of garbage containers left in the road for the plows to avoid, cars parked in the road because residents cannot get in their driveways, etc. It was a most enlightening day for Supervisor Lagonia. Another item of interest to R. Lagonia was that by the

time the plow route he was on was completed and he was back to the start, the road did not even look like it had been plowed.

Town Clerk Report for the month of January 2015 submitted.

Tax Collector Report for the month of January 2015 submitted.

Planning Board Report for the month of January 2015 submitted.

Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee Report for the month of January 2015 submitted. The Town Board discussed if they wanted to tackle the revisions to the Ridgeline section in the Zoning law this year.

Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Report for the month of January 2015 submitted.

Justice Cassuto Justice Court Report for the month of January 2015 submitted.

Justice Grubin Justice Court Report for the month of January 2015 submitted.

Dog Report for the month of January 2015 submitted.

A motion to accept the above reports was made by G. Vogler and seconded by J. Mesick.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 4:1.

Correspondence

Morris Associates: New name is Morris Associates Engineering and Surveying Consultants, PLLC. New partner, Jonathan Verderber, L.S., head of the Land Surveying Department.

Spencertown Academy Arts Center: Request to use the Spencertown Town Green for a Garden Market as part of the Spencertown Academy's annual Hidden Garden Tour on Saturday, June 20, 2015.

A motion to allow the Spencertown Academy to use the Spencertown Town Green for a Garden Market as part of the Spencertown Academy's annual Hidden Garden Tour on Saturday, June 20, 2015 was made by R. Lagonia and seconded by J. Mesick closing County Route 7 in front of St. Peter's Presbyterian Church.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 4:1.

Chatham Central School District: Town of Austerlitz committee appointment to sit on a board to process input from entire district to help the district shape its long term goals and strategies for the future.

Town Board Member John Mesick will be the representative for the Town of Austerlitz.

Gravel Ginder Cycling Event: The Capital Bicycle Racing Club and Helping Riders Realize Talent are planning a non-competitive dirt road ride that would travel through a portion of the Town of Austerlitz on Sunday, May 17, 2015

Unfinished Business

Parker Property: Discussed

Town Park: Discussed

New Business

B.A.R. Member: Elizabeth Whiteman's term is up and this position needs to be filled. E. Whiteman advised she is willing to serve another 5 year term. Supervisor Lagonia has spoken with Town Assessor Pam Cook who advised that E. Whiteman does a great job in this position.

A motion to appoint Elizabeth Whiteman to the Town of Austerlitz' Board of Assessment Review for a term to begin 10/1/2014 and ending 9/30/19 was made by R. Lagonia and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 4:1.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Audit: Town Board Member Greg Vogler performed an audit of the Town Clerk and Tax Collector books. All was found to be in order.

Justice Court Audit: Town Board Member Greg Vogler performed an audit of the Justice Court books. All was found to be in order.

Plowing of the Town Park for the Spencertown Academy: Discussed

Historical Records Review: K Sickler/Murphy, Records Management Consultants, have reviewed the Town of Austerlitz' Historical Records and provided a summary report on their findings. Discussed.

NYSEG Energy Efficiency Assessment: Discussed.

Resolution #31-2015, Inter-Municipal Cooperation Agreement

Although Columbia County already helps Towns with highway issues, no formal agreement has been in place in the past. There now needs to be one and Resolution #31-2015 was presented for this reason. Highway Superintendent Meehan notes that Towns also help other Towns and the Town can bow out of this agreement at any time.

A motion to adopt Resolution #31-2015, Inter-municipal Cooperation Agreement was made by R. Lagonia and seconded by G. Vogler.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 4:1.

Whereas, the Town of Austerlitz has a good working cooperative relationship with neighboring towns in Columbia County and with the County itself with respect to highway needs and emergencies both with providing assistance and receiving assistance when needed; and

Whereas, Columbia County has taken the initiative to formalize this cooperative effort by proposing an inter-municipal agreement that includes as parties the County of Columbia and all municipalities in the County for a five (5) year term; and

Whereas, Town of Austerlitz desires to continue and foster the cooperation and assistance by and between its Highway Department and the Highway Departments and Public Work Departments of other political subdivisions of the County of Columbia, for, but not limited to, the general maintenance, repair and construction of municipal roads, highways, bridges and properties;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

- The Town Board hereby approves the inter-municipal agreement proposed by the County of Columbia with respect to cooperating with and assisting other municipalities in the County of Columbia and receiving such cooperation and assistance in turn.
- Town Board hereby authorizes the Town Supervisor, and if necessary, the Town Highway Superintendent, to execute the inter-municipal agreement proposed by the County of Columbia subject to the approval of the Town's attorney.
- This resolution shall thereby take effect immediately.

Public Comments

Charles Vander Weit asked the Town Board the details concerning the paving of State Route 203. Superintendent Meehan explained the actual process that was going to be done.

C. Vander Weit noted that the Town has a 99 year lease with the Spencertown Academy. Since the Academy leases from the Town and the Town owns this building, who covers the liability insurance? Supervisor Lagonia advised that both the Spencertown Academy and the Town carry insurance coverage.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by R. Lagonia and seconded by G. Vogler.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 4:1. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan A. Haag, Town Clerk