

Town of Austerlitz  
Town Board Meeting  
June 18, 2015

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

Jon Mesick absent.

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

Moment of Silence in remembrance of Ellie Ouwerkirk. Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes**

A motion to accept the May 21, 2015 Workshop/Public Forum/Regular Town Board Meeting minutes was made by G. Vogler and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: abstain due to meeting absence

J. Mesick: absent

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 3:2.

**Auditing of Accounts and Claims**

A motion to pay General Fund, #151-182, in the amount of \$41889.21, and Highway Fund, #86-104, in the amount of \$34807.67, was made by M. Verenazi and seconded by B. Geel.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: yes

J. Mesick: absent

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 4:1.

**Reports**

**Monthly Cash Disbursement and Supervisor Report**

Supervisor Lagonia noted that it is nice to have a second set of eyes looking through the financials. Town Board Member Vogler has helped out in this area and caught that some of the numbers were slightly off because of the formulas used, but have been corrected. Supervisor Lagonia noted the balances on hand in each of the bank accounts and noted that revenues are up in some line items. It was noted that it is difficult to compare appropriations in the Highway Fund from month to month as compared to the previous year because the not all appropriations happen the same time each year.

**Town Park Renovations**

For those new in the audience, Supervisor Lagonia gave a short history of this park renovation project. The Town Board decided to bid the entire project as a full project. The Town Board

recently approved a bid package that was put out for bid and two bids were received. These bids were opened Wednesday, June 17, 2015, at 1:00 pm.

Bids Opened:

J.C. Millbrank Construction Co., Inc  
128 Drake Road  
Pleasant Valley, New York 12569

\$316,000.00

Pavilion: \$103,000.00  
Sitework: \$158,800.00  
Electric \$52,700.00  
\$5000.00 Contingency Allowance

Sport-Tech Construction

410 Route 22  
Brewster, New York 10509

\$470,000.00

Pavilion: \$180,000.00  
Sitework: \$210,000.00  
Electric: \$75,000.00  
\$5000.00 Contingency Allowance

These bids came in way over the allotted amount for this project and the Town Board would like to reject these bids. Supervisor Lagonia spent time speaking with the Engineer for the Town, Ray Jurkowski, from Morris Associates, who advised that this project can be bid out in pieces. The Town Board discussed how to bid this project, what pieces to bid out when, and the cost of preparing the new bid specs. Engineer Jurkowski advised Supervisor Lagonia that the billing would be minimal. The Town Board and Highway Superintendent Meehan discussed what part of the project the Highway Crew could take on. R. Lagonia also discussed this issue with the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation since the money for the project was donated through the Foundation. Jack Shear, representing the Foundation, advised that it was acceptable to the Foundation to rebid this project in separate pieces.

A motion to reject all bids received for the Town Park Renovation Project was made by R. Lagonia and seconded by B. Geel.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: yes

J. Mesick: absent

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 4:1.

A motion to authorize Morris Associates to prepare bid specs for surface work, blacktopping, and fencing, for the Town Park Renovation Project was made by R. Lagonia and seconded by G. Vogler.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: yes  
J. Mesick: absent  
M. Verenazi: yes  
G. Vogler: yes  
Motion carried 4:1.

#### New Town Hall Plans

Supervisor Lagonia advised that he met with Architect Joe Iuveniene who presented preliminary plans for the inside of the new town hall for the Town Board to review. The Town Board reviewed the submitted plans and discussed. The next stage in the project would be to gut the basement area to see what is there and then make decisions from that point. The current amount pledged to begin this work is \$300,000.00 with the potential for more. Supervisor Lagonia does not want to use any taxpayer dollars for this project.

In addition, Supervisor Lagonia has been working with Joseph and Constance Mondel in an effort to purchase a portion of their land which is adjacent to the new town hall. This would be used for the septic system. Attorney for the Town, Joseph Catalano, is working on a contract that would be suitable for all and will be given to the Town Board for approval. The Town Board consensus is to authorize Supervisor Lagonia to work through this process with Attorney Catalano.

#### State Route 203 Repaving

As far as Supervisor Lagonia is aware, the paving of State Route 203 is still on track to begin in July.

#### Austerlitz Fire House

Supervisor Lagonia went to look at the new fire house and met with the Austerlitz Fire District concerning this project. The Austerlitz Fire Company is working through the process of gaining possession of the old firehouse from the Austerlitz Fire District. There are some issues with this project as it is moving forward, but all involved are working through the issues.

#### Barn of New Town Hall Property

Supervisor Lagonia noted that because the Town now has preliminary plans for the new town hall, the Town Board can make the decision as to what it would like to do concerning the barn on this property. Supervisor Lagonia feels that it would be better to declare the barn salvage since it is not going to be used in any fashion and in speaking with others, it is believed that no one would want it. Engineer Jurkowski confirmed this and noted that it would be a headache to bid out. The Highway Crew could do the demolition.

A motion to declare the barn on the new town hall property salvage and have the Highway Crew tear it down and dispose of it was made by R. Lagonia and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes  
B. Geel: yes  
J. Mesick: absent  
M. Verenazi: yes  
G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 4:1.

#### Benjamin Strauss Lawsuit

There has been a ruling in the Benjamin Strauss Lawsuit in favor of the Town of Austerlitz. Although this lawsuit did cost the Town money, it had to be done.

#### Town Liability Insurance

Supervisor Lagonia and Town Board Member Vogler met with Rich Nesbitt, Johnnie Walker Insurance (NYMIR) concerning the renewal of the Town's liability insurance needs. A representative from NYMIR will come within the next couple of months and look over the buildings the Town owns and assess a current value for them. The amount of coverage on the new town hall was raised to \$500,000.00. Highway Superintendent Meehan needs to provide an updated equipment list and the Town Board needs to make a decision as to whether or not it wants to continue insuring the old highway garage building.

#### Columbia County

On a County level, Supervisor Lagonia noted that he sits on the Economic Development Committee and they are currently looking into the relationship between Columbia County and the Columbia Economic Development Corporation, a private organization.

#### Highway Superintendent Report

Highway Superintendent Meehan reported that due to the heavy rain storms, the Highway Crew has been cleaning up downed trees. In addition, the Town of Canaan has needed some help. There is a culvert that needs to be replaced on Harlemville Road on the Hillsdale side. There are other culverts around Town that need to be replaced as well. Highway Superintendent Meehan has taken an additional load of rocks up to the Choate property. He believes that this batch are a sufficient replacement for the ones removed during the Bryarcliffe Road paving project. There is some topsoil that needs to be put around, but generally, this issue is remedied.

Highway Superintendent Meehan has spoken with Peckham about the blacktopping of Reed Road. The Town Board looked over the estimates for this project and for Bloody Hollow which R. Meehan would also like to blacktop this year. Superintendent Meehan noted that C.H.I.P.s money can be used for these to projects and he believes the Town will be getting roughly \$160,000.00 from this program. The Town Board discussed using C.H.I.P.s money for this since it was proposed to use this money for bridge replacement on East Hill Road. Possible funding options and materials were also discussed.

The Town Board consensus was to have a workshop before the July Town Board meeting to discuss this project, get solid cost estimates, incorporate work needed on Angel Hill and the bridge replacement on East Hill Road.

Town Clerk Report for the month of May 2015 submitted.

Tax Collector Report for the month of May 2015 submitted. Supervisor Lagonia noted that he was part of a group on the County level who assessed properties that were slated to go up for foreclosure. The process was explained.

Planning Board Report for the month of May 2015 submitted.

Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee Report for the month of May 2015 submitted. No report for June, Committee did not meet.

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

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

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

Dog Report for the month of May 2015 submitted.

A motion to accept the above reports was made by B. Geel and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: yes

J. Mesick: absent

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 4:1.

### **Correspondence**

Friends of Historic St. Peters: Thank you for Welcome to Summer in Spencertown Donation.

NYS Dept. of Taxation and Finance: Town of Austerlitz 2015 Tentative Equalization Rate of 100%

### **Miscellaneous**

Supervisor Lagonia met with Assessor Pam Cook who alerted him that the Town would need to do a full revaluation in a year or so.

### **Austerlitz Historical Society**

Supervisor Lagonia advised that he and Town Clerk Susan Haag met with representatives from the Austerlitz Historical Society concerning the Town's historical records. Town Historian Sally Light was unable to attend the meeting. The meeting concerned the housing of the Town's historical records, who owns them, how to access them, etc. Supervisor Lagonia thanked the AHS for housing these records and for keeping them currently. Since the Town does not know exactly what is there and the historical value of these records, Gail Cashen has offered to pay for these records to be surveyed to answer these questions. The Austerlitz Historical Society will hire a retired State Library Archivist to survey the records, assess historical value, advise as to record grouping, etc., and generate a report. Once this report is finished, then the Town can decide next steps. Supervisor Lagonia noted that there are great people associated with the Austerlitz Historical Society who want to help the Town. The records are still locked in a cabinet and have not been touched.

## **Unfinished Business**

**New Town Hall:** Discussed

Town Board Member Verenazi questioned whether or not the tree that needed to be taken down has been. Supervisor Lagonia advised that the Town currently only has one bid for this and really should have at least 2 or 3. Supervisor Lagonia and Highway Superintendent Meehan will reach out for additional quotes and then the Town Board can decide.

**Town Park Bid Award:** Discussed

**Judith Choate Rocks:** Highway Superintendent Meehan noted that J. Choate has seen the provided rocks and believe they are suitable.

**Barn of New Town Hall Site:** Discussed

**Benjamin Strauss Lawsuit:** Discussed

## **New Business**

**2015-2016 Insurance Coverage:** Discussed

**Payroll Records:** Payroll records for the month of May were made available to the Town Board for review.

Highway Superintendent Meehan advised that he replaced the pump in the Fountain on the Spencertown Green. In answer to a question posed by Member Verenazi, R. Meehan advised that he uses screen fill for roads. Superintendent Meehan is still working on looking for a skid steer to purchase.

## **Public Comments**

Charles Vander Weit noted that the Town Justice Court has compliance issues as well as space issues and questions whether or not the new town hall plans take these into consideration. Supervisor Lagonia advised that they do. Member Verenazi questioned what grants were available for the Town Justice Court to pursue. Supervisor Lagonia will look into this.

## **Adjournment**

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

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: yes

J. Mesick: absent

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 4:1. Meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan A. Haag, Town Clerk

