

Town of Austerlitz
Town Board Meeting
August 27, 2015

Present: Robert Lagonia, Supervisor, Jon Mesick, Greg Vogler, Matthew Verenazi, Bryan Geel, Town Board Members, and Susan Haag, Town Clerk

Highway Superintendent Robert Meehan absent.

Regular meeting called to order at 7:01 p.m.

Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

A motion to accept the July 16, 2015 Workshop/Regular Town Board Meeting minutes was made by M. Verenazi and seconded by J. Mesick.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: abstain due to absence

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 4:1.

Auditing of Accounts and Claims

A motion to pay General Fund, #227-276, in the amount of \$42146.45, and Highway Fund, #118-136, in the amount of \$28172.74, was made by G. Vogler and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: yes

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 5:0.

Reports

Monthly Cash Disbursement and Supervisor Report

Monthly Cash Disbursement for the Month of July 2015 submitted. Supervisor Lagonia noted line items are running as expected for the most part. Supervisor Lagonia and Town Board Member Greg Vogler are working on the 2016 budget. Accountant for the Town, Nelson Furlano was down working through the figures as well. Since this is Supervisor Lagonia's second time doing the budget, he has a much better handle on it. The tax cap rate for this year is .73% and Supervisor Lagonia anticipates the budget will comply with this cap. For the 2015 budget, a plus to the Town this year was a savings from a recently announced significant reduction in retirement fees. NYS furnishes the figures each year to towns for budgeting purposes and last year came in with a higher figure. Another area that saw savings for the Town was in the Highway fund. The vacant highway position was never filled. There are a number of major bills still to come before the end of the year. Supervisor Lagonia would like to have the

2016 Tentative Budget at the September Town Board meeting. Workshops can be scheduled for budget purposes, or if the Town Board prefers, work can be done during the regular meeting. Supervisor Lagonia asked the Town Board Members to let him know which way they prefer to go.

Town Park Renovation Project: Supervisor Lagonia noted this has become a thorn in his side. R. Lagonia is very disappointed with the process and the position the Town has been left in. No bids came in on the second round of bidding. This current round saw the project split into sections. Supervisor Lagonia gave a history of this project process and the need for a second bidding cycle. After receiving no bids, Supervisor Lagonia spoke with Attorney for the Town, Joseph Catalano, and confirmed that the Town is now allowed legally to solicit bids directly, as well as, negotiate directly. R. Lagonia advised that this project may not get done in the Fall as had been hoped.

State Route 203: Supervisor Lagonia noted this project was moving quickly and will be done early to mid-September.

Town Newsletter: The first addition of the Town's Newsletter has been distributed and is on the Town's website. This is the first of many that will be put together on a fairly regular basis, but not every month. Town Board Member Vogler has taken on this task and is doing a great job.

Austerlitz Fire House: This project is not only physically coming together, but Representatives for the Austerlitz Fire House are working this project through the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals process.

Columbia County

On a County level, Supervisor Lagonia noted Pine Haven has been sold. The Town Board discussed this sale and savings it would afford Columbia County. Columbia Economic Development Corporation is still in the process of rebuilding. The County is still holding back funding until all as been corrected.

Highway Superintendent Report

Highway Superintendent Meehan was absent. Supervisor Lagonia reported drainage work at the Town Park is completed. The Highway Crew cleaned up fallen trees on Punsit and Schoolhouse Roads. Road repair on Angel Hill will begin after Labor Day. Currently a culvert was replaced. There is a dip in the bridge on West Hill Road and Highway Superintendent Meehan will fix this temporarily until Spring. Supervisor Lagonia advised that Highway Superintendent Meehan works well with himself and the Town Board. Issues that come in are being taken care of, but the public needs to understand that not all issues can be taken care of in a day. The Highway Crew will get to any outstanding issues. Reed Road and Dugway Road have scheduled repair work to be done.

Town Clerk Report for the month of July 2015 submitted.

Planning Board Report for the month of July 2015 submitted.

Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee Report for the month of July 2015 submitted.

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

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

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

Dog Report for the months of June and July 2015 submitted.

Payroll Reports for the month of July 2015 submitted.

A motion to accept the above reports was made by B. Geel and seconded by J. Mesick.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: yes

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 5:0.

Correspondence

NYMIR: Underwriting Survey of the Town of Austerlitz. Town will put up some no trespassing signs.

NYS Dept of Taxation and Finance: Equalization Rate of 100% for the 2015-2016 Cycle. Supervisor Lagonia discussed a Town wide revaluation with Town Assessor, Pam Cook, with no definitive answer.

NYS Dept of Ag and Markets: Municipal Shelter Inspection Report-Satisfactory Rating.

Shelter Point: Disability Benefit Level Upgrade.

Unfinished Business

New Town Hall: Supervisor Lagonia noted that the Town is waiting on a survey on the adjoining property owned by the Mondels. In addition, the Town is waiting on the Columbia County Health Department approval for a new septic system. The Town Board does not want to fund any of this project with tax payer money if possible, so they are in a holding position until additional funding is made available. Any expenses to date will be paid out of a contribution made by the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation. Once additional funding is received, the basement of the building will be gutted to ascertain what is there. Again, the Town is ready to act, but waiting funding.

Town Park Bid Specs: Supervisor Lagonia will work with the Engineer for the Town, Ray Jurkowski and Attorney for the Town, Joseph Catalano, to see about moving this project forward.

Copier Bids: Supervisor Lagonia noted that the copier in the Town Hall is over 10 years old and needs to be replaced because the machine is starting to have repeat break downs and replacement parts are no longer available. Both Canon and Repeat Business have given lease pricing for a new copier. When looking over the numbers, it was concluded that the Town is able to purchase a copier out right.

A motion to authorize Supervisor Lagonia to purchase a new copier for an amount up to \$5000.00 From Canon was made by J. Mesick and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: yes

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 5:0.

Town Newsletter: Discussed

New Business

Court Clerk Appointment: Resolution #34-2015, Appointment of Temporary Court Clerks

A motion to adopt Resolution #34-2015, Appointment of Temporary Court Clerks was made by G. Vogler and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: yes

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 5:0.

Whereas, at the Town of Austerlitz organizational meeting held on January 5, 2015, the Town Board appointed Eileen Olsen as the Town Court Clerk for a one-year term but on July 17, 2015, Ms. Olsen resigned; and

Whereas, since the Town Court cannot function properly without a clerk, the Town Justices with the assistance of the Town Supervisor took immediate action to find temporary replacements for the vacated position; and

Whereas, subsequent to her resignation, Ms. Olsen agreed to temporarily cover the Court Clerk duties until a replacement could be found and then Justices found a Court Clerk, Kati Bell, from another jurisdiction as a temporary replacement; and

Whereas, the hiring of Ms. Bell and Ms. Olsen on a temporary basis was immediately necessary so that there was little or no disruption of the functioning of the Town Court; and

Whereas, the Town Justices will continue to advertise and seek candidates for filling the Court Clerk position on a more permanent basis but in the interim Ms. Bell has agreed to temporarily fulfill the Court Clerk duties; and

Whereas, the Town Board understands the emergency nature of the situation caused by the vacated Court Clerk position and now desires to ratify the arrangements made during that emergency and to formalize the temporary appointment of Ms. Bell;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

1. The Town Board accepts the resignation of the Eileen Olsen and thanks her for her longstanding professional and dedicated service to the Town of Austerlitz.
2. The Town Board hereby ratifies and approves the re-hiring of Eileen Olsen as temporary Court Clerk for the time period of August 5th through August 12th, and authorizes her to be paid for a total of 17.25 hours that she worked during such time period at a rate of \$15.00 per hour.
3. The Town Board hereby appoints Kati Bell as temporary Court Clerk at the rate of \$15.00 per hour to be paid on bi-weekly basis until a new Court Clerk is nominated by the Town Justices and appointed by the Town Board.
4. The Town Board hereby ratifies and approves the hiring of Kati Bell as temporary Court Clerk on August 12th and authorizes her to be paid for the hours she worked from that time period at a rate of \$15.00 per hour.
5. This resolution shall be deemed to take effect as of August 5, 2015 for purposes of ratifying and approving the acts of the Town Supervisor, Town Clerk and Town Justices with respect to the hiring of Eileen Olsen and Kati Bell as set forth above.

Highway Water Tanker Purchase: Supervisor Lagonia advised that there is an old fire truck that was converted into a water truck for sale that is currently owned by the Redrock Fire Company. The thought is that this truck could be continued to be used as a water truck, but for dust control throughout the Town. There have been a number of complaints concerning dust each season. Superintendent Meehan found this truck. Town Board Member Jon Mesick is familiar with this truck and advised that it is old and tired and certainly not worth the money being asked for it. The Town Board discussed the ins and outs of this purchase, the condition of the truck, the ability of the truck to function for the purpose it would be bought for, etc. Town Board Member Mesick also noted that currently the truck is out of service, but does hold and pump water. The consensus of the Town Board was to hold off and keep looking for something suitable. Town Board Member Mesick will look around for alternatives as well.

State Route 203 Speed Stenciling: Supervisor Lagonia received a call concerning the possibility of stenciling State Route 203 with speed limits in the Hamlet of Spencertown. R. Lagonia reached out to the NYSDOT who advised they do not do this, but R. Lagonia wanted to make sure the request was brought before the Town Board. Supervisor Lagonia sent information to the Town resident concerning speeding throughout the Spencertown Hamlet that would help to alleviate some of his concerns.

Skid Steer: Supervisor Lagonia noted that the Town received a bid from Milton Cat for the purchase or lease of a skid steer. This is currently offered on State bid. It was noted that this piece of Highway Equipment would be incredibly helpful and is needed especially since the Town is down a highway crew member. Supervisor Lagonia noted that when looking at the numbers, the Town may be able to purchase this instead of leasing. Supervisor Lagonia noted that since the budget has been watched and is in good shape, the Town needs to move on into getting the roads back in shape. The needed equipment to accomplish this needs to be purchased. The Town Board discussed the Milton Cat bid and looked over the add-ons available.

Public Comments

Jean Anmuth questioned the speed limit on Upper Hollow Road. She noted that it used to be posted with a speed limit sign, but currently there is no signage and people are speeding on this road. There was a counter placed on the road by the County at one time. Supervisor Lagonia advised he will speak with Highway Superintendent Meehan and have a sign put up. In addition, the Town's resident deputy can sit on this road.

Eileen Fusco noted that it may be premature, especially since it is great what the Town is doing with the new Town Hall, but she is curious about the loss of tax revenue, the extra maintenance and heating costs because of bigger building, etc. Supervisor Lagonia noted that the Town offices would be in the basement, and the upper portion would be shut down for most of the time, as well as, being on a different heating zone. R. Lagonia is not anticipating a lot of extra expenses and really the Town tax is so low overall in comparison to the entire tax levy including the County and School, that the Town would only be losing an estimated amount of roughly \$450.00 per year of Town tax.

Eileen Fusco also questioned an internet program in Massachusetts that subsidizes high speed internet. Supervisor Lagonia advised that the County Board of Supervisors is currently working on this type of project for Columbia County. At this point in the process, there is nothing for residents to do.

Linda Horn questioned whether corrugated noise marks could be put in the middle of State Route 203 which Supervisor Lagonia advised probably not.

Charles VanderWeit questioned what protection for the Town Court system is being incorporated into the new Town hall plans. Supervisor Lagonia advised that steps are being taken.

Executive Session

A motion was made by M. Verenazi and seconded by J. Mesick to enter into Executive Session for a personnel matter and to discuss a possible land purchase.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: yes

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 5:0. Executive Session entered at 7:57 p.m.

A motion to exit Executive Session was made by R. Lagonia and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: yes

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 5:0. Executive Session exited at 8:10 p.m.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by J. Mesick and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: yes

J. Mesick: yes

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 5:0. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan A. Haag, Town Clerk