

Town of Austerlitz  
Town Board Meeting  
November 19, 2015

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

Bryan Geel and John Mesick absent.

Regular meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Moment of Silence in memory of John Barden, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes**

A motion to accept the October 15, 2015 Public Hearing/Regular Town Board Meeting minutes was made by G. Vogler and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: absent

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 3:2.

**Auditing of Accounts and Claims**

Budget Amendment #4-2015

General Fund

A1910.4 Insurance increase by \$904.00

A3620.2 Capital Expenditure increase by \$158.00

A1255 Clerk Fees increase by \$1062.00

Highway Fund

DA9901.9 Trans Capital Project increase by \$58000.00

DA5110.4 General Repairs decrease by \$20000.00

DA5140.1 Brush and Weeds decrease by \$15000.00

DA 9010.8 Retirement decrease by \$13000.00

DA Hospitalization decrease by \$10000.00

A motion to approve budget amendment #4-2015 was made by G. Vogler and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: absent

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 3:2.

A motion to pay General Fund, #331-359, in the amount of \$18225.74, Highway Fund, #170-199, in the amount of \$28329.02, and Capital Fund #1-3, in the amount of \$7035.13 was made by M. Verenazi and seconded by G. Vogler.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: absent

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 3:2.

## **Reports**

### **Monthly Cash Disbursement and Supervisor Report**

Monthly Cash Disbursement for the Month of October 2015 submitted. Supervisor Lagonia noted that some of the heading names will be changed. Amounts previously booked to A480 Prepaids, have been moved to a Capital Account so some of the line item numbers will change. In reviewing the financials, Supervisor Lagonia believes the line items are continuing to tract well in both revenues and appropriations. Supervisor Lagonia noted the account totals advising that overall the Town's in good shape at \$1.1 million.

Supervisor Lagonia thanked the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation for an additional contribution to the Town of \$300,000.00. Supervisor Lagonia met with Jack Shear this week discussing progress on projects.

On a County level, Supervisor Lagonia noted that sales tax revenues are down because of lower gas prices, but when Love's Truck Stop in Canaan is complete next year, sales tax revenue will be up.

Town Park Renovations: Renovation work at the Town Park has begun. The blacktopping is finished and the fencing around the muliti-use court will be installed next week. Spring time will see additional work, and bidding out for the pavilion.

Mondel Land Purchase: The Town is still waiting for a title search to be complete in order to close on this purchase.

Christmas Events: The tree lighting ceremony will take place December 11<sup>th</sup>. Supervisor Lagonia has asked the Columbia County Sheriff to send a car for traffic safety. Richard Madonia will provide music for caroling, the Spencertown Store will cater the event and Santa will be coming! The evening will start at 7:00 p.m. Dan Howes will decorate the Town Hall again this year.

The Town has received a notice from the NYS Comptroller's Office that they will be at the Town Monday morning for a tax cap review/audit.

Town Historian: Sally Light has been the Town Historian for 28 years. This Spring the Town moved the historical records from her house to the Austerlitz Historical Society. Historian Light still has additional records at her home which she advises she will turn over to the Town. It has

been increasingly difficult for S. Light to do this job and Supervisor Lagonia was going to meet with her this week, but before that meeting could take place, S. Light sent the Town a letter saying she is retiring at the end of the year.

Supervisor Lagonia has spoken with Tom Moreland about taking up this banner and he has noted his interest in being appointed Town Historian in January. R. Lagonia would like to recognize S. Light for her 28 years of service at the next Town Board meeting.

Supervisor Lagonia has also spoken with Jane McGee, the interim President of the Austerlitz Historical Society, concerning the Town historical records, a new Town Historian, and a contract with the AHS for housing these records. A meeting will take place shortly with all those concerned.

Town Court: The Town Justice Court has been operating with two court clerks, one for each judge. Loren Brink, Justice Grubin's clerk has resigned and Carol Wilber will be clerking for both Justices. Supervisor Lagonia thanked L. Brink for all his efforts.

Town Board Member Vogler noted there were two vouchers for Darsi Fredricks, the Town of Canaan's Court Clerk, who has been training both C. Wilber and L. Brink. The Town Board had approved this training for 20 hours at a rate of \$15.00 an hour. The total time used was 28 hours which is over the allotted time the Town Board approved. Although the Justice Court is still within their allotted 2015 budget, the Town Board would like this recognized and noted that they are actively approving the overage.

#### Highway Superintendent Report

Highway Superintendent Meehan reported that three trucks are ready for this winter. The truck that was purchased from the Town of Canaan is also ready. Half of the sand and salt needed for the winter season has been delivered. The Highway Crew spent time at the Town Park helping with the renovations grinding up the old tennis court blacktop with the new skid steer. It is working well. The Crew is also out grading the roads, filling in potholes and blowing leaves off the roads. Two culverts, one on Foghill Road and one on Prathill Road needed to be changed out before winter.

Town Board Member Vogler questioned when the work was going to be done on Reed Road and Dugway Road that was discussed a couple of months ago. The agreement was to spend \$20000.00-30000.00 on Reed Road. Superintendent Meehan noted that time is running out this year, but he will see what he can do.

Member Vogler noted that the Highway Crew did a great job up at the Town Park and the Town saved money by using in house resources, but he is concerned about these types of projects taking up time that could be spent by having the grader out on the roads. With the staff reduction in the Highway Crew, and the money spent on this new grader, G. Vogler is concerned it is not getting used as it should. Highway Superintendent Meehan explained that there needs to be a team of two when running the grader: one to blow leaves off the road in front and one to actually run the grader. R. Meehan realizes the roads need to be graded, but there are projects that need to be done, especially some blacktop work which he needs his whole crew for. Once these are

complete, R. Meehan will split up the crew and some grading can get done. R. Meehan explains that grading is not done continually throughout the year, but rather three times a year. The hills are not being done right away because R. Meehan will need to rent a roller. Supervisor Lagonia advised there was money in the budget for the rental of a roller.

Town Clerk Report for the month of October 2015 submitted.

Planning Board Report for the month of October 2015 submitted.

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

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

Justice Cassuto Justice Court Report for the months of September and October 2015 submitted.

Justice Grubin Justice Court Report for the months of September and October 2015 submitted.

Dog Report for the month of October 2015 submitted.

A motion to accept the above reports was made by G. Vogler and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: absent

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 3:2.

### **Correspondence**

Town Historian Sally Light: Decision not to be reappointed in 2016 as Town Historian

### **Unfinished Business**

#### **New Town Hall**

Supervisor Lagonia turned the meeting over to Joe Iuviene, Architectural Bureau who gave a presentation to the Town Board concerning the condition of the roof on the new Town Hall. The roof is constructed of trusses, purlins, and roof rafters. Three of the trusses are failing and one has totally collapsed. J. Iuviene is preparing construction drawings for the repair of the collapsed and damaged trusses. This is an emergency situation and work must commence immediately to prevent further collapse. Wes Coons has been hired for the emergency repairs and will begin work next week.

As for the demolition work in the basement of the new town hall, which will mark the beginning of the renovation project, this work will begin after the roof repairs are complete. Plumbing, electrical and heating issues will be first and insurance coverage needs to come in for all workers. Supervisor Lagonia advised that there is a no smoking policy on Town property and asked that the workers be advised of this. Our insurance carrier will be notified as well concerning the work to be completed to make sure the Town is covered on its end. The Highway Crew will put up a fence and no trespassing signs.

Supervisor Lagonia has met with Jack Shear and explained the emergency roof repairs and J. Shear is okay with how the Town is handling the distribution of donated funding.

The Town Board and J. Iuviene discussed prevailing wage, the bidding process, etc. This entire project must be in compliance with law.

**Emergency Roof Repair**

A motion to hire Wes Coons as the contractor for the emergency roof repair for an amount up to \$50000.00 with Supervisor Lagonia authorized to sign a contract was made by M. Verenazi and seconded by G. Vogler.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: absent

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 3:2.

It was noted that an employee of Wes Coons is experienced in roof rafters of this type and the repair of them.

A motion to hire Paul Robertson for electrical work for an amount up to \$1500.00 was made by G. Vogel and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: absent

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 3:2.

A motion to hire KDK Improvements for plumbing and heating work for an amount up to \$1050.00 was made by M. Verenazi and seconded by G. Vogler.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: absent

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 3:2.

**Demolition Bid:**

Demolition Bid:

Daloia Contracting Inc.

402 Lape Road

Nassau, New York 12123

\$19900.00

Wesley Coon  
116 Solar Heights Road  
Ghent, New York 12075  
\$29900.00

It was noted that because of prevailing wage, most contractors did not want to bid on this project.

A motion to award the demolition work of the new town hall to Daloia Contracting Inc. in the amount of \$19900.00 was made by G. Vogler and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes  
B. Geel: absent  
J. Mesick: absent  
M. Verenazi: yes  
G. Vogler: yes  
Motion carried 3:2.

The chimney will be evaluated before any use.

### **Speed Reduction County Route 7**

Resolution #39-2015, Speed Reduction County Route 7

A motion to adopt Resolution #39-2015, Speed Reduction County Route 7 was made by G. Vogler and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes  
B. Geel: absent  
J. Mesick: absent  
M. Verenazi: yes  
G. Vogler: yes  
Motion carried 3:2.

WHEREAS, the Town Board has received correspondence and comments of concern from a Town resident regarding a dangerous condition along a stretch of County Route 7 due to cars traveling too fast on County Route 7 resulting in accidents; and

WHEREAS, the portion of County Route 7 in question (also know as Crow Hill Road) is from Pratt Hill Road to the north and Rigor Hill Road to the south and the speed limit along such portion of County Route 7 is currently posted at 55 miles per hour; and

WHEREAS, the Town has investigated this stretch of road and finds that the speed limit does seem too high for that portion of County Route 7 which has steep grades and substantial curves especially during times of inclement weather conditions; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board believes that this portion of County Route 7 is unsafe due to the high speed limit and that the safety condition of this stretch of road would be improved by lowering the speed limit;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

- The Town Board hereby requests the New York State Department of Transportation and the Department of Public Works of the County of Columbia to reduce the posted speed limit along County Route 7 from Pratt Hill Road to the north and Rigor Hill Road or Schoolhouse Road to the south from the currently posted speed limit of 55 miles per hour to at least 45 miles per hour.
- The Town Board hereby directs the Town Clerk to forward a certified copy of this Resolution first to the Director of the Department of Public Works of the County of Columbia for comment and then to the appropriate Regional Office of the New York State Department of Transportation.
- The Town Board hereby authorizes the Town Supervisor and/or the Town Superintendent of Highways to complete and execute such documents and take such other acts as may be necessary and appropriate in order to have this speed limit reduction request to be processed by the appropriate authorities.
- This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

### **New Business**

#### **2016 Health Insurance**

Supervisor Lagonia has spent a good deal of time with Insurance Broker for the Town, Steve Acciani, discussing different health and dental plans available and options within each of those plans. The Town has been using CDPHP, but after comparisons with other companies, Blue Shield came in with much lower rates when comparing gold plans. In order for the Town to continue to pay the premiums for the highway workers, it will change to Blue Shield in January. This plan is \$8000.00 cheaper than CDPHP. The major difference the employees will see is a change in deductibles. They will be increasing. Supervisor Lagonia and Highway Superintendent Meehan have spoken with the Highway employees about this change, Because Supervisor Lagonia feels the men are still low in pay, he would like to pick up the change in deductible amount if need be. The Highway employees realize that the Town paying for insurance is a year by year decision based on cost.

A motion to approve using Blue Shield Gold Plan, with the Town picking up the difference in deductible if need be was made by R. Lagonia and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: absent

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 3:2.

Supervisor Lagonia noted that the Town is currently paying the single rate for Jim Casey. J. Casey may need to be on a family plan next year because his wife may lose insurance coverage in January and has come to R. Lagonia asking if the Town will pay for family coverage for him if need be. The difference in cost between the single rate and the family rate is quite large. In addition, if the Town decides to change the coverage for one Highway employee, what are it's obligations to do so for the rest of the workers? R. Lagonia again noted that the pay levels for

the Town's Highway crew are low compared to the other Towns in the County. But, Towns in the County have opted for coverage with much higher deductibles.

Supervisor Lagonia will speak with S. Acciani as to whether or not the Town can offer one type of insurance to one employee and not the others. Town Board Member Vogler would like a policy on this going forward.

### **2016 Salt Shed Contract**

Supervisor Lagonia noted that the Town Board will be looking at bonding opportunities for some projects in 2016, but currently, the renewal for the Salt Shed must be approved.

A motion to renew the Salt Shed contract with Jeff Braley for one year was made by G. Vogler and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: absent

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 3:2.

### **Proposed Landscaping Town Green**

Dan Howes is asking the Town to allow him to replace the dying shrubs on the Town Green. A proposed replacement sketch was submitted for review. Town Board Member Vogler noted that the proposal reclaims some lawn area. Highway Superintendent Meehan would like to have new power run for lighting and the fountain while the area is being dug up. The flag pole lights could also be replaced. Supervisor Lagonia agreed.

A motion to approve the proposal submitted by D. Howes for the replacement of shrubs on the Town Green was made by R. Lagonia and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent

J. Mesick: absent

M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 3:2.

### **Columbia Green Humane Society Shelter Contract**

Although there are some changes in the fee structure for next year, the Town really has no other options for handling stray dogs. In addition, Supervisor Lagonia noted that the Humane Society knows the correct handling of dogs and does a good job.

A motion to renew the Dog Shelter Agreement with Columbia Green Humane Society for the 2016 year and to authorize Supervisor Lagonia to sign this contract was made by M. Verenazi and seconded by G. Vogler.

R. Lagonia: yes

B. Geel: absent



J. Mesick: absent  
M. Verenazi: yes  
G. Vogler: yes  
Motion carried 3:2.

### **Public Comments**

Howard Resnikoff: Suggested that the Town does something for retiring Historian, Sally Light. Also, he lives on State Route 203 and questioned any drainage work the State may do in the future since it was not done at the time of paving. H. Resnikoff believes it is appropriate for the Town to ask. Supervisor Lagonia noted that the Town did ask this and was told that no drainage work would be done. R. Lagonia asked that H. Resnikoff send him an email and he will forward it to the County. Highway Superintendent Meehan will talk with the County.

Discussion was also heard concerning an area on State Rte 203, where the shoulder is gone and barrels are currently there. Supervisor Lagonia will address this issue as well.

### **Executive Session**

A motion to enter Executive Session for personel issues was made by R. Lagonia and seconded by M. Verenazi.

R. Lagonia: yes  
B. Geel: absent  
J. Mesick: absent  
M. Verenazi: yes  
G. Vogler: yes  
Motion carried 3:2. Executive Session entered at 8:22 p.m.

A motion to exit Executive Session was made by G. Vogler and seconded by M. Verenazi

R. Lagonia: yes  
B. Geel: absent  
J. Mesick: absent  
M. Verenazi: yes  
G. Vogler: yes  
Motion carried 3:2. Executive Session exited at 8:48 p.m.

In light of the architect's finding, the Town Board is concerned that the Engineer for the Town did not identify and make them aware of the significant structural/emergency situation that exists with the new town hall.

Supervisor Lagonia will discuss this with the Attorney for the Town, Joe Catalano.

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by R. Lagonia and seconded by M. Verenazi.  
R. Lagonia: yes  
B. Geel: absent  
J. Mesick: absent  
M. Verenazi: yes

G. Vogler: yes

Motion carried 3:2. Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan A. Haag, Town Clerk