

Town of Austerlitz
Workshop/Town Board Meeting
August 15, 2019

Present: Robert Lagonia, Supervisor, Greg Vogler, Nansi Friedman, Jere Wrightsman and Christopher Schober, Town Board Members, Robert Meehan, Highway Superintendent and Susan Haag, Town Clerk.

This is the first Town Board Meeting and first overall meeting of the Town of Austerlitz held at the new Town Hall.

Town Board Workshop called to order at 6:00 p.m. Workshop called to discuss Airbnbs. Workshop duly advertised.

Attorney for the Town, Joseph Catalano, gave the Town Board discussion points concerning Airbnbs.

Discussion centered on Airbnbs that advertised event rentals verses those that did not. The consensus of the Town Board is to limit regulations to those that wish to hold events.

Town Board Member Vogler does not want to put regulations in place that will upset residents, but believes the Town should have something in place to at least start to manage this. As this type of rental grows in use, additional regulations can be put in place if needed. But for a start, there should be a foundation in place to handle the egregious issues that have started to rise.

Supervisor Lagonia noted that festivals in Town are part of this discussion because it is generally covering the same issue. Although residents in Town have come to the Town Board complaining about weddings held at Airbnbs, no one has come about other similar events. R. Lagonia feels the Town Board has a responsibility to the community to discuss very large gatherings, which the Town has a few each year. Several annual events were mentioned.

The Town Board discussed liability issues and insurance coverage issues for Airbnbs. What liability could the Town have and if these rentals were to require a permit, what type of inspections would be necessary for this permitting process? What happens if the rental is not up to current code?

Supervisor Lagonia would prefer to just handle the Airbnbs that advertise event opportunities. Member Friedman suggested not making any differentiation between Airbnbs and just regulating certain types of events in Town. Further discussion between owner sponsored events and a rented Airbnb event with Member Schober noting the proximity of the owner is an issue.

Town Board Member Wrightsman would like to see a balanced approach that allows owners to make money if they wish, and put some regulation in place, just nothing excessive.

Town Board Member Schober notes a difference with a house just bought for investment. C. Schober does not want to see any regulations that are overly restrictive.

Member Vogler would like some distinction made between allowable events owners who live at their property and those renting, but regardless, there needs to be repercussions for those who do not comply with whatever regulations are set up. G. Vogler does not want to fix an issue that does not exist, but he believes the Town should be proactive for those issues that have already come up and to just keep regulations to the most egregious stuff.

Supervisor Lagonia believes that all members are saying the same thing: concerned about large events for those venues that are rentals.

None of the Town Board Members have heard any complaints from anyone in Town on 'normal' Airbnb rentals.

Supervisor Lagonia mentioned again the idea to just regulate what the issue is, which is large events. The County is working on some regulations that the Town can look at if needed. R. Lagonia would like to just sit tight for now. Member Vogler would like to regulate large, frequent event rental venues that are excessively use for noise making events.

The Town Board decided to form a committee of the Town Board to come up with wording working in conjunction with the Attorney for the Town. Supervisor Lagonia and Member Vogler will work together on this and bring some wording back to the Town Board.

A motion to close the workshop was made by G. Vogler and seconded by N. Friedman.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober: yes

N. Friedman: yes

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 5:0. Workshop closed at 6:36 p.m.

Town Board meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Moment of Silence in memory of Ronald Ouwerkerk and Robert Heron, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

A motion to accept the July 11, 2019 Town Board Meeting minutes was made by N. Friedman and seconded by J. Wrightsman.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober: yes

N. Friedman: yes

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 5:0.

Auditing of Accounts and Claims

A motion to pay General Fund, #268-305, in the amount of \$14888.18, Highway Fund, #163-184, in the amount of \$108891.68, and the Capital Fund #102-109 in the amount of \$120970.17 was made by G. Vogler and seconded by C. Schober.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober: yes

N. Friedman: yes

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 5:0.

The check for Fox Hill will be held until the amount can be verified. If the amount is correct, the check will be sent.

Reports

Monthly Cash Disbursement and Supervisor Report

Monthly Cash Disbursement for the Month of July 2019 submitted. Supervisor Lagonia advised that some of the C.H.I.P.s funding was put into repairs so this will have to be corrected. There is roughly \$1.6 million in the bank. The money for the new Town Hall has been managed well so there might be a few dollars left. The Town received a \$16000.00 building permit fee.

Supervisor Lagonia advised that Town Board Member Vogler has been working diligently on the 2020 budget with his input. R. Lagonia will be meeting with G. Vogler Tuesday to go over the figures and after this the 2020 budget will be to the Town Board Member pretty quickly.

The last BAN on the salt shed was turned to a Bond and closed last week.

Highway Report

Highway Superintendent Meehan reported that the Highway Crew has finished placing oil and stone on West Hill Road and Mallory Road down by the Cully residence. Some patching has been done, but part of Partridge Drive still needs to be done. R. Meehan also helped Howes Horticultural with the landscaping outside the new Town Hall. The rest of the landscaping is waiting for the fence around the outside heating/cooling units to be completed. Discussion centered on digging post holes for the fencing and R. Meehan using his personal equipment. Supervisor Lagonia advised that Superintendent Meehan should be including the purchase of an auger in his 2020 budget request. R. Lagonia will see if Wes Coons can come and dig some post holes.

Superintendent Meehan advised there is a problem with the fountain at the park. R. Meehan believes it is either a hole in the water line or the tank well has stopped working, but will look and fix it.

A. Colarusso and Son have finished blacktopping by the salt shed. Superintendent Meehan advised that a neighbor came down and complained because this job was done so early in the morning.

People have been speeding on our Town roads so Superintendent Meehan asked that the Resident Deputy patrol.

Town Board Member Friedman ask that Superintendent Meehan mow the Austerlitz Park. R. Meehan will try and get there next week.

Town Board Member Vogler asked the status of the Strawberry Hill Bridge Project. Supervisor Lagonia stated that it is in the hand of Engineer for the Town, Ray Jurkowski. Superintendent Meehan noted that Engineer Jurkowski had wanted some concrete put down before winter. R. Meehan will follow up with R. Jurkowski.

Town Clerk Report for the month of July 2019 submitted.

Planning Board Report for the month of July 2019 submitted. Supervisor Lagonia noted there is a chance that the ATT tower will be pulling their Planning Board application. They might be looking at a different site.

No Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee Report for the month of July 2019 submitted.

Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Report for the month of July 2019 submitted.

Justice Grubin Justice Court Report for the month of July 2019 submitted.

Justice Cassuto Justice Court Report for the month of July 2019 submitted.

Dog Report for the month of July 2019 submitted.

Climate Smart

Member Vogler noted that there was only an informal meeting last month. There will be a formal meeting this Wednesday.

Member Vogler noted that the electronic car charging station suffered a little bit of damage and he has been in contact with the company to get this fixed.

A motion to accept the monthly reports was made by J. Wrightsman and seconded by N. Friedman.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober: yes

N. Friedman: yes

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 5:0.

Correspondence

Chatham Rescue Squad: Updated Funding Information

Supervisor Lagonia noted the increased amount requested and noted that this will be a continual problem going forward. This is the Town's only option.

Columbia County Department of Health: Children's Camp Inspection Summary Report. The report found no public health hazards, no public health hazards not corrected, no other type of violations found. Therefore, no reinspection is required.

Supervisor Lagonia advised that there were only 14 kids this year, but Summer Recreation Director Deborah Oleynek anticipates around 30 next year. R. Lagonia discussed with D. Oleynek ways to increase attendance, maybe by offering a \$10.00 discount for early enrollment. Busing may be an issue next year because Michael Johnston does not really want to be involved. Chatham Central School might be able to take this on. There are some options that do not require bussing. Member Friedman questioned if it would be better to partner with another Town. R. Lagonia noted that Chatham is pretty full and already turns away kids. In addition, R. Lagonia is not sure D. Oleynek would be in favor of this.

It was noted that kids probably will not go to the program if there is no swimming. R. Lagonia is supportive of the Summer Recreation Program, but notes it is hard to justify the money spent for only 14 kids. The Town Board will wait and see what next year brings by way of attendance.

Unfinished Business

New Town Hall Update

Wallace Architecture submitted an updated construction budget versus cost sheet for review.

Supervisor Lagonia discussed the minor items still on the list to be completed. There are a couple of bigger items, namely the gutters and the fencing, both are not B. Daloia's responsibility. The old Town Hall will next get a face lift.

The Town Board anticipates a Town wide celebration of the new Town Hall in October.

September Town Board Meeting

Supervisor Lagonia advised there will be 2 speakers at the September Town Board meeting: Holly Tanner speaking about Enhanced Driver's Licenses and Joyce Thompson speaking about senior issues. Holly Tanner's presentation will begin at 6:00 p.m.

Austerlitz Woodland Park

Discussed.

New Business

Assessor Reappointment

Supervisor Lagonia stated that Town Assessor Pam Cook's term is up September 30, 2019.

A motion to appoint Pam Cook as Town Assessor for a 6 year term running from October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2025 was made by G. Vogler and seconded by C. Schober.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes
C. Schober: yes
N. Friedman: yes
J. Wrightsman: yes
Motion carried 5:0.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by N. Friedman and seconded by J. Wrightsman.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober: yes

N. Friedman: yes

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 5:0. Meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan A. Haag, Town Clerk