

**Caroline Town Board Meeting
Tuesday, February 3, 2015**

Mr. Barber called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Board Members Present: Don Barber, Tim Seely, Irene Weiser, John Fracchia, Mark Witmer

Mr. Fracchia's Report

Full report – see attachment #1.

CIT committee

Mr. Fracchia said that the next step will most likely be to put the site out for redesign because fixing it doesn't seem like a viable option. He said that part of the problem is that the coding is not functional – it's not playing nicely with the current technology.

Ms. Weiser added that in the way web sites are currently made, there's the window dressing, which can be changed easily, and the content, which is preserved. What we need to do is get a new set of window dressing that will work with the content; it's not radical to redesign it. She said that before putting out an RFP, we'll need to evaluate different platforms and figure out how we want to organize the content. There was a suggestion that Laserfiche (the electronic data storage system the town is working on with the county) could make this all much easier, but she heard from the town clerk that her department hasn't had the training to use the system – she's not at a point of being able to just upload data into Laserfiche. Ms. Weiser said we'll have to consult with other committees and departments to find out their needs are; for example, allowing the highway superintendent to post road closures. She said we might explore what more we want the web site to be; for example, is it only town government or do we want it also to highlight businesses in the town? Some people might see it as part of economic development, say, to promote B&Bs, etc.

Mr. Barber responded that town government has to focus on town government. It depends on how you see economic development. He commented that economic development doesn't do anything to keep your tax rate down. So if your goal is to keep your tax rate down, all you want is cows, like Yates County, which has the lowest tax rate around.

Ms. Weiser said we can't anticipate a new web site in a month or two and that it will take time to coordinate things and do it right.

Mr. Witmer's Report

Full report – see attachment #2.

Ms. Weiser's Report

Full report – see attachment #3.

Agenda Items for Business Meeting

Minimum maintenance designation on section of Level Green Road

Mr. Barber stated that there's a letter, dated Jan. 19, to him from Joseph and Judy Wiiki, asking that a section of Level Green Road be discontinued as a minimum maintenance road. He outlined

the process for the town board to follow if any property owner owning or abutting a minimum maintenance road petitions the town to discontinue such designation. The petition needs to be filed with the town clerk and it needs to identify the road or portion of road to be discontinued and the reason for the discontinuance. The town board then needs to hold a public hearing within 30 days of receipt of the petition. Even though the letter was dated Feb. 3, Mr. Barber didn't know whether the town clerk had officially received it. If so, the board would need to hold a public hearing by Feb. 20, and 10 days ahead of that, give notice to every landowner on that section of road. Once we hold a public hearing, we don't have to make a decision immediately. Mr. Barber said he could ask the Wiiki's if we can postpone the public hearing for a couple of months so we can assess the road when there's no snow. It's currently a minimum maintenance road, and the Wiikis would like it changed to regular maintenance.

Mr. Seely added that a minimum maintenance road does not get plowed; in order for the Wiikis to obtain a building permit in the State of New York, the property has to have access to emergency services, which means it needs to be at a level of maintenance that allows it to be plowed all year.

Mr. Barber said that each road that was considered minimum maintenance had to meet several criteria, such as no houses on it. All the minimum maintenance roads in the town were defined by a local law and it will require another local law to undo them.

Mr. Seely said he would like to direct Mr. Barber to have a conversation with the Wiikis to see if we can extend this out three months to allow us time to see the road condition when there's no snow. If that's not acceptable, he would like at least until the March. We are very pressed for time in order to hold a public hearing.

Mr. Barber said Mr. Wiiki is not planning on doing anything for several years.

Mr. Fracchia said that even if he says no, we don't have to figure out what we're doing right away.

Mr. Seely said he thinks we will get public input, especially for residents on that road, and he would like to give as much notice to them as possible, so pushing it out is better.

Ms. Weiser said this weighs into other things that could be more costly; we discussed that over time, the town would put harder surfaces on these gravel roads and it's at least \$10,000 per mile. It's a significant expense to implement such a road extension. She thought that Mr. Wiiki is a reasonable guy to work with and doesn't seem to be in a rush.

Mr. Barber will contact Mr. Wiiki tonight or tomorrow morning and if not, have the clerk get letters ready. To a question from Mr. Witmer, Mr. Barber said there is a precedent for such requests: several small sections of road have been taken out of minimum maintenance, including one at the top of Level Green. We turned one down on a steep part of Speed Hill Road; it would not have been possible for the town to take it over.

Association of towns meeting

Mr. Barber said that at the next meeting, the board can discuss the resolutions and direct Mr. Witmer on how to vote on the issues.

Health insurance benefit analysis

Continue discussion

Safety committee from NYMIR

Mr. Seely reported that Ms. Whittaker said we already cover this because it's required by mine safety.

Mr. Barber responded that we have to use what Ms. Whittaker does as the basis for the committee.; we might invite her to attend the meeting.

Municipal cooperation agreement for health consortium

Mr. Barber pointed out that any amendments are due by Mar. 1.

Establish Caroline Emergency Services Day

Mr. Fracchia said that May is the magic month for national and international recognition days. He will put a resolution forward for the board to pick a day in May to honor the squads. He'd like the board to ask the squads to name members who are in a milestone year.

Ms. Weiser thought that we could also honor those otherwise deserving of recognition.

Resolution 2015-67 Designate Alternate for Association of Towns Annual Meeting

Moved by Mr. Barber; seconded by Mr. Witmer

Resolved, the town board appoints Tim Seely to be the alternate delegate to the annual meeting of the Association of Towns.

Vote

Ayes: Barber, Seely, Weiser, Witmer, Fracchia

Discussion of Public Service Commission's vision for new energy policies

Ms. Weiser stated that the Public Service Commission notified the town of a proceeding called the REV (Reforming the Energy Vision) and that we have one month to get comments in. She briefed the board on what she has learned. It's monstrous in size and has huge implications for the state and the country. Over 300 parties have joined the proceeding from around the world. Most of the parties are corporate. New York State has undertaken an exciting initiative to redesign the energy policies to drive us in the direction of renewables and distributed generation, etc – all the stuff we needed ten years ago. However, part of the vision is to not simply say you have to do these things – they're changing the policies to "animate the markets," which is jargon for "get Wall Street attention and dollars." Right now, the way the state has been funding moving over to renewables is through surcharges on our electric bills, and through money the governor decides to set aside to put into a contest for cleaner, greener something. That's just not big enough money to propel us forward at the speed needed to save the planet, so there may be some legitimate (although unpalatable) rationale in needing to animate the markets. A problem is that they want to put the utility companies in charge of all of it. Ms. Weiser discovered that there are actually two proceedings: one to take the surcharges off the bills and the other to allow municipal power, which is really cool. However, it suggests that municipalities can become a bulk buyer club and they'll go look for an energy company to provide energy service to the municipality.

This is a handout to the corporations. This might be fine for municipalities with enough density, but it also means that municipalities can buy whatever type of energy they want, which could encourage more gas buildout to do the combined heat and power. It's potentially great and it potentially could be mishandled, so it's not clear it will meet its goals. The PSC initially announced five public hearings, one of which was in Syracuse last week. Ms. Weiser attended and commented that 30 days is not enough for a municipality to provide meaningful commentary on such a comprehensive proceeding. Many commenters said it is crazy for them to be fast-tracking this. Her resolution is for them to extend the comment deadline.

Ms. Weiser wondered whether a comment about the town's taking climate change seriously and our commitment to reducing greenhouse gas reduction belonged in the resolution.

Mr. Seely responded that this straw proposal has nothing to do with the environment; it has everything to do with distribution – trying to redirect it towards municipalities. He said adding something like that would be trying to make it an environmental issue and it is not. It's not about the generation of power.

Mr. Barber agreed that that is the public service commission's authority.

Ms. Weiser disagreed – it has to do with microgrids and distributed generation. One of the six priorities of REV is reducing carbon or greenhouse gas.

Mr. Barber thought that at the next meeting or subsequently, the board could spend more time on the environmental side, but the big point here is do something about extending this before the time period runs out. He wasn't keen on adding a statement about greenhouse gas. If we're going to respond to this thing and talk about the technical issues, we should do that rather than taking little swipes at it. He thinks that her statement about the municipal involvement is so critical to why we need the extension and we should focus on that. The greenhouse gas issue should be part of a more comprehensive response, and hopefully we'll have until April 1 to get that done.

Resolution 2015-68: RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE NEW YORK STATE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION EXTEND THE COMMENT DEADLINE ON 14-M-0101 STAFF STRAW PROPOSAL FOR TRACK 1 and for 14-M-0224 ORDER INSTITUTING THE PROCEEDING AND SOLICITING COMMENTS

Moved by Ms. Weiser; seconded by John Fracchia

Resolution 68 of 2015

Whereas New York State's Public Service Commission has undertaken an exciting proceeding 14-M-0101 entitled Renewing the Energy Vision (REV) which aims to transform energy policy to encourage investment in distributed energy resources such as local distributed generation, on-site power, micro-grids, demand response, and energy storage, and it is envisioned that these changes will empower customers by allowing them more choice in how they manage and consume electric energy; and

Whereas New York State's Public Service Commission has undertaken a related proceeding, 14-M-0224 to Enable Community Choice Aggregation Programs, which aims to increase participa-

tion of and benefits for residential and small non-residential customers in energy markets by involving local governments in procuring energy supply service for their residents and, if desired, by developing distributed energy resources or otherwise engaging in energy planning for their residents; and

Whereas municipal involvement is integral to the successful development and implementation of distributed energy resources, and implementation of these proposals will have profound and lasting impacts on our land-use, our municipal economy, and our residents' welfare; and

Whereas the Town of Caroline only became aware of the 14-M-0101 proceeding as a result of a mailing received from the PSC on January 12, 2015, notifying us of a comment deadline of February 10; and only became aware of 14-M-0224 as a result of research into the REV proceeding; and

Whereas many municipal boards meet only once a month and 30 days' notice is not adequate time to review technical proceedings and provide meaningful input; and

Whereas a review of dockets on these proceedings does not show involvement of any municipality either as a party or in public comments submitted to date;

Now therefore

Be it resolved that the Town of Caroline requests an extension until April 1 on the comment period for the 14-M-0101 Staff Straw Proposal for Track 1 and asks that the Staff not finalize their recommendations until municipal comments are received; and further

Be it resolved that the Town of Caroline requests an extension until April 1 on the comment period for 14-M-0224; and further

Be it resolved that the Town of Caroline requests that the PSC notify all municipalities of the extended comment period on these dockets; and further

Be it resolved that the Town of Caroline requests that the PSC notify all N.Y. municipalities of all existing and future proceedings and comment solicitations related to reforming the energy vision in New York State, and that the notice shall allow for at least 60 days to respond; and further

Be it resolved that the Clerk of the Town of Caroline is instructed to email certified copies of this resolution to Honorable Kathleen Burgess, Secretary of the Commission and Honorable Eleanor Stein, Administrative Law Judge for the REV proceeding as soon as possible; and that hard copies of this resolution shall be mailed to Honorable Kathleen Burgess, Honorable Eleanor Stein, Honorable Audrey Zibelman, Chair, Public Service Commission, and to Governor Cuomo.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye; Weiser: Aye Seely: Aye

Vote

Ayes: Barber, Seely, Weiser, Witmer, Fracchia

Ms. Weiser said that there will be proposals submitted on the Cayuga power plant before the end of the week. There have been many extensions and the deadline is this Friday.

On a motion by Mr. Barber and seconded by Mr. Seely, the board entered executive session to discuss contract negotiations. On a motion by Mr. Barber and seconded by Mr. Fracchia, the board exited executive session.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Barber, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully,

Debra DeAugustine, Deputy Town Clerk