

Caroline Town Board Meeting Minutes of October 4, 2023

The Town Board Agenda Meeting was held hybrid beginning at 7:05 p.m. and was hosted by Town Supervisor Mark Witmer

Attendance:

Supervisor Mark Witmer
Councilmember Cal Snow
Councilmember Tim Murray
Councilmember Kate Kelley-Mackenzie
Councilmember Michele Brown

Also Present:

County Legislature Rep., Dan Klein

Recording Secretary:

Jessie Townsend, Town Clerk

Public Attendance: 5 in-person, 2 via zoom

Supr. Witmer opened with the Pledge to the Flag.

Privilege-of-the-Floor

Bruce Murray – Asked the Board if the comments on the draft zoning law, provided by the town attorney, would be made public, or at least provided to the Review Board. Supr. Witmer responded that they would not cite them as inter-intra office communications. This was confirmed by the Town Clerk/RMO adding that details containing legal advisement on a working draft document given by Counsel is privileged and is exempt from NYS FOI law.

Wil Lawrence – Spoke on the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Law that was introduced at the last meeting. She has spent many years helping write this law. She has met and discussed the proposed law with several of the local Fire Companies and shares in their concern about the fire safety and other protocols needed for these systems. She now has reservations about passing the law at this time and recommended that they hold the vote until further research and development can be done.

Committee Reports

Cm. Murray – Coddington Rd - residents that petitioned for a speed reduction to 45MPH have asked that the designation be made to the portion of Coddington Rd that's in the Town of Caroline.

Cm. Kelley-Mackenzie – Asked for update on the new speed signs on Landon and Lounsbery Rd. She plans to talk to Bob (Hwy Supt) to see if he has heard back from the County.

Dan Klein, County Legislator Report – Tompkins County 2024 Budget – They will be voting next week on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday on the 2024 budget. Broadband – proposals are due and will be coming this month. Rapid Medical Response Plan – of all 911 calls that are dispatched to the Brooktondale area, 41% of those calls go unanswered. He also wanted to clarify that the cost of this Plan for the 1st year (2024) is \$0.00. Cost sharing will begin in 2025. Recycling Center – Currently, tires used for agricultural are not accepted at the Center. This is due to the high cost of shipment. They are considering finding a site location to stockpile and then do a large shipment at once to make it worth the cost. More info to come.

Cm. Murray stated that he is very strongly opposed to the cost sharing proposal put forward for the Rapid Emergency Response Plan, adding that this is a county issue. Mr. Klein offered his thought of shared services means shared cost for those services and added that the towns of Caroline, Danby, Enfield, and

Newfield will benefit the most from this program. Supr. Witmer agreed with Clm. Murray but is hopeful that they will come to an agreement that will work for all.

Introduction of 2024 Tentative Budget – Set Budget Workshop

Supr. Witmer introduced the 2024 tentative budget and briefly ran through the account lines of both the General (A) Fund and the Highway (DA) Fund. He highlighted some of the notable changes and the basis for doing so. Most notable were the following:

General (A) Fund

- Wages – (+2%) for all town employees -
- Town Hall Equipment - (-40%) no longer wishing to purchase a town mower.
- IT Support – (+43%) based on 2023 expenditures.
- Historian Contractual - (-70%) project work near completion
- Community Services – (+250%) Trail
- Medical Insurance – (+8%) Premium increase

Highway (DA) Fund

General Repairs Contractual – (-28%) based on 2023 expenditures.

Budget Notes / Considerations TBD

- A FUND Wages – 3-3.5% was suggested by Clm. Murray & Clm. Kelley Mackenzie
- A FUND Planning Contractual – set at \$30k for the hire of a Director of Works/Advisor to oversee the new highway build - may need to consider increasing for planning and zoning enforcement.
- DA FUND General Repair Contractual Ekroos – project completed; line removed from budget.
- DA FUND General Repair Contractual Fuel – possibly decrease based on expenditure.

Using \$120,000 of A Fund balance and \$140,000 DA Fund balance to offset levy.
Tax Rate: -5.2390% 2024 Tax Levy: +1.19% = 3.39% below tax cap

Resolution 112 of 2023. Set Budget Workshop #1

Motion by: Witmer Seconded: Kelley-Mackenzie

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board sets the first budget workshop for Thursday, October 12, 2023, at 12:30PM.

Motion carried.
Ayes: Witmer, Snow, Murray, Kelley-Mackenzie, Brown
Nays: None

Review and Discussion of draft Zoning Law

The Board briefly reviewed some of the proposed notes given by the town attorney. Many were minor adjustments to the related definitions: Applicant; Auction House; Commercial Recreation Facility, Indoor; Conservation Easement; Farm Market; Fuel Station, gasoline; Junk, Scrap or Salvage Yard; Mine, Moderate Size; Short-Term Rental; Site; and Townhouse.

Other noted suggestions were to:

October Agenda Meeting – Recorded and Posted on Website

Article I, Section 1.1 Enacting Clause (p.5) – remove last sentence regarding supersedes NYS law and change to: “In enacting this Local Law, the Town of Caroline follows the NY Uniform Building and Energy Code.”

Table 1. Schedule of Uses

Concentrated Animal Feed Operations (p.43) – change from ASPR to P in Ag/Rural and remove Focused Commercial Districts.

Discussion on other changes made to the Schedule of Uses beginning with the Telecommunications Towers (p. 49) will continue at the October Business Meeting.

Agenda Items for October 19 Business Meeting (Thursday)

Broadband Presentation by Hunt Engineers

Discussion with Sheriff Osborne

Resolution for Approval of the 2023 and Future Amendments to the Municipal Cooperative Agreement for the Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium (GTCMHIC)

Discussion on draft zoning law

A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Supr. Witmer and seconded by Clm. Murray and carried unanimously at 9:10PM.

---Meeting Adjourned---

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessie Townsend