

Caroline Town Board Agenda Meeting Minutes of October 2, 2012

The Town Board Agenda Meeting held on October 2, 2012 at the Historic Town Hall was called to order at 7:00 PM by Supervisor Donald Barber.

Attendance:

Donald Barber, Supervisor
Dominic Frongillo, Councilmember
Linda Adams, Councilmember
Aaron Snow, Councilmember
Irene Weiser, Councilmember

Recording

Secretary: Christine M. Wilbur, Deputy Town Clerk

Also present: 20 Members of the public

Supervisor Barber called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Privilege of the Floor

- Diana Predmore – Needs broadband – teaches homeschool –computer too slow – needs to do more computer work – very bright grandchild– needs more knowledge – needs high speed - currently has DSL – real slow.
- Una Moneypenny – very interested in supporting Clarity Connect – she is an IT project manager – works from home – has DSL - \$150 up front for a booster. Canaan Rd. – many businesses - glass blower, furniture makers, Mike Ludgate – music; and all within one mile – lots of businesses.
- Jim Nagel – lives on Canaan Rd – Furniture business – wife works for Cornell Coop. Ext. – works from home – would like better computer connection – supports Clarity Connect. DSL now – some days it works and some days it doesn't. Could not do e-commerce business – curtails business efforts.
- Milt Taam – read a prepared statement – works from home – Frontier DSL marginal – not adequate, less adequate over time. Survey of energy use in Caroline – 24,000,000 miles traveled annually – biggest energy consumption for travel – need to stay home! He saves 10,000 miles per year by working at home. Thinks both proposals are fine. Fiber optics for higher density, other for Caroline. Board has spent time on gas ban for questionable benefit, hopes to move faster on this issue.
- Pete Hoyt – has given some thought about the proposals - except for the issue of the town having to pay money for one proposal and not the other – all things being equal probably go with fiber – opposed to resolution that would have the town pay electric bills. Any money spent would be to help private enterprise; need to abide by State 2% tax cap - \$10,000 equals 1% tax hike - choices in the budget process; it's foolish to subsidize private business.
- Will Lawrence – read prepared statement – 247 Middaugh Rd. – described businesses in her neighborhood – licensed nursery and small farm operation – describes what it would cost to get cable service to her house – several thousands – support both options – important to go ahead with both providers and both types – no level of service guaranteed – multiple types will motivate providers to provide consistent level of service. Relocate engineering business away from home – substantial loss of income – people travel back and forth to download/upload files,

etc. Bus service left in 2009, had to reduce rental rates – both proposals limit business models – lots of confusion of lines of authority, etc. She got a run around from current providers (i.e Time Warner, Verizon) - \$35,000. Talked of pros of both proposals. Limited interaction with outside world – in both directions – affects rural residents. Strongly recommends both systems.

- Another resident also reported the need for those who use medical alert systems.
- Paul Howe - computer programmer – likes Clarity proposal in principal – covers the entire town; other proposal covers only a portion (fragment the market) – would like to see action – the board has opportunity to do something about this issue.

Board deliberation regarding the Haefele TV Inc. and Clarity Connect proposals for Broadband Grant Application:

Board members have had the opportunity to review each proposal and offer the following comments. It is the intent to vote on this matter at the end of the comment session.

- Ms. Weiser – public comments are consistent with those expressed through the committee process and in writing; appreciates the need to have broadband access through the town; agrees that Haefele’s proposal does not provide service to all needed – some would not benefit for years to come; Haefele targets area of 10 households/mile – not profitable otherwise; Haefele would leave town fragmented; Clarity proposal tries to reach all the unserved areas – would be able to offset the loss to reach further areas – technology is cheaper to implement – would also have the people in the more dense areas – would balance; Haefele is a real losing proposition to provide just to those areas; Clarity agreed we could pay the electric cost (\$10,000) over 3 years; risk of loss of property values for those who don’t have service – a loss of tax revenue. Broadband is the electricity of this century and we need to provide this service.
- Ms. Adams – input from the public – getting lots of people who have home businesses – DSL doesn’t do it for them – one was willing to kick in on a pool of money – at least 8 businesses are here tonight – pass the hat? With Clarity spreading over 3 years – we still need to find where the money will come from – if this is a true priority – budget process – lose something else; idea of property values impacted by this – some don’t plan on selling in the near future – so increased values isn’t a priority to them; she supports the serious investigation of these proposals – they would need to be reworded; contact with Pat Pryor – Tompkins Communication Committee who reports that Verizon had chosen to go with a statewide plan – how that impacts us, we don’t know.
- Mr. Snow is uncomfortable taking State monies – he will not vote for either proposal. He compares it to the Town not wanting gas drilling – wants to be consistent with our message; he feels this technology uses a lot of energy – wants to slow down modernization. He also feels that this is the business of private companies and the Town should not get in the middle of it.
- Mr. Frongillo – health, education, business – competitive issue – not having our residents and businesses incurring the expense; benefits outweigh the negatives; two proposals – State funding – we all pay – it is our responsibility to get some of that back. Clarity Connect provides more universal coverage – other towns have endorsed as well. Cost? It is a serious issue – investment that would have far-reaching effects – reducing miles traveled, etc.
- Mr. Barber – in response to Ms. Adams – time is of the essence – deadline for State grant is imminent – need to decide tonight – opportunity for funding will pass us by. Early on board members thought we should not take State monies – that taxes would go down – that did not happen. This grant would ensure that 80% is paid by the State and 20% by the town. In response to Mr. Snow – he (Mr. Barber) has a hard time making connection between gas and

broadband issues. This is a vision for our community by providing opportunities for residents. Mr. Barber read some of the comments from Gary Reinholt, who is the Town of Caroline representative on the County broadband committee. He also had discussions with residents regarding health issues about radiation exposure – minute amounts. Both sides say no specific research has been conducted; there could be an amendment to proposals to address this issue; there will be no future opportunities to get this funding; Clarity proposal has long-term benefits; it is almost mandatory for students to have access to broadband - if our students do not have access, their future opportunities will be limited.

Mr. Barber proposes to add language to extend infrastructure and when it comes time for them to apply for a franchise –that is the time that we set up our requirements i.e. where poles are set, etc. Mr. Barber strongly supports the Clarity Connect Proposal as it most closely meets our needs.

At this time, Mr. Barber moved acceptance of the Clarity Connect Proposal. Seconded by Mr. Frongillo.

Ms. Adams proposed a friendly amendment to not limit approval to Clarity, but keep both options open. Seconded by Mr. Snow.

After a lengthy discussion of the benefits of having a clear preference, the vote on the amendment to keep both options open was as follows:

Amendment defeated: Adams: Aye Snow: Aye Barber: Nay Weiser: Nay Frongillo: Nay

Ms. Adams proposed a new resolution to pursue a serious investigation for future partnerships, but withdrew the motion.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding other aspects of the proposal:

Mr. Barber believes that agreement to participate in the cost helps to show a commitment as a partner in the project;

Mr. Snow expressed an issue of health concerns – how confident are we and do we have a say that they will set the poles certain distances from the houses? Mr. Barber said this would be specified in the franchise agreement;

Ms. Adams – do we really think that Clarity would not do it if we did not commit \$10,000? We could structure so the cost would not come from public funds;

Mr. Barber offered a friendly amendment to include that there would be an attempt to raise funds from private sources. Ms. Adams seconded the motion.

Amendment Adopted: Barber: Aye Adams: Aye Frongillo: Aye Weiser: Aye Snow: Aye

Further discussion on the main motion (to support Clarity Connect proposal) included the fact that the electric cost (\$10,000) of this proposal is not included in the 2013 budget proposal, and that the cost could be spread out over 3 years.

Ms. Weiser offered an amendment to change the word “expediting” in the last resolve to the word “attaining”. Seconded by Mr. Frongillo.

Amendment Adopted: Barber: Aye Adams: Aye Frongillo: Aye Weiser: Aye Snow: Aye

After further lengthy discussion of the pros and cons of the two proposals, and the changes made in the language of the Clarity Connect proposal, Mr. Barber read the Clarity Connect proposal as amended and the vote was as follows

Resolution 150 of 2012: DEVELOPMENT OF BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Whereas, the Town of Caroline recognizes that the development of Broadband Infrastructure is critically

important to our community and,

Whereas, New York State is offering broadband grants to expand service to unserved and underserved communities, especially to public-private partnerships,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Town of Caroline wishes to partner with Clarity Connect, Inc. to apply for a grant for our community and,

Further be it resolved that the Town of Caroline as a part of its contribution to the project will, to the extent legally permissible,

- (1) waive all fees related to the implementation of the project
- (2) will bring electric service to each tower location, and
- (3) will help inform the public and promote where appropriate, the service availability and

Further, be it resolved the Town of Caroline will work with Clarity Connect to develop a Franchise Agreement within the constructs of the Public Service Commission statute and,

Further be it resolved that the Town of Caroline will do everything practical to assist in attaining easements for pole/tower installation and any other needs of the project and,

Further, be it resolved the Town of Caroline will attempt to raise funds for electric service from the private sector.

ADOPTED: Barber: Aye Frongillo: Aye Weiser: Aye Adams: Nay Snow: Nay

Reports

Lucy Gagliardo – Chair of Caroline Youth Commission – addressed the board and presented the 2013 budget request. They are asking for an increase in funding for 2013, which includes a raise for the program manager as well as much-needed program supplies. She reported that some program expenses, use of personal vehicle and refreshments have been provided personally by the program manager. She reminded the board that these were middle school students and they eat a lot. She reported on fundraising events and grant writing to obtain funds to continue programs. She also described the importance of providing services to a group of young people who need assistance in many aspects of their lives, and the rural nature of our community limits their opportunities. One of the areas in great need is for more volunteers and board members. An information session has been scheduled for November 17th here at the Historic Town Hall in an attempt to attract more interest. Board members asked questions about programming costs and Mr. Barber reported how the funding for this program is channeled through the Brooktondale Community Center and affirmed their need for more adult volunteers. A grant was submitted to the Community Foundation to ask for funds that would reduce the town's portion, but of course, approval is not yet known. She once again stressed the importance of keeping a local program manager and how efforts to consolidate with other towns have not been successful. Another aspect of the program is to raise money to use for summer youth employment opportunities.

Aaron Snow, Councilmember – no report for Recreation Partnership; the Highway Superintendent will be attending the October 10th meeting to present her budget.

Dominic Frongillo, Councilmember – Planning Board working on site plan review along with the consultant, Jonathan Kanter, and new board members are getting up to speed. The Planning Board needs to advertise for another new member.

Irene Weiser, Councilmember – committees met to work up budget requests; Watershed Committee – up in the air as to whether to complete Banks Rd. project this year due to delayed funding from FEMA – appeal to County to tide us through –they agree, but it's not official.

Linda Adams, Councilmember – no report

Don Barber, Supervisor -

Supervisor Barber reported that at the meeting on September 11, 2012 the Board approved Resolution 140 regarding use of Water Quality Reserve Funds that required a 30 day notice to the public - the time period was not met. Therefore, Resolution 140 of 2012 was rescinded and replaced by the following resolution:

Resolution 151 of 2012:

Motion was made by Mr. Barber: seconded by Mr. Frongillo:

Be it resolved, the Caroline Town Board makes the following 2012 Fund Transfers:

\$10,000 from Highway Fund Account DA 5142.1 Snow and Ice PS to Highway Fund Account DA 5110.1 Repair PS;

Be it further resolved, that the Caroline Town Board, subject to 30-day notice to the public to allow for petitioning for a Permissive Referendum, withdraw \$27,531.00 from the Water Quality Reserve Fund to provide partial payment of construction work on Six Mile Creek at Banks Rd.

Adopted: Barber: Aye Frongillo: Aye Adams: Aye Snow: Aye Weiser: Aye

- 2013 Budget Presentation:

Supervisor Barber explained how he puts the budget together – he begins by asking department heads and committee chairs to make their requests for the tentative budget. The tentative budget then is put together with the current year's numbers, requested funds and his suggested budget amounts.

The last page is summary – described numbers on chart. He explained how the amount needed to be raised by taxes is determined and how the unexpended fund balance is determined; explained the unexpended fund balance for 2012 – take cash on hand right now, look at where we are in the budget, and how much to expect to spend – then subtract 20% of the total appropriation and that is the amount in reserve – and then the amount that's left over to spend to reduce taxes. The reason to keep money in reserve is to start spending in the beginning of the year and for unexpected expenses prior to the receipt of taxes.

Discussion followed of how the fund balance is determined and how the equipment reserve for Highway Dept. is determined. Previous boards decided that any equipment funds left at the end of the year are put into the highway equipment reserve fund.

Ms. Adams reported that prior to that practice, monies still in budgets in December were usually spent because there would be no way to use the monies after that – use it, or lose it. The current practice allows funds to be used in the future (by putting it in the equipment reserve fund).

Discussion followed regarding changing this method – Ms. Weiser suggested possibly using a percentage of the balances be put in the equipment reserve fund and putting the rest in the unexpended fund balance to reduce taxes. Ms. Adams feels if the method is changed, the Highway Dept. would be inclined to use all their appropriations, and that would be unfortunate. She (Ms. Adams) feels it is crucial to “flat line” budget lines.

Mr. Barber continued to summarize budget items in general terms:

- Inflation is 3% and property tax cap is 3% - all salaries went up 3% - could do something

different – need to be consistent and not play favorites. Judges requested 2%. Last year town board and supervisor did not take increase.

- Justices – huge increase in typist line – current court clerk is retiring – looking for an overlap for training new clerk – put funds in the typist line so as to not confuse salary amount for the clerk;
- Under the Supervisor’s line – no increase in salary for bookkeeper; Ms. Weiser reported that it would be helpful if we found a way to streamline her duties – file sharing for abstracts, etc.
- Town Clerk – the increase requested is to expand hours in that office – not included in tentative budget, board can decide if otherwise;
- Legal – never sure how much will be needed;
- Engineering – Brooktondale Gauge Station;
- Rec. Mgt. – difference is due to a previous grant;
- Pub. Info. – Ms. Weiser will address this request from the CIT Committee at next week’s meeting; (\$3,000 of a \$7,000 request is included in the tentative budget); Town Hall – Equip. - \$2,500 – copier, fax, scanner (1620.2)
- Capital Reserve – roof on town hall needs attention - \$5,600 – hopes to create reserve and spend time to put together an engineering proposal and design;
- Print Mail – more outreach to community
- Special Items – unallocated insurance – from NYMIR – increase;
- Traffic Control – two parts – street lighting at intersections and road signs; it’s a flexible budget.
- Dog Control - we were paying for a census taker in 2011; the increase is due to joining with other towns in county for dog control and agreed to make the fee the SPCA charges is calculated at 1/3 humans, 1/3 dogs and 1/3 calls for assistance. We are picking up more of the share, due to the number of dogs and calls for assistance. We have a signed agreement.
- Safety Inspect. – Code Enforcement Officer – explained division of his work for 3 towns;
- Health – requested \$56,000 – will need to execute a contract with Slaterville Ambulance;
- Highway – personal services – \$12,000 for clerical support is left in; there may be a number of retirements – lots of historical and institutional knowledge may be lost – need assistance (clerical) to help support the loss; and monies for computer upgrade is sorely needed;
- Highway Engineering – roughly flat;
- Garage – contractual - flat;
- Food Pantry and TCAD – contractual;
- Youth Summer – Mr. Barber described the funding stream – through the Brooktondale Community Center;
- Youth Services –contractual;
- Library – they need to come and make a case for the increase they are requesting;
- Historian – flat;
- Aging – bumped up – they asked for roll-over of funds and have not asked for an increase for next year;
- Planning – increase to do outreach for site-plan review process and consultant;
- Conservation – creek work – huge increase due to FEMA funding that goes away – raiding funds to keep JB Construction on site – if reimbursed - \$27,537 will go back in stream reserve and will have another \$60,000 left over from Boice Creek and 600 rd. projects;
- Cemeteries – 6 or 8 – we are required by law to maintain cemeteries;
- Employee Benefits – retirement – up 15%; Social Security – 3.8%; Worker’s Comp. guessing 3.8%, medical insurance – 9%increase

The focus of next week’s meeting will be on the expense side with presentations by the CIT Committee and the Clerk’s Office. On October 10th, the Highway Department will make their presentation. The final budget could be done at the end of the October 10th meeting. If not, another meeting is scheduled for October 24th. Once finalized, a public hearing will be

established by resolution. Once the budget goes to the public hearing, no salary changes can be made.

Town Business

No agenda items were noted for the business meeting next week other than approval of abstracts and continued budget deliberations.

Approval of Minutes

Resolution 152 of 2012: Minutes of Business Meeting held September 11, 2012:

A motion was made by Mr. Barber and seconded Ms. Adams to accept the minutes of the September 11, 2012 meeting as submitted by the Town Clerk.

Mr. Barber noted some minor clarifications.

Adopted: Barber: Aye; Frongillo: Aye; Adams: Aye; Snow: Aye; Weiser: Aye

Adjourn

Hearing no further business, Mr. Barber made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Frongillo. Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine M. Wilbur, Deputy Clerk