

The Town Board Agenda meeting held on September 4, 2013 at the Caroline Town Hall was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Don Barber.

Attendance:

Don Barber, Supervisor
Vacant, Councilmember
Linda Adams, Councilmember
Aaron Snow, Councilmember
Irene Weiser, Councilmember - Absent

Recording

Secretary: Christine Wilbur, Deputy Town Clerk

Also present: Approx. 7 members of the public

Supervisor Barber led the Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.

Privilege of the Floor –

Pete Hoyt – commended Supervisor Barber to want the board vacancy filled prior to the election and that he encouraged people who are not running to fill the vacant council spot – a wise decision. He gave his opinion on the candidates and supports Mr. Anderson to fill the vacancy. He believes Mr. Anderson would balance out an otherwise homogenous board.

Greg Harrington spoke about the Slaterville Ambulance budget and the need for the Town to have a line item in the Town budget for a per diem ambulance position. He spoke about the limited number of volunteers to fulfill the contractual obligation and this would provide a safety net. Mr. Harrington reported that the Slaterville Ambulance service is the only all-volunteer ambulance left in the County and is struggling to keep it that way. Mr. Barber explained that the monies would only be expended if needed, and he encourages community members to volunteer.

Mr. Snow asked about the qualifications for ambulance volunteers. Mr. Harrington explained the course work and on-going training that is required, as well as the difficulty in attracting young people – most take the training to do the work as a profession.

Ed Wurtz – inquired about a line item in the budget for consultants to the Planning Board. Mr. Barber explained the process to get something in the budget.

Interviews for Vacant Councilmember Seat

Supervisor Barber outlined the process to fill the vacancy. Interviews of 3 interested candidates will take place this evening. Then, the Board will have a discussion and vote at next week's meeting. The successful candidate will be seated immediately and an oath of office will be done within 30 days.

Robert Anderson – talked about his letter and background information. He is a retired corporate lawyer who has experience in budgeting and negotiating employment contracts. As he is retired, he has the time to devote to the 3 month position, takes civic duty seriously, but does not feel that he could commit to a longer term by running for a seat in the upcoming election

Ms. Adams endorses Mr. Anderson's application and spoke of her acquaintance with him and his wife. She believes that having an independent board member would add significantly to the current make-up of the board. She has found Mr. Anderson to be an excellent sounding board and provides a different perspective to issues at hand.

Mr. Snow inquired if Mr. Anderson had any ideas where the town could save money – in anticipation of a new board member being involved in the budget process. Mr. Anderson replied that he had not looked

at the budget and would need some time to get up to speed – he doesn't know right now where the soft parts are, but is confident that he could do this fairly quickly.

Mr. Barber talked about the 2% tax cap and asked Mr. Anderson under what circumstances would he consider asking to raise the tax cap. Mr. Barber continued to report that the Highway Department accounts for approx. 2/3 of the total town budget – with the cost of materials, retirement and health care benefits all rising, other programs will need to take a hit. Mr. Anderson said that, as a taxpayer, he wouldn't like to raise taxes, but doesn't have a fixed attitude; however there is a need to make sound business decisions.

Ms. Adams indicated that Supervisor Barber generally puts forth a reasonable budget and that the town board stays within the tax cap under their own volition.

Tim Seely of 120 Burns Rd. was next to be interviewed.

Ms. Adams thanked Mr. Seely for his past service to the Town. Since he was involved in the planning for construction of the Town Hall Annex, she asked him if he was happy with the process and results, and wondered if a different board were in place, would there have been a different design, or a different outcome? Mr. Seely said he was happy with the building but didn't know if there would have been a different outcome if there were different people involved.

Mr. Seely indicated that he is interested in following Mr. Frongillo's community involvement and respects his perspective on issues.

Mr. Snow asked Mr. Seely if he feels he is more liberal or conservative. Mr. Seely feels he is socially liberal.

In response to a question from Ms. Adams, Mr. Seely indicated he had previously worked on the Teamsters labor contract along with Ed Cope. They tried to make headway with the health care and retirement items and feels they made a little progress, but knows that it will be an overwhelming issue at this time.

Mr. Barber reported that Mr. Seely was involved in rewriting the Teamsters contract so that it could be more easily understood, and was built on by Mr. Frongillo and Mr. McDonald in the following negotiation.

Mr. Barber asked Mr. Seely under what conditions would he consider overriding the 2% tax cap. Mr. Seely said that he hadn't thought it through, but does know that the Town has been dealing with several very lean budgets, and that if circumstances warranted it, he would consider an override.

Ms. Adams likes the fact that the board goes through the budget line-by-line and that there are no sacred cows.

Randall Reed was the third applicant to be interviewed. Since his application and cover letter were both received today, board members spent a few minutes looking over his application and cover letter.

Mr. Barber talked about the budget process and the requirement to have a tentative budget by the end of September – coming right up! He reiterated how the Highway Department represents about 2/3 of the total budget – materials, retirement and health insurance increases are not something that can be negotiated. He asked Mr. Reed under what conditions would he consider an override of the 2% tax cap. Mr. Reed indicated that he would consider an override, but he would have to hear objections and develop criteria to make that decision.

Mr. Snow thanked Mr. Reed for his interest and asked him, if he doesn't get chosen, would he be able to contribute in other ways. Mr. Reed said he would – he is a general law and patent attorney and has extensive experience in real estate in New York and California, familiar with sub-division laws and has

experience in negotiating labor contracts.

Mr. Barber asked if he had experience in developing budgets and sub-division processes. Mr. Reed replied that he manages costs in his line of work as well as personal budgets. He can logically go through budgets line-by-line and prioritize and make reasoned decisions. He is familiar with sub-division work – developing pieces of property considering requirements of size, local access – basic laws established by the state with local board oversight.

Mr. Barber asked how board work and getting up to speed with items like the budget would fit in his other priorities. Mr. Reed indicated that he would spend the time needed to do the work.

Reports:

Don Barber, Supervisor:

- \$15,000 was received from diminishing liens for rehabilitation projects – some people returned funds – we decided to cooperate with Better Housing for a grant which they received. The Town Attorney has responded to the grant agreement and Mr. Barber will be asking the Board to authorize him to sign a contract.
- Regarding Ms. Weiser’s report – she is suggesting to add more people to the Emergency Management Committee which will require an update to the original resolution. She will also no longer be a representative to the joint committee on benefits for the Health Care Consortium – this is not a priority at this point.
- At the next meeting, Mr. Barber will ask to set up budget working sessions for October – so please bring your calendars. The public hearing for the budget will be held on the Thursday after Election Day – on November 7th, 2013. And, due to Election Day, November 7th will also be the Agenda Meeting.
- The legal matters that were previously reported are both being handed by NYMIR.
- A piece of correspondence from a resident, regarding a lighting proposal, would need to be brought forward by a board member if they are interested in pursuing it further.
- A letter will be sent out to employees making them aware of a health insurance exchange. If board members have any questions regarding the letter, please ask soon.
- An audit being conducted by the State Controller’s Office due to an issue in the Highway budget is no longer an issue; they have changed the focus of their audit on an analysis of savings from the solar panels.
- Mr. Barber would like to discuss strategies for the Teamsters negotiations at next week’s meeting.
- Clarity Connect Application for Broad Band System: review list of things required by applicant and waivers. A resolution will be considered next week to provide for the Town Board to be reviewer of the applicant application. Even though Senator Seward has been asked for member item funding, it won’t be known until later this Fall.
- Budget items need to be submitted to Mr. Barber by next Monday. He further explained the budget process that all happens in September.

Aaron Snow, Town Board:

- Youth Commission – no minutes of last meeting – working on the budget. Mr. Barber reported that Dave Saunders contacted him and asked him to hold off about the budget until a new proposal can be considered.
- Recreation Partnership – No report
- Watershed Committee - discussed and questioned proposed budget; gauge station and where is IO money and CSI and Storm Water Coalition - they are under municipal dues – but add on anything that they can think of. Discussion of partners; contact partners to make sure they are committed to expense for gauge station. Barry planning on doing work with Emergency Planning Committee for flood plain mapping. Mr. Snow asked about revenue – where the money comes from . Ms. Adams provided information about USGS. The contract will be finished in 2014 but might be able to renew.

Irene Weiser, Town Board: Absent – see attached written report.

Linda Adams, Town Board: No report.

Approval of Minutes –.

Resolution 129 of 2013 – Minutes of Agenda Meeting held on August 6, 2013:

A motion was made by Mr. Barber and seconded by Ms. Adams to approve the minutes as submitted by the Deputy Town Clerk.

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

Hearing no further business, Mr. Barber made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Snow. Carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Wilbur, Deputy Town Clerk

