

Caroline Town Board Business Meeting Minutes of September 9, 2020

The Town Board Business Meeting held electronically via Zoom teleconference on September 9, 2020 at 7:02 p.m. hosted by Supervisor Mark Witmer and co-hosted by Councilmember Irene Weiser

Attendance: Mark Witmer, Supervisor

John Fracchia, Councilmember

Irene Weiser, Councilmember

Cal Snow, Councilmember

Tim Murray, Councilmember

Recording Secretary: Velvet Lyke, Bookkeeper

Also Present: 3 members of the public attended the teleconference.

Privilege-of-the-Floor - None

Additions or Deletions from Agenda

Supervisor Witmer has add the status of the Brooktondale Cemetery and this will be added to the end of the meeting.

The Town of Caroline Land Use and Economic Task Force Members

Interviews and appointments to Caroline Land Use and Economic Development Task Force

Ken Miller has applied for the Taskforce. Ken explained that he would like to represent land use owners and protect landowners’ rights. Mark explained the mission of the Taskforce is to investigate land use development. Ken believes he could be an active participant in this Taskforce. Ken owns land and property in Caroline and is a resident of Richford. Ken feels he can give the time needed and he values the people, land and views.

Resolution 113 of 2020

Supervisor Witmer, seconded by Councilmember Fracchia, made the motion to accept Ken Miller as part of the Taskforce.

Adopted: Witmer: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Weiser: Aye; Snow: Aye; Murray: Aye

Resolution 113 of 2020

Resolution 114 of 2020

Supervisor Witmer, seconded by Councilmember Weiser, made the motion to amend the Taskforce resolution 110 of 2020 to say the Taskforce is now complete and that the Town Board, Planning and Review Boards can have representatives on the Taskforce attend and that the Town Board Chair will Lead the Taskforce.

Adopted: Witmer: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Weiser: Aye; Snow: Aye; Murray: Aye

Councilmember Weiser asked if the Taskforce was a public meeting and how are the decisions decided? Discussion was held about how the views will be directed to the Town Board. Ultimately the Taskforce will decide how things will be directed to the Town Board.

Moment of Silence for those lives lost on 911.

Elen Dowd – Health Consortium

Elin presented information on the Consortium.

Reports

Mark Witmer, Town Supervisor – The Town Supervisor’s Report is as follows:

- Streetlights: 90% Design Plan meeting with NYPA for Caroline’s 79 streetlights. Submitted grant application for \$20,000 to Smart Street Lighting NY Program as part of NYPA process. Sale of facilities tasks are complete. Awaiting confirmation from NYSEG. Awaiting maintenance agreement proposal and 100% Design Plan from NYPA.
- Town Discussion on Streetlighting: The Board asked Supervisor Witmer to investigate an analysis of the number of streetlights needed prior to finalizing the design plan with NYPA.
- TCCOG subcommittee reports:
 - Emergency Planning: resolution calling for New York State funding to support rural emergency services, updating Fire Protection Contracts, facilitate trainings.
 - Energy: investigating Community Choice Aggregation. Seeking interest from municipalities. Webinar with focus on creating CCAs with a focus on renewables scheduled for Oct 2.
 - Water: developing new member contribution funding model for the Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Organization that will support efforts for watershed-wide projects.
- Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium Board of Directors and Joint Member Meetings:
 - Accumulator issue between Excellus and ProAct has been resolved and safeguards have been implemented. Errors in payments are now being corrected with subscribers by Excellus and ProAct.
 - Eyeglass and hearing aid benefit was approved.
 - One-month year-end premium relief is being considered to mitigate fiscal impacts of the pandemic on municipalities.
- Work on 2021 Tentative Budget. Developed draft Fund Balance Policy to clarify and facilitate budget and capital planning. Revenues: given New York State fiscal impacts, I will propose to budget State Aid (AIM) at \$0.00 (normally about 20K) and Consolidated Highway Improvements Projects (CHIPS) at 80%. Expenditures: propose to keep wage rates flat (except Union employees, set at 2%).
- Megan Pulver and Ray Davis from TCAT alerted me to the need for creating a concrete connection between the Town Hall shelter pad and the curb for ADA compliance. Working with Superintendent Spencer to add this to the planned sidewalk project.

TBD, Code Officer – None

Jessie Townsend, Town Clerk – Jessie has been working diligently for getting the DEC however, the DEC told her that no new agent ID’s will be issued this year, but she will be able to get one in 2021.

Bobby Spencer, Highway Superintendent – Reported by Supervisor Witmer, Suite-Kote is coordinating the paving with the County and it will be pushed back a week.

Dan Klein, County Representative – Danby town clerk resigned.

This year, registered voters can vote three ways: By absentee ballot, in-person early voting, or in-person voting on Election Day, November 3, 2020.

All registered voters can request an absentee ballot if they are concerned about COVID-19 for the November 3 election. Signed absentee ballots can be returned to drop boxes without a wait at over 300 locations statewide.

You may return the ballot in any of the following ways:

1. Put it in the mail ensuring it receives a postmark no later than November 3
2. Drop it off at an early voting poll site between October 24th and November 1
3. Drop it off at a poll site on November 3 by 9pm
4. Drop it off at your County Board of Elections Office starting September 8 until no later than November 3 by 9pm

It is encouraged that any voter who is willing to vote in person but would like to minimize the number of people they should do early voting. Public Hearing at next meeting increase in tax rate for Air BB and Bed and Breakfast. Broadband expansion on regional or county basis. Thursday, September 21 @5pm to have a discussion if it would make more sense to do something jointly. ST8 is a planning organization is a regional broadband expansion in some areas. Councilmember Weiser is involved with STN expansion. 2021 County Budget has been delayed and is expected September 14th.

Irene Weiser, Councilmember – Logging and Road Use Laws from Danby are expected to be sent for Irene to the Town Hall. Supervisor Witmer has some information in his office and Don Barber has offered his assistance to go over what Mark has in his office. Barry Goodrich also provided information on logging. Irene attended the Finance training meeting for multiyear planning and would like to institute a capital and budget plan on a multiyear basis.

Cal Snow, Councilmember – None

Tim Murray, Councilmember – Public Hearing is September 24 @7pm for the Preliminary Comprehensive Plan. Taskforce first meeting in September 14th @ 7:00 via Zoom.

Resolutions

Resolution 115 of 2020

Supervisor Witmer, seconded by Councilmember Murray, made the following Resolution

Proposing New York State Funding of Rural Emergency Services

WHEREAS, volunteer Fire and EMS services in rural New York State have been under pressure for many years - ongoing declining volunteerism rates which leads to the closure of departments, which leads to the expansion of coverage areas for nearby agencies, which themselves struggle with staffing – in an environment of ever-increasing costs; and,

WHEREAS, efforts to increase volunteerism, particularly in EMS, while noble, are neither sustainable nor effective enough to make a meaningful impact; and,

WHEREAS, as a result of these circumstances, many municipalities have been forced to implement paid EMS Departments, contract for services with other paid departments, or do without timely EMS coverage for their residents; and,

WHEREAS, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical nature of EMS services, particularly in rural areas where EMS response is the primary source of frontline emergency healthcare to millions of NY residents; and,

WHEREAS, as a subset of the healthcare field, annual EMS cost increases strain the budgets of rural towns and villages who are nevertheless morally and ethically obligated to provide these services to their constituents; and

WHEREAS, Article XVII §3 of the New York State Constitution states that,

“The protection and promotion of the health of the inhabitants of the state are matters of public concern and provision therefor **shall be made by the state** and by such of its subdivisions and in such manner, and **by such means as the legislature shall from time to time determine.**” (emphasis added); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Tompkins County Council of Governments (TCCOG) requests that the Tompkins County Legislature call upon New York State to allocate funding to local municipalities to support the provision of rural EMS services; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that TCCOG requests that the Tompkins County Legislature advocate for a CHIPS or STOA model of funding wherein funds will be allocated to municipalities using a formula which takes into account call volume, coverage area and funding needs; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Caroline Town Board supports this proposal; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, this resolution shall be sent to New York State Senator James Seward, New York State Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton, and Governor Andrew Cuomo.

Adopted: Witmer: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Weiser: Aye; Snow: Aye; Murray: Aye

Resolution 116 of 2020

Three-Year Joint Funding Agreement

Supervisor Witmer, seconded by Councilmember Weiser, made the following Resolution

Resolution authorizing the Supervisor to sign thee-year joint funding agreement for maintenance of the Six Mile Creek at Brooktondale NY stream gauging beginning October 1, 2020.

Adopted: Witmer: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Weiser: Aye; Snow: Aye; Murray: Aye

Resolution 117 of 2020

Tompkins County Animal Control

Supervisor Witmer, seconded by Councilmember Fracchia, made the following Resolution

Resolution authorizing the Supervisor to sign 2021 Animal Control Services Agreement with Tompkins County Animal Control (TCAC) for \$19,798.

Adopted: Witmer: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Weiser: Aye; Snow: Aye; Murray: Aye

License Agreement with NYSEG for the Trail

Supervisors met with NYSEG and asked the term could be 20-year initial with 5-year renewal terms. 120 days removal of any infrastructure was asked to be extended. Awaiting NYSEG response.

Resolution 118 of 2020

Transfers

Supervisor Witmer, seconded by Councilmember Murray, made the resolution:

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board makes the following budget transfers:

Amount	From	To
\$2,000	A1910.4 Contingency	A1420.4 Legal
\$17,500	DA5140.1 Misc. PS	DA5110.1 Gen. Repairs PS
\$2,000	DA5140.1 Misc. PS	DA5110.11 Gen. Repairs OT

Adopted: Witmer: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Weiser: Aye; Snow: Aye; Murray: Aye

Resolution 119 of 2020

General Fund, Highway Fund and Streetlighting Fund Abstracts

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by Councilmember Snow to approve payment for the General Fund for \$26,739; the Highway Fund for \$68554.77; and the Streetlight Fund for \$1,058.98

Adopted: Witmer: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Weiser: Aye; Snow: Aye; Murray: Aye

Resolution 120 of 2020

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by Councilmember Weiser to approve the Agenda Minutes of September 1, 2020 as submitted by Town Clerk, Jessica Townsend

Adopted: Witmer: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Weiser: Aye; Snow: Aye; Murray: Aye

Brookton Cemetery:

The group that are maintaining the cemetery is a nonprofit organization and the Director wants to step away. The paperwork and requirement of a cemetery association is getting overwhelming. Cal Snow believes that there are community members willing to step up and assist with the upkeep of this cemetery. There will be an annual meeting on September 24, 2020 for the Brookton Cemetery Association and hopefully there will be a discussion on who would be willing to continue with the maintenance of the cemetery. Irene suggested that maybe speak to and have a New York State representative at the annual meeting.

Executive Session was called by a motion made by Supervisor Mark Witmer and seconded by Councilmember John Fracchia to discuss personnel matters and was carried unanimously at 9:37 p.m. and ended at 10:00 p.m.

---Adjourn---

Respectfully Submitted,
Velvet Lyke, Bookkeeper