

## **Caroline Town Board Meeting of July 13, 2016**

The Town Board Business meeting held on July 13, 2016 at the Caroline Town Hall was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Supervisor Mark Witmer.

### **Attendance:**

Mark Witmer, Supervisor  
John Fracchia, Councilmember  
Irene Weiser, Councilmember  
Cal Snow, Councilmember  
Gary Reinbolt, Councilmember

### **Recording**

**Secretary:** Debra DeAugustine

### **Also present:**

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### **Salute to the Flag:**

### **Privilege of the Floor:**

Frank Proto said he had two items to address. The county is embarking on a study regarding unifying the police departments throughout the county. They tried this when he was on the legislature, and Don Barber was chair of the subcommittee. Due to turf issues with the union, it didn't gain traction, although there was interest. There's a problem in getting the Sheriff to respond out in Caroline. Mr. Proto wants to make sure Caroline is not left out of this process and that we continue to have good or better response time. Second, a NYSEG rate increase was recently approved. They intend to collect \$131.6 million in revenue, starting this month. The need is to maintain transmission and distribution networks. Mr. Proto's concern is that it can't go unnoticed that a number of people from the town of Caroline encouraged the closure of Milliken Station because of the savings to ratepayers. The report was that the cost was going to be negligible to ratepayers, but before the ink was dry, they had a rate increase. His question is: Will there be a local outreach effort to address this rate increase so people can rely on what was said before the rate increase? The chair of the PSC has a prior connection to Frontier Communication. Regarding the universal fund on the phone bill and cable bill, there's supposed to be a method to receive reimbursement to libraries, schools, etc. There are millions of dollars -- over 4 million per year. Frontier, in their annual report, taps the universal fund for millions per year, which is supposed to be going to upgrade our phone systems, including broadband. He is concerned that we have somebody on the Public Service Commission telling us one thing and Frontier saying they can't do upgrades because it won't be profitable. This is a guy voting to increase our utility bills and not playing fair and square about his other affiliation.

Scott Van Gaasbeck spoke regarding the proposed extension of the South Hill Rec Way through Caroline. He said they still have not received a plan of what might happen with their property and no response to his questions. It seems like there was a meeting with County Planning and a feasibility study passed out. Danby was told that there were no landowners against it even though no landowners were invited. The feasibility study has false information in it. One piece is that the town has been 100 percent in favor of it since 2008. It did not mention that the Town of Caroline

withdrew as lead agency at that time. The county put Caroline's withdrawn resolution in and not the one actually passed in 2008. He and his family are concerned. There are around 25 landowners involved, who have lost sleep over this, about people planning to do something with their land and not telling them what it is. In the feasibility study, it says they were contacted, but they were not. He doesn't want it to escalate into a big war. He's asking that the board back off, involve them, go slowly, and insist the county talk to them.

Mr. Witmer replied that he did contact all the adjoining landowners. He wrote them all letters. Much of what Mr. Van Gaasbeck says is true, and he agrees with everything he says about involvement and going slowly. He understands the concerns. He was not aware of the feasibility study. The Caroline town board has not made any decisions. We were told that the county had been told by NYSEG that they were ready to negotiate an easement agreement and had authority to do it. We are looking at the facts and trying to understand the whole piece. He was involved with the county group as the new supervisor and understood they were an easement.

Ms. Whittaker asked whether something has changed since 2008.

Mr. Witmer said it might be that affected landowners might have changed their opinion. His reading was that the previous town board saw serious concerns and wanted to develop a plan that would involve everyone and that it did not happen. Regarding maintenance, the idea was that each town would engage or that the Town of Ithaca would take the helm.

Mr. Fracchia said one thing that strikes him is that this came at the board from the county, and the board is trying to understand what the real situation is. At the baseline, it's not clear what is actually true, and the board is not interested in moving forward until they have all the facts.

Mr. Proto said what troubles him is that the county planning commissioner is not talking to Mr. Van Gaasbeck. He urged him to get in touch with Dan Klein and tell him what he just told the town board, particularly about the commissioner. Mr. Klein should be in a position to intercede.

Mr. Van Gaasbeck said that if there's any chance of a trail, it has to involve the landowners.

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### **Additions or Deletions from Agenda:**

Add a resolution authorizing the supervisor to sign the Renovus agreement.

### **Highway Superintendent's Report:**

The board discussed the accident involving a town truck and a motorcycle driven by Donny Ward. Ms. Whittaker would like to settle with Mr. Ward before the insurance claim is settled because it was clearly the town's fault and Mr. Ward needs to get his motorcycle fixed sooner rather than later.

Mr. Snow noted there was a software malfunction with the Williamson Law program for payroll. Ms. Whittaker said she'll talk to the bookkeeper. She has looked at the payroll for a couple pay periods, and a couple of the men were paid this year's rate for certain pay periods and last year's rate for other pay periods. We have had problems in the past, and it's been a Williamson issue.

The board agreed that this is a serious concern.

### **Supervisor's Report:**

1. Update on FEMA application through DHSE (have apprised Senator Seward and Assemblywoman Lifton)
2. Broadband RFP sent for posting today (btw, probable 5-7 customers on Fire Tower Rd)
3. Town Hall Roof: Site visit will be Friday, 7:30 am
4. Conversation with Superintendent Whittaker regarding Highway Barn assessment and planning.
5. Superintendent Whittaker and I will meet with Time Warner at Fuller Lane on Thursday at 9:30 am for site assessment for cable extension. Will also discuss relocation of cable on Buffalo Road to poles.
6. Barry Goodrich and I will meet with Sarah Jane and Jim Blake on Monday to advise on creek issue.

### **Department, Committee & Liaison Reports:**

CIT committee: Ms. Weiser reported that the county library had a workshop on The Internet of Things. It's easier to set up than wifi, but doesn't offer speed, etc; it's for low-volume data transmission. A farmer, for example, can put sensors on his fence and would know if it went down. Since we don't have cell service, people can't call for help if they hit a deer in the middle of the night. Data can't be sent from emergency vehicles while they're on the dead zone on Route 79. These kinds of smaller data services can be done with text messages It's cheap and can be publicly done. She thinks it's worth exploring.

### **Discussion and Action Topics:**

#### **Resolution in support to Tompkins County's Renewable Energy Score Program**

##### Discussion

Ms. Weiser said this program is being put forward so homeowners can get their energy score. The idea is that energy costs for houses are significant and buyers can find out what they're getting into. It can also make people be more energy conscious. This isn't about the behavior of the occupants, rather about the structure of the home and how tight the envelope is. The final component for the NYSERDA grant is bringing it to municipalities to pass a resolution to endorse.

Mr. Proto asked what this commits the town to.

Mr. Witmer responded that there's no financial commitment. The steps going forward are that they need to develop funding, develop a pilot program, find a coordinator, and develop a plan.

Ms. Weiser added that we have to explore opportunities for funding.

Mr. Proto said that his concern is that we're already talking about hiring a coordinator, doing a pilot. He's glad to see Cooperative Extension is involved. NYSERDA doesn't have any money.

Ms. Weiser said that there's a lot of jumping through hoops in getting funding from NYSERDA.

Ms. Weiser said this is a voluntary thing for people to be able to do an energy score for their house. Home inspections aren't required and are completely voluntary.

Mr. Fracchia spoke about the intent of the program.

Mr. Reinbolt finds it attractive. Home inspection has no standardization. This would work from standardized numbers.

Mr. Proto asked if this was presented to TCCOG. (It has, but has not been voted on.) He pointed out that only four towns were asked to endorse this.

Ms. Weiser said these are the municipalities that volunteered. It was decided that we would do it with this group and then make it available to all municipalities. We worked closely with the board of realtors. There's a fair bit of expertise on the advisory committee. Realtors are more and more asked about this, just like they're ask about the taxes. They welcomed the idea about standardization. They talked extensively with Tompkins County Assessment. Having a high score will not affect a homeowner's assessment.

Mr. Witmer asked if programs like this were rolled out in other states.

Ms. Weiser said not by states, but by localities. There is around 25 to 30 percent participation.

Mr. Proto said a purchase offer could be contingent on having this done.

### **Resolution No. 2016-103: Regarding Tompkins Residential Energy Score Program and Implementation Plan**

Moved by Irene Weiser; seconded by John Fracchia

WHEREAS the Town of Caroline is an Energy Smart Community and is concerned about reducing energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and according to the March 2016 *Tompkins County Energy Roadmap*, in order to meet the goal of reducing GHG emissions 80% by the year 2050, the community will need to achieve at least a 35% reduction in energy use in existing buildings through retrofits and upgrades; and

WHEREAS the NYS *Reforming the Energy Vision* initiative has a goal of helping consumers make better and more informed energy choices; and

WHEREAS the residential energy score program is a voluntary program that will provide residents and home-buyers with numerous benefits, including the ability to better understand and reduce energy-related living costs and GHG emissions; and

WHEREAS a project team, composed of representatives of the Towns of Caroline, Danby, Ithaca, Ulysses and the City of Ithaca, with consultation from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County and the Tompkins County Planning Department, was formed in 2013 to work on a residential energy score project; and

WHEREAS the Town of Ithaca, working on behalf of the project team, submitted and was awarded grant funding from NYSERDA's Cleaner, Greener Communities program, and contracted with subject matter experts Performance Systems Development to develop deliverables for the project; and

WHEREAS extensive public outreach guided the creation of the first draft report of the program and implementation plan, completed on February 24, 2016. The second draft was informed by more than 250 comments collected from additional public outreach, and was presented to the governing boards of the five partner municipalities between May 23 and June 15, 2016, with a comment period ending on June 17, 2016, and comments on the second draft were incorporated into a final report, titled "Tompkins Residential Energy Score Program and Implementation Plan;" and

WHEREAS the grant contract with NYSERDA requires the project team to present the final report to the governing boards of each of the five partner municipalities for consideration of adoption, including a formal vote; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town of Caroline Town Board endorses the Tompkins Residential Energy Score Program and Implementation Plan.

**Vote**

Ayes: Witmer, Fracchia, Weiser, Reinbolt

Nays: Snow

**Snow and Ice Agreement**

**Resolution 2016-104 Approving a Three-Year Snow and Ice Agreement with Tompkins County**

Moved by Mark Witmer; seconded by Irene Weiser

Resolved that the Caroline Town Board hereby authorizes the Town Supervisor to enter into the proposed agreement with Tompkins County for the purposes of snow and ice removal commencing October 1, 2016 and ending September 30, 2019.

**Vote**

Ayes: Witmer, Fracchia, Snow, Weiser, Reinbolt

**Town Hall Parking Lot**

They had a discussion about the parking lot that was not on the agenda. An estimate for paving is attached.

**Discussion of Non-Binding Agreement with Renovus Solar for Design and Financing of Town Participation in Community Solar Farm**

Mr. Witmer said this is a 25-year agreement. The town would be a member of a solar farm. PPA means a third party firm can take advantage of tax savings. We don't own it at the end, but don't outlay any money up front. This is just a letter of intent and is not binding. Mr. Witmer wants to go forward to give Renovus something to work with.

**Resolution 2016-105: Authorizing the Supervisor to Sign Non-binding Term Sheet with Renovus Solar, Inc**

Moved by Mark Witmer; seconded by Cal Snow

Resolution to Authorize Supervisor to Sign Non-binding Term Sheet with Renovus Solar, Inc. for Design and Financing of Town Participation in Community Solar Farm Structured as a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA).

Whereas Climate Change is a global environmental crisis caused by burning of fossil fuels since the dawn of the Industrial Age; and

Whereas the Caroline Town Board recognizes that we must take responsibility for immediately shifting away from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, as articulated in the Climate Change Resolution of July 15, 2015; and

Whereas the Town of Caroline has signed on as Climate Smart Community in 2012, committed to leading the municipality and the community toward sustainable practices in a timely manner; and

Whereas the Town Board has engaged with Renovus Solar, Inc. to learn about the work of their local company to build Community Solar Farms to provide affordable, renewable solar electricity to Nonprofits and Municipalities via PPAs, which enable third-party financiers to take advantage of State and Federal financial incentives for building solar PV and passing some of those savings to participating energy users; and

Whereas Renovus Solar, Inc. submitted a Proposal in response to the Town's RFP for a Solar PPA that would provide renewable solar electricity from a local solar farm, an immediate reduction in electrical energy cost, and a projected savings to the Town of approximately \$1,500/year over the 25-year life of the project; and

Whereas the investment by the Town for its portion of the Community Solar Farm is structured in the manner in which we purchase electricity from the grid, with a starting price/kWh and an annual escalator, that would result in energy savings based upon the long-term (30-year) trend in electrical energy prices; and

Whereas this price structure simply reflects that the cost of building infrastructure for solar PV at this time, demonstrating that electricity is now, at the very least, cost-competitive with our traditional fossil fuel sources, which neglect the externalized costs of greenhouse gas emissions, as well as other serious global contaminants, such as mercury; and

Whereas the signing of a “Term Sheet” with Renovus Solar, Inc. by the Town would enable the fine-tuning of project design, sizing, and cost, and does not commit the Town to the Project;

Therefore be it Resolved, that the Caroline Town Board authorizes the Town Supervisor to sign a “Term Sheet” with Renovus Solar, Inc.

### **Vote**

Ayes: Witmer, Fracchia, Snow, Weiser, Reinbolt

### **Food Truck Discussion**

Mr. Fracchia commented that the Southern Tier Foodbank said they’re stopping the food truck until a location is found. The highway department parking lot was suggested instead of the Brooktondale Community Center.

Mr. Witmer thought they were going to check with the Brooktondale Fire Company. They might only need the parking lot, but might need access to the bathroom. There’s also a question of insurance.

### **Resolution 2016-106 Reimbursing Donald Ward for Repair of Motorcycle**

Moved by Gary Reinbolt; seconded by John Fracchia

Whereas, an accident occurred on July involving a town truck driven by town employee William Case and a motorcycle driven by Donald Ward of 346 Buffalo Rd, Brooktondale, NY and

Whereas, it has been established that the town truck was at fault; and

Whereas, Mr. Ward will provide a written statement that he will waive any further action against the town once he is reimbursed for the damage done to his motorcycle; now therefore be it

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board authorizes the supervisor to write a check in the amount of \$1200 for the repair of Mr. Ward’s motorcycle, based on an estimate he brought forward from a repair shop Ithaca Recreation Sports; and be it further

Resolved, the town will seek reimbursement from the Town of Caroline’s insurance company.

Vote

Ayes: Witmer, Fracchia, Snow, Weiser, Reinbolt

### **Fund Transfers**

#### **Resolution 107 of 2016**

Motion made by Mark Witmer and seconded by Irene Weiser

**Be It Resolved the Caroline Town Board makes the following 2016 Fund Transfer**

\$ 675.00 from General Fund Account A 7310.4 Youth Services Contractual to General Fund Account A 7310.1 Youth Services Personnel Services

**Adopted** Fracchia: Aye; Snow: Aye; Weiser: Aye Reinbolt: Aye Witmer: Aye

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**Approval of Abstracts****Resolution 108 of 2016  
Streetlight Fund Abstract**

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by John Fracchia to approve payment for the Streetlight Fund voucher numbers 13 and 14 for \$527.52.

**Adopted** Fracchia: Aye; Snow: Aye; Weiser: Aye Reinbolt: Aye Witmer: Aye

**Resolution 109 of 2016  
General Fund Abstract**

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by Irene Weiser to approve payment for the General Fund voucher numbers 225 through 246 for \$11,476.82.

**Adopted** Fracchia: Aye; Snow: Aye; Weiser: Aye Reinbolt: Aye Witmer: Aye

**Resolution 110 of 2016  
Highway Fund Abstract**

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by Irene Weiser to approve payment for the Highway Fund voucher numbers 129 through 141 for \$80,305.09.

**Adopted** Fracchia: Aye; Snow: Aye; Weiser: Aye Reinbolt: Aye Witmer: Aye

**----Adjourn----**

Adjourned on a motion by Mark Witmer, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra DeAugustine