

Caroline Town Board Meeting Minutes of January 8, 2014

The Town Board Business meeting held on January 8, 2014 at the Caroline Town Hall was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Don Barber.

Attendance:

Don Barber, Supervisor
John Fracchia, Councilmember
Irene Weiser, Councilmember
Mark Witmer, Councilmember

Recording

Secretary: Marilou Harrington-Lawson, Town Clerk

Also present: Jim Liddington

Public Hearing

The public hearing opened at 7:04 p.m.

Petition to change the boundaries of the James and Beverly Liddington properties so all will be in the Brooktondale Fire district.

The public hearing closed 7:05 p.m. with no comments from the public

Reports

Cindy Whittaker, Highway Superintendent

No report

Don Barber, Town Supervisor

Correspondence of Note:

1. Park Grant application for financial assistance for Broadband infrastructure : thanks to Councilmember Weiser and Councilmember Fracchia for helping put this application together.
2. Town of Ulysses has pledged \$6000 and Tompkins County up to \$15,000 for broadband Infrastructure

Report:

1. 600 Road Stream stabilization project is complete except for hydroseeding in the Spring
2. Clarity Connect has not submitted Special Use Permit application yet, but still claims they will.
3. Met with Highway Collective Bargaining Team fourth time today.
4. Updated FEMA Superstorm Sandy funding request for Buffalo Road.

Councilmember Fracchia: Questions about some of the Correspondence in the “Correspondence File”. He made a recommendation to order conservation brochures. Councilmember Fracchia will talk with the Town Clerk about what to order.

Dan Klein, County Representative

Unavailable

Irene Weiser, Town Board

-CIT Committee made a grant proposal to Park Foundation requesting funding for \$20,000 for Broad band.

-Town wide e-mail.

-Microsoft based system offers off sight storage box. Provides users with current versions of Microsoft Office (which would be continually updated with the newest versions at no extra charge) and e-mail with full archiving. The company that would make this conversion would charge a flat fee of \$2,500 and a monthly fee of \$17.00 per person/per computer. We would no longer use Egnyte, (which had been previously installed by Brightworks).

-Website was down do to a billing problem. The website was back up by the end of the day.

-Cleaner Greener Initiative- Renewable energy board members from the Town of Ithaca, Ulysses, Danby, and Caroline met and discussed the idea for energy insulation and efficiency in current housing . A good energy efficiency rating may be an incentive to buy a house. It is a voluntary program but possibly may be phased in as required. Energy efficiency rating when your house goes on the market. Initially NYSEDA liked it and funded it. The Town is required to do some financial or inkind contribution. Energy Independent Caroline (EIC) may be interested; Mark Witmer to bring it to the committee. Dryden may be coming on board.

John Fracchia, Town Board

No report

Mark Witmer, Town Board

No Report

Budget Modification**Resolution 38 of 2014**

A motion was made by Mr. Barber; seconded by Ms. Weiser

Be It Resolved the Caroline Town Board makes the following 2014 Fund Transfers

Resolved that the Caroline Town Board makes 2014 Budget modification to General Fund by increasing General Revenue Account A 3066 NRCS Grant by \$48,800 and increasing General Appropriation Account A 8710.4 Conservation CE by \$48,800.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye; Weiser: Aye

Discussion: Adjustment made to pay bill to JB Construction. NRC State will be covering 75% of project. Funds to pay for the remaining 25% will come from the reserve which will be through a Permissive Referendum.

Abstracts**Approval of Abstracts****Resolution 39 of 2014**

General Fund Abstract

A motion was made by Mr. Barber and seconded by Mr. Witmer to approve payment for the General Fund voucher numbers 1 through 30 for \$133,949.87.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye; Weiser: Aye

Discussion: Brightworks charges of \$125 per hour to the Town for the use of a sub-contractor from the Computer Room. Don: Question for Brightworks- What is the mark up for sub-contractors? If they are paying prevailing wage for a sub-contractor why does the Town get charged \$125/hour? Councilmember Weiser will follow-up with Brightworks and ask the proposed questions.

Resolution 40 of 2014**Caroline Fire**

A motion was made by Mr. Barber and seconded by Mr. Fracchia to approve payment for the Bond voucher number 1 for \$8,252.00.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye; Weiser: Aye

Resolution 41 of 2014**Streetlight Fund Abstract**

A motion was made by Mr. Barber and seconded by Ms. Weiser to approve payment for the Streetlight Fund voucher numbers 1 for \$472.26.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye; Weiser: Aye

Resolution 42 of 2014**Highway Fund Abstract**

A motion was made by Mr. Barber and seconded by Mr. Fracchia to approve payment for the Highway Fund voucher numbers 1 through 13 for \$127,209.05.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye; Weiser: Aye

Approval of Minutes**Resolution 43 of 2014****Minutes of the Business Meeting held November 12, 2013:**

A motion was made by Mr. Barber and seconded Ms. Weiser to accept the minutes of the November 12, 2013 meeting as submitted by the Town Clerk and amended.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye; Weiser: Aye

Resolutions**Resolution 44 of 2014**

A motion was made by Mr. Barber; seconded by Mr. Fracchia

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board authorizes the Town Supervisor to Sign a Contract with Slaterville Ambulance for the amount of \$56,000 for the year 2014.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye ; Weiser: Aye

Resolution 45 of 2014

A motion was made by Ms. Weiser; seconded by Mr. Witmer

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board authorizes the Town Supervisor to a sign Contract for legal services with Thaler and Thaler and attorney Guy Krogh

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye; Weiser: Aye

Resolution 46 of 2014

A motion was made by Mr. Barber; seconded by Mr. Witmer

Resolved the Caroline Town Board hereby approves the Alteration of Fire District Boundaries in the Town of Caroline. Pursuant to Town law Article 11, that the Town Board alters the boundaries of said Brooktondale Fire District by moving tax parcels 24.-1-17.2 and 24.-1-18 from the Caroline Fire Protection District to the Brooktondale Fire District. The unified tax parcels 24.-1-17.2; 24.-1-18 and 24.-1-23 will all reside in the Brooktondale Fire District as a result of this compilation.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye; Weiser: Aye

Resolution 47 of 2013

A motion was made by Mr. Barber; seconded by Ms. Weiser

Resolved the Caroline Town Board sets the Building Permit Fee for out buildings such as garages, carports, storage sheds, etc. at \$100 for the first 1000 square feet and additional \$10/100 square feet fee for structures larger than 1000 square feet.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye ; Weiser: Aye

Resolution 48 of 2014

A motion was made by Mr. Barber; seconded by Mr. Witmer

Whereas, at the time of the formation of Town, the holdings of property in the form of real estate were predictors of wealth and therefore ability to pay property taxes, and

Whereas, **much property wealth in the current economy is in non real estate not subject to property tax- (Supervisor Barber suggestions added in bold)** stocks and bonds and other financial holdings and boats and cars, yet these are not taxable property, and

Does not pass Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Nay; Witmer: Nay ; Weiser: Nay

A motion was made by Ms. Weiser; seconded by Mr. Fracchia

(Supervisor Barber and Councilmember Weiser suggested add in bold and removal in ~~strikeout~~)

Whereas, at the time of the formation of Town, the holdings of property in the form of real estate were predictors of wealth and therefore ability to pay property taxes, and

Whereas, **much property wealth in the current economy is in non real estate - such as** (stocks and bonds and other financial holdings ~~and boats and cars~~, yet these are not taxable property, and

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye ; Weiser: Aye

Whereas, the property tax is a regressive tax that is not based on ability to pay, yet holds the powerful lever of foreclosure on one's home if it is not paid, and

Whereas, the State of NY has, in recent decades, used the property tax as a revenue source for State programs in the form of unfunded mandates and partially funded mandates, and

A motion was made by Ms. Weiser; seconded by Mr. Barber

Whereas, the burden the State puts on local governments is disproportionate to those placed on any other State in the union as evidenced by the up to 50% that local governments are required to pay for medicaid whereas other states require local governments to pay only 0-2%.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye ; Weiser: Aye

A motion was made by Ms. Weiser; seconded by Mr. Fracchia

Whereas, in 2014 State mandated programs consumed 78% of the Tompkins County property tax levy, and

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye ; Weiser: Aye

Whereas, the State of NY has in recent decades curtailed the sharing of revenues from the progressive income tax with local governments that lack tax base and economic resources to provide for the health, safety, and well-being of their community, and

Whereas, the State of NY has moved revenue sharing funds into competitive grants that stack the deck against the poor municipalities with the least resources to apply, and

A motion was made by Mr. Barber; seconded by Ms. Weiser

Whereas, ~~the Governor of the State of NY been very vocal~~ **has been using property tax as a revenue source for State programs which causes New York State to have the highest property taxes in the nation while New York State is starving local governments of revenue to** ~~that NY reputation of having the highest property taxes in the nation is caused by inefficient and mismanaged local government and he is using the power of his office to starve local governments of revenue through reduced revenue sharing and imposition of a property tax cap, and~~

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye ; Weiser: Aye

Now therefore be it resolved that the Caroline Town Board **urges** to Association of Towns to make fighting for a fairer tax base for local governments a top priority, and be it

A motion was made by Mr. Barber; seconded by Mr. Fracchia

Further resolved that the Caroline Town Board urges the Associations of Towns to recognize that there is an assault on local governments ~~of both words and financial resources~~ that must be met, ~~confronted by the full membership~~

and be it further resolved, that the Caroline Town Board urges the Association of Town staff to hold a membership wide strategy discussion at the 2014 Annual Meeting and Training to develop a plan to get all Towns in front of their State legislators to advocate for fairer tax base for local governments, relief of unfunded and partially funded mandates, and increase of revenue sharing based on need, and

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye ; Weiser: Aye

A motion was made by Ms. Weiser; seconded by Mr. Fracchia

Further resolved that the Caroline Town Board urges the Associations of Towns to use their good office

to **urge** the Governor, **Senate and Assembly** ~~that if he really wanted~~ to reduce property tax ~~he could do so~~ by using State money to fund all State **mandated** programs that are currently funded by the property tax.

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board asks the Clerk to send a certified copy of the resolution Governor, Assemblywoman Barber Lifton, Senator James Seward and the executive director at the Association of Towns.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye ; Weiser: Aye

Resolution 49 of 2014

A motion was made by Mr. Barber; seconded by Mr. Witmer

Whereas, at the time of the formation of Town, the holdings of property in the form of real estate were predictors of wealth and therefore ability to pay property taxes, and

Whereas, much property wealth in the current economy is in non real estate - such as (stocks and bonds and other financial holdings, yet these are not taxable property, and

Whereas, the property tax is a regressive tax that is not based on ability to pay, yet holds the powerful lever of foreclosure on one's home if it is not paid, and

Whereas, the State of NY has, in recent decades, used the property tax as a revenue source for State programs in the form of unfunded mandates and partially funded mandates, and

Whereas, the burden the State puts on local governments is disproportionate to those placed on any other State in the union as evidenced by the up to 50% that local governments are required to pay for medicaid whereas other states require local governments to pay only 0-2%.

Whereas, in 2014 State mandated programs consumed 78% of the Tompkins County property tax levy, and

Whereas, the State of NY has in recent decades curtailed the sharing of revenues from the progressive income tax with local governments that lack tax base and economic resources to provide for the health, safety, and well-being of their community, and

Whereas, the State of NY has moved revenue sharing funds into competitive grants that stack the deck against the poor municipalities with the least resources to apply, and

Whereas, State of NY has been using property tax as a revenue source for State programs which causes New York State to have the highest property taxes in the nation while New York State is starving local governments of revenue to reduced revenue sharing and imposition of a property tax cap, and

Now therefore be it resolved that the Caroline Town Board urges to Association of Towns to make fighting for a fairer tax base for local governments a top priority, and be it

Further resolved that the Caroline Town Board urges the Associations of Towns to recognize that there is an assault on local governments that must be met,

and be it further resolved, that the Caroline Town Board urges the Association of Town staff to hold a membership wide strategy discussion at the 2014 Annual Meeting and Training to develop a plan to get all Towns in front of their State legislators to advocate for fairer tax base for local governments, relief of unfunded and partially funded mandates, and increase of revenue sharing based on need, and

Further resolved that the Caroline Town Board urges the Associations of Towns to use their good office to urge the Governor, Senate and Assembly to reduce property tax by using State money to fund all

State mandated programs that are currently funded by the property tax.

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board asks the Clerk to send a certified copy of the resolution to the Governor, Assemblywoman Barber Lifton, Senator James Seward and the executive director at the Association of Towns.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye ; Weiser: Aye

Resolution 50 of 2014

Resolved, the Caroline moved to Executive Session at 9:07 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations for the Highway Department Teamsters Union.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Witmer: Aye; Weiser: Aye

---Adjourn---

Adjourned on a motion by Mr. Barber and seconded by Mr. Fracchia the meeting adjourned at 9:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marilou Harrington-Lawson, Town Clerk

Town Business

Salute to the Flag (7:00)

Public Hearing on Changing Fire District Boundary

Privilege of the Floor: Opportunity for citizens to bring forward matters of concern
Please be prepared to make one statement not to exceed 3 minutes in length

Highway Superintendents Report (7:30)

Supervisors Report (7:35)

County Representatives Report (7:40)

Department, Committee, & Liaison Reports (7:50)

Discussion and Action Topics

- Transfers (8:00)
- Approve Abstracts: Highway, General, Lighting (8:05)
- Authorization of Supervisor to Sign Ambulance Contract (8:15)
- Authorization of Supervisor to Sign Contract for legal services with Thaler and Thaler (8:20)
- Resolution to amend Building permit fee schedule on garages and pole barns (8:30)
- Resolution to NY Towns for firm action against assault on local governments by NYS government (8:25)
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----Adjourn----

Adjourned on a motion by Mr. Barber and seconded by Mr. Fracchia the meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marilou Harrington-Lawson, Town Clerk

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