

Caroline Town Board Meeting

August 12, 2015

Board Members Present: Don Barber (Supervisor), Mark Witmer (Deputy Supervisor), Irene Weiser, Tim Seely, Jon Fracchia

Recording Secretary: Deb DeAugustine, Acting Town Clerk

Salute to the Flag

Mr. Barber called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Privilege of the Floor

Peter Hoyt addressed the resolution opposing the repowering of the Cayuga Power Plant. He had three objections to the resolution. The first is ideological. The second is one of appropriateness. He thinks it's inappropriate for a municipal body to weigh in on an issue that's none of its business. The PSC is taking input from citizens. He thinks the board is stepping outside the bounds of its business. His third objection is practical. When he was on town board, there was effort made to work with other municipalities toward common interests and goals, such as the county-wide health consortium. This resolution will be taken as an insult in Lansing and will thwart any attempts to work on an inter-town basis. Some folks in Lansing are very upset about this. Some moderates don't have much of an opinion, but they don't want another town to tell them what they can be doing. He doesn't know what the town board gets out of it. It doesn't have any more influence on the Public Service Commission than if the board members weighed in individually as citizens. He thinks it does a disservice to the town in that it undermines their relationship with another town. He urged the board to consider it on those terms.

Mary Arsenault stated that she attended the meeting to request that the town consider putting in a speed bump near her home between the corner of Middaugh Road and Beaver Creek Road. Her driveway is less than 50 feet from the corner and can't be seen very well. She's been nearly broadsided coming out of her driveway on numerous occasions. Traffic comes off Middaugh Road without even letting off the gas. There are hikers on the road and a lot of small children. She rides her horse on that road. Ms. Weiser asked how often trucks come up from the quarry. Ms. Arsenault said often, and town trucks use that road. She has a big trailer herself and has thought about what sorts of problems it would cause for her getting out of her driveway. She doesn't like the idea of having to tangle with it, but she also doesn't like the thought of getting broadsided coming out of her driveway. Someone came by recently, squealing their tires all the way from the corner and past her driveway. When she looked at them incredulously, they stopped at the crest of the hill and got out and called her some choice names. She could hear them all the way to the scale house – they were going that fast. This is a recurring problem.

Pat Dolan commented on the Cayuga Power Plant resolution. She congratulated the board on the resolution. She hopes the board will pass it tonight. She thinks it's very appropriate; it will be within the comment period. Five years ago, she would not have thought about a power plant, but now there's global warming and we're worrying about coal and methane emissions. When they first started talking about the repowering, they were just talking about natural gas; now they want coal, too. Refurbishing this old plant at taxpayers' expense, and the idea that it will be used for years to come and be a very polluting and toxic plant, will stop us from going in the direction we want to go in, which is renewables, and stand in the way of the progress we need to make.

NYSEG has to upgrade these transmission lines anyway. She has talked to many people all over the county regarding the power plant vs. the NYSEG upgrades. A lot of people in Lansing feel somewhat conflicted because it does affect their tax base, but a Lansing woman, who recently wrote in to the Lansing Star, said it may affect their taxes, but worse for her family and the future generations is what's going to happen if we keep having these polluting power plants. There are other ways to solve this issue. Ms. Dolan thinks lots of people in Lansing think that closing the plant and doing the upgrades is the right thing to do. She thinks we're supporting them by passing this resolution. She thinks we need to get our voice as a public body to the PSC. It doesn't mean we won't work with other towns.

Nelly Farnum spoke in support of the Cayuga Power Plant resolution. Up front it's important to acknowledge that any time a group of citizens are facing a decision that will have its most negative impact on only on a subset of people in the county, it's a difficult kind of decision to make. She disagrees with Mr. Hoyt that this not a decision that we're involved in. It's minimally a county-wide decision. She thinks it does involve us. Any time you're thinking about the future, it's inevitable that there will be short-term negative impacts. It's equally important to be thinking to both the short-term and the long-term future when making present-day decisions. She likes the resolution because it acknowledges that there are short-term potential negative impacts to the status quo for repowering with natural gas, specifically to the citizens of Lansing. It equally acknowledges the long-term negative impacts to the future of our county of powering this plant with natural gas. The resolution suggests solutions to mitigate the short-term negative impacts. She thinks this is the time for local town boards to embrace positive actions at the state level, such as the Reform the Energy Vision plan. She also thinks it's important to build on the momentum of our local initiatives for sustainable energy, such as the two programs that have been ongoing for home-based solar power in Tompkins County, which has already led to the creation of more than 70 jobs in the last two years. She asked the town board to support the resolution. It's an important step for thinking globally while acting locally.

Ellen Harrison spoke in support of the Cayuga Power Plant resolution. She thinks that the town board has a responsibility to constituents to deal with the fact that the repowering is so unfair to ratepayers, who would be paying a lot more money for something that is not necessary. The transmission lines are much less of a burden for us. To her, it's appalling that it's even being considered. Why would we be bailing out this company? Caroline was one of the leaders in passing a law to ban fracking. It was appropriate and courageous. How can we, then, not be hypocrites if we support a power plant in our community that's burning fracked gas? That's not consistent. The board has a responsibility to oppose it in order to not be hypocritical. That would be in the worst way saying, Don't do it here, but do it there. This is not only Lansing's decision. It is not Lansing's plant. Yes, it will have a lot of impact on Lansing, so dealing with those impacts is important. It's up to the PSC to consider all comments, certainly of those of us who are NYSEG rate payers and live locally.

Frank Proto addressed the Cayuga Power Plant resolution in regard to environmental items. He read something from the Catskill Mountainkeeper pertaining to the Constitution Pipeline. His concerns are the environmental impacts of the new transmission lines as opposed to repowering the plant. He doesn't know the facts and figures regarding the environmental impact of the alternative transmission lines. Those towers are not like what we have along the road. His concern is that there hasn't been enough public information dispensed. There seems to have been a rush to get this not repowered. He's wondering whether towns should take a step back, but realized that there's a deadline of the 24th for comments. He liked what Ms. Harrison said about

the town acting responsibly. The current Cayuga power plant has not been given enough appropriate environmental plusses. He remembers when that stack was retrofitted by the DEC. They had to tear apart and rebuild it with scrubbers in order to make it environmentally sound. At the same time, they were required to buy low sulfite coal, so the coal that's going in there is theoretically not polluting. While he understands that there's a county-wide impact, it directly affects the folks in Lansing because of taxes and jobs. Whatever happens will affect all of us. He would like the board also to remember what happened 10 or 12 years ago in the North Country when the power lines went down and there was snow to beat the band; there wasn't a generator to be had. He urged the town board to take a step back or at least include in the resolution that there was some effort to examine environmentally what the impacts are of the proposed power lines. There is concern, not necessarily in our area because we don't have those huge towers.

Ms. Weiser said that she has been very involved, not only in the repowering proceeding, but in the Auburn upgrade proceedings. The transmission lines they intend to put in, ten miles of them are in an existing right of way. To minimize the expansion of the right of way, they will not be the big metal monsters, but similar to the lines we see in our county, which are 115 kilovolts. To minimize the expansion of the right of way, they've decided that, instead of using the H-frame, they're going to use a steel monopole, which is a slimmer structure. There has been a two-year proceeding in front of the PSC to manage the environmental impacts of putting these transmission lines in. The Farm Bureau has been involved, the DEC, and there will be an evidentiary meeting coming up in front of a judge. There was very little dispute about the management of the environmental impacts. It's not what Mr. Proto fears.

Mr. Proto said that the resolution is missing that kind of reference. In his opinion, the board needs to insert something that says it has been examined, because he's not sure about the poles. It's anecdotal information at this point, and the PSC has not approved any alternative proceeding. He asked whether the proceeding will address eminent domain.

Ms. Weiser said that it doesn't, because the proceeding is about the necessity of the power lines and the environmental impact.

Mr. Proto asked whether private lands will be taken.

Ms. Weiser said that ten out of the 14 miles will be in existing rights of way. The other four, she does not know. It's a negotiation between NYSEG and the property owner as to whether they grant the right of way or whether there will be an eminent-domain proceeding.

Mary Alyce Kolber strongly supports the town board in the Cayuga Power Plant resolution. She is a NYSEG customer who resents paying \$145 million in corporate welfare to keep the plant moving. It's a behemoth and isn't needed. We should be investing in jobs in the new energy economy for the future. There's only so much money. If we invest in repowering the Cayuga Power Plant, where's the money to invest in our new energy economy? She would like to see Lansing get those \$2 million for however long it takes to transition them to better-paying jobs. We, as a very tiny group of volunteers, doubled the size of photovoltaics on people's homes. Just think what we could do if we broadened that scope. It created 70 new, well-paying permanent jobs. We stimulated the market and that is ongoing. We banned fracking here, but if we allow fracked gas to power the plant, that means someone else's land is being fracked and that is morally repugnant to her. She said we need to invest the \$55 million in the new transmission lines rather than repowering the Cayuga plant at \$145 million. That makes no economic sense.

Who will pay for the toxic heap of coal ash that's sitting there waiting to burst and go into the lake? We will. Once again, the taxpayer is carrying the entire burden, while the corporations get out leaving us with our toxic superfund sites.

Jonathan Comstock spoke in support of the resolution and in support of the Auburn transmission upgrades. There are no good reasons for repowering the Cayuga Power Plant. Economically, it's insupportable that ratepayers across the state should pay \$145 million in corporate welfare so that Lansing can receive \$1.8 million a year in taxes. The loss of these kinds of revenues is a serious issue, but all parties should be involved in finding a coherent solution. There's nothing more real than real jobs. Individual, families, and communities alike depend on good jobs. There are far more jobs to be found in alternative actions than in repowering the plant. Solar Tompkins took action to stimulate the residential solar market and we saw our participating installers grow enough to create 70 new full-time, well-paying jobs in a single year. Proud as he is of that accomplishment, he knows we're only a little part of the energy revolution that's going on all around us. This is just the beginning of a huge potential for good green jobs and developing a future grid of clean energy sources. Workers that have served their community for years providing power from the Cayuga plant should be respected for that service and aided in transferring their skills to jobs that will move our community forward. Repowering the plant is contrary to the state's goals in its new energy plan as well as the county's goals in achieving greenhouse gas reductions. The concept of a grid supported by huge, lumbering power plants, spending most of their life in standby mode, waiting for peak demand is archaic and economically unjustified. The immediate solution that is part this debate is to upgrade the transmission lines, but a longer term vision of this is incorporated in the new Reinventing the Energy Vision. This envisions our grid being composed more of a developed whole set of microgrids supported by distributed power generation such as wind and solar, and an increased reliance on energy storage, rather than archaic backup power plants. Five years ago, we heard how battery storage was not cost effective and was the holy grail of the future. This is the future. And today, it is economically the more cost-effective way to approach these issues. The companies that are making those kinds of grid-sized power plants can barely keep up with the demand of the production. Climate change is real and is accelerating. Our opportunities to avoid huge costs are rapidly being lost as we dawdle over mixed, short-term priorities. We cannot afford to cling to the most familiar modes of energy management for no other reason than that they are familiar, while they have ongoing devastating effects on our planet. He's tired of listening to people say, How can decommissioning this one power plant make a difference to these global issues? Or, How can the US do anything before the whole world does it together? These are the same people who view any form of broad cooperation as an inherent evil conspiracy. This would appear to be a flawless justification for why nothing can ever be done except follow the poisonous status quo. His answer to that is that it takes community action to solve the problems of communities locally and globally. We have to act as a community. In a community, to achieve communal good, we have to take individual responsibility. We do our part. We don't pretend we can do everyone's part, nor should we. By acknowledging our own responsibilities and doing our own part, we contribute directly to the solutions at the community level. We also set an example. We expect others to do their share. And when individuals are doing their share, this inspires other individuals as words never do. And then they expect to be supported by their local governments as we do. And when local governments are doing their share, they have a right to expect the state to do so. So taking responsibility is a contagious thing. To summarize, the Cayuga Power Plant is a huge liability to the environment. It's a financial boondoggle and sink hole. And it is our responsibility to deal with it. For these reasons, he supports the town board's resolution.

Ms. Weiser suggested moving the resolution up so audience members who wanted to know the outcome of the vote didn't have to wait. Mr. Seely was in favor of moving it to the top of the action topics, but was not in favor of reformatting the whole meeting. Mr. Barber said the most important thing is paying bills, and would be in favor of moving it to the top of the action topics, but not to the top of the agenda.

On a motion by Ms. Weiser and seconded by Mr. Fracchia, the resolution regarding repowering the Cayuga Power Plant was moved up on the agenda, to occur immediately after Persons to Be Heard.

Vote

Ayes: Weiser, Fracchia, Witmer

Nays: Barber, Seely

Discussion of Resolution Regarding Repowering the Cayuga Power Plant

Mr. Seely noted that the PSC is taking comments and asked whether it was possible to see them. Is it live? Mr. Barber said that it is. Mr. Seely asked whether other municipalities have done this. Ms. Weiser responded that four in Tompkins have. This is a revised repowering proposal. Ulysses, Caroline, Ithaca, and Dryden commented on the first one.

Mr. Fracchia said he appreciated the public attending the meeting to voice an opinion on the resolution. Community engagement is critical and their input is valuable to the board. He thinks it's important for governments at all levels to weigh in on the issues of the day. He hopes all the speakers will also make comments to the PSC – it's important for everyone's voices to be heard. That's democracy at its very root and at its very best.

Mr. Witmer said this is a very important resolution. It doesn't make sense economically to repower the plant, and taking responsibility for climate change is at its core. Repowering the plant is a huge boondoggle and would take resources away from the direction we need to go. He feels that the town board has a role in promoting this. The resolution is expressed as coming from the town board. He thinks the board has made a judgement based on the facts about the direction and decision that should be made.

Ms. Weiser said she also appreciated the input from the audience. Mr. Hoyt's comments about intermunicipal relationships is important to her, although it doesn't trump her concerns about the environmental impact and the insanity of providing \$145 million to a plant that's 60 years old, that's had a fire in one unit that still hasn't been repaired. It's reached its lifetime. It's an inefficient plant that will not serve us well and is not going to be able to survive without ongoing subsidies of \$9.6 million per year. She doesn't see that it serves anyone well to have to prop up an old power plant when there are new solutions on the horizon. The place where she thinks the resolution is responsible towards intermunicipal relationships is the work that has been done to secure funding to provide for transition support so the Lansing School District, the town of Lansing, and the county aren't walloped with an overwhelming tax burden when the plant closes. That's a very big success we've had with the governor and with the most recent legislative action at the end of session. She looks forward to pushing to ensure that there's also financial support for the workers, that they be transitioned responsibly to find new work or training for new work, and also working with the unions to ensure that they're having conversations so older workers who are nearing retirement age receive a parachute to get them through to their pensions. She

realizes some people are angry, but you do what you think is right in a way that is the most responsible and responsive that you can.

Mr. Hoyt always felt that citizens talk as citizens about these things. It's not his understanding of civics that one level of government has any more influence on another level of government beyond that of the individual citizen. That's not the town board's standing. That's about politics and perception, and maybe folks will listen to an elected board more than they would to individuals. He doesn't know what's right.

Mr. Seely understood Mr. Hoyt's point. His only hesitation with the resolution is that the town is implying their judgement on another township. But he can move past that.

Mr. Barber discussed his opinion on the issue of whether it's appropriate for the town board to weigh in on an issue that's not related to the town infrastructure, etc. When talking about the vision for the future, you have to talk about how far you're willing to go outside your town boundaries. Although climate change has been made a very political issue by people who stand to gain a lot of money, for him it's the most important issue for us as a society. The retired Brigadier General Stephen Cheney said on the Weather Channel that "there's no doubt climate change is a threat to our national security. Burning of fossil fuels, releasing CO2 into the atmosphere, is the cause of climate change. We're not worried about the national defense, but we are worried about our community. He thinks that not taking a position on this issue is irresponsible because we need to change direction. He has been working in farming, and we're seeing a completely different climate than what he grew up with. So he feels that as a town board, when there are opportunities to speak, we need to take those opportunities. There's something that transcends the economic impacts of this. What's different about the current proceedings than the ones that happened before is that we've moved farther down the alternative energy trail. We now know that the power lines are going to have to be upgraded, whether or not the plant is upgraded, so why spend money for something you don't need? The governor and legislature have put in \$19 million recognizing that when you cause an upheaval in a community, they need some transition funding. Mr. Comstock and others have been working to create a new energy economy, so we're not just telling you that you have to absorb all the impacts and we're not doing anything to help change and work on it ourselves.

Resolution No. 2015-137: Opposing the Repowering of Cayuga Power Plant with Natural Gas (12-E-0577) and Supporting Auburn Transmission Upgrades (13-T-0235)

WHEREAS in January 2013 the Public Service Commission (PSC) began a proceeding (12-E-0577) to analyze repowering the Cayuga Power Plant as an alternative to Auburn transmission system upgrades; and

WHEREAS the PSC has announced a public comment period ending August 24, 2015 regarding the merits of Cayuga's February 6th revised repowering proposal versus New York State Electric and Gas' (NYSEG's) February 6th proposal for transmission line upgrades in Auburn; and

WHEREAS Cayuga proposes to convert the 60-year-old, 300 megawatt plant to use natural gas fuel on both operating units, while retaining the ability to burn coal on one operating unit, and the conversion will cost NYSEG customers \$49.5 million for construction, plus \$9.6 million per year for ten years to subsidize the plant's operation (total \$145 million)¹; and

¹ PSC case 12-E-0577, Revised Repowering Proposal, Filing #232, 2/6/2015 p.14
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WHEREAS NYSEG's proposal for Auburn transmission upgrades is being considered under PSC Proceeding 13-T-0235 for a certificate of environmental compatibility and public need, and will cost approximately \$55 million² and it is the sworn testimony of the Department of Public Service's Power Systems Operations Specialist that Auburn transmission upgrades will be needed by 2020 regardless of whether the Cayuga Plant is repowered³; and

WHEREAS if the Cayuga plant is repowered, 30 workers will lose their jobs, 30 will be retained and the plant will continue to pay property taxes; and if the transmission upgrades are made and the plant closes, 60 plant workers will lose their jobs⁴ and \$1.8 million in property tax revenue will be lost; and

WHEREAS if the State keeps fossil-fuel burning power plants open because of the impact closing them will have on the communities where the plant resides the State's energy policy cannot advance; and

WHEREAS the 2014 Fifth Assessment Report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change finds that climate change is a result of fossil fuel combustion and other human activities, and that it poses a serious threat to human and natural systems that calls for immediate actions to curtail greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS the impact to the local tax base from plant closure pales in comparison to the cataclysmic impact continued reliance on fossil fuels has for the planet; and extreme weather events associated with climate change such as Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Irene, Tropical Storm Lee and many localized flash flooding events have already added greatly to the tax burden locally, statewide and nationally; and

WHEREAS continued fossil fuel burning at the Cayuga Power Plant is contrary to the State's commitment to Reform the Energy Vision by promoting development of distributed power generation, demand response, microgrids and energy efficiency, with stated goals including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the costs of electricity; and

WHEREAS the PSC notes that one of the major expenses of our current electric system is for maintaining idle power plants that are utilized for only a few hundred hours of peak demand time per year - as is proposed for the Cayuga plant - but now technological developments have made alternative methods of managing and satisfying demand more feasible and less costly⁵; and

WHEREAS NYSEG has nominated Tompkins County for demonstration projects that would enable the area to be early adopters of such newer technologies⁶, and has proposed working with the State to develop REV initiatives to ease the transition for the Lansing economy;⁷ and

² Cayuga Operating Corporation Repowering Project Economic Impact Analysis, Prepared by Camoin Associates for Tompkins County Area Development, p. 4.

³ PSC Case 13-T-0235, ESS Rebuttal Testimony, Filing #59, 7/31/2015

⁴ Revised Repowering Proposal, p. 24; Camoin Report, p. 5

⁵ PSC Case 14-M-0101, Order Instituting Proceeding, 4/25/2014 Filing #3, p. 3

⁶ PSC Case 13-M-0101, NYSEG & RGE Demonstration Projects, 7/2/2015 Filing #395

⁷ PSC Case 12-E-0577, NYSEG Response to Notice of Filing Deadline, 2/6/2015 p. 5
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WHEREAS in the final legislation of the 2015 legislative session a budget provision was made to establish a fund to support the local tax base upon closing of a power plant and \$19 million was appropriated to that fund;

Now therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Caroline Town Board opposes the repowering of Cayuga Power Plant (12-E-0577) to burn fossil fuels, and supports the proposal for all necessary and environmentally compatible transmission upgrades (13-T-0235); and be it further

RESOLVED that the Caroline Town Board calls on the Governor to provide support for job training for the plant workers and financial support for Tompkins County, the Town of Lansing and the Lansing School District to mitigate the tax impact closing the plant will have on the community; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Caroline Town Board asks the PSC to ensure that NYSEG timely details the development of projects in Lansing that fit within the scope of REV and will support the local economy; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk will send a certified copy of this resolution to:
Honorable Kathleen H. Burgess, Secretary, Public Service Commission, 3 Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York 12223-1350, (518) 474-6530; Honorable Audrey Zibelman, Chair, Public Service Commission; Governor Andrew Cuomo; Mr. Richard Kauffman, Chairman of Energy and Finance for New York in the Governor's office, Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton, Senator James Seward, members of the Tompkins County Legislature and the Town of Lansing town board.

Vote

Ayes: Barber, Weiser, Seely, Witmer, Fracchia

Highway Superintendent's Report

Mr. Witmer reported that the new fuel pump is now working. The town highway department will hydroseed Buffalo Hill Road once the guard rails are in.

Supervisors Report

Correspondence of Note

1. Email from attorney Guy Krogh regarding technical reasons to adopt property tax cap override
2. Letter from Department of Transportation alerting to changes at parking pull-off on Rt 79 just east of Slaterville Springs

Report

1. Working with Clm Witmer on budget preparation
2. Working with Slaterville Ambulance to develop plan to incorporate paid staff with volunteers
3. Attending work site wellness coalition. September is Fruit and Veggie Month

County Representatives Report (7:40)

Mr. Klein said there is a proposed drone law on the table. They looked at Rockland County's law on drones, which basically said that if you want to fly a drone over someone else's property, you

have to ask their permission. The county attorney doesn't think that's constitutional; he thinks it violates free speech and freedom of the press. The legislature has asked him to write a law. The federal government has set up five or six drone test sites around the country and one is Syracuse. The guy who runs that is coming to address the legislature on August 25th at 3:30 and answer questions from the public. The military, police, utilities, etc, are exempt from the law. Under 400 feet is unregulated space and that's where the drones fly. There are a lot of potential conflicts with airports, power lines, etc. The test sites are trying to get a handle of what the conflicts might be and how to manage them. Over 400 feet is regulated by the FAA. We own the land below us, but not anything above us.

Mr. Hoyt was concerned about the privacy aspects. It's a very complex issue. He can see it being used for bad mischief.

Adam Hilker said he has been flying drones one for over a year. He bought one for business. He can fly over his own property and take photos. At 400 feet, the photos would have very poor resolution. Residential guys flying drones near your window can happen, but it's not likely. He'd be worried he'd hit something. He flies over trees and looks at pretty things.

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

Discussion and Action Topics

Resolution No. 2015-138: Approval of Transfers

Be It Resolved the Caroline Town Board makes the following 2015 Fund Transfers

\$ 1,000.00 from General Fund Account A 1620.12 Town Hall PS to General Fund Account A 1620.41 IT CE.

\$ 90,000.00 from Highway Fund Account DA 5110.41 Banks Road CE to Highway Fund Account DA5130.2 Equipment EQ.

\$ 11,000.00 from Highway Fund Account DA 5110.1 Repair PS to Highway Fund Account DA 5112.1 Capital Improvement PS.

\$ 1,230.00 from Highway Fund Account DA 5140.4 Miscellaneous CE to Highway Fund Account DA 5142.4 Snow and Ice CE.

\$ 1,400.00 from Highway Fund Account DA 5142.1 Snow and Ice PS to Highway Fund Account DA 5112.11 Snow and Ice OT.

Moved by Don Barber; Seconded by Tim Seely

Vote: Ayes – Barber, Weiser, Seely, Witmer, Fracchia

Resolution No. 2015-139: Approval of Lighting Abstract

Resolved, the Caroline town board approved the lighting abstract in the amount of xxxxx.

Moved by Don Barber; seconded by Irene Weiser

Vote: Ayes – Barber, Weiser, Seely, Witmer, Fracchia

Resolution No. 2015-140: Approval of Highway Abstract

Resolved, the Caroline town board approved the highway abstract in the amount of xxxxx.

Moved by Don Barber; seconded by Mark Witmer

Vote: Ayes – Barber, Weiser, Seely, Witmer, Fracchia

Resolution No. 2015-141: Approval of General Abstract

Resolved, the Caroline town board approved the general abstract in the amount of xxxxx.

Moved by Don Barber; seconded by Jon Fracchia

Vote: Ayes – Barber, Weiser, Seely, Witmer, Fracchia

Resolution No. 2015-142: Approval of Minutes of August 4, 2015

Resolved, the Caroline town board approved the minutes of August 4, 2015, as submitted.

Moved by Don Barber; seconded by Jon Fracchia

Vote: Ayes – Barber, Weiser, Witmer, Fracchia

Abstentions: Seely

Discussion of Solar Installation Permit Fee Resolution

Mr. Witmer reported that the code officer thought that the recommendation makes sense. Solar is unique to other kinds of alterations. The resolution would set fees in the ballpark of other municipalities in our area. This will have the most impact on commercial installations because the alteration fee structure is currently set to \$10 per \$1000 of project cost. That doesn't quite make sense because the code officer's cost isn't scaled to the project cost. So the \$600 will pay for 18 to 20 hours of code officer work, and that was in line with our code officer's estimate of his time.

Mr. Barber pointed out that there haven't been many commercial installations, but there are on the horizon. We can go back and review fees, if necessary.

Mr. Witmer noted that he's enrolled in the Solar Tompkins program and will be getting a system soon, so he'll abstain from the vote. Regarding how long it takes the code officer to permit residential solar projects, Mr. Witmer said two to three hours and sometimes six to seven. He also talked to code officials in Dryden and Danby and they both indicated two to three hours.

A gentleman from the audience commented that it seems too high, and that if we're making a big push to Solarize Tompkins, maybe we should go further to subsidize costs and make it even cheaper. Should the town profit off something they're encouraging to make happen?

Mr. Barber responded that it is possible to do what the town of Danby is doing in having the taxpayers subsidize residential solar installations, but this town board decided to go to the flat fee to make sure that for most projects, the permit applicant is paying for cost of the entire permit process. It is a revenue source for the town, which pales in comparison to the property tax. The code officer

position was set up by state law to enforce the Uniform Building Code. The state initially provided support to local governments to fund that. Then they thought that we should fund that through the building permit process, and collect that money through fees. Through enforcing the building code, we have drastically reduced the number of house fires: now the electric is done correctly and the chimneys are inspected. Our code officer has done a lot of solar installations, so he knows how long it takes him. The three hours is not what we pay him.

Mr. Klein said that the town of Danby started doing free solar permits when there were like eight installations, but then Solarize Tompkins added another 80. They're not sure they'd make the same decision today.

Note that Ms. Weiser was not in the room when the resolution was voted on.

Resolution No. 2015-143: Amendment to Town of Caroline Building Fee Schedule: Solar Photovoltaic (PV) and Solar Hot Water (SHW) Flat Fees

WHEREAS, building code fees for solar PV and SHW are currently set by item E. of the 2014 Town of Caroline Building Fee Schedule: "Structural repairs, alterations and additions," which are not specific to the efforts involved in permitting of solar installation, but to project cost, and

WHEREAS, the current building code fee structure results in permit fees for solar installations that are significantly higher than those in adjoining towns, and

WHEREAS, the Town Board of Caroline wishes to set building fees for solar installations that cover the work of the Code Officer, and

WHEREAS, setting building fees to a level just necessary to cover Town cost will moderate a potential financial barrier to solar adoption, consistent with Resolution #136 of 2015: Promoting Effective Actions on Climate Change,

RESOLVED, that the Caroline Town Board amends Caroline's Building Code Fee Schedule to establish flat permitting fees for solar installations as follows:

- Residential Solar PV and SHW installations: \$100.00
- Commercial Solar PV and SHW projects: \$600.00

Moved by Mark Witmer; Seconded by Irene Weiser

Vote

Ayes: Barber, Seely, Fracchia

Abstentions: Witmer

Resolution No. 2015-144: Establish Publish Hearing for a Local Law to Override Property Tax Cap

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board hereby sets a public hearing for September 1, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. to hear any and all comments related to a "Local Law to Override the Tax Levy Limit Established by GML 3-C."

Moved by Don Barber; seconded by Mark Witmer

Vote: Ayes – Barber, Weiser, Seely, Witmer, Fracchia

Resolution No. 2015-145: Amend Resolution #26-2015 Designating Electrical Inspector to include “The Inspector, LLC”

Resolved, the Town Board amends Resolution #26-2015 “Designation of Electrical Inspector” as follows: Upon receiving insurance certificates of \$2 million liability and National Electric Code Certification, hereby designates Atlantic-Inland, Commonwealth Electric Inspection Services, Inc., and The Inspector LLC as the Electrical Inspectors for the Town.

Moved by Don Barber; Seconded by Tim Seely

Vote: Ayes – Barber, Weiser, Seely, Witmer, Fracchia

TB Resolution No. 2015-146: Approve Offering Standard Platinum Plan

Whereas, the Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium (Consortium) has approved the Standard Platinum Plan to be available January 1, 2015; and

Whereas, the Town Board has reviewed the Standard Platinum Plan as it compares to the Town’s current Participating Provider Organization (PPO) plan; and

Whereas, the Town Board has discussed the Town considering offering the Standard Platinum Plan as an additional health insurance plan option to employees at a 2015 monthly premium of \$540.75 Individual and \$1,405.95 Family; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, the Town Board approves offering the Consortium’s Standard Platinum Plan effective January 1, 2016 as an additional health insurance plan option for employees.

Moved by Don Barber; Seconded by Jon Fracchi

Vote: Ayes – Barber, Weiser, Seely, Witmer, Fracchia

TB Resolution No. 2015-147: Approve Offering Medicare Supplement Plan

Whereas, the current Collective Bargaining Agreement with Teamsters Local 317 states in Section: 11.2.5 “Medicare: At the time the retiree and/or spouse meet the eligibility criteria for Medicare coverage, the retiree and/or spouse will be enrolled in the New York State Teamsters Council Health and Hospital Fund Secure Comp Medicare Supplement Plan, or its equivalent. The Town will not reimburse an eligible retiree and the retiree’s spouse for the cost of the Medicare Part B premium”; and

Whereas, the Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium (Consortium) has approved a Medicare Supplement Plan with five options for prescription drug coverage; and

Whereas, the Town Board has compared the New York State Teamsters Council Health and Hospital Fund Secure Comp Medicare Supplement Plan with the Consortium’s Medicare Supplement Plan and found them to be identical; and

Whereas, the Town Board is considering offering a Medicare Supplement plan with the three tier prescription drug option 3T3 (\$5/10/25) at an estimated monthly premium of \$449.75; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, the Town Board approves offering the Consortium Medicare Supplement plan with the three tier prescription drug option 3T3 (\$5/10/25) at an estimated monthly premium of \$449.75, effective January 1, 2016.

Moved by Don Barber; Seconded by Irene Weiser

Vote: Ayes – Barber, Weiser, Seely, Witmer, Fracchia

Discussion of proposals from potential Website development contractors

Ms. Weiser said the CIT committee got two proposals. There was very clear support for the proposal from the local bidder. It was much more thorough. The work plan is not described as concrete deliverables, so it is not ready to be executed at this point. The proposal was smartly done in that it was divided into two phases: 1) Review current content and think about the content and structure we want for the new site. Price range: \$900-\$1600. 2) Build the site, which is contingent on the results of the web site plan, so it's hard to give a firm estimate, but a rough estimate was \$5000. Ms. Weiser requested that the supervisor be authorized to sign off on the proposal so they don't have to wait another month for the meeting in order to get going. This way, once we have a work plan that specifies deliverables, we could sign it without waiting for the meeting next month. The other bid was not at all thorough. It was for \$4000. There was no attention to working with us; just taking what we have and plugging it into a new site. The bidder was not responsive and in the end, just gave us a template with some numbers plugged in.

Mr. Witmer asked what other towns use. Ms. Weiser said she talked with other web developers who say it is a reasonable price, and not a fire sale price. The price for phase II probably won't be that high because there's not that much content. The other option we have is that at the end of the phase I deliverable, we could shop around again if we want to get a revised estimate.

Mr. Barber asked where the input is going to come from. Ms. Weiser responded that it will come from the CIT committee and from other town committees and departments.

Mr. Fracchia said it's a smart way to approach it. He asked whether we have any sense of her experience. Ms. Weiser said they've done no reference checking. She hasn't done a lot; it's a sideline.

Mr. Barber asked about her hourly rate. Ms. Weiser said she would check. Mr. Barber stated that she needs one contact person, not a lot of bosses, because otherwise you can really run up a lot of money. He thinks that the idea before building a site is to hit the pause button and leave it open to shop it. Ms. Weiser said that's what the proposer suggested. She could also give a more definite price at that time.

Mr. Hoyt asked whether she talked about ongoing support. That's phase III and it's indefinite. Ms. Weiser responded that we have Michael Ludgate as our day-to-day person for updating the site and managing the town listserv. Mr. Hoyt commented that web sites are more and more are dynamic. He urged the board to have a flexible technical process. Mr. Barber stated that we have worked that out with Mr. Ludgate and the platform we're using is one that he knows how to use and can work with.

Ms. Weiser agreed with Mr. Hoyt and said that is what we ran into with our current site, which is a Wordpress site, which is easy to work with and simple for loading content. The problem is that it

was in the early days of Wordpress and the developer customized some things that made it impossible to upgrade versions, so we're still operating with an ancient version. With the update, we will not get any customizations.

Resolution No. 2015-148: Authorize the supervisor to sign an agreement for web site planning

Resolved, the town board authorizes the supervisor to negotiate a contract for web site planning not to exceed \$1200.

Moved by Don Barber; seconded by Tim Seely

Vote: Ayes – Barber, Weiser, Seely, Witmer, Fracchia

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Fracchia, the meeting adjourned at 9:26 p.m.