

Caroline Town Board Business Meeting Minutes of March 11, 2020

The Town Board Business Meeting held on March 11, 2020 at the Caroline Town Hall was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Supervisor Mark Witmer.

Attendance: Mark Witmer, Supervisor
John Fracchia, Councilmember
Irene Weiser, Councilmember
Cal Snow, Councilmember
Tim Murray, Councilmember

Recording Secretary: Jessica L. Townsend, Town Clerk

Also Present: Highway Superintendent Bobby Spencer; Tompkins County Representative Dan Klein and 7 members of the public attended

Supervisor Mark Witmer led the Salute to the Flag.

Privilege-of -the-Floor:

Wil Lawrence – Thanked the Clerk and Bookkeeper for the preparation and posting of the meeting minutes in a timely manner.

Frank Proto – Concerned about property tax bill 5.2% increase. Asked the Town Supervisor for an explanation for the increase. 2. Discussed NYSEG’s proposal of 27% percent increase in delivery charge for electricity, believes this is due to the closure of the Station in Lansing. NYSEG now is being purchased and delivered from further distances. 3. Sales tax- Cornell has taken measures to keep students out of classrooms till Spring due to the COVID19 virus threat and he urges the town to prepare for reduction in sales tax. Supervisor Witmer answered Mr. Proto’s question on the tax increase saying we took a carry-over amount from 2019 and there were growth allowances that increased tax levy amount allowed under the Tax Cap; the 2020 tax levy was under the tax cap. The tax rate for Town services decreased. Councilmember Weiser commented that he is mistaken on the relationship of the NYSEG costs and the station that closed. She has been going to Albany to participate in the NYSEG rate discussions. Publication on revised rates should be out in the next month or two. First proposal was inaccurate and premature. Is fighting to bring things more into line. NYSEG rates are based on delivery systems.

Jonathan Bates offered the following statement: Want to know one way to drain the wealth from a rural community? According to the: Town of Caroline Subdivision Review Law “These regulations are intended to guide and protect the Town’s physical development and to help the Town grow in an orderly, efficient, and economical manner which maintains and reflects the uniqueness of the Town and the character of the Town as a rural community and a beautiful and desirable place in which to live as set forth in the goals of the Comprehensive Plan... that all proposed lots be so laid out as to be in harmony with the development pattern of neighboring properties and with the character of the land.. that there is optimum overall conservation, protection, development, and use of the environmental resources of the Town.” In light of these regulations, the Caroline Planning Board, and Town Board cannot allow retail development on parcel # 9.-1-7.272 as this proposed development would be in direct contradiction to the Town's current comprehensive plan. I'd like to add, the Town of Caroline is in the process of revising the Comprehensive Plan, which helps guide new developments that could significantly impact the town, and so I strongly encourage the Town to enact a moratorium of new commercial development until the town and the people providing input can complete this process for a new Comprehensive Plan.

Furthermore, according to the U.S. Small Business Association 57 cents per dollar spent at a non-local business leaves the community. This 57 cents can no longer be taxed and used for schools and police,

paying living wages, or preserve farmland, this money is gone forever, never coming back... One non-local retailer, Dollar General, who's corporate offices are in Goodlettsville, TN, removed \$500 million dollars from communities in NY last year. With a rough extrapolation, that equals \$10 million dollars removed from each of the states' 50 Dollar General stores. Even if the loss from Caroline is 1/20 that amount, say 500 thousand dollars per year, that is money that could have done a lot of good for Caroline. If we cannot stop this development, shame on us... We all fell asleep at the wheel, including me...

Conservation Easement Proposal from Thomas Road Wetlands from Finger Lakes Land Trust

Kris West – Presented a map of the wet-lands property on Thomas Rd. Area is well known for the amphibians. Proposal would be to work with landowners and is asking if the town would like to partner. FLLT proposed donating the land to the town. There would be no direct cost to the town upfront. FLLT has had conversations with the property owners and they are both in support of this. Responsibilities would include watching for dumping and encroachments to the property. Town ownership means it comes off the tax roll. Councilmember Fracchia asked for a more formal proposal to review.

Reports

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

The Clerk and I met with the OSC auditors to review their audit findings. Preparing our response with Corrective Action Plan by March 25.

Ekroos Road culverts: met with Donald Harner (T.G. Miller), Angel Hinickle and Tom Mallory (T.C Soil & Water), Barry Goodrich, and landowners Tony Tavelli and Kyle Gregrow to discuss the project. Defined Town/WQIP (culvert replacement and stream stabilization), Town (drainage along Ekroos Rd.), and Landowner/T.C. Soil & Water (stream channel and possible riparian buffer) components.

Watershed Committee is planning Caroline Clean Up Day for Saturday, May 2, the final day of Highway Department Clean Up Week (April 27 – May 2). Lucy Gagliardo has taken leadership on this.

Tompkins County Council of Governments:

Report from Tompkins County Department of Recycling and Materials Management on recycling: Recyclables ARE recycled in Tompkins County - recycling is the law; domestic processing and markets for recyclables are recovering in wake of China's refusal to accept recyclables; care in proper recycling is important to maximize recycling rates and maintain quality of recyclables.

Chairing TCCOG working committee to identify next steps to address countywide emergency services needs.

Report from T.C. Public Health Director on Coronavirus.

Climate Vulnerability Assessment Community Meeting will be Wednesday, April 1, 7 pm at the Brooktondale Community Center.

Attended Annual Meeting of NY Association of Towns. Notable sessions on ambulance billing for municipalities, requirements of fire service contracts, and town budgeting process.

Met with Northern Tioga ATV Riders to clarify requirements for opening town roads to ATVs. They are developing a proposal for us.

Will be meeting to discuss cost-sharing between municipalities for proposed South Hill Recreation Way extension.

Scheduled meeting for Thursday, March 19 at 12:30 pm with Terry Carroll, Lou Vogel, and Code Officer Greenhouse to discuss NYSERDA's voluntary Stretch Energy Code.

Annual test of fire alarms completed by Pleasant Valley.

Brooke Greenhouse, Code Officer – None

Jessie Townsend, Town Clerk – Participated in a Webinar this morning hosted by New York State Archives – topic was Email Essentials and retention management of same. Time is being spent in the records room working on Records Management, sorting and filing all correspondence from 2019 to date and updating Minutes books and 2020 Resolutions from monthly meetings. Working to update software for fishing/hunting so we can begin the sale of licenses.

Bobby Spencer, Highway Superintendent – Report Attached. (Attachment #1) Has concerns about the logging trucks on the dirt roads. Recommends the board consider a bonding process. Caroline Clean up week to be held April 27-May 2.

Irene Weiser, Councilmember – Charter/Spectrum update– Has been in touch with Representative. Was told the cost to provide service to the areas that have no coverage would be \$4,000 to \$5,000 per household. There are an estimated 280 residents without coverage in the town. She will be contacted Senator Seward to ask for assistance in building out in these areas. Mr. Proto recommended that she also contact Senator Schumer regarding the Universal funds through the FCC.

Cal Snow, Councilmember – None

Tim Murray, Councilmember - None

Dan Klein, County Representative Report – Review of the Ag district - One property for removal has been requested. Tompkins County will have its list of recommendations starting on Monday. Town of Danby Planning Board recommended 162 properties to be removed. You can add an Ag and Farm at any time, but you can only request a removal once every 8 years. Public Hearing set to be held on April 7th on the proposed changes

Resolutions

Resolution 70 of 2020 General Fund Abstract

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by John Fracchia to approve payment for the General Fund for \$17,948.32

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

Discussion: Question regarding voucher preparation

Resolution 71 of 2020 Highway Fund Abstract

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by Tim Murray to approve payment for the Highway Fund for \$ 105,737.23

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

Resolution 72 of 2018 Streetlight Fund Abstract

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by Cal Snow to approve payment for the Streetlight Fund voucher for \$547.21

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

Resolution 73 of 2020 Highway 284 Agreement for Expenditure of Highway Moneys

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by John Fracchia
Resolved, the Caroline Town Board hereby approves for expenditure of Highway Funds for up to \$200,822.00 for paving Buffalo Rd commencing at Route 79 to a distance of approximately 6,438 feet on Buffalo Road.

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

Resolution 74 of 2020 Minutes of the Business Meeting held March 3, 2020:

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by John Fracchia to accept the minutes of the March 3, 2020 Agenda Meeting as submitted by Town Clerk, Jessica Townsend

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

Resolution 75 of 2020 Appointment of Nancy Kane as 2nd Representative to the Joint Youth Commission

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by Cal Snow to appoint Nancy Kane as the Town's second representative to the Joint Youth Commission

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

Resolution 76 of 2020 Letter of Intent to Participate in Tompkins County's Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by Tim Murray
Resolved, the Caroline Town Board hereby authorizes the Town Supervisor, Mark Witmer, to submit a Letter of Intent to Participate in Tompkins County's Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

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

Resolution 77 of 2020
Purchase of snow plows

A motion made by Mark Witmer and seconded by John Fracchia

Whereas, the Town's snow plow fleet (5 plows) ranges in age from 10 to 23 years old, with three trucks over 20 years old; and

Whereas, repair costs are escalating for the older trucks; and

Whereas, the Town has budgeted for new snow plows in 2019 and 2020; therefore be it

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board authorizes the purchase of two snow plow trucks (\$227,277 each) that will replace the oldest trucks.

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

Resolution 78 of 2020
Purchase of pickup

A motion made by Mark Witmer and seconded by Irene Weiser

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board authorizes the purchase a Dodge Ram Pickup for \$47,000, maintaining a 2-3 year purchasing rotation policy.

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

Discussion of Site Plan Review Fees

Supervisor Witmer recommends to set fee schedule parallel to subdivision law for flat fee plus additional costs.

---Adjourn---

A motion to adjourn made by Mark Witmer, seconded by John Fracchia and carried unanimously at **8:52** p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica L. Townsend, Town Clerk

(ATTACHMENT #1)

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – MARCH 2020

Roadwork

Plowing, salting and sanding roads

Repairing equipment

Patching (Weather Permitting)

Trucks & Equipment

We have been working to get all equipment ready for the spring repair season, and the road repairs that have been showing up due to the winter season

Road Conditions

Some of the dirt roads are in real bad shape due to heavy truck traffic (logging)

In the near future we need to set up a local law to prevent these damages from happening again ,some form of bonding or permit process

Spring clean-up

Spring clean up week will be April 27th – May 2nd

Snow & Ice - To date

November 2019 Tompkins County Reimbursement = \$6,546.63

December 2019 Tompkins County Reimbursement = \$14,933.18

January 2020 Tompkins County Reimbursement = \$21,292.97

February 2020 Tompkins County Reimbursement = \$20,919.61

Total reimbursement \$63,692.39

Bobby Spencer