

Caroline Town Board Meeting of January 13, 2016

The Town Board Business meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Supervisor Mark Witmer.

Board Members Present: Mark Witmer, Supervisor; John Fracchia; Irene Weiser; Gary Reinholt

Recording

Secretary: Deb DeAugustine, Deputy Clerk

Also present: County Legislator Dan Klein

Mr. Witmer went over the Privilege of the Floor Policy, which gives the opportunity for citizen input.

Privilege of the Floor

No one came forward to address the board.

Highway Superintendent's Report

Ms. Whittaker is in California for a conference. Mr. Witmer reported that he provided a check for the new truck, which wasn't ready. The company is making some improvements before delivery.

Supervisor's Report

Mr. Witmer, Ms. Weiser, and Mr. Reinholt attended a three-day training for newly elected officials and town supervisors.

County Representative's Report

Dan Klein said he talked with Barb Ekstrom from Tompkins County Solid Waste. She's interested in setting up a food scrap drop-off in Caroline. It will be one day per week at Brookton's Market and will be staffed by Solid Waste personnel. People can bring their kitchen waste for drop off for industrial composting. It's a very successful program and is growing really fast. Material is taken to Cayuga Compost in Trumansburg. Mr. Klein also announced that was appointed to the TCAT board. He knows some of the problems with the bus system, but he doesn't know the solutions yet. He was also elected vice chair of the legislature.

Department, Committee, & Liaison Reports

John Fracchia's Report

Emergency Services

- They've continued discussions with community members, regarding the future of emergency medical services in the Town of Caroline. He's reached out to the board of the Slaterville Ambulance to try to set up a meeting to discuss possible acquisition of equipment.

- They'll be following up on steps needed to create an ambulance district and obtaining a certificate of need.

CIT

- He's been working with Councilmember Weiser on the website redesign. They anticipate that the launch will be soon.

Discussion regarding committee assignments

Mr. Witmer reported that Mr. Barber is interested in serving on the EIC.

Mr. Reinbolt said that IT and broadband currently are lumped together and he thinks that broadband should stand alone. Initially, the county committee was going to be carrying the weight for broadband. Now that we've been cut off on our own, he thinks the workload is high enough and substantially different enough that it should stand alone. He thought cell could be folded in to broadband because the issues are similar. He doesn't think it needs to be a large committee; in the short run, it will be largely be engineering studies, talking to state legislators about whether they can provide funds, etc. He sits on the county committee, so this would be somewhat overlapping. The county committee is relatively dormant because much of what was initially designed in the county-wide study that was funded is on its way to being completed. Because Caroline was excluded, the initial engineering survey may be inaccurate for purposes of projecting pricing because a couple of towers moved, they weren't funding the whole thing, etc. He needs to assess what a good option would be, what people would be willing to pay. Throwing lots of money at it is not an option, so the first threshold you need to find out is the threshold of the amount of money is available. That's going to tell you how deeply you can go into underserved: can you go down to one house per mile, four houses per mile? Who's going to administer it?

Mr. Fracchia said that if broadband was splitting off, he would stay on CIT.

Mr. Witmer suggested combining the two emergency services committees, but Mr. Fracchia said they're both really big and he's not had much success in launching disaster preparedness. His recommendation would be to keep them separate in light of the upcoming ambulance issue. He thought Ms. Weiser would make more progress than he was able to.

Ms. Weiser said she would be willing.

Mr. Witmer added a safety committee to assess and promote safety within the town. NYMIR has been promoting this.

Ms. Weiser suggested a personnel committee. Mr. Reinbolt agreed and would be willing to serve.

Mr. Fracchia said he would be a good fit for the JYC since he works in career development.

Ms. Weiser thought we should continue moving forward with road preservation. We need a policy in place for if and when wind farms come into play to address road damage.

Mr. Fracchia brought up the wellness committee, which came out of the health consortium. Mr. Reinbolt suggested combining it with under the personnel committee since there's such a small workforce.

Ms. Weiser said that this is a lot of committees and suggested another way to think about them: certain committees can run themselves, and board members are supposed to be liaisons, not run the committee. The committees are supposed to be advisory to the board, so the chairs can report to the board.

Draft Planning Board Survey

Mr. Witmer said that the planning board is in the process of revising the comp plan. There have been three public meetings to get input from citizens. The planning board came up with a draft survey, which Mr. Witmer handed out to the board members for review. The survey will be mailed out to all households in Caroline sometime this spring. Mr. Witmer would like feedback from board members by January 31st.

Mr. Fracchia said he hoped there would also be an electronic survey that could be filled out online.

Resolution No. 2016-43 Transfers

Moved by Mark Witmer; seconded by John Fracchia

Be it resolved, the Caroline Town Board makes the following 2015 fund transfers:

\$36 from General Fund Account A1990.4 Contingency to
General Fund Account A9030.8 Social Security

\$519 from Highway Fund Account DA9040.8 Workers Compensation to
Highway Fund Account DA9040.8 Social Security

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

Resolution No. 2016-44 General Abstract

A motion was made by Mr. Witmer and seconded by Ms. Weiser to approve payment for the General Fund voucher numbers 1 to 29 in the amount of \$93,229.43.

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

Resolution No. 2016-45 Highway Abstract

A motion was made by Mr. Witmer and seconded by Mr. Fracchia to approve payment for the Highway Fund voucher numbers 1 to 14 in the amount of \$107,019.78.

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

Resolution No. 2016-46 Streetlighting Abstract

A motion was made by Mr. Witmer and seconded by Mr. Fracchia to approve payment for the Streetlight Fund voucher numbers 1 and 2 in the amount of \$624. 97.

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

Resolution No. 2016-47 Slaterville Fire Abstract

A motion was made by Mr. Witmer and seconded by Mr. Reinbolt to approve payment for the Slaterville Fire Fund voucher number 1 in the amount of \$7,428.00.

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

Resolution No. 2016-48 Purchase Cyber-insurance through NYMIR

Moved by Mark Witmer; Seconded by Irene Weiser

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board hereby authorizes the town supervisor to purchase Cyber-insurance through NYMIR.

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

Resolution No. 2016-49 Sign 2016 Contract with Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District

Moved by Mark Witmer; seconded by Irene Weiser

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board authorizes the town supervisor to sign the 2016 contract with Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District for professional services to review stormwater management plans of residential and commercial developments and monitor implementation of erosion and sediment control measures.

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

Resolution No. 2016-50 Appoint Representative to the Environmental Management Council

Moved by Mark Witmer; seconded by John Fracchia

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board appoints Steve Nicholson as the Town's representative to the Environmental Management Council (EMC), and be it further

Resolved, that the representative speak with the Town Board on a quarterly basis about EMC activity, and be it further

Resolved, that the representative forward EMC meeting minutes to the Town Board on a monthly basis.

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

Discussion

Mr. Fracchia said that this could apply to other staff, boards, and committees as well. It's helpful when the board can sit and talk with people. He encouraged the board to make this a practice so everyone is better informed.

Resolution No. 2016-51 Amend Resolution No. 2016-5

Moved by Mark Witmer; seconded by John Fracchia

Resolved, the pay rate of the Deputy Clerk be amended to 14.77 per hour.

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

Resolution No. 2016-52 Amend Resolution No. 2016-24

Moved by Mark Witmer; seconded by Irene Weiser

Replace numbers in 2016-24

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

Resolution No. 2016-53 Amend Resolution No. 2016-28

Moved by Mark Witmer; seconded by

Resolved, that the last paragraph of the resolution will be amended by substituting the word "Platinum" Plan in place of "PPO" Plan.

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

Ambulance Discussion

Mr. Fracchia said that as of the 31st of December, Slaterville Ambulance went out of service. He has reached out to the board of the ambulance to set up a meeting to discuss equipment, etc. The barriers to a new service often come in the form of the cost of equipment. He heard back from Beth Harrington. They owe money on the ambulance and there are other debts. They feel it will be necessary to sell the ambulance. She asked about the possibility of a committee forming. He wrote back and said he'd like to meet with the board before any definitive actions are taken. Concurrently, his next move is to figure out what would be needed to consider forming an ambulance district, which is the next step to be able to apply for a certificate of need. He believes there is an interest in the community in having this type of service. He has seen Bangs come into Caroline many times in the last couple of weeks. We don't currently have an official emergency services committee; Mr. Fracchia is the board liaison to the fire department.

Mr. Witmer is intending to form a committee and will reach out the fire departments because they should be part of that discussion.

Bob Spencer, a commissioner in Brooktondale, said he and his wife, Lisa, would be interested in being on a committee. He thanked the board for working so hard to try and save the ambulance.

Evie Weinstein said she has been making phone calls to figure out the logistics of what will be needed. It's good to have various voices. She will continue collecting information.

Ms. Weiser asked if we know if this is an area Mr. Krogh is well versed in this.

Mr. Spencer said that being a fire commissioner, he has access to an attorney who is very knowledgeable.

Broadband Discussion

Mr. Witmer asked what our options are and what critical decisions need to be made in the near future.

Ms. Weiser said the state might be opening a new RFP, as early as the end of this month, so the board has to decide how to proceed. We have had challenges in our interactions with Clarity on Phase I, so the question is whether we want to work with Clarity on Phase II or find other alternatives. The experience of the committee is that there aren't a lot of options.

Mr. Reinbolt said there are always options for the construction phase – that's the easy part. The question that has to accompany build out is operation. Do we want to become broadband operators? Do we want to own substantial capital assets in the form of towers? Do we want to be purchasing right of ways, collecting revenues? It doesn't seem like a core business for a town. But if not us, then who? Time Warner would have done it if it was useful for them to have done it. It's either Clarity or form a municipal and spin it off with its own board or create a town division that operates it, which is burdensome and requires expertise, or build it and sell it later as a completed asset, which might interest someone like Time Warner, who isn't interested now. Verizon might want it, but he doesn't think they would give us full market value. What would be our return on investment? Are we willing to operate at a loss because it's a public service? For the short term, we could get the engineering done by someone other than Chuck Bartosch. But if he's going to operate it, it makes sense for him to do the preliminary engineering studies for two reasons: the revenue stream will be his in the end, and we can make an argument that he should eat the up-front cost of the study because he has offsetting revenue.

Ms. Weiser said he suggested as an option that he does the proposal, which includes the engineering design, or we could hire him to do the design and then if we hired him to also do the proposal, we would only be reimbursed for half of what we paid him. For her, it comes down to the choice of going with the Clarity package: design the system, write the grant, market and provide the service, maintain the licenses, answer the service calls, etc. He would do it all for the price of the state paying him through the grant. There may be an element of matching the state would require. Or do we want the town to take that responsibility?

Mr. Reinbolt said some would depend on the size of the grant. If they're going to cover 100% of the capital cost, then the first invoice for service is profit. To the extent that they don't cover the whole thing, we have to come up with a couple hundred thousand.

Ms. Weiser said Mr. Barber has commitment from elected officials in helping the town secure Dormitory money. She thinks there's strong sentiment from our elected officials to see us secure this funding. So she thinks our costs would be covered.

Mr. Witmer said Mr. Bartosch has stated that Caroline broadband is a money-losing proposition.

Mr. Reinbolt agreed, and said the question is: do we want it badly enough to subsidize it?

Ms. Weiser said it's also a matter of whether the state funds it. In effect, he's taking the financial risk of it not being viable, whereas if we do it on our own, then we need to keep it viable. If we went with Clarity, we would need to insist on certain conditions up front before we work with him again, such as that he get easements. We've heard through our attorney about Clarity not getting easements for a pole in Lansing, and telling the property owner that he's a utility and has the right to do that.

Mr. Reinbolt thinks any state money would require we have all the easements.

Ms. Weiser said in addition to asking it of Mr. Bartosch, it merits a visit to someone in Albany, to tell them they should include this not only in the award to the town of Caroline, but to anyone. Any broadband award should come with a service agreement. So the decision we need to make is whether we're going with Clarity for the whole thing or whether we'll take an ala carte approach. Haefeli just does fiber, which is considerably more expensive, and we don't know timewise when they would be able to do it.

Mr. Reinbolt said that fiber is far superior – it's almost impossible to fill up fiber. So every time the state changes the standards and you're facing an upgrade, you're not. With transceivers, it's an issue because their throttle is fixed. Every time the standards are changed, you have to swap out transmitters. The up-front cost of fiber is higher, but you don't have the ongoing churn. He suggested doing fiber where you can do fiber. Build a superior service to the extent that you can, and where you can't, use RF. Haefeli is working with state money now. The additional cost to do the alternate route could be attained through this RFP.

Ms. Weiser said he's doing Cornell's business development center downtown. There are two routes he's looking at: one is from the Enfiled direction and the other is coming down 96B, in which case they could pick up IC and the Business Technology Park. In running down Coddington, they could pick up IC through the back end.

Mr. Reinbolt suggested we could ask him to fund a separate spur. We shouldn't think of Clarity and Haefeli as mutually exclusive. In fact, working them in combination might make a stronger package for the end user.

Ms. Weiser said that still brings us to the question of whether we'll go with full providers or design our own system and look for our own providers and write our own grant. That's the decision we need to make, so when the funding hits, Mr. Reinbolt needs to know whether he's working with Clarity and Haefeli to build out a whole proposal or working with someone to engineer a system that we would then write the grant and take it from there.

Mr. Reinbolt said he doesn't think we need to make that decision this early. Wait for the RFP, then do a cost-benefit analysis for each option, then determine how much of that cost the RFP will cover. There are also other pots of money. Rural Utility Service just issued a brand new Telemedicine distance learning grant. They're willing to put up money specifically for education and telemedicine, but we could make the argument for education.

Mr. Klein said that his memory of Mr. Bartosch is that the engineering study would take him three months.

Mr. Reinbolt said the delivery date for the proposal will drive that. He may need three months, but if he only has 60 days, he'll have to do it in 60 days. He doesn't think three months is

unreasonable because Mr. Bartosch is operating a business. An engineering firm could turn one around in 45 days.

Mr. Klein said there's a proposed merger between Time Warner and Charter Communications. The NYS Public Service Commission made conditions. One condition is that they have to add 150,000 units to their high-speed cable network in New York State. There's no plan on where those units have to be. It would not solve all of Caroline's problems, but was worth mentioning as an a la carte item.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Witmer, the meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.