

Caroline Town Board Meeting Minutes of November 1, 2011

The Town Board agenda meeting held on November 1, 2011 at the Caroline Historic Town Hall was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Donald Barber.

Attendance:

Donald Barber, Supervisor
Dominic Frongillo, Councilmember
Linda Adams, Councilmember
Toby McDonald, Councilmember
Peter Hoyt, Councilmember

Recording

Secretary: Christine Wilbur, Deputy Town Clerk

Also present: Members of the public including Molly Adams, Steve Nicholson, Mary Pspiki, Lucy Gagliardo, Aaron Snow, Edie Spaulding.

Supervisor Donald Barber opened the meeting by leading the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Public Hearing about Preliminary Budget

At 7:00 P.M., Supervisor Barber opened the public hearing regarding the 2012 Town of Caroline budget. He described the sections of the budget that include:

General Fund – appropriations, revenues and expected tax rate;
Highway Fund – appropriations, revenues and expected tax rate;
Debt Service – appropriations, and expected tax rate.

Discussion followed regarding the 2% property tax cap imposed by New York State. This budget reflects an overall increase of 1.79% for a tax rate of \$6.04/\$1,000 which is \$.01 over last year. Supervisor Barber is proud that the budget exhibits prudent management over the years, and fund balances increase because we do not overestimate expenses and departments stay within their budgets.

Other discussions included the capital budget, use of fund balances and State and Federal grants. Supervisor Barber reported that use of fund balances is not encouraged, as these funds are needed in the beginning of the year while taxes are being collected. Councilmember Adams speculated on grant approvals. It will be interesting to see what the State and Federal governments deem important.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding funding for youth programs. Councilmember Hoyt is concerned that funding for the day camp program, which serves the most number of youngsters, has been completely eliminated. Mary Psiaki, the Treasurer for the Brooktondale Community Center, and Lucy Gagliardo, Chairperson of the Caroline Youth Commission, spoke of the needs and funding streams for youth programs in the Town of Caroline. The day camp program is not in urgent need of funding because there is a charge for those attending. Since the weekly rate has not increased in a few years, they are considering a modest increase that will offset expenses. Both Mary and Lucy agreed that the camp program would continue without financial assistance from the Town. Other board members feel this is a legitimate elimination of this expense in the budget. Councilmember Hoyt indicated that he would make a motion in the voting portion of the budget approval process to include funding for the day camp program.

Hearing no other questions or comments, Supervisor Barber closed the public hearing at 7:50 PM

At 7:50 PM, Supervisor Barber opened the public hearing for the Fire Protection Districts.

Supervisor Barber reported that the fire districts/department budgets are also included in the 2% property tax cap imposed by New York State. He reviewed the budgets submitted by Slaterville, Brooktondale and Speedsville. Councilmember Hoyt congratulated Speedsville for providing excellent service without the benefit of a fire district or fire commissioners.

Hearing no other questions or comments, Supervisor Barber closed the public hearing at 7:55 PM.

At 7:55 PM, Supervisor Barber opened the public hearing on the Lighting District. He reviewed the budget, which is based on actual usage, and discussed some changes that were made to make energy use more efficient. Board members discussed the advantages and disadvantages and cost or savings if the lighting districts were bagged. Initially it is very expensive, and is very dependent on public opinion. The lighting district will remain as is. The budget reflects \$.03 more than last year.

Hearing no other questions or comments, Supervisor Barber closed the public hearing at 8:05 PM.

Supervisor Barber then commented on the bond budget, which was \$250,000 for the new Town Hall. A public hearing is not necessary. He reported that 2014 will be the last year for the bond, and then the Town can start planning for a new highway facility.

Privilege of the Floor

Steve Nicholson asked the Board to consider adopting a resolution (which he distributed and is attached to these minutes) that would designate the Town of Caroline as a "Climate Smart Community" which, in turn, would enable the Town to be eligible for funding through the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. They have approximately \$100m to distribute for a variety of programs that are also available to private residences. By adopting this resolution, it would give the Town extra points in the approval process. Councilmember Adams indicated this would be an example of what the State deems important in the grant approval process. The Board will consider the resolution at the Business Meeting to be held on November 10, 2011.

Reports

Don Barber, Town Supervisor – no report

Councilmember Toby McDonald reported he received a call from Greg Harrington regarding a sump pump that burned out in the Historic Town Hall. Greg needed authorization to repair or replace the pump, and Toby approved his request. Toby asked what the protocol is for that type of authorization. Greg just needs to contact someone from the Board.

Councilmember McDonald also reported that Pleasant Valley Electric would switch over the smoke detection and high water alarms to a monitoring company in Syracuse. Previously, alarms from only the Historic Town Hall were transmitted to the TC Dept. of Emergency Response, who will no longer be receiving these alarms. The Annex alarms were not monitored at all. The alarm transmissions will be for both the Historic Town Hall and the Annex. This work will cost approximately \$800 and then there is a \$300 yearly fee for monitoring. Board members gave their approval to have the work completed.

He also reported that the Highway Department is gearing up for winter and switching back to a 5-day week. They all were relieved that we did not get the recent snowstorm that hit the East Coast.

Councilmember Dominic Frongillo reported there was not a Planning Board meeting. Veridian Energy Company gave a presentation to the Energy Independent Caroline Committee. He reported they had a slick sales pitch; the Committee will evaluate their proposal and incentive program. He also reported on a presentation by George Franze on an energy pilot program – researching how communities make decisions for energy conservation. The projected energy use by the Town of Caroline will be on the Town website along with a report by Cornell – how Caroline can develop energy resources.

Resolution 137 of 2011:

Councilmember Peter Hoyt made a motion, for the 2012 Town of Caroline budget, to reduce account A7310.4 by \$1,500 and increase account A7140.1 by \$1,500 to provide funding for the Caroline Summer Day Camp program as this program serves more children than the other youth programs. Seconded by Councilmember Adams.

Councilmember McDonald believes the program can operate properly and effectively without funding from the Town – as stated by the Youth Program representatives; and he mentioned other departments who are struggling – like the Highway Department, who will be operating with one less employee. Councilmember Frongillo does not want to distinguish between the programs and will vote based on the Youth Programs’ representatives report. Councilmember Adams and Supervisor Barber agree.

Failed: Councilmember Hoyt: Aye Councilmembers McDonald, Adams, Frongillo & Barber: Nay

Councilmember Hoyt also reported that he is no longer sponsoring the Caroline Farm-All.com website.

Councilmember Linda Adams presented a draft resolution to “Establish a Caroline Water Quality Improvement Reserve Fund”. She explained that these funds - \$27,550 – were received in 2011 and are currently being held in the fund balance. She wants a formal resolution to make certain these funds are designated to Water Quality Improvement. Supervisor Barber will consult with the Town Attorney to formalize the process and wording of the resolution

Town Business

Councilmember McDonald asked if there had been any progress on John Daniels’ replacement. Supervisor Barber reported that the position has been posted at Tompkins County Personnel and he is aware of two applicants. Neither one has taken the Civil Service exam. November 28, 2011 is the last day for applications. A decision will be made during the month of December. Councilmember McDonald also asked if the job description had been updated to include the additional duties of water systems inspection. No, those additional duties will be discussed in the interview process.

Supervisor Barber distributed a copy of McKinney’s Consolidated Laws regarding General Powers of local governments to adopt and amend local laws, for Councilmember’s information.

Councilmember Adams spoke about the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and how it is brought up when residents do not want change. A short discussion followed.

Agenda Items

Agenda items for the next Business Meeting:

- Flood Plain local law
- 2010 Town Budget resolution
- SPCA contract discussion
- Climate Smart Communities Resolution
- FEMA Report

Approval of Minutes**Resolution 138 of 2011**

Supervisor Barber made a motion to change the date of the regular business meeting from November 8, 2011 to November 10, 2011 due to General Elections. Seconded by Councilmember Adams.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Frongillo: Aye; Adams: Aye; McDonald: Aye; Hoyt: Aye

Resolution 139 of 2011

Supervisor Barber made a motion to approved the minutes of the October 4 Agenda Meeting as submitted by the Deputy Town Clerk. Seconded by Councilmember Frongillo.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Frongillo: Aye; Adams: Aye; McDonald: Aye; Hoyt: Aye

Resolution 140 of 2011

Supervisor Barber made a motion to approve the Minutes of the October 11, 2011 Business Meeting as submitted by the Town Clerk. Seconded by Councilmember Hoyt.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Frongillo: Aye; Adams: Aye; McDonald: Aye; Hoyt: Aye

Adjourn

On a motion by Supervisor Barber and seconded by Councilmember Frongillo, the meeting adjourned at 9:25 P.M. all members in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine M. Wilbur, Deputy Town Clerk