

**2021 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING &
PUBLIC HEARING
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD APRIL 12, 2021
IN PERSON MEETING**

Present:

Paul H. Smith	Supervisor
Patrick Britton	Councilman
Susan Storms	Councilman
Shari Gerber	Councilman
Frank Skvorak	Councilman
Lori Borland	Town Clerk
Michael O'Shaughnessy	Highway Superintendent
Jim Yuhas	Bookkeeper
Terry McKeever	Code Enforcement Officer
James Burrows, Esq.	Town Attorney
Mickey Dietrich	RACOG Circuit Rider
Jon Storms	Planning Board
Rebecca Shultz	Deputy Clerk

Supervisor Smith called the public hearing to order at 6:45 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mr. Smith read the purpose of the public hearing as to hear the public's comments, if any, on an Unsafe Building and Structure proposed Local Law and asked if there was anyone wishing to speak. There being no one speaking the public hearing was closed at 6:46 by motion by Councilman Britton, seconded by Councilman Storms. Supervisor Smith then opened the regular monthly meeting at 6:46 p.m.

Motion was made by Councilman Skvorak, seconded by Councilman Britton to approve the minutes from the meeting held on March 8, 2021. Unanimously passed, carried.

Privilege of the Floor: Mickey Dietrich, Circuit Rider for RACOG was present and noted that the next RACOG meeting will be April 20, 2021. He noted that there may be Clean Energy Community Grants through ANCA, and will be having Jennifer Perry, ANCA representative speaking at the next RACOG meeting. There is a new program called Tug Hill Community Award Program to include municipalities who have gone above and beyond to help their communities. Regarding the Black River Trail expansion, there is to be no removal of the railroad tracks from Carthage to Lowville, so most likely there will be no new trails going through that area. There is a new group being formed called the Friends of the Black River regarding projects along the Black River Blueway. Mark Rhunke from NYPA has some thoughts relating to the CIDC hydro property to help it out financially, and is willing to do a conference call regarding the same. Mr. Dietrich also said he continues to work on the Town of Wilna website and will present it at the next meeting.

Community Development Director Report: Sarah Bullock reported that there are a few grant opportunities for the CDBG Grant Program and has attended a webinar regarding the same. She will be reaching out to the public regarding finding the most households in need. Regarding the NYS Main Street program, the Town was turned down for the grant, and she will be attending an exit interview to see what can be improved for the next round of applications. The CIDC did receive a grant for the feasibility study of the old railroad depot. There are funding opportunities through the Northern Border Regional Commission, and a possible project for this would be further work on the Herrings Park.

Town Highway Superintendent Report: Michael O'Shaughnessy noted that CHIPS funding for 2021 has increased to 95%. The crew has been busy plowing, sanding, cutting trees, patching potholes, sweeping the roadsides and picking up roadside trash. Routine maintenance on the vehicles has been done and winter equipment cleaned and put away. Mr. O'Shaughnessy asked for an Executive Session to discuss and employee issue.

Dog Control Officer Report: No report

Town Clerk Report: Water district collections for March were \$12,215.80. Town Clerk fees for March were \$1448.50. Transfer site fees collected for March were \$4210.00. It was noted that Robert Amell needs to be contacted again regarding the electric fence still not working.

Code Enforcement Officer Report: Terry McKeever noted that he has issued 14 new permits this month and sent out 10 violation notices. One of the properties he condemned last month is being removed and a new mobile home replacing it.

Assessor's Report: Robert Ball, Assessor was not present, but submitted a written report. He states that there have been no new sales for March. 13 of 21 sales or transfers since January 1, 2021 have been arm's length transactions. He has 61 open site visits/permits for the 2021 Assessment Roll, and has closed out 31 permits last month. He has prepared a legal notice for the paper for the filing of the 2021 Tentative Roll, sitting with the roll and Grievance Day. The notices have been sent to WDT for publishing. He will be working in the next week on the finalization of the 2021 Assessment Roll.

Attorney's Report: Attorney Burrows noted that Governor Cuomo has legalized cannabis with a 13% sales tax packed on. Of that, 9% will go to NYS; 3% to the Towns and Villages and 1% to the County. The question is: Do we want to allow cannabis shops in our Township? We can opt out if we wish to, but if we do, we cannot participate in the sales tax. There is a decision required on this issue by 12/31/2021. Regarding unpaid water bills, the Governor has passed legislation that the unpaid water bills cannot be relieved on the Village tax bills. The law also states that the water cannot be shut off. He noted that this does not include sewer charges at this point. This will be monitored to see if it will affect the October reliefs on the January Town & County tax bills.

Town Supervisor's Report: Motion was made by Councilman Storms, seconded by Councilman Skvorak to approve the March Supervisor's Report. Unanimously passed, carried.

Vouchers: Motion was made by Councilman Skvorak, seconded by Councilman Gerber, to approve the vouchers in Abstract #4 in the amount of \$102,842.36. Unanimously passed, carried.

Old Business: Regarding the Unsafe Structures Law, a negative declaration for SEQR is required. Motion was made by Councilman Britton, seconded by Councilman Storms to issue a Negative Declaration for SEQR on the Unsafe Structures Law. Unanimously passed, carried.

Resolution #5-2021 – Motion was made by Councilman Skvorak, seconded by Councilman Storms to adopt Local Law #1-2021 Unsafe Buildings and Structures Law which states that the cost of demolition or razing of unsafe properties that is borne by the Towns will be passed on to the landowner, and if not recouped from the landowner, to levy the cost on the Town & County taxes, and that the County must make the Towns whole for that cost. Unanimously passed, carried.

Regarding the assessment challenge by WDC Properties, there has been an agreement worked out that the assessment for 2018 and 2019 will remain at \$7,100,000, and the assessment for 2020 will be reduced to \$6,400,000 with no refunds or rebates, and WDC Properties agrees not to bring tax review proceedings for the tax years 2021, 2022, and 2023; and the assessor reserves the right to adjust the assessment of this property during years 2021-2023.

Resolution #6-2021 – Motion was made by Councilman Britton, seconded by Councilman Skvorak to accept and approve the above assessment challenge agreement. Unanimously passed, carried.

Resolution #7-2021 - Regarding the replacement of the Highway Dept. roof, a quote was given by Bernier & Carr for \$26,500 to handle all of the aspects of the replacement including bids, etc. Atlantic Testing needs to be brought in at an additional cost to handle the asbestos issues. Motion was made by Councilman Storms, seconded by Councilman Skvorak to hire BAC Associates to do the replacement process on the highway department's roof at the cost of \$26,500 and to bring in Atlantic Testing to do the abatement of the asbestos. Unanimously passed, carried.

Resolution #8-2021 - Regarding the Emergency Health Plan, it is necessary to have a plan in place in the event of another emergency or pandemic. A plan has been developed, and a motion was made by Councilman Britton, seconded

by Councilman Storms to adopt the Emergency Health Plan with the understanding that it can be revised in the future as necessary. Unanimously passed, carried.

New Business:

Motion was made by Councilman Storms, seconded by Councilman Skvorak to approve the budget transfers as requested. Unanimously passed, carried.

Regarding the Wilna Solar Project on County Rt. 41, a Decommissioning Bond needs to be addressed for when the time comes at the end of life of the project to decommission the project. The Bond amount is for \$200,295 as noted by Jon Storms, Planning Board Chairman. The Planning Board is recommending that the Town Council accept this amount.

Resolution #9-2021 – Motion was made by Councilman Britton, seconded by Councilman Skvorak to approve the Decommissioning Bond amount of \$200,295 for the demolition and decommissioning of the Wilna Solar Project on County Rt. 41, Natural Bridge, with the understanding the this amount needs to be reviewed every three years and the bond amount adjusted accordingly. Unanimously passed, carried.

Regarding IT back up for the Town Clerk's Office, an estimate was given by Computech of \$49.00 per month to take care of everything to begin and continue to back up to the Cloud. Another estimate is being obtained from Westelcom. After the second estimate comes in, the Town Clerk has been authorized to accept whichever one she feels comfortable with.

Regarding the Herrings Wastewater Disinfection Project, this project is mandated by the State. The project would entail a new chlorinator and dosing station which needs replacing, among other things, and the cost would be approximately \$178,000 plus the replacement of the sand filters. The estimated cost of the sand filter replacement in 2016 was \$36,100, and would most likely be much more now due to inflation and increase in materials. Currently, there are 44 units including three for the Herrings Inn. Currently the residents are paying \$700.00 per year for sewer per unit, and this project has the potential to raise that cost by \$900 per year for each unit. This is informational at this point, and no action was taken. Supervisor Smith is looking into what kind of grant funds may be available to alleviate such an increase.

The building at Herrings Water/Sewer needs repairs, and David Arnold has obtained a quote for \$717.25 for materials, and he will do the work himself. Motion was made by Councilman Storms, seconded by Councilman Britton to accept the quote of \$717.25 and approve the repairs to be done. Unanimously passed, carried.

Regarding the Sugar Maple Solar Project, a motion was made by Councilman Britton, seconded by Councilman Storms to hire GYMO to take care of the paperwork, etc. for this project. Unanimously passed, carried.

Planning Board Chairman Jon Storms was present and has asked the Town Council to write a letter of support to the Jefferson County Board of Legislators supporting utilizing brownfield sites, former landfills, and other underutilized sites for solar projects instead of using prime agricultural land. Motion was made by Councilman Britton, seconded by Councilman Storms to issue a letter of support as noted. Unanimously passed, carried.

Town Clerk Lori Borland has requested to be appointed by the Town Board to become a Marriage Officer in order to be able to perform marriage ceremonies within the Town of Wilna. Motion was made by Councilman Storms, seconded by Councilman Skvorak to appoint Lori Borland as Marriage Officer. Unanimously passed, carried.

Motion was made by Councilman Skvorak, seconded by Councilman Gerber to appoint Deborah Yuhas to the Board of Assessment Review to fulfill the vacancy left by Carol Workman. Unanimously passed, carried.

Motion was made by Councilman Storms, seconded by Councilman Gerber to appoint Robert Sligar to the Planning Board to fill the vacancy left by Cheryl Schroy who has moved from the township. Unanimously passed, carried.

A motion was made by Councilman Skvorak, seconded by Councilman Gerber to enter into Executive Session to discuss an employee issue. Executive Session began at 8:27 p.m. Regular Session resumed at 8:45 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made by Councilman Storms, seconded by Councilman Gerber to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Lori Borland, Town Clerk