

**2021 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING HELD JULY 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
Jim Yuhas	Bookkeeper
Terry McKeever	Code Enforcement Officer
Robert Ball	Assessor
James Burrows, Esq.	Town Attorney
Mickey Dietrich	RACOG Circuit Rider
Jon Storms	Planning Board Chair
Sarah Bullock	Community Development Director
Mark Roberts	Public

Excused: Mike O'Shaughnessy, Highway Superintendent

Supervisor Smith called the Public Hearings to order at 6:30 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The purpose of the public hearing was read, (regarding the unsafe buildings/structures that were cited previously). Attorney Burrows reviewed the steps regarding unsafe buildings/structures. He noted that he had only received the lien searches last Thursday and did not have sufficient time to notify all interested parties before this public hearing. He commented on the following:

1. Foy – Mr. Foy is not the record owner, he passed away in 2012 with no estate. Notices need to be posted on the property, bulletin board at the town offices and on the website and give proper notice to interested parties.
2. Helmer – There are no other interested parties other than the owner. Notices need to be posted on the bulletin board and website.
3. Hajdasz – Owner died in 2015, tax bills go to a relative in Pennsylvania.
4. Smith Estate – Service has been made
5. Bart Gill – Need to post the property, bulletin board and website

The County is going to scrutinize to see that all steps are taken and met. Mr. Burrows suggested that the public hearing be held open until next month's meeting. Upon notice, the interested parties have a 7-30 day window to take steps to repair or tear down. Engineers should be hired for asbestos surveys, and the County is to reimburse the Town for any out-of-pocket expenses.

The extension of the Public Hearing is held until the next meeting on August 9 at 6:45 p.m. Mr. Burrows noted that photos of the properties be put with the files.

Regarding the Bart Gill Property in Natural Bridge – it was discussed that this should be deemed an emergency situation because of the dangers and trespassers. There was a question regarding the presence of asbestos.

RESOLUTION #17-2021 – Motion was made by Councilman Gerber, seconded by Councilman Britton to determine the Bart Gill property as an emergency situation to speed up the clean up process and reimbursement by the County. Roll call vote was held and all council members voted Aye. Motion carried. Mr. Burrows will follow up with the Town Clerk as to the next steps to be taken.

Motion was made by Councilman Storms, seconded by Councilman Gerber to close the Public Hearing, which was closed at 6:45 p.m.

Supervisor Smith called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:50 p.m.

Motion was made by Councilman Skvorak, seconded by Councilman Storms to approve the minutes from the Public Hearing and Regular meeting held on June 14, 2021. Unanimously passed, carried.

Privilege of the Floor: Mark Roberts a citizen from Deferiet, had questions regarding the old Deferiet Mill site. He was under the impression that the Town turned the property over to Deferiet, which is not correct. The Town has actually applied for a Brownfield Opportunity Area grant which will open up various other funding opportunities for re-development of the property. NYSERDA is currently interested in the site for a solar farm.

Mickey Dietrich, Circuit Rider for RACOG was present and noted that the next RACOG meeting will be a date to be determined in September. "Friends of the Black River" Group is interested in historical sites along the river, and there is continuation of marking the navigation hazards. DEC is interested and there are boats needed to accomplish this. He further noted that the RACOG brochure has been updated.

Regarding the LED Lighting Conversion, there are conflicting opinions regarding the need for a letter of credit to National Grid. We can provide a bond which is unsecured. There is SEQR short form Part 1 that needs to be completed, but we have not received that yet.

Community Development Director Report: Sarah Bullock reported that she has done a walk through at the old Railroad Depot and there is serious roof damage. The stairs and second floor are intact. There are RFP's currently out on the feasibility study and she is expecting those proposals in shortly. There is much work to be done physically on this property.

Regarding the Brownfield Opportunity Area matter for the old Deferiet mill property, an application is in process and is due on July 30. The public comment period is open until July 30.

Regarding the Herrings Wastewater Disinfection Project, she is in process of completing the application for a WQIP Grant. A resolution is needed for this in order to move ahead.

RESOLUTION #18-2021 – Motion was made by Councilman Britton, seconded by Councilman Storms to adopt a resolution for the application for the WQIP Grant. All voted Aye, motion carried.

Jon Storms, Planning Board Chair, was present and noted that the Planning Board has reviewed a proposed Battery Storage Law for the Solar Projects in the area, which would include the Sugar Maple Solar Project on the Strickland Road and especially the Wilna Solar Project on County Rt. 41. The Sugar Maple Solar Project is governed by State Law because of the size of the project. The Planning Board is recommending that the Town Board adopt this new Battery Storage Law. There needs to be a public hearing set. Motion was made by Councilman Storms, seconded by Councilman Gerber, to have a public hearing on August 9, 2021 beginning at 6:45 to hear any comments from the public on this matter. All voted Aye, Motion carried.

Correspondence: A letter was received from the Missing Link Snowmobile Club requesting a letter of support from the Town in order to purchase a new groomer. Motion was made by Councilman Britton, seconded by Councilman Gerber to provide the letter of support. All voted Aye, carried.

A letter was received from an individual who needs to bury her mother's ashes in Pierce Cemetery, and given the quote of \$280 to open the gravesite, she noted that she cannot afford this and is asking for the Town Council to either waive the fee or give her a reduction. After discussion, it was noted that according to Article 8, Section 1 of the NYS Constitution, that this cannot be done. Town Clerk will follow up with the individual to let her know, and to give information on various agencies she may be able to contact for financial assistance.

Town Highway Superintendent Report: Michael O'Shaughnessy was excused, but provided a written report. He noted that work performed for Jefferson County was billed for \$3070.76 through 6/29/21. Ten culverts on the Hickey Road have been changed with four left, and work continues on a daily basis. Mowing of cemeteries and Town lots have been

done. Tree cutting continues on Hickey Road. Highway Department was shut down during the week of July 5 for vacation. He noted that he has received a few employment applications that look good and will work with the Town Supervisor for hiring around August 1.

Dog Control Officer Report: None

Town Clerk Report: Water district collections for June were \$12,152. Town Clerk fees for June were \$958.50. Transfer site fees collected for June were \$4564.00.

Code Enforcement Officer Report: Terry McKeever noted that he has issued a few permits and violation notices. Regarding the Bruce Fuller squatter matter, this needs to go to Supreme Court in Jefferson County. He said the Justice Court needs an email to return the paperwork that was previously submitted. He needs to send National Grid a notification that this will be going to Supreme Court. Regarding the James Potter matter, the family is cleaning up this property on the outside, but inspection of the inside resulted in non-livable conditions. He will do an inspection report as required and put this on for the August 9 meeting.

Assessor's Report: Robert Ball, Assessor reported that there are 69 new sales/transfers since January 1, 2021. He has 43 open site visit/permits for the 2021 Assessment Roll. The 2021 Final Assessment Roll has been officially filed with the Town Clerk and put in the paper as required.

Attorney's Report: Attorney Burrows noted that there is nothing new to report other than what he noted in the Public Hearing.

Cemetery Matters – none other than the correspondence noted above.

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

Vouchers: Motion was made by Councilman Skvorak, seconded by Councilman Britton, to approve the vouchers in Abstract #7 in the amount of \$63,954.54. Unanimously passed, carried.

Old Business:

Union Contract – no date has been set as of yet for discussions, but will be soon.

Highway Roof Replacement – Bernier & Carr has been approached to do the work on this matter.

RESOLUTION #19-2021 – Motion was made by Councilman Skvorak, seconded by Councilman Storms to move ahead on the highway roof replacement project with Bernier & Carr, who will send the matter out to bid and handle all factors concerning the same. All voted Aye, carried.

New Business:

Budget Transfers: Motion was made by Councilman Storms, seconded by Councilman Skvorak to approve the budget transfers as noted.

It was noted that Sheila Prospero can no longer provide services to the Town on a regular basis for Town Historian. She has suggested that Shannon Margrey be appointed to replace her.

RESOLUTION #20-2021 – Motion was made by Councilman Gerber, seconded by Councilman Britton, to appoint Shannon Margrey as Town Historian at the same rate which is currently \$450.00 per year. Sheila Prospero will stay on temporarily if needed. All voted Aye, carried.

Regarding the Cannabis Law, the Town has until December 31, 2021 to opt out if desired. It was noted that if we opt out now, we can later change our minds and opt in, however, if we opt in now, we cannot change our minds and opt out later. The public hearing on this was kept open and will continue for public comment on August 9.

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made by Councilman Skvorak, seconded by Councilman Gerber to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Lori Borland, Town Clerk