

Workshop Meeting
August 30, 2021
836 Route 217, Philmont NY
6:00pm

Attendees:

Clifford Weigelt Supervisor	Stephen Hook Councilman
Katy Cashen Councilwoman	Brian Keeler Councilman
George Duntz Councilman	Louis LaMont Highway Superintendent
William R Michael Deputy Town Clerk	

Joe Vining, the town's computer IT person presented the board with a new contract agreement. Mr. Vining informed the board that he now has different levels of service in the agreement and explained the level he feels best fits the town and the services provided with that level. Mr. Vining stated this would give the town's computers a higher level of protection. The current contract expires in May of 2022. The board asked Mr. Vining if he would be involved with the computers for the court once it is moved to the new location. Mr. Vining stated that he would if needed but not if something that the NYS court system handles.

Samantha Umstead from MX Morningstar Farm spoke to the board about possibly getting a tractor crossing sign and the speed limit lowered by the intersection of state route 9H and county route 27. She explained she had spoken with the state to try to get the speed limit lowered at which they responded the town would need to pass a resolution first before it was considered. Supervisor Weigelt stated he understood and that he and Councilwoman Cashen are meeting with a state engineer in the near future and will bring it up then. Councilwoman explained to Ms. Umstead that lowering the speed limit is very difficult and it may not happen but they will try to at the least get a tractor crossing sign in the area. Supervisor Weigelt stated he will also contact state police to see if they could have a patrol sit in the area to hopefully have the traffic slow down. The board will pass a resolution at the next board meeting.

Discussed the Churchtown/Claverack fire district boundaries. Councilwoman Cashen stated that she had seen a series of emails between the fire officials, Town Attorney Fitzsimmons and others and that there are a more questions to answer but feels it is getting close to being done.

Councilman Hook advised the board of the status of the new court location at the old Claverack Library. He stated that he is picking up materials for county workers to work on electric, making shelves, etc. He said that he hopes by the end of October to be at the new location. Councilwoman questioned if the Philmont Police Department could still provide court security considering the distance from Philmont. Supervisor Weigelt believed they would be able to under the current shared services agreement, but would check to confirm.

Discussed the demolition of the current town hall/court. Supervisor Weigelt stated that he would soon like to see something go out for bids for the demolition to get things started. He explained that first any asbestos materials would need to be removed before demolition could start. He also stated he would like to see something go on the town's website looking for volunteers to form a committee to input any ideas or expertise in helping plan what is needed for the new town building. Councilwoman Cashen stated that when looking for a committee, it should also ask for persons for expertise such as in planning, architecture, etc, that would benefit the planning process.

Councilwoman Cashen advised the board of requests to change wording in past minutes. She explained that the Town Clerk had received an email with the wording in it that should be changed. There was also a request by a citizen to have her name removed from past minutes.

Motion to change the minutes made by Councilwoman Cashen, seconded by Supervisor Weigelt. Councilmen Keeler and Duntz were in favor, Councilman Hook opposed.

Discussed pandemic relief money received by the town. Councilman Keeler stated he has spoken to Michael Bucci, the town's accountant, who has read up on what is permissible to spend the funds on and he would like to meet with town officials to go over it with them. Councilwoman advised the board that the town received information that it will be also receiving additional funds due to other municipalities opting out or not completing the application process.

Supervisor Weigelt advised the board of speaking to a resident on Apple Lane who had several complaints. Complaints were snow plowing related, flooding concerns and zoning issues. Supervisor Weigelt will attempt to speak to the resident again.

Supervisor Weigelt advised the board that he had met with the State Police as far as what can be done in preparation for a large party that has happened the past two years. He advised the board that council has been contacted and will get back to them with possible solutions. Councilwoman Cashen stated that a certified letter has been sent to the residents of the house where the parties occur and that she has had requests from neighbors who made complaints asking for a copy of the letter sent. She stated that she spoke to Town Attorney Fitzsimmons and he stated that anyone that would like a copy of the letter should make a FOIL request.

Councilwoman Cashen gave the board an update concerning the town's health insurance agent. The current agencies contact person for the town will be purchasing the company. The only change may be the name of the company, but otherwise the board felt that the agency has done a great job and would like to continue on with its new owner.

Supervisor Weigelt advised the board that it is approaching budget time. He stated he would like to have two budget meetings before submitting the preliminary budget by the October deadline. It was decided to meet on September 20th at 6 PM at the Town Office Building.

Supervisor Weigelt advised the board that Columbia County has decided to go back to persons wearing full masks in county buildings. He asked the board if they thought the town should follow the procedure which they all agreed to. Full masks will be required while in town buildings, including planning, zoning and town board meetings.

Councilman Hook spoke of KISS shredder bins currently located at the town office. He stated that the shredding company had changed ownership and now the bins would stay permanently at each location. He stated that the town office is very small and has run out of space and with the size of the bins, it would be very inconvenient to have them year-round. The current space is also used by the food pantry which makes it very difficult for them to store items and to move around the area.

Highway Superintendent LaMont spoke of a location on Decker Road where the town was going to replace two large culvert pipes in a stream so a resident can get to his home. Mr. LaMont advised the board that after purchasing the pipes, he has been advised by NYS that the pipes are not acceptable and that its needs to be something totally open like an arch instead. The other option for the town to use the new culvert pipes would be to have an engineer to sign off that the pipes would be sufficient. Supervisor Weigelt will be contacting an engineer to discuss the issue. Both he and LaMont feel that with the increased size of the pipes, it should be easier for water and debris to get through but will confirm, if possible, with an engineer. Mr. LaMont asked if there were any word back about getting new water meters. Supervisor Weigelt stated he has not heard anything as of yet. Councilwoman Cashen stated that after checking, this may be one of the projects where funds from pandemic relief that the town received, could possibly be used for.

Lisa Bowe from the public asked the board if there were any regulations within the town law regarding Air BNB's. She stated that she felt with housing sales, it was easy for persons to buy homes and turning them into Air BNB's, which with no regulations, could create a safety hazard. Councilman Duntz stated he has been in contact with someone in Hudson, where they are working on a law, and he will be provided with some contact information to someone who can advise on how to go about possibly putting some type of law into effect. Michael Brandon weighed in stating that some time ago he had spoken with a previous town building inspector who stated his home would not be sufficient to become a bed and breakfast without a lot of work, and thought if that were the case, then homes that were never inspected for safety used for Air BNBs should not be permissible. Mr. Brandon found that peculiar being with a bed and breakfast, someone would need to live at the premises, and with Air BNB's the owners may be nowhere near the location, and with persons not knowing the home, in an emergency may not know where to exit in an emergency, etc, making it dangerous.

John Bradley spoke about the truck study done on Rte. 23B that there was also talk of having sidewalks in the hamlet. He thought that with this being budget time, it may be a good time to start thinking of that issue. Supervisor Weigelt stated that was another thing that him and Councilwoman Cashen will be asking when they meet with the state engineer in the near future. Councilwoman Cashen again stated that this may be something that pandemic relief funds could be used for.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Councilman Duntz, seconded by Councilman Keeler, all in favor, carried. Meeting adjourned 7:38 PM.