

TOWN OF CLAVERACK
Regular Monthly Town Board Meeting
November 9, 2023
6:00 pm

Board Members Present

abs	Clifford Weigelt (CW) Supervisor	✓	George Duntz (GD) Councilman
✓	Stephen Hook (SH) Councilman/Deputy Supervisor	✓	Douglas Colwell (DC) Councilman
✓	Kathleen Cashen (KC) Councilwoman		

Also Present

✓	Louis LaMont, Superintendent of Highways
✓	Robert Fitzsimmons, Jr., Esq, Attorney for the Town
✓	Michael Brandon, Town Judge
✓	Mary J. Hoose, Town Clerk
✓	Vonda Teaney, Deputy Clerk

PUBLIC HEARING on 2024 BUDGET

Peter Johnson, Resident – *Questioned listing on page 6 of preliminary budget of library contractual expense. Is this for Philmont library or Claverack library – Board advised it was for Philmont. Questioned Capital Reserves – rough figures (pgs. 11, 13, 16, 19) – are there unexpended balances carried forward? If so, are they with restriction? KC stated it would depend on fund. Mr. Johnson wonders if there is “slush” money the Board just moves around as needed. KC answered that each fund has its specific purpose. If there is a shortage – they have to go back and go over. Mr. Johnson requested that public be made aware of unexpended amounts moved forward and what the restrictions are. How much of revenue comes from grants? Can public be made aware of what’s been applied for and what we receive.*

Jeff Kiplinger, Resident - *Asked the Board for the same information that Mr. Johnson requested. Mr. Kiplinger requested if, moving forward, the Board might be more informative to the public.*

He would like to Board to make more effort to provide clarity around financial issues and expenditures. He stated he tried to uncover towns balance sheets to follow funding and he cannot find them. Mr. Kiplinger suggests the public get the same information the State gets. Feels that money spoken about at meetings is not clearly in budget. Mr. Kiplinger had two suggestions – one, that the Town’s accounting be put on website and two, that the Board present annual budget sufficiently ahead so that public input can be considered.

John Bradley, Resident – *Stated he is having a lot of difficulty with the Budget. He has spent a lot of time trying to figure out issues. Reiterates what others said. Questioned the financial implications of merger to be discussed later in this meeting. Mr. Bradley stated he cannot figure out fund balances and the reporting of State and Federal funds (i.e., ARPA funds). Mr. Bradley would like to know what the public process is for how these funds are spent. He stated he would like to see this kind of thing discussed with the public more. Mr. Bradley questioned what the status of the old town garage remediation and demolition is. He asked that the contract proposals and timeline be made public. He also asked what the source of funds being used for this work is.*

There being no further comments, Public Hearing was closed at 6:15pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - *Town Board meeting minutes of 10/11/2023 and Workshop meeting minutes of 10/30/23.*

Motion: KC **Seconded:** GD

Vote: Yes: 5 No: Abstention(s): Accepted Rejected Tabled

DISCUSSION/MOTION ON INTER-MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT

Robert Fitzsimmons, Town Attorney explained the merger. The Town has been helping the Village for 8 months now. Current DPW employees of the Village will transfer to become Town employees. Together with the Village a 2-year agreement has been developed. UHY provided financial guidance in this development of the costs associated with the merger. If there are extenuating conditions, they can be discussed and renegotiated during the time of the agreement. Village of Philmont will retain ownership of their equipment. But the Town can use the equipment as needed.

Mr. Fitzsimmons introduced Elena DeFio Kean, Labor Attorney. She explained that the DPW employees will be coming in to the Town as new employees with a new date of hire. Employee Retirement System date of hire will go by original hire date. All employees accrued time currently on the books with the Village is being bought out by Village. Regarding Health insurance, employees have contributed to Village Health Insurance provider for coverage

through December 31, 2023 and then Town has agreed to make an exception to begin coverage with the Union Insurance provider effective January 1st. Pay periods/pay dates we can't change. There is going to be a lag for employees to get them on the Town's pay cycle. If equipment owned by the Village needs to be replaced, discussions will need to happen as needed. Extra costs will be negotiated as it moves forward. Attorney Fitzsimmons feels there will not be a need for additional staff to plow Village and Town roads during the winter. The Village will still be collecting garbage of Village residents, at least in the short term. The goal is to maintain the level of service the Village currently has. Insurance still being worked out with Rich Nesbitt, but he covers both municipalities so it seems to be something that can be worked out. Attorney Fitzsimmons added that the State Comptrollers guidelines were followed in developing this agreement.

Motion to adopt the *Inter-municipal Agreement – Department of Public Works Services between the Town of Claverack and the Village of Philmont effective November 13, 2023.*

Motion: GD **Seconded:** KC

Vote: Yes: 4 No: ___ Abstention(s): ___ **Motion:** Accepted Rejected Tabled

CORRESPONDENCE – Including, but not limited to:

- *Columbia County Habitat for Humanity – News
- *Philmont Public Library – Fall 2023 news
- *Hudson City School District – Information on Breaking Down the Constitutional Amendment on Repeal of Debt Ceiling for Small City School Districts
- *The Social Security Star – November 2023
- *Climate Smart – Claverack – Meeting – October 19, 2023, at Claverack Town Office
- *Real Property Tax Service – Re: Board of Assessment Review
- *Philmont Public Library – Dino-vementer at the library
- *Barbara Delamater – Concerning issue on Webb Road
- *Gotham Communications – Re: Property acquisition on Schoolhouse Road for energy storage facility
- *Greenport Planning Board – Public Notice – Re: Colarusso Ventures LLC sub-division
- *Hudson City School District via Parentsquare – Re: Update letter – Advancing diversity, equality and inclusion

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – *Milled and paved Summit Street from the bridge to Stevers Crossing in the Village of Philmont. Paved Roxbury Road East End from 217 to Stevers Crossing and black topped ditch. Replaced a culvert pipe on Bate Road that had collapsed. Grader patched Harder Road, Waldon Road, Oak Hill Road and Courts Lane. Dug for new sidewalks in Philmont. Speed signs were placed on Fish & Game Road as requested by Supervisor*

Weigelt. Servicing trucks and installing sanders, plows, and wings. Moved blocks to barricade off Old Highway Garage building. Gave two checks for monies to be given to the Town Bookkeeper - one from salvaging scrap from around tennis courts and one a refund from Auctions International for an overpayment in the recent purchase of a pickup truck for the park.

DOG CONTROL REPORT – *On file with the Town Clerk*

SUPERVISOR REPORT – *None due to absence*

TOWN BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Councilman Hook – *Came to Office almost daily and signed checks as needed; Attended Churchtown Firehouse meeting; Met with Bookkeeper numerous times; Met with Amadore regarding senior housing; Bank Trips/Deposits for Town Office; Recycling; Food Pantry; Spoke with Town Attorney numerous times; Spoke with UHY numerous times regarding development of 2024 budget; Together with Katy Cashen met with Union reps.*

Councilman Duntz - *Attended Budget Meeting; Attended ZBA and Town Workshop meeting.*

Councilman Colwell - *Attended Budget Meeting; Attended ZBA and Town Workshop meeting.*

Councilwoman Cashen – *Worked with health insurance broker and attorney on dental and vision options for union employees. Sent draft changes to the town’s campground law to Town Board and Planning Board for review and comments. Provided updated project description and budget information to NYS for park grant. The grant will provide funding for the new surfacing of the basketball and tennis courts as well as reimbursing the town for the playground equipment previously purchased after we were notified we had been awarded the grant. Participated in final union negotiations with the Teamsters Union for the Highway Department employees. Worked on the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget. Provided information for FlexTech grant for energy audit for the town garage and finalized resolution in support of the grant.*

PROPOSED MOTIONS/RESOLUTIONS

Motion to send draft changes to the Town’s Campground Law to County Planning.

Motion: KC **Seconded:** GD

Vote: Yes: 4 No: Abstention(s): **Motion:** Accepted Rejected Tabled

Motion to set a public hearing for a final three-month moratorium on the Campground Law to be held at the regular monthly Town Board meeting on December 14, 2023.

Motion: KC **Seconded:** SH

Vote: Yes: 4 No: ___ Abstention(s): ___ **Motion:** Accepted Rejected Tabled

NOTE: Per town attorney public hearing was not needed due to adoption of Local Law #8 of 2023.

Resolution # 36 of 2023 – Authorization to Apply for a Building Decarbonization Grant.

Motion: KC **Seconded:** GD

Vote: Yes: 4 No: ___ Abstention(s): ___ **Motion:** Accepted Rejected Tabled

Resolution # 37 of 2023 – Authorization for Supervisor to File Tax Cap Calculation.

Motion: KC **Seconded:** DC

Vote: Yes: 4 No: ___ Abstention(s): ___ **Motion:** Accepted Rejected Tabled

Motion to accept Preliminary Budget as Final Budget for 2024.

Motion: DC **Seconded:** GD

Vote: Yes: 4 No: ___ Abstention(s): ___ **Motion:** Accepted Rejected Tabled

Resolution #38 of 2023 – Vote to approve a 20-year Bond to cover costs for Water Tank painting and Water Softener replacement amount not to exceed \$634,000.

Motion: KC **Seconded:** GD

Vote: Yes: 4 No: ___ Abstention(s): ___ **Motion:** Accepted Rejected Tabled

OTHER BUSINESS

- **Discussion of Board of Assessment Review members** - Currently looking for four new members to serve on the BAR. SH stated it is a small time commitment as they meet once a year on Grievance Day to hear disputes and make decisions. Training for new members will be held in April/May. Normally a term is five years but, in this circumstance, terms for new appointees would need to be staggered so they run out on different years.

- **Discussion of proposed High Falls Blues Festival** - Board members requested Deputy Clerk reach out to organizers and ask them to attend the Workshop meeting on November 27 for further questions and discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

RESOLVED that the following bills were reviewed by the Town Board and are authorized for payment in the following amounts:

General A - \$ 31,066.33
General B - \$ 5,323.20
Highway DB - \$ 68,454.37
Water Dept. - \$ 17,794.21
Highway DA – none
Escrow Accts/Bills – none

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, on motion by GD, seconded by KC, meeting adjourned by Deputy Supervisor Hook at 7:05p.m.

Date: Approved 12/14/23

Supervisor: _____

Councilwoman Cashen: _____

Councilman Hook: _____

Councilman Duntz: _____

Councilman Colwell: _____

Town Clerk: _____

Prepared by Deputy Clerk, Vonda Teaney