

VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 2013

In Attendance: Supervisor Schaffer, Board Members Marnicki, Fitzgerald, Milkovich and Majewski

Also Attending: Town Attorney David Berger, Comptroller Laura McKane, Town Clerk Emil Bielecki and several members of the community.

WORK SESSION – Supervisor Schaffer convened the meeting at 6:00 PM

6:00 Bob Warner – Vestal Center Fireman’s Hall

Fire Company 2 member Robert Warner and Fire Company 2 President David Foland announced to the Board the desire of Fire Company 2 to dispose of the Fireman’s Hall and surrounding land in Vestal Center. The Fire Company wishes to shed the responsibility and cost of maintaining the building. Since the Town already leases part of the property from Fire Company 2, it may be to the Town’s benefit to acquire the building and the rest of the property. They would like the Board to consider this proposal and enter into negotiations for the acquisition of the property. There are other interested parties in the property, however, the Fire Company would prefer that the Town acquire it to use it for the benefit of the community.

Several Board members asked about the history of the \$1,200 lease payment. Bob Warner promised to get additional information.

Supervisor Schaffer stated that the Board will discuss this proposal and respond to the Fire Company.

UPCOMING PUBLIC HEARINGS

8/14/2013 - Vehicle Service Station Permit, 2401 Vestal Parkway

8/14/2013 – Rezone 3005 Vestal Road (Matthew’s Property)

COMMITTEES

7.1 PUBLIC WORKS

1. Request from residents on Juneberry Road area to install a “Children at Play” signs.

Councilman Milkovich stated that a petition was filed (signed by 21 residents of Juneberry Rd. and Juneberry Court) requesting the installation of ‘children at play’ signs on Juneberry Rd. Excessive speed and running a stop sign were identified as the major problems.

Several Board members, citing a study from the NY State Association of Towns advising against the use of these types of warning signs, expressed reluctance to allow the installation of the signs on Juneberry Rd. Moreover, it appears that this request is not looking at a current problem but anticipating a potential problem in the future due to planned development in the area.

Town Attorney Berger noted that although Board has the discretion to install these signs, it can be problematic to acknowledge an area as dangerous when in fact it may not be dangerous.

Councilman Milkovich stated that he would like talk to Police Chief Butler to explore the feasibility of reducing the speed limit on Juneberry Rd. and asked the Board to discuss this matter again at the Work Session on August 26th. The Board, by consensus, accepted that recommendation.

2. Request for approval for Gary Campo, Town Engineer to sign the paperwork for Enerpath

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re-lamping of the highway garage, and also to allow transfer of funds (\$4563.59) from A5132.4111 to A5132.2100

Supervisor Schaffer stated that he does not support this. The Town's share of the cost rose and now the payback is 5 years. When a similar program with much more attractive terms was available a few years ago, the Board rejected it.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

3. Request from Brock Leonard, Highway Superintendent to pay Scott Walter, and Jeff Tomczyk for out of title pay for April to July 2013

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

4. Request to dispose of Highway Equipment as noted in the memo from Laura McKane, Town Comptroller dated 8/9/2013.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

7.2 **FINANCE**

1. **Warrants** - 2013- 30, 30E, 31, 31E, 31R, 32, 32E, 32T

OK - This item will be placed on the Agenda as a Receive and File item at the next Regular Meeting.

2. Request to approve Corrective Action Plan in response to the State Comptroller's audit.

Comptroller Laura McKane stated that the State Comptroller's office has recommended that the Town develop a formal comprehensive multiyear capital plan. They also recommended considering a pay-as-you-go financing and the use of reserve funds. Lastly, they suggested that the long-term capital planning process be integrated with the budgetary process. She feels that that Town is already doing much of what is being recommended.

As part of the Audit Corrective Action Plan, Comptroller McKane asked the Board to consider adopting a Capital Program Policy (as per memo to Board dated 7/3/13). This draft of this policy has been shown to the Board earlier. The latest version has been updated with the audit comments in mind.

Supervisor Schaffer stated that his goal continues to be the integration of the capital budget review process with the operating budget review process. He recommends that the Board adopts the Capital Program Policy as drafted by the Comptroller.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

3. Request to pay \$4280.00 to David Berger, Town Attorney for billable hours for the month of July 2013.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

4. Request to authorize Laura McKane, Town Comptroller to complete any paperwork necessary to begin offering the Excellus Blue4U wellness program to begin on or about October 24, 2013, offered to active employees eligible for health plan, adult covered dependents of active employees, retirees covered on the health plan that are not Medicare eligible, adult covered dependents of retirees that are

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not Medicare eligible, and to apply for grant from PERMA to provide prizes.

If the Board adopts a wellness program as recommended by the Health Care Oversight Committee, Comptroller McKane asked that the Board establish who should be eligible to participate. The PERMA grant would be to secure funds to use for incentives to increase program participation.

Responding to a question from Councilman Majewski about the cost of this wellness program, Comptroller McKane responded that it would cost about \$150 per participant for the blood testing.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

5. Request to do budget transfers for effective dates 1/15/2013 thru 8/8/2013 from the memo dated August 8, 2013.

Comptroller McKane noted that as the budget lines are reduced, we are likely to see more budget transfers because there is less cushion to absorb small variances in expenditures.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

6. Discuss the amount to be paid to the sewage treatment plant for 2nd quarter

Comptroller McKane stated that the increased charges imposed by the Joint Sewage Treatment Plant amount to \$428,000 more than what we budgeted. To cover that shortfall, we would need to increase sewer rents by 24%. The Town may get some refund from an ongoing 2011 reconciliation, but it's not likely to make up much of the shortfall. It appears to her that the users of the plant are being charged up front for many flood damage related expenditures that will eventually be covered by FEMA. Something needs to be done soon to resolve this budgetary shortfall.

Supervisor Schaffer stated that he is continuing to work with a group of outside users to challenge the exorbitant increases imposed by the Joint Sewage Treatment Plant after the towns adopted their budgets. Nonetheless, we will probably have to raise the sewer rents. Until there is some resolution of this problem, the Town will continue to make the normal payments and withhold the overage payments.

7.3 PERSONNEL

1. Discussion of Board of Assessment Review Appointments

Supervisor Schaffer indicated that he would provide the names of the new appointments (as recommended by the Board in Executive Session) for consideration at the next Regular Meeting. The reason for the delay in announcing the names is to give adequate time to notify all of the applicants who interviewed for the openings.

2. Request from John Butler, Chief of Police to grant an unpaid internship for the fall of 2013 to Maureen Eberly of Harpursville NY has applied for this opportunity and is currently a student at Broome Community College in the Criminal Justice Program, a background check has already been completed.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

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7.4 PLANNING & ZONING

1. Discuss request from Gary Van Driesen to obtain a license for open storage.

Councilwoman Fitzgerald noted that this person has experienced additional hardship due to the flood of 2011, but that she is skeptical that he will do much of anything with these vehicles.

Town Attorney Berger noted that this person was recently found guilty in Town Court for storing junk vehicles on the property and was ordered to remove them. If the Board considers allowing open storage, there would still be a list of requirements that this person would have to meet to comply.

It was noted that the Code Department is recommending against granting a license for open storage.

The consensus of the Board is not to consider this request at this time.

7.5 PUBLIC SAFETY – no items were brought for consideration.

7.6 ADMINISTRATION

1. Request from Sue Jastran, Recreation Planner to hire baseball, lacrosse, field hockey, volleyball and soccer camp employees as stated in memo dated August 8, 2013

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

2. Request from Dan Williams, IT Director to scrap 8 Dell GX280 Computer that have been replaced with up graded hardware

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

3. Request from Debra Wallace, Tax Collector to dispose of an old Pitney Bowes folding machine that no longer works

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Potential purchase and renovation of the OLS church property for Town use

Following up on a prior presentation, Councilman Marnicki provided the Board with updated cost estimates for the acquisition and renovation of the OLS property for use as Town office space. The new estimated total cost is \$900,000 or \$36 per square foot. This compares with an estimated cost of \$224/s.f. for new construction. The net increase in expenses to the Town (debt service) for the acquisition and renovation of the property is estimated to be \$24,000 per year. In his opinion, this is a very cost effective solution to the Town's office space shortage. If the Board wished to proceed with this project, the next step would be to set up a negotiating team.

Supervisor Schaffer thanked Councilman Marnicki for his hard work in evaluating the feasibility of this proposed project but stated that he cannot support it at this time. He called this proposal a great opportunity at a bad time. The timing is just not right. Finances are tight and will become even more difficult with the state imposed spending cap now going to 1.6% (inflation adjustment). This plan is not workable this year.

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Councilman Majewski stated the church property is not a proper location for a Town Hall.

Councilwoman Fitzgerald agreed with Supervisor Schaffer that now is not a good time to undertake this project.

Councilman Milkovich stated that he is still determined to explore the feasibility of consolidating all Town Hall functions at the current location.

All Board members thanked Councilman Marnicki for his hard work in preparing the OLS acquisition and renovation plan. All expressed reservations about proceeding to the next stage, primarily citing fiscal constraints and the inability of the OLS location to accommodate all of the Town's offices as the reasons.

Councilman Marnicki urged the Board to review his updated proposal noting that the Town is in a pay me now of pay me later situation. An attractive opportunity like this may not be available in the future.

2. Collection to School Taxes by the Town Receiver of Taxes

Supervisor Schaffer stated that the Vestal School District has approached the Town's Receiver of Taxes about the possibility of taking over the collection of school taxes. If we undertook this task, we would collect the interest and late fee penalties.

Several Board members expressed support for the idea, citing existing software compatibility, a collection cycle that does not conflict with Town taxes and the availability of a trained staff.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Review changes to Scrap Metal Policy – not addressed at this meeting
2. Coal House Insurance – not addressed at this meeting

SUPERVISOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion of Councilman Milkovich, seconded by Councilman Majewski, the following was

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Majewski, Fitzgerald, Milkovich, Marnicki, Schaffer

 Nays 0

Resolved the Board enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing potential litigation with the Vestal Emergency Squad and a health issue of an employee. The time was 7:15 PM.

On a motion of Councilman Milkovich, seconded by Councilwoman Fitzgerald, the following was

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Majewski, Fitzgerald, Milkovich, Marnicki, Schaffer

 Nays 0

Resolved the Board leave the Executive Session and adjourn the Work Session. The time was 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Emil Bielecki, Town Clerk