

Aug. 19, 2021

Regular Town Board Meeting

Present: Supervisor Edward Bender, Councilman Paul Aubertine, Councilman Marty Mason, Councilman Dan Wiley, Councilman Alan Wood, Bill Pond Highway Superintendent, and approximately 10 visitors.

Supervisor Bender called the meeting to order at 6:30pm with the pledge of allegiance.

Privilege of the floor

Kirk Grant – Kirk spoke to the board about not being reappointed as a member of the Board of Assessment Review, (BAR). He said that the allegations against him are false. He said that there was a hearing incident on Grievance day that he was upset with and he left the room. He spoke about the rules regarding conflicts. He said that he was asked by the Chairman to sign a form, and he said that he would not sign it and then he was told his signature was there. Kirk said that he did not sign a form. He said that it was wrong that he was let go as a member of the BAR.

Dave McIntyre – Dave told the board that at the last meeting the board meeting it was said that the town board would revisit the payments made to the ambulance squad if they needed it. He said that the amount of funds budgeted from the town has been used, and they are asking for more funding. Dave told the board that they are moving forward with a contract for ambulance service in the town of Lyme, and the town of Lyme will relinquish the CON (certificate of need) to Cape Vincent. Dave said that they are working through the paperwork, and hope to have everything in place soon. Councilman Wood asked if they would be getting any equipment. Dave told him that they are discussing this, that they will be getting a list of the equipment. He said that their ambulance will be housed in Chaumont.

Councilman Wood said that he knows the squad has not used any of the Covid-19 relief funding and wondered if they would be using it if they are running low in funds. Dave told him that they are now using the funds.

Dave went on to explain to the board that they are having a hard time finding people to cover shifts, and that is why many weekends there isn't coverage.

The board discussed the creation of the Ambulance District and that they wanted it to appear on the tax bill in 2022. Councilman Wiley said that the Attorney is asking for an IMA with the Village for the District. Councilman Wiley also talked about the town continuing the monthly payments to the squad of \$7,500.00 until the end of the year, and not to exceed \$90,000.00 for the year.

Dave told the board that they have a bare bones budget.

Councilman Mason asked for a copy of the budget.

Councilman Wiley talked about a line on the tax bill for 2022 for the ambulance and said he would want to stay under the tax cap.

Legislator Bob Cantwell – Bob told the board that June set a traffic record at the Watertown Airport. He said that they are continuing to make improvements with FAA funding, and he noted that no County Tax dollars have been used at the facility. Bob told the board that another source of income for the Airport is the ability to sell fuel. He said that the runways are up to speed with lighting and regulations. He said that Senator Ritchie awarded funding to them which helped.

Councilman Wood asked about the PILOT program, and who will be in control over what will be distributed. Bob said that the IDA negotiates the PILOT program. He said that the IDA feels strongly that they don't want the towns and the IDA negotiating the program. Bob said that he feels the towns should have a say in the negotiations.

Councilman Aubertine asked where the IDA got the authority to negotiate. Bob told him he did not know but will get the answer for him.

Councilman Mason asked who the IDA answers to. Bob told him the County Legislators.

The board discussed with Bob the end dates of the PILOT program and the feeling of the surrounding towns regarding the IDA being the sole negotiator.

Bob told the board that he will try to attend more meetings and will be there as much as the board wants him to be.

Supervisor Bender said that he would like him to attend when he has information for the board.

Councilman Aubertine asked if they had started their budget and Bob said that they have. Councilman Aubertine asked if he would keep the board informed as their budget progresses.

Councilman Wiley said that the LDC is looking for letters of support for the DRI grant and Bob said that he will spread the word.

Matt Cooper – Matt gave a project overview of the sewer project. He said that the DEC has approved the report and B & L will prepare the grant disbursements to the town for the sewer study. Matt told the board that they still need to do an interest survey, but will hold off until Water District #7 has been determined.

Matt gave the board an overview of the current status of water district #7. He reviewed the project costs and the grant and loan awarded for funding. Matt also reviewed the timeline to receive petitions for a permissive referendum.

Councilman Aubertine asked Matt if he has received any notice that they won't have grant funding available this year. Matt said that he knows that there is plenty of funding.

Councilman Mason asked if Matt had opened any lines of communication with Rural Development and Matt said that he would. Councilman Mason said that he does not want to lose the funding.

Matt also told the board that he has been working with Keith Brass regarding the icing issue at the water tower. He said that they are discussing a mixing system.

Reports

Recreation Park – Town Clerk Michelle Bouchard read Keith Brass' report in his absence. Keith reported that they had a blood drive, meetings and the youth commission day camp. He reported that the Library also had an art class for the kids. There was also a wedding reception and a couple of birthday parties. Keith also starting painting the building. He reported that they moved the temporary driveway that went to the pickleball court and will use the stone for a walking path to the courts. The landscaping will be done after the fence is installed. There have been repairs made to the mower. The new AED machine has been installed in the hallway going to the restrooms.

Water – Town Clerk Michelle Bouchard read Keith Brass' report in his absence. Keith reported that they did a new install in water district 4 and repair a leak at a trailer park. He said that they also replaced the

service line to the meter vault. The report also said that they replaced the tubing in the cl-17 at the booster pump station and cleaned the injection quill. They also put a new seal in the valve for the storage tank there too. Keith also reported that NY Rural Water came to help him look for a possible leak in water district 6, but they did not find any leaks.

Keith's report also went on to say that Matt Cooper looked into the valve at the booster pump station and it has been determined that the valve needs to be replaced. He submitted a request to the Dept. of Health for approval, and the approval was given via email from Mike Tracy. Keith report stated that he would like to replace this valve as soon as possible, and he provided quotes for the board to review. Keith would also like to know if the board would agree to sell the old AED machine to Cintas who has offered \$200.00.

After reviewing the valve replacement quotes, the board took the following action.

Councilman Wood made a motion to have Keith accept the lowest bid from Core & Main in the amount of \$9,172.00, and to have sell the AED machine to Cintas for \$200.00, seconded by Councilman Mason. All members voted AYE.

Highway – Bill Pond told that board that the tractor has been out mowing the shoulders and they have been brooming the intersections. He said that they have also helped the elementary school install a new sidewalk from the school to Recreation Park. Bill said that they had done the shoulders on the Mason Road and he sent trucks to Mannsville to help on County Rte 90.

Bill told the board that Jim Lawrence is very happy with the work that they have done, and he has asked Bill to oversee the road construction on County Rt. 54. He said that they will be helping Clayton. He also told the board that the 2010 Mac truck needs considerable repairs, and they are waiting for parts.

Bill told the board that the County has let him use their boom mower and they have mowed a few hill sides that have become over grown and a traffic hazard.

Bill said that Scott was stopped and asked if he would mow the Legion Memorial on Esselstyne Street. He was told that the town owns that and asked if it was true. The board did not know, and Councilman Mason said that he would look into it.

Bill reported that they had to make some repairs to the transfer site backhoe.

Councilman Wood told Bill that Scott and Steve are doing a good job mowing and it looks good.

Supervisor's Financial Report – Councilman Aubertine made a motion to accept the Supervisor's Financial Report, seconded by Councilman Wiley. All members voted AYE.

LDC – Councilman Wiley reported that they will be hiring the MRB group to file the paperwork for the 501 C3 status. He said that the LDC will meet the second Thursday in September.

Councilman Wiley said that they will have a company appraise the Anchor Marina as well as the boathouses on Club Street.

Tim White said that the boathouse that was purchased by the town should be demolished soon.

The board discussed the budget work sessions and it was decided that they will be held on Tuesday mornings at 8am in the office building during the month of September and the first two Tuesdays in October if need be.

Councilman Aubertine said that he thinks the ambulance can use some of the Covid-19 relief funds to help them be competitive with wages.

Councilman Wiley said that he is comfortable bumping up the town's funding to them to \$90,000.00.

Councilman Aubertine said that the town did not budget this amount, but agreed that he too would like to give them the \$90,000.00.

Councilman Wiley said that he is disappointed that the ambulance funding will not be on the 2022 tax bill. He said that he knows Joe Russell has been ill, but it is time to have someone else take this over.

Councilman Wiley said that he feels it is time for a sit-down discussion with them, and the board agreed.

Supervisor Bender said that he would like the board's approval for him to speak with a friend of his who is also in the firm to see if they could be of any assistance. The board agreed.

Councilman Aubertine said that the Covid-19 funding is funds the town did not expect. He said he would like to give the \$90,000.00 to the ambulance from this money.

Councilman Wood said that he was told that the town can't use that money for this type of thing. He said that if they want to give this money it should come from the fund balance. He went on to say that he feels they should take a loan from the bank and repay the loan. He said that if the town gives them the money from the Covid funding, the town will never be repaid.

Councilman Wiley said that the ambulance board asked the town for \$90,000.00, and he feels that the town should give it to them.

Councilman Aubertine said that he is open to whatever it takes to help them.

Councilman Wood said that the board needs to decide on covering eye and dental coverage for Shelley Higgins who has just retired.

Councilman Wiley said that it would be through COBRA and it would only last for 18 months. He said that the board needs to find out if she wants this coverage.

Councilman Aubertine said that the Youth Commission has asked that the equipment shed be replaced. The board discussed this and it was decided to make necessary repairs to the existing shed.

The board discussed the ambulance again.

Councilman Wood made a motion to pay the ambulance their regular monthly stipend of \$7,500.00 from September through December with a cap of \$90,000.00 for the year and they will need to come back to the board if they need more, seconded by Councilman Mason.

There was the following discussion. Councilman Wiley said that he did not like the motion. He would like them to have the funding. He said that he does not want to make them come back to the board to ask for more funds.

Vote was taken Supervisor Bender, Councilmen Wiley and Aubertine vote NAY, Councilmen Wood and Mason vote AYE. Motion did not pass.

Councilman Mason said that he would like to know what accounts the town can take this amount from first. He said that they town only budgeted \$45,000.00, and he would like to know where they will get the extra \$45,000.00 to give to the ambulance.

Councilman Wood agreed.

Councilman Wiley said that the board told the ambulance that they would revisit the funding situation. Councilman Mason said that he does not want to commit until they find out where the money will come from.

Councilman Wood asked what it would hurt to wait until November when the town will have a better understanding of account balances.

Councilman Wiley said that he wants to give them the money as a show of good faith.

Councilman Wiley made a motion to give the ambulance squad a monthly stipend of \$7,500.00 for the remainder of the year with a cap of \$90,000.00, seconded by Councilman Aubertine.

There was the following discussion.

Councilman Mason stressed the need for the town to find out where the funds will come from. He said that the Covid-19 relief funds are not to be used this way. He said that there are strict guidelines and reporting of how the funds were used.

Councilman Wiley said that he feels that funding the ambulance with the Covid relief funds is the best avenue.

Vote was taken. Supervisor Bender, Councilmen Wiley and Aubertine voting AYE. Councilmen Mason and Wood voting NAY. Motion was carried.

Resolutions

Resolution #48

Resolution #48 was moved by Councilman Aubertine, seconded by Supervisor Bender. Resolution #48 is to approve the payment of \$750.00 to LaFave, White & McGivern, L.S. for a boundary survey to be done at 371 Club Street.

There was no discussion. All members voted AYE.

Resolution #49

Resolution #49 was moved by Councilman Wiley, seconded by Councilman Mason. Resolution #49 is to accept the petition submitted to the board from the residents along Humphrey Road regarding a speed limit reduction and to authorize the Highway Superintendent to move forward the procedure as per the recommendation of the State Police.

There was no discussion. All members voted AYE.

Resolution #50

Resolution #50 was moved by Councilman Mason, seconded by Councilman Aubertine. Resolution #50 is to authorize the Supervisor to sign the Technical Services Agreement for the Cape Vincent Pump Station Generator replacement with the Development Authority of the North Country.

There was no discussion. All members voted AYE.

Resolution #51

Resolution #51 was moved by Councilman Wiley, seconded by Councilman Mason. Resolution #51 is to authorize the Supervisor to sign the Start-Up Services Agreement with the MRB group for the Cape Vincent Local Development Corporation and agrees to the fee of \$9,750.00 which will be split 60% from the town and 40% from the village.

There was no discussion. All members voted AYE.

Councilman Wood made a motion to accept the minutes of the July 15, July 30, and Aug. 5, 2021 meetings, seconded by Councilman Aubertine. All members voted AYE.

Bills

General Fund, \$38,236.48; Highway, \$99,389.40; Capital, \$31,997.71; WD 1, \$33,607.79; WD2, \$1,805.03; WD3, \$1,416.43; WD4, \$1,733.95; WD5, \$2,573.91, WD6, \$32,932.45

Councilman Wood made a motion to approve the payment of the vouchers, seconded by Councilman Aubertine. All members voted AYE.

Councilman Wood made a motion to adjourn at 8:20pm.

Michelle Bouchard, RMC – Town Clerk