

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Regular Meeting
February 18, 2016**

Present:	Supervisor Arthur Bassin	Councilman Hugh Clark
	Councilman Chris Thomas	Councilwoman Madeline Israel
	Councilman David Boice	Town Clerk Monica Cleveland

The regular meeting of the Ancram Town Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Supervisor Arthur Bassin with a salute to the flag.

Mr. Bassin introduced Mr. Gary Flaherty, Director for the Columbia County Veterans Service Agency. Mr. Flaherty announced that that he will be giving a presentation on homeless veterans and services he provides as well as information about enrolling in the VA, at the Ancram Town Hall sometime at the end of March or early April. He hopes when he comes to Ancram he will be accompanied by a VA van to give services to our vets if needed. He said that he was a Veteran of the Vietnam war. He was concerned with the fact that the current members of the military are subject to back to back tours, and they are coming home with PTSD and head injuries. He has been instrumental in working with the Columbia County court system and the courts in the towns throughout Columbia County to try and keep young vets out of the court system. He says that he has worked closely with the courts and that he commends them on how understanding they have been to the Vets. He was proud of the fact that Columbia County has no homeless Vets and that since January of 2014, there have been no Vets in jail in Columbia County. Mr. Bassin and the board thanked both Mr. Flaherty and his wife for all they have done for the Vets in the County.

Mr. Bassin introduced Jane Meigs of Ancram and Robin Reynolds of Albany to the meeting to give a presentation on becoming a Climate Smart Community. Ms. Reynolds gave a detailed presentation on the process and the Community Smart Program itself. She stated that there is a 10 point pledge the town would commit to through a resolution. This is a voluntary commitment and that there is no risk and only reward. The commitment will strive to help the town with many issues including reducing greenhouse gasses and planning for a climate change. She stressed that this is not a big step for the town as many of those issues addressed in the pledge are also a part of the town's Comprehensive plan. There are at this time 172 communities in New York who are pledged to the program. Mrs. Meigs said that there are many benefits and that they will help small farms and the open spaces. Mr. Bassin asked the feelings of the town board members on this subject. Mrs. Israel felt that there were many pieces of this that the town is already engaged in. She felt it was smart to adopt it. Mr. Clark had only one concern and that was if the pledge is taken, is the town committing to doing all ten items within a certain time frame. Jane answered that the town can do what fits the community. This is a long term process and the steps taken will be those that the community wants.

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilwoman Israel and moved for adoption. Resolution carried unanimously.

Resolution #11 of 2016: Climate Smart Communities:

WHEREAS, the Town of Ancram believes that climate change poses a real and increasing threat to our local and global environments and is primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels; and

WHEREAS, the effects of climate change will endanger our infrastructure, economy and livelihoods; harm our farms, orchards, and ecological communities, including native fish and wildlife populations; spread invasive species and exotic diseases; reduce drinking water supplies and recreational opportunities; and pose health threats to our citizens; and

WHEREAS, we believe that our response to climate change provides us with an unprecedented opportunity to save money, and to build livable, energy-independent and secure communities, vibrant innovation economies, healthy and safe schools, and resilient infrastructures; and

WHEREAS, we believe the scale of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions required for climate stabilization will require sustained and substantial efforts; and

WHEREAS, we believe that even if emissions were dramatically reduced today, communities would still be required to adapt to the effects of climate change for decades to come,

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that Town of Ancram, in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate, adopts the New York State Climate Smart Communities Pledge, which comprises the following ten elements:

1. Pledge to be a Climate Smart Community.
2. Set goals, inventory emissions, plan for climate action.
3. Decrease community energy use.
4. Increase community use of renewable energy.
5. Realize benefits of recycling and other climate-smart solid waste management practices.
6. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through use of climate-smart land-use policies.
7. Enhance community resilience and prepare for the effects of climate change.
8. Support development of a green innovation economy.
9. Inform and inspire the public.
10. Commit to an evolving process of climate action.

Assessors

The assessor announced that the revaluation process is complete. He is waiting to hear from the state on their opinion. The letters will be coming out next month. He will be meeting in the next week with the county valuation expert. The revaluation is based on 3 years worth of sales as well

as the data collection sheets which were returned. Following this revaluation, the equalization rate will be between 102-103%. Mr. Legget said that a revaluation should be done every three to four years. Mrs. Hoyt asked what the residents should bring to their appointments with him. Mr. Legget stated that it is best to bring supporting data as well as comparisons.

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to approve the 1/21/2016 LED Public Hearing and Town Board Meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Fire Chief

Mr. Boice reported that there were many calls Monday night during the ice and rain storm, including six calls in a twelve hour span. The department will be hosting a chicken BBQ. The burn ban begins March 15th and goes until May 15th.

Mr. Thomas asked if the new proposed fire truck will be paid out of the capital fund. Mr. Boice said that all of the money will come from budgeted funds and capital investment. Mr. Boice said there would be no tax increase for a new truck. Mr. Brant asked why the department was buying a new truck. Mr. Boice explained that the trucks are on a five year plan which means that when a truck is replaced, they are at the time about 25 years old. Mr. Boice said that there are regulations that have to be followed. Mr. Boice said that because of the shape the trucks are in at trade in the department is getting three times what they should bring. Mr. Citrin asked if there was anything that can be saved off the old trucks. Mr. Boice said that while the insurance laws state that certain trucks may not pass regulations, a lot of the equipment can be removed from the truck and continue to be used.

In other fire department issues, Mr. Bassin announced that Mr. Bill Hunt had been appointed the County Fire Cordinator.

Supervisors Report to the Town Board, dated 2/15/16

1. Financial Report – Tax Collector Monica Cleveland remitted the Town’s 2016 tax levy in January, so we ended the month with \$1.5 million in the bank. Favorable weather caused lower than expected highway costs in January.
2. Culvert Project – Ryan Biggs and Highway Superintendent Jim Miller have narrowed the list of high priority culverts from 17 to 5, and are in the process of evaluating these 5 culverts to determine the right solution for each and what the cost of each will be. We expect to have a “plan” by the March TB meeting. .
3. Central Hudson – They have “fixed” 5 of the 6 street lights that were not working in Ancram. The 6th should be fixed shortly. If anyone sees a street light that is out, please let me know.
4. Climate Smart Community – We will consider the Climate Smart Community resolution at the 2/18 TB meeting. Before we vote on this resolution, we should probably solicit comments from the Town Agriculture Advisory Council and others from the County and NYS State agricultural communities on the agricultural implications of the CSC. This suggests we may want to defer any vote on this proposal until April or May.

5. Right to Farm law – Suggest we schedule a public hearing on this prior to the April TB meeting. This will give the Agricultural Advisory Council time to review the proposed law and solicit feedback from various agricultural groups around the county.

6. Highway Garage Drain – Highway Superintendent Jim Miller has discovered that the containment tank attached to the garage inside drain has been leaking. He has plugged the drain, plans to pump out whatever is in the tank, and check for contamination. In addition, he has proposed that we install an oil-water separator system to allow us to reopen the drain and properly dispose of the water resulting from rinsing off the equipment inside the garage.

7. Upcoming events:

a) February 21, 2 pm – “Field Notes” - Grand opening presentation of the new display at the Town Hall vestibule, focused on Ancram’s natural resources

b) February 27, 4-7 pm – Chicken BBQ at Fire House

c) March 5, 5.30 pm – Corn Beef Dinner at Ancramdale Presbyterian Church

d) March 12, 10-12 - Rabies Clinic at Town Garage

e) May 7, 9-1 – Community Cleanup Day; details to follow

8. County Issues – Nothing new to report.

At this point the Lower Rhoda Lake Community addressed the board asking that the town write a letter to the DEC supporting a hearing at the town hall in regards to Camp Pontiac placing herbicides in the lake. Madeline Israel recused herself from this discussion and vote. A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilman Boice to approve a letter of support for the Rhoda Lake community to the DEC in regards to a hearing being held to discuss placing chemicals in Rhoda lake. Motion carried with a recusal from Councilwoman Israel.

Board Members

Councilwoman Israel read a letter to the County Senior Citizen Recognition Award Committee nominating Ellwood Woody Hoyt:

Elwood “Woody” Hoyt died on December 11, 2015, at age 88. Still, his service to the Town of Ancram is worthy of celebration. Not only will posthumous recognition honor Woody, but also it will send a message to a new generation of volunteers: what it means to be dedicated to a cause, and to the welfare of the community.

Elwood Hoyt was an active volunteer fireman in with the Ancram Fire Company for 71 years. Despite increasingly poor health, he rarely, if ever, missed the opportunity to assist at a fire. While he was no longer a "firefighter," he directed traffic and helped to keep the area safe.

As Fire Chief David Boice says:

Elwood (Woody) Hoyt was an exceptional volunteer firefighter. He never complained about anything. Even into his 70th and 71st years of active service he would come out and direct traffic for hours at a time no matter the weather or the time of day. We marveled at the fact that in his everyday life Woody needed a walker to navigate, but when the siren sounded he would stand on his own and do his duty for hours at a time. He rarely missed a meeting even when his health was failing. He always wanted to be involved in whatever was going on. This year with his health failing Woody, one last time, stuffed all of the envelopes for our yearly fund drive. I can say without a doubt that if the firefighters joining today have half of the determination that Woody had everyday, our volunteer fire company will survive. Woody was a tremendous person and there is a void in our Ancram Fire Company that hasn't existed since Woody joined in 1944. Any way that Elwood Hoyt can be recognized for his dedication and sacrifice would be appreciated.

Honoring Elwood Hoyt will be meaningful to his family, to the Town of Ancram, and to the superb Ancram Fire Company. In addition, and as important, it will honor the very concept of volunteer service--regardless of age or disability.

We understand that there has never been a posthumous honoree. Elwood Hoyt was exceptional, and deserves to be an exception!

On behalf of the Town of Ancram,

Madeleine Israel

Councilwoman

Councilman Boice addressed the lighting district. He made the suggestion that the town take over the expenses of the lighting district. Councilman Thomas said that the town had discussed this two years ago and that they were not sure about how the district was formed. A motion was made by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to allow Mr. Bassin to research the forming and the desolving of the lighting district. Motion carried.

Highway Department

Superintendent Miller gave a report on the Highway Department. There has been one small snow storm this year so far. He has had one employee out for the month of January following surgery. He reported that the tank for the floor drain was opened and it was $\frac{3}{4}$ full. He is looking for records for a pumping schedule.

At this time the Highway Department is planning to install an oil-water separator system. The current tank is scheduled to be pumped on March 8th for \$2500.00. A rough estimate from Pat

Penderghast to replace the tank is between \$8,000 and \$15,000 depending on which option the town chooses.

Mr. Miller also stated that he would like to replace the dump body on one of the older trucks for a cost of about \$35,000. This truck has a sander that throws the sand out the back of the truck unlike the newer trucks which throw the sand out by the back wheels. This truck has had a few incidents this winter with ice.

Mr. Miller would like to also look into purchasing a sander for the blue pickup truck. Mr. Miller said that this way, when he is out and finds a slick spot, he can take care of it at the moment and not have to go back to the garage to get a different truck. The expense for this would be about \$5000.

Mr. Miller also told the board that the department will be looking to replace the mower on the roadside tractor. He said that the expense would be about \$15,000.

Town Clerk

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Israel and moved for adoption. Resolution carried unanimously.

Resolution #12 of 2016: Town Clerk training – Resolved, that the Town Clerk Monica Cleveland is authorized to attend Town Clerk training in Saratoga in April, 2016 at a cost not to exceed \$600.

The following resolution was offered by Councilwoman Israel and seconded by Councilman Clark and moved for adoption. Resolution carried unanimously.

Resolution #13 of 2016: Court/Planning/Zoning training – Resolved, that Court Clerk and Planning/ZBA Secretary Colleen Lutz is authorized to attend Court and Planning/Zoning training in February, 2016 at a cost not to exceed \$600.

Town Court

Mr. Wilcox noted that there has been an increase in traffic tickets in town as there are more patrols happening.

FAC

The FAC noted that while they are a very developed group, they welcome new members at any time.

Planning Board

Colleen Lutz stated that she really enjoyed the training she attended in New York City and that she came away feeling like Ancram is in a very good state.

Zoning Board

The zoning board has two new applications.

Youth Commission

The members will be attending a camp meeting with Samantha Mason.

Communications

The committee is working on a new newsletter.

CAC

The CAC will be helping with the presentation on the new vestibule display.
The committee is working with the county on a County Natural Resources Plan.

Ag Committee

The Columbia County Land Conservancy has looked at the proposed Ancram Right to Farm Law. A meeting of this committee will happen on April 4th at 6pm. Mr. Bassin asked the board members their thoughts on the document.

Mr. Clark said that the town should be cautious, that a law should be about one item and that the town should remember that this law is to focus on the right to farm.

Mr. Wlicox asked if there were any towns who have passed a similar law and then regreted it.

Mr. Bassin explained that the State has a right to farm law and that no matter what the town passes, the state law will always govern. The town law is meant to support the state law.

Mrs. Donna Hoyt asked if the document will have changes. She felt that there was a problem in that the law seems to favour the large land owners and not the smaller properties. She expressed worries about the changes made and that the law is taking away powers of the small property owners. Mr. Bassin said that he will check on Mrs. Hoyts concerns. He did say that the town law cannot be more restrictive than the NYS law.

Ms. Eddie noted that when Sommerhoff farms sprayed that they had not notified the adjacent properties. They killed the plants and gardens of the neighbors.

Mr. Dan Slott noted that very few towns in NYS have the right to farm law. Mr. Bassin stated that the proposed law is based on the state template. Mr. Slott felt that the law left many items very general. He questioned the transportation of compost and noted that Copake has been in litigation on this very subject for many years.

Historian

The historian will hold a meeting of the proposed historical district on February 28th. The state representative will be available for questions.

Culvert Grant

The committee has chosen Doug Clark as the engineer. The committee has surveyed five culverts and chose three to work on. The projects have been submitted to the Corps of Engineers and Ag and Markets. The committee is waiting to hear back from these departments. On March 1st the committee will meet with the grants manager. The five culverts which were looked at were Pats Road, Hall Hill Road, Snyder Road, Overmountain Road and Crest Lane.

Broadband

Mr. Fultz is designing a broadband survey.

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilman Boice and moved for adoption. Resolution carried unanimously

Resolution #14 of 2016: Oil-water separator – Resolved, that the Highway Superintendent is authorized to engage Engineer Pat Prendergast to assist in the design and installation of an oil-water separator tank system at the Town Garage for a total cost not to exceed \$25,000, and it is further resolved that as part of the installation of the oil-water separator, the Highway Superintendent will arrange to test for contamination around the current tank and in the storm water retention pond, and if any contamination is found, the Highway Superintendent will solicit estimates to remove any contamination found and secure Town Board approval for the cost of such removal.

The following resolution was offered by Councilwoman Israel and seconded by Councilman Clark and moved for adoption. Resolution carried unanimously.

Resolution #15 of 2016: Right to farm law public hearing – Resolved, that the Ancram Town Board will conduct a public hearing on the proposed Right to Farm Law at 6.45 pm on April 21, 2016, prior to the April TB meeting.

A motion was made by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilman Thomas to approve the warrant and pay the bills. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Israel and seconded by Councilman Clark to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica R. Cleveland
Ancram Town Clerk