

# Town of Ancram Town Board Regular Meeting January 21, 2016

**Present:** Supervisor Arthur Bassin  
Councilman Chris Thomas  
Councilman David Boice  
Highway Superintendent James Miller  
Councilman Hugh Clark  
Councilwoman Madeline Israel  
Town Clerk Monica Cleveland

---

Supervisor Arthur Bassin called the regular meeting to order at 7:26 pm with a salute to the flag.

Due to personal dealings with the CLC, Mr. Bassin recused himself from participating in the following discussion.

A representative from the Columbia Land Conservancy was in attendance to ask for the signing of a letter of support for applicant Kestral Farm in the sale of their development rights. This is a one time item. Ag and Markets is funding this through a grant earned from Ag and Markets. The CLC will act as the applicant and asks that the town sign a letter of support. A motion was made by Councilwoman Israel and seconded by Councilman Thomas to sign a letter of support to CLC for an application for the purchase of development rights by Kestral Farm. Motion carried with a recusal from Mr. Bassin.

Lynn Perella gave an overview of the proposed celebration for the kickoff of the new entryway exhibit titled Ancram's Natural Resources. The celebration will take place on February 21, 2016 at 2pm. This will be the fourth exhibit. There will be a slide show by B. Doctor as well as a presentation by Sharon Autoban's hawks and owls.

Colleen Lutz introduced the Culvert Grant Committee; Gerry Fultz, Erin Robinson, Ann Rader, Jim Miller, Art Bassin and herself. Mrs. Lutz gave an overview of the history of the Hudson River. She stated that Ancram is in the Hudson River watershed explaining that the Punch Brook and the Shikamiko both flow into the Hudson. Mrs. Lutz said that the town needs to understand the importance of the watershed and its preservation. She spoke about the DEC/Cornell study which was done on the culverts in Ancram in 2012. 213 culverts in Ancram were looked at. Once this was done, the town applied for a Grant to update some of the culverts most in need of repair. The town received \$220,000 in grant money from DEC to do at least 2 culverts. At this point the committee is still in the planning stages. The town is going to contract with an engineer to build a replacement program. The committee is going to analyze 2 to 5 culverts most in need of repair from among the 17 Mrs. Lutz had identified as part of the grant application to start.

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to approve the 12/17/2016 Regular Meeting and 1/4/2016 Year End and Organizational Minutes. Motion carried.

## Supervisors Report

### Town Issues

**1. Financial Report** – We ended December with \$811,000 in the bank and about \$60,000 in sales tax receivables due from the County. 2015 revenues came in about \$55,000 better than budget, and costs

were about \$127,000 under budget. Stronger than expected sales tax revenues and sale of equipment were the major elements of the better than expected revenue, while half the expense underrun resulted from not using \$65,000 of the budgeted contingency money, along with small underruns of \$1000 to \$4000 in a dozen or so other accounts. Operating spending in the General and Highway funds were about the same as 2014, excluding "financial transactions" like the \$240,000 loan prepayment made in August 2014 and the \$396,000 truck loan taken out in September, 2015.

**2. Engineering support** – Colleen Lutz and the Culvert Committee will be recommending an engineering firm to support us with the culvert grant at the 1/21 TB meeting. Hugh Clark will be recommending an engineer to assist the subdivision regulations revision committee review and revise highway construction standards.

**3. Central Hudson LED Program** – We will have a public hearing on the proposed LED street light program at 6:30, prior to the 1/21 TB meeting. Gerry Fultz and the LED committee will give us an overview of the situation. We also should have a representative of Central Hudson at the public hearing.

**4. Climate Smart Community** – Jane Meigs of CAC will brief us on this program. CAC recommends we sign up. Will circulate some background material on this Dec program.

**5. Right to farm law** – Suggest we schedule a public hearing on this prior to the 2/18 TB meeting.

**6. Purchase of Development Rights** – CLC will be requesting that the TB approve letters of support for two development rights deals – one for Kestral Farms and one for Thompson Finch Farm.

## County Issues

### A quiet month.

- 1. Ken Flood to Retire** - The major recent news is the announcement by Ken Flood, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, that he plans to retire mid-year.
- 2. Ginsberg Grant** – NYS has denied the previously approved \$516,000 grant to support the Ginsberg expansion project. Reason given by the State is Ginsberg started work prematurely.

Mr. Bassin asked the board their thoughts on the LED lighting district proposal. He said the question remains about installing the 4000 kelvin light on Poole Hill Road as an example light. Gerry Fultz suggested that the town wait until the 3000 kelvin light came out. He did feel that the company should at least replace the 6 broken lights with the sodium bulbs. A motion was made by Councilwoman Israel and seconded by Councilman Boice to put off installing the 4000 kelvin example light and to have Mr. Bassin to contact Central Hudson to replace the 6 existing lights which are inoperable with sodium bulbs. Motion carried. Councilman Thomas stated that he felt when this comes up again, the lighting district residents should make the decision on what happens.

Councilwoman Israel asked about when the sample LED is put up, shouldn't there be more than one. Mr. Fultz said that to get a true representation, the town would need to replace six to eight. But funding wise that is not realistic. Councilman Boice said that in Ancram, the lights are too far apart for this.

## Fire Chief

Mr. Boice said that there had been no calls since the last meeting. The department will hold a chicken BBQ on February 27, 2016. He gave budget numbers for Ancram compared to other districts. Ancram is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the amount collected in taxes and 21<sup>st</sup> in the amount in rate per thousand. Ancram is the largest district by square miles.

Jane Meigs gave a presentation on Climate Smart Communities. The town board will look at this. The board commented that many of the listed changes are also part of the Comprehensive Plan. By the town passing a resolution and becoming a Climate Smart Community, it will be eligible for funding through grants. A CSC representative can attend the February meeting to answer questions.

Mr. Bassin stated that the board will schedule a public hearing for the right to farm law in March.

The town board and the FAC will audit town financial records for the 2015 audit before the end of MAY.

### **Court**

Ruth Wittlinger gave a report on the 2015 court offices. She stated that the office has developed a new way to keep track of dockets and tickets. The court will continue to apply for grants to update office equipment. In 2015 the court saw 49 less cases than 2014. The criminal cases are down.

### **Town Board**

Mr. Bassin asked how the town board felt about the officials training they attended. Mr. Miller said that he found it informative. Mr. Clark said that he found it helpful and worth going to as it went over laws, regulations and evolving policies. It also touched on Ethics and finance. He felt it was also good to talk informally with other town officials. He came away feeling good about Ancram. Mrs. Israel said that she found it educational. Mr. Boice stated that he thought the information given was great and that although much did not involve Ancram issues, it was nice to learn about.

### **Highway**

Mr. Miller stated that Barry Hay has been out with a hip replacement. There have been a couple of small storms and that the department is working on truck maintenance. Mr. Miller had the town board sign the 2016 284 agreement. It includes sealing 10 miles of road.

### **Planning Board**

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilman Thomas to appoint Palmer Irving as a second alternate. Motion carried.

### **Zoning Board**

The board reported that they had one case for 2015.

### **Youth Commission**

The youth commission will begin to work with the camp board.

### **Assessment**

The assessor reported that the department is continuing to work on the internal revaluation. The new office computer is up and running.

It was confirmed that the property between Doodletown Road and Westfall will be used as a wildlife area and is going to be an open hunting area.

Logging regulations will be looked at over the next few months.

Councilman Clark stated that the Flood Law should be looked at on its own.

The Highway Design Standards for subdivisions have not been looked at since 1994 and is a highly technical document. The town will need to contract with an engineer. This will become a part of the subdivision regulations as a separate document.

Mr. Fultz reported on Habitat for Humanity. There had been an on site review of the three sites. The committee will meet again in March.

The highway department will work on cutting back brush at the Freedground Cemetary. Once this is done, a private group has agreed to fix the stones and the fence.

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

**Resolution #7 of 2016** Culvert grant manager additional compensation – Resolved, that the Town Supervisor is authorized to compensate the Culvert Grant Manager \$150 per month in addition to \$16.25 per hour for hours spent working on the culvert grant, and to allocate the cost of culvert grant management to the culvert grant project.

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

**Resolution #8 of 2016:** Culvert grant fund – Resolved, that the Town Supervisor is authorized to establish a Culvert Grant Fund to allow for the accounting and control of all culvert grant related revenues and expenses.

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

**Resolution #9 of 2016:** Culvert grant engineering support – Resolved, that the Town Supervisor is authorized to enter into a contract with Ryan Biggs Clark Davis to provide engineering for the culvert grant project at a cost not to exceed \$20,000.

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

**Resolution #10 of 2016:** Highway construction standards – Resolved, that the Town Board authorizes the SRRC to engage Pat Prendergast, PE, to review the currency and completeness of Subdivision and Highway Construction Standards contained in Local Law #1 of 2015, and to make recommendations thereon, at a cost not to exceed \$5,000.

Mrs. Hoyt asked about the Tin Smith house and the walls in that area, in regards to Habitat fixing it. She questioned if this was possible. Mr. Bassin said that is Habitat cannot fix the issues, then at that point it would be reasonable to conclude that a private citizen could not take on the project.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Israel 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 Thomas to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica R. Cleveland

Ancram Town Clerk