

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Regular Meeting
August 16, 2018**

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

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

Mr. Bassin asked if there were any items on the agenda which members of the board needed to recuse themselves from. There were none at this time.

Town Assessor Ken Legget reported that there are two SCAR hearings that he will be attending. Mr. Legget explained to the board that there are changes coming from the State in regards of the Enhanced Star program. He also explained how the income verification process will complicate this.

Gerry Fultz gave a detailed presentation on the Broadband installation. He showed a map of Ancram which outlined where the new Consolidated fiber lines were going in. He showed a promotional flyer which gave a proposed cost of \$99.95 for an internet and phone package. They are proposing a October, November, December hookup for homes. Councilwoman Hundt asked if there was going to be a set up fee for homeowners. Gerry said there would not be unless the home is further than 300 feet away from the road.

Gerry pointed out that where the map was not colored indicated where the Spectrum lines are. There is no indication as to if and when those hookups will be available, but Spectrum is starting to make calls on legacy Charter customers offering enhanced cable.

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to approve the minutes of the 6/21 meeting and the 7/19 public hearing and town board meeting. Motion carried.

Supervisors Report

1. Financial Report – Another normal financial month in July. General fund spending through YTD July was about flat to last year, and Highway spending YTD through July, excluding the \$240,000 for the new grader, was about \$70,000 under last year. Cash on hand as of the end of June was \$1,070,000. YE cash projection is \$822,000, down \$19,000 from last month's YE projection of \$841,000 and \$105,000 better than the YE budgeted cash number of \$736,000. The improvement versus budget in YE cash projections are primarily caused by better than budgeted sales tax receipts. About \$900,000 of our \$1,070,000 in cash on hand is on deposit with TD Bank in their liquid investment account, which currently earns 1.6% and floats with changes in the Fed Funds rate.

2. Comp Plan Review Process – The Comp Plan Review Committee will meet again on Monday, 8/20 to start working on the strategies and action plans to implement the revised Vision and Goals.

3. 2019 Tentative Budget – I will present the “final” Tentative Budget at the 8/16 meeting, and we will schedule a public hearing on the Tentative Budget on 9/20, prior to the Town Board meeting. The Tentative Budget includes a \$30,000 increase in the sales tax to reflect our actual experience for the past few years, a \$10,000 increase in interest to reflect higher interest earnings from our TD Bank account, and a 2.5% salary increase for all employees except the Town Board, Town Judges and Town Supervisor. Departmental spending is pretty much in line with 2018 budget spending, with some line item adjustments to reflect actual experiences in 2018. The 2019 Budget is on track to reduce taxes by 1% while we maintain a \$130,000 “contingent account” to fund long term capital spending needs and to provide a buffer in the event we see an unexpected drop in state funding or sales & mortgage tax receipts.

4. NYS Property Tax Related Charitable Reserve Funds – Nothing new to report. We are waiting for an IRS decision on whether this NYS plan is “legal” or not, and for the outcome of a lawsuit brought against the Federal Government by NYS and several other states alleging the SALT tax cap is not legal. The County and local School Districts are waiting for clarification on the legality of this program as well. Even if this program is declared legal later this year, the accounting systems to allow this program to be implemented may not be available until 2019, so it's unlikely this program will be available this year.

5. Speed Limit Enforcement – Speeding in the hamlets has been identified as a major problem by participants in the Comp Plan Review Process. In addition to a stronger law enforcement presence in town, installing radar speed signs that track your speed and flash how fast you are going may contribute to slowing traffic down. These signs also track and record vehicle speeds from both directions, which will allow us to schedule law enforcement at the right times to issue speeding tickets. Two of these speed control signs would cost between \$5500-\$6000. Recommend we approve a resolution allowing us to purchase two of these signs to see if they contribute to slowing people down.

6. Weight Limits on 8/8a - In addition to concerns about speeding, participants in the Comp Plan Review Process have expressed concerns about heavy truck traffic, especially in Ancramdale. The Town can pass a local law establishing weight limits on town and county roads to try and reroute heavy trucks away from areas we want to protect from heavy truck traffic. The immediate concern is the center of Ancramdale, and weight limits on 8 and 8a in Ancramdale would, if enforced, reroute truck traffic to 82 or 22. Recommend we approve a resolution to retain

an attorney to draft a local law to establish weight limits on 8 and 8a. If we start the local law process now, we would probably be ready to consider the local law for adoption in 90 days, following a public hearing. Over the next 90 days we will work with State and County law enforcement to figure out how to enforce weight limits on 8 and 8a, and on other roads in town where there already are weight limits.

7. Sawchuk Road Septage – DEC has requested additional information from Floods Sanitation to complete Flood’s application for renewing his registration to dump septage on a farm along Sawchuk Rd. The additional information is due 9/4, and if it’s not provided, the dumping of septage will have to stop by 9/14. If DEC renews the permit to dump septage, the Town could consider taking action to stop the practice as a violation of our Zoning Code. If we were to do that, Flood may seek the support of Ag & Markets, arguing that spreading septage is a normal agricultural practice. Ag & Markets has indicated they will normally intervene to protect a farmer spreading septage if the septage is being used to grow agricultural products.

8. Unsafe Buildings – Code Enforcement officer Ed Ferratto plans to contact all owners of vacant/unsafe buildings to remind them of the violations outstanding on their buildings and to request they remedy the violations. We have identified about 15 structures around town that are “vacant/unsafe and potentially a threat to public safety.

9. Fire Fighter Cancer Benefit – NYS has passed a law effective 1/1/19 requiring Fire Districts provide volunteer fire fighters monetary assistance if they are diagnosed with

cancer. The County has proposed to fund the cost for this program for the fire fighters in the county by using County workers compensation funds which are available because of the sale of the Pine Haven nursing home a few years ago. The cost to the County for this program apparently is 50% of the cost a fire district would incur. Recommend we support this proposal.

10. Trim River Birches at Town Hall - The 7 river birches adjacent to the Town Hall need to be trimmed back to remove branches leaning on the building and to raise up the canopy. Hope to have some proposals by Thursday.

11. Houghtaling House – Jim has gotten one proposal to demolish Houghtaling house according to the RFP, which we will review on Thursday, and one request to postpone awarding the bid so this second bidder can try and get an asbestos survey done to determine if there is asbestos on the inside of the house or not. If there is no interior asbestos, the cost of demolition could be significantly less than if there is interior asbestos. As you may recall, we tried to get an interior inspection done early in 2017, but the unsafe condition of the house caused the asbestos inspector we talked to conclude that it was unsafe to enter and inspect the interior, so we had to assume there was interior asbestos and proceed accordingly. It's unlikely the second bidder will be able to get an experienced asbestos investigator to enter a condemned building, so this may not be a valid proposal. We will discuss Thursday.

Mr. Bassin spoke about the proposed speed radar sign. The signs would be mounted on poles and could be moved from one place to another. The signs are solar powered and give the speed of the vehicles going past. The signs will record the speeds of the vehicles passing along with the time that they passed. This can then be downloaded onto a computer and looked at for reference. Councilman Boice asked if the town was authorized to put the signs on county and state roads and who would be responsible for taking care of them. Mr. Bassin said he had checked and as long as the town keeps within a certain distance off the road, the signs are allowed. The town will be responsible to take care of them. Mr. Boice requested a monthly report from the court on speeding tickets. Councilman Clark asked what the lifespan of the radar speed signs were and if there were maintenance issues. Councilman Boice asked where they would be stored. The answer was the highway garage. Councilwoman Hundt would like these questions answered prior to the next meeting. Councilwoman Israel would like to see the purchase made and the signs in place before the end of the summer. Jen Boice stated that the board should find out if they are sensitive to the cold or the heat.

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

Resolution #16 of 2018:

Speed Control – Resolved, that subject to clarification of maintenance issues and sensitivity to extreme heat and cold, that the Town Supervisor is authorized to purchase two radar speed control devices at a cost not to exceed \$6000.

Mr. Bassin presented to the board the thought of placing a weight limit on County Route 8 and 8A. The limit would be for 5 ton vehicles and would exclude local delivery, town and emergency vehicles. Mr. Bassin said that he had spoken to the town attorney and that it would take about an hour to draft a proposed local law to this effect. Mr. Bassin asked for comments from the board. Councilman Boice felt that the 5 ton limit is very low and suggested a 25-30 ton limit. Mr. Gerry Fultz asked if this can also be done in the Ancram Hamlet. Mr. Bassin said it cannot because 82 is a state road. Councilman Clark expressed a concern for unexpected consequences. He was not keen on rerouting based on weight. Councilwoman Hundt expressed concern with this plan pushing large trucks to use some of the smaller town roads instead. Mr. Bassin commented that weight limits could be imposed on other roads to prevent heavy vehicles from using other residential roads. Mr. Bassin asked if the board was in favor of having the local law drafted. The board decided to hold off on the law and instead go forward with continued enforcement on speed control.

Two estimates were given to trim the trees along the side of the town hall building. A motion was made by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilman Clark to approve the bid for \$1000 which included an extensive trimming but no cabling.

Councilman Boice gave a brief summary of the Fire Fighter Cancer Benefit Program proposed NY legislation. Mr. Boice explained what was covered and who was covered and that most firefighters are not eligible. Mr Bassin asked if the board wants him to vote for or against this at the Board of Supervisors. A motion was made by Councilwoman Hundt and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to have Mr. Bassin support the Firefighter Cancer Benefit Program. Motion carried with a recusal from Councilman Boice.

Councilwoman Hundt asked if the town is going to move forward with the condemned building notices. Mr. Bassin informed the board the Mr. Ferratto had updated the letters, and he was in the process of reminding owners of the buildings in question that the buildings should not be entered and should be secured. There are 15 structures on the “watch list”, but all are not of equal risk to public safety. Not all of them will get the letters. Mrs. Jen Boice stated that at the last meeting the board had

decided to take no actions on the one unsafe building that was discussed and asked what has changed. Mr. Bassin explained that nothing has changed, and the building referred to last month is not on the list. Mr. Bassin noted that there is a difference between a “threat to public safety” and “uninhabitable”, noting that a building could be uninhabitable but not a threat to public safety. . Councilman Clark also noted that what the town is pursuing falls under the State Building Law.

Mr. Bassin announced that the public hearing for the 2019 tentative budget will be held prior to the September town board meeting. Councilwoman Hundt proposed that the town board increase the library funding by \$10,000 making the town’s contribution \$17,500. Councilman Boice stated that while he agreed with Ms. Hundt that the library should be funded more from Ancram, the residents voted twice to defeat a referendum to allow a 414 tax of \$35,000 for the library. He stressed that as a person elected to represent the people of the town, if the majority of the town voted no to the 414, the the town board has to respect that. Councilwoman Israel said that she felt ashamed that Ancram does not support the library more. She felt that although she understood the 414 vote was a defeat, that she felt some people voted no for other reasons. Mr. Boice said that then maybe the 414 should be voted on again. Councilman Clark said he would reserve his opinion and comments until after the public hearings.

Councilman Boice said that he would like to see more money put into the town hall building budget. He said that the building needs painting on the inside, new carpets, work on the garden beds and some general upkeep as the building is now 15 years old.

Board Member comments

Councilman Boice stated that while traffic is an issue, he was in both hamlets in the last month directing traffic and that motorists seemed reasonable.

Councilwoman Israel has ordered the Town of Ancram shirts. The newsletter is a bit behind due to health issues on the committee.

Highway

Highway Superintendent Miller reported that the department is trimming brush. He informed the board that two chain saws were missing from the town barn. The theft has been reported to the sheriff. The garage building will now be locked up at all times. Oil and stone has been completed. Now the highway department is working

to support projects in other towns, returning the favor for the support we received from them.

One bid was received for the demolition of the Houghtaling house. Mr. Miller read a letter from Dan Brooks that was received following the ending of the bid period. The letter is on record with the Highway Superintendent. Mr. Bassin commented that the company that came to look at the building initially stated that the building is not safe enough to enter into so it has to be treated as though it has asbestos in it.

The bid was opened and was as follows: from Christo Demolition - \$29,800 to take down and haul away.

A motion was made by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilman Clark to accept the bid of \$29,800 from Christo for the demolition of the Houghtaling house. Motion carried.

Mr. Miller stated that the town will need to look at purchasing a new town truck in 2020. Next year the department may be in need of a backhoe, and this year we may need a new pickup with plow.

Ancramdale Historic District

Mr. Bassin reported that 10 postcards have returned. 7 were in favor, 1 with no vote marked and 2 no votes.

Doodletown Wildlife

The Doodletown WMA will hold a public meeting on August 28th at the Copake pavilion.

A motion was made by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to approve the following budget adjustments. Motion carried.

Highway Fund:

To 5011.2 Chips from Fund Balance \$27,000.00

General Fund:

To 1620.4 \$7,500, 7020.4 \$4,000 from Fund Balance: \$11,500

To 8010.14 \$2,500 from 8010.42 \$1,500 and 8010.13 \$1,000

A motion was made by Councilwoman Israel and seconded by Councilman Clark to approve the warrant and pay the bills. Motion carried.

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

Respectively submitted by,

Monica Cleveland
Ancram Town Clerk