

**Town of Ancram  
Town Board  
Regular Meeting  
June 18, 2020  
In Person and Zoom Meeting**

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

---

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

Mr. Bassin informed the board members that the meeting was also available online via zoom and that at this point two members of the public had signed on to participate in the meeting.

Mr. Bassin asked if there were any items on the agenda that any board member needed to recuse themselves from. There were none.

Mr. Ed Ferratto, Town of Ancram Zoning and Code Enforcement Officer gave the board a presentation on derelict buildings in Ancram. He informed the board that Marie MacDermott sends her apologies but that she had a family emergency and had to go north.

Mr. Ferratto provided the town board members with a list of properties that he determined to be dilapidated, vacant and derelict. A binder accompanied this list that provided photos of the properties. There are approximately 18 properties on this list. 8 properties need to be taken down, 6 are vacant, 2-3 are barns on farms, one has been boarded up and one has been taken down to date. Mr. Ferratto stated that property #3 on the list is owned by Double D and that he has condemned the building and has been in contact with the owner who has plans on taking the building down. Property #4 on the list is a manufactured home on Cottontail Road and that the owner plans on removing the structure. Property #8 is a small building on the property and has been condemned. Property #9 has had no communication as the mailings have been returned. Last communication with this property owner ended with the owner saying the building would be taken down after personal property had been removed. Property #18 is a mobile home that has been boarded up and is being used for storage and has been made secure. Building #10 has been taken down.

A question arose about the "Tin Smith House". Mr. Ferratto informed the board that he has issued a stop work order on the property but that he believes that the owner continues to work. Mr. Ferratto felt that the home was deteriorating quickly.

Mr. Bassin said that Mr. Boice had asked about the Steele house and the grant that the Opera House had applied for. Mr. Bassin said that the Opera house had been awarded \$50,000 and that they are in the stage of hiring a planner to do an analysis on the building. Mr. Boice said that there is no back wall on the building at this time, windows are missing and that it is not a secure building. Mr. Ferratto said he will look at it. Last he was there he felt it was structurally sound.

Councilwoman Hundt asked if there was any action that the Town Board needs to make at this time regarding any of the issues spoken about. Mr. Ferratto said that once the 60-90 day notice passes, the town board notifies the property owners and that they are to come before the town board. Mr. Bassin noted that the town law does not allow a property to be taken down just because of it “not looking nice”. Mr. Ferratto said that while this is true, there are state building codes that have to be adhered to.

Councilman Boice had a question for Mr. Ferratto regarding multiple fire activations at Camp Anne. Mr. Boice had several concerns and was told that these concerns need to be first addressed with the towns building inspector. Mr. r said that he will look into Mr. Boices concerns including the fact that there are multiple issues it seems with the alarm system and the fact that at times they do not have an active alarm system.

Mr. Bassin also brought up the issue of trees blocking driveways for fire truck access. Mr. Ferratto asked that when this happens Mr. Boice alert him. Mr. Boice named a few known areas.

### **Minutes**

Councilwoman Hundt asked that the name of the farm be added to the section of the minutes where the town board approved the support of a letter for a Conservation Easement. The name of the farm “Taking Care Farm” will be added as an addition to the minutes.

A motion was made by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt to approve the amended minutes. Motion carried.

### **Supervisors Report**

1. May Financial Report – NYS reported that sales tax for Columbia County was down 32% for May, which is consistent with our assumption that sales tax will be down about 40% over the rest of the year. Assuming we get the plow truck loan and cut costs as outlined in our year-end cash projection, we should end the year in good financial shape, with \$934,000 in cash.

2. Reopening Town Hall – We will discuss and decide if we want to reopen Town Hall to the public, by appointment only, starting on Monday, July 6, based on the procedures in the Town Hall Reopening Plan Summary, which is attached. Visitors will be asked to log in and fill out a health questionnaire, and employees will fill out the health questionnaire. Anyone coming to Town Hall will maintain a 6-foot social distance or wear mask if that is not possible. Sanitizing of public areas, door handles, light switches and phones will be done Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays following normal town hall hours, and a complete cleaning and sanitizing will be done on Sundays.

3. Camp & Pool – We will discuss and decide what we want to do about the camp and pool this summer. NYS has issued guidance to allow Towns to operate day camps and a pool as long as we follow the State guidelines. You all should read the guidelines carefully and be prepared to make a decision on what we want to do. I have asked for recommendations on whether or not to open the camp and or pool this summer from Camp/Pool Board co-chairs Jane Plasman and Ellen Langton, from Pool Manager Jen Boice, Head Lifeguard Johanna Skoda and Camp Director Sarah Mason. Hopefully we will have their recommendations before we meet on 6/18.

4. CSCTF Initiatives – 1) Geothermal HVAC system at Town Hall – As you may recall, the CPL analysis suggested a town hall geothermal system would cost about \$270,000 compared to the \$116,000

proposed by Aztech. Primary difference in costs is the CPL analysis assumed a need for a significantly larger system than Aztech. NYSERDA reviewed the two estimates, and indicated the Aztech proposal is more reasonable than the CPL estimate. Next step will be to issue a design-build RFP for a town hall geothermal system and see what we get by way of proposed configurations and costs from a wider variety of installers. 2) LED Street Lights – We are waiting for Central Hudson to give us a final financial estimate for converting all streetlights to LED.

5. Building Department report – Code Enforcement Officer Ed Ferratto has compiled a summary of all derelict buildings in town and plans to review his analysis with us at the 6/18 meeting.

6. Communications training – Jami Erhing has indicated she is ready to conduct an in-person communications & sensitivity training program for up to 10 people using social distancing. Its up to us to determine when we want to do this.

7. We have ordered 100 mbs broadband for Town Hall and 25 mbs broadband for the Garage and are waiting for an installation date.

8. Financial Advisory Council and Comp Plan Implementation Committees Meetings – Both groups met recently. Notes from each meeting will be circulated next week.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Hundt and seconded by Councilman Clark to approve the towns reopening plan that is on file at the town hall. Motion carried.

Councilman Boice suggested that the occupancy signs at the town hall be taken down for the time being.

### **Camp and Pool**

Mr. Bassin asked for the town board member's thoughts on opening the camp and pool for the summer. All board members were in agreement that they did not see how it was possible to open the camp and pool and stay within the mandates set by the state. Mr. Boice noted that he had been told that pools were not going to be allowed to open until phase 4.

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

**Resolution # 30 of 2020** - Whereas NYS has established guidelines for operating kids day camps and pools to protect children, counselors and lifeguards from exposure to Covid-19, and whereas these guidelines require, among other things, that 6 foot social distances be maintained, or that masks be worn, and that rest rooms be sanitized after each use, and whereas the Camp Director and Head Lifeguard have determined it is not possible to adhere to the NYS guidelines and have recommended that the camp and pool do not operate in 2020, and whereas the Columbia County Health Department has strongly recommended against opening kids camps and pools this summer, therefore it is **Resolved**, that to protect the health and welfare of campers, swimmers, counselors, lifeguards and their families, that the Town of Ancram will not operate its kids' camp or open the town pool in 2020.

Councilwoman Hundt asked what was happening with the lunches for the school children during the summer months. Mr. Bassin said that the schools are supposed to be covering the bagged lunches and that where there may be a gap, Neighbors Helping Neighbors will step in.

Concerning the Planning Board training on sensitivity, Mr. Bassin has asked if the planning board is taking part in in person meetings in July. Mr. Ingram and Mr. Hoffman were not sure. Once the planning board schedules an in person meeting again, the town will set up the training to happen prior to the meeting. Given the distancing restraints at this time, the town may hold off on including the Zoning Board in this training.

There is concern in Boston Corners with parking and the need for some no parking signs. While the town has the right to put these signs up, a town law has to be passed to do so. Councilman Clark stated that he has no issue with the proposed no parking signs. He is interested to know what the Rail Trail group reported to the Boston Corners Hamlet group in regards to the new section of the trail and parking. Carol Falsetti, who joined the meeting via zoom and is the head of the Boston Corners Hamlet Committee, said that the Rail Trail representatives told the group that they have no plans for any new parking areas for the new section of the trail which goes through the hamlet. They were told that this would be a town responsibility.

### **Board Member Comments**

Councilwoman Israel gave a thank you to those who worked on the town newsletter and expressed how great it looks.

Councilman Clark gave a thank you to Jack Lindsay, Hila Richardson and the NHN group for all they have done for transportation and food delivery during this pandemic.

Councilwoman Hundt asked where the town radar signs are at this time. Mr. Miller said that they are on Undermountain Road and Wiltsie Bridge. Ms. Hundt felt that there was a need for them in the hamlets.

Councilman Boice informed the board that the Fire Department has been extremely busy the past few months with multiple calls. He felt that this was because of a rise in traffic and more people in town.

### **Highway Department**

Mr. Miller reported that he has received notice on the CHIPS funding. The town is slated to get the same amount as last year but that there is the possibility of a 20% cut. The new truck is at Zwacks and the town should receive it by the end of July. Mr. Bassin said that the estoppel notice period has been extended by the state by one month due to the pandemic and that this is due to the courts being closed. He is hopeful that the loan will be ready in time for the delivery of the truck.

Mr. Miller said that he had researched the trees for the screening of the town garage building. He has found blue spruce trees for \$100-\$200 depending on the size. The town will need about 4-5 trees. He

feels that the view down Maple Lane is the biggest issue. Councilwoman Hundt asked if Mr. Miller will follow the rendering sent to the town by a resident. Mr. Miller said that in some aspects, yes. But, he noted, the rendering also had areas where the driveway was proposed to be ripped up and Mr. Miller said he would not be doing that. Mr. Miller said that the town would look to plant them in the fall due to the dry conditions at this time. Mr. Bassin suggested that Mr. Miller speak to Colleen Lutz to get her input as well.

The highway department will be paving the town's section of Sawchuk Road this coming week. This will be an approximately \$75,000 item and will be done in house with our equipment.

#### **Town Clerk**

The taxes have been taken to the county and noticed was received today that they balance.

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to make the following budget adjustments. Motion carried.: From Fund Balance: \$15,600 To: 1620.4 \$13,800, 1910.4 \$400.00, 8797 \$400.00, 7510.1 \$1000.00

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt 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 Cleveland, Ancram Town Clerk