

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Regular Meeting
July 16, 2020**

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 by Supervisor Arthur Bassin with a salute to the flag. Mr. Bassin noted that due to the covid-19 pandemic, the board was meeting in person with social distancing and that the public can participate via zoom.

Ancram Zoning Enforcement Officer Ed Ferratto gave an update on the Ancram Building Department. Mr. Ferratto reported that the department had their second biggest month ever. They have been very busy. He has been busy with telephone inquiries and reviews of plans. Mr. Ferratto reported that he has had progress with some of the buildings on the list of derelict buildings. Two buildings have been removed from the list because they are not unsafe to the properties surrounding them. He felt that while these buildings are vacant, they are not unsafe. Mr. Ferratto reported that he has been in touch with Camp Anne and that during both phone calls he had been cut off and that he is in the process of calling them back and visiting them.

The department has sent three letters concerning egress on driveways. He sent with the letters a copy of where the codes address this. The three driveways are on East Ancram Road. 73 Cottontail Road has been issued a demolition permit and will be taken down. The structure on Bryant Mines Property is waiting for an asbestos report but will be coming down soon.

Mr. Ferratto addressed the Stiehle house. He stated that he had an email conversation with Kit White from the APG. The APG has the proper permits and that the weeds surrounding the structure have been mowed down. Work had stopped on the building due to the Covid shut down but that ongoing renovations had begun again. Councilman Boice had several concerns with the back wall of the structure.

Mr. Ferratto reported that he has emailed the owners of the Tin Smith house and has received no response to date.

Councilman Boice asked what the exact criteria was for placing a property on the derelict building list. Mr. Boice felt that the Stiehle House was a joke. He said that it didn't seem right that the Hoyts were pushed, during the pandemic, to take down the Porter Store but that the Steele structure was not made to continue work due to Covid. Mr. Boice asked why the

Lampman house which has no windows and is overgrown with vegetation was not on the list. The structure is on East Ancram Road. Mr. Ferratto said that if there is a building that he missed or the board members feel needs to be addressed, they need to let him know so he can go and look at the structure. He stressed that in addition to the derelict building laws, there are building codes for the state that can be addressed as well. In response to the Stiehle house and the Hoyt building, Mr. Ferratto said that the demolition of the Hoyt building was done by one individual with no contact with another person. The Stiehle house project took more than one person in a confined space. Mr. Ferratto also stated that the reason the Stiehle house was not on the list was because there was an open building permit on the property and work was being done. Mr. Boice remarked that with photos of buildings being on the front page of the papers, it is possible for the town to incur lawsuits from homeowners. Mr. Boice felt that the criteria for these buildings needs to be very clear. Mr. Ferratto felt that the board members and the residents need to read the building codes and the derelict building laws and that the town board and his department need to work together and not attack each other. Mr. Bassin thanked Mr. Ferratto and his department for the hard work on this project and that there are definitely more buildings out there that need to be looked at. Councilwoman Hundt said that she had looked through the book and that she felt that it was a very good start. She agreed that there is clear criteria for derelict buildings in the state building codes as well. Mr. Bassin stated that while the town does have the power to take down a building and place a lien on the property, if the property owner decides to not pay the tax bill, the town may not recoup the money. Mr. Ferratto also agreed that in addition to those costs, the town would incur legal fees if the individuals needed to be taken to court to remove the buildings.

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt to approve the June 21, 2020 minutes as read and placed on the record. Motion carried.

Supervisors Report

1. June Financial Report – June numbers and the full year cash projection are consistent with expectations and the prior month data. Because of planned savings and the \$200,000 plow ruck loan, we expect to end 2020 with about \$900,000 in cash on hand, which is about \$200,000 higher than had been budgeted.
2. 2021 Budget – We will start the 2021 budget process in August. Attached are drafts of preliminary 2021 budget assumptions and the 2021-2025 Capital Plan, which envision keeping property taxes flat and continue to fund the \$130,000 contingent account for future capital spending. There are no new capital spending projects proposed for the next few years, but we will have about \$60,000 available as part of the NYSERDA grant to fund a new TH HVAC system in 2021 when we determine what we want to do with the HVAC system. We also will have the \$900,000 fund balance available if we need to make some unplanned capital investments.

3. CSCTF Initiatives

a) Geothermal HVAC system at Town Hall – No new news on this. 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.

b) LED Street Lights – Central Hudson is planning to replace all streetlights with LEDs over the next few months. We are waiting for final documents to sign to get this done

4. TH Broadband – Consolidated installed 100 mbs broadband for Town Hall on July 2. We are still waiting on an installation date for the Town Garage. Rich Juliano, head of the County IT Department came down to review the broadband installation and has recommended we install an enhanced security system to protect town computers from viruses and hackers. The system Rich recommends is Sophos – which should cost under \$2000 to install with a three-year subscription.

5. Reopening Town Hall – Town Hall opened to the public by appointment on Monday, July 6. Traffic has been slow. We need to decide what we want to do about “opening” the playground at TH and the basketball court at Blass Field, and with what rules.

6. Communications/sensitivity training – Jami Erhing conducted an in-person communications & sensitivity training program on July 2. All but two Planning Board members attended, and the program was well received. I suggest we consider offering this program to a wider audience of town officials and volunteers in the fall.

Mr. Bassin spoke about the 2021 Town Budget process. He noted that there would be a possible additional fee for STR's. Councilman Clark asked if the library was going to go forward with a 414 vote. Mr. Bassin said that due to the Covid, he did not think that the library would proceed with the 414. Councilwoman Hundt confirmed that they would not.

Highway Superintendent Miller announced that the Town Plow Truck that is being replaced has been sold on an auction site for \$32,100. He was pleased with this amount as it was quite a bit more than was anticipated.

Mr. Bassin spoke about the speeding that has been happening in the hamlets. The highway department moved the radar sign closer to the hamlet in Ancramdale. Mr. Bassin asked Councilman Boice if he had any information in regards to the parking issues in Boston Corners. Mr. Boice said that the state park representative that he spoke to was not overly receptive. Mr. Miller said that while a no parking zone can be established, it would take a local law to do so. Councilman Clark felt that while he understands the need for no parking signs, he felt as though

this would only be a band aide to a larger problem which is that Boston Corners, given the Alander Trail and the Rail Trail, needs adequate parking. Mr. Clark felt that the state parks should and could help and that possibly an engineer study is warranted. Supervisor Bassin suggested to Carol Falcetti, who was joining the meeting via Zoom and is the head of the Boston Corners Hamlet Group, that the group set up a subcommittee.

Mr. Bassin reflected on the sensitivity training that was attended by all but two planning board and one zoning board member. The training was two hours long and the town may have another one in the Fall. Councilwoman Hundt stated that she had been unable to attend but that she wished that everyone from the planning board could have attended. She felt that the communication about the class had broken down. Ms. Hundt stated that the complainant has noted that they have felt lost in the "loop" and that nobody has apologized at the end of the day. Ms. Hundt says that she has heard the comment made that there really is no issue on the planning board and that she feels that there is a communication and attitude problem prevalent within the planning board members. Mr. Bassin agreed that there are times that members seem to be dismissive of the environmental issues in regards to applicants before the planning board but that there is also the feeling that the environmental issues are pushed at times above the scope of the law. Mr. Bassin felt that there are two sides to every story and that both sides need to come together. Mr. Bassin noted that the two members of the planning board not in attendance were absent due to one being out of town and another caring for an elderly parent and not taking part in in person meetings. Councilman Clark noted that he felt it was a well done presentation and good for those who attended, many who actively participated.

Councilwoman Hundt asked if the members of both the planning and zoning boards are keeping up with their training. Mr. Bassin said that will be looked at again at the end of the year.

Mr. Bassin asked the town board members their feelings on allowing the towns playground and ballfield to be opened back up to the public. The members agreed that this will be fine and that the town will install some sanitation stations.

Councilman Boice said that the plan is to open and paint the pool in September and October. This will deter fence jumpers.

Board Members

Councilwoman Israel noted that the town still has an Ancram gateway sign in storage and that she is actively looking for a place to place it along County Route 7.

Councilwoman Hundt asked about the governors mandate in regards to police procedures and what the county is doing to comply. Mr. Bassin noted he had sent around three emails today regarding this.

Mr. Bassin noted that the handmade sign that was questioned on County Route 7 at Four Corners, had disappeared on its own.

Mr. Bassin announced that the Pond Restaurant has decided to forego their food truck event. Millerhurst Farm is going ahead with their 250th Anniversary, with facemasks, sanitizer and only take out food.

Highway

Mr. Miller reported that Sawchuck road has been completed. The job was done in house with Ancram's paver and the help of three other towns. The new truck is waiting for the plow hitch to be put on. The department will be looking to oil and stone both Simons Road and the Town Hall parking lot.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Hundt and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to approve the warrants 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