

To: Ancram Town Board
From: Art Bassin
Subject: Supervisor's Report
Date: February 12, 2022



1) Financial Report – We received our December 2021 and January 2022 financial reports this week. 4Q sales tax at \$109,857 was stronger than expected, but other than that, December was a normal month. January also came in as expected.

2) Recognizing and Solving the Problem – There have been incidents over the past 15 years that have contributed to the perception that there is a culture of disrespect toward women by some individuals in Ancram town government. Some have been reported and investigated, and some have not been reported or investigated. As a Town and Town Board we must work to create an environment where we can disagree with each other without being disrespectful, and that we deal promptly and appropriately with specific complaints of disrespectful behavior. There is no excuse for disrespectful behavior, and if we want to eliminate disrespectful behavior, there is no excuse for not reporting it and dealing with it when it occurs. Jack Lindsey has done the Town an important service by bringing this issue to the Town's attention, so we can all think about and work toward solving this set of problems.

3) Investigation of Disrespectful Behavior – The Town has retained Hinman and Straub attorney Elena DeFio Kean to investigate the issues raised by Jack Lindsey and others at the 1/20 Town Board meeting and two related complaints that the Town has received following Mr. Lindsey's comments. Ms. DeFio Kean will interview individuals who have expressed concerns about experiencing or observing disrespectful behavior. Per town policy, the investigation will remain confidential until completed at which time the Town Board will be briefed on the results in executive session, and the public will be provided with a summary of findings.

4) Committee for Respectful Behavior (CRB) – One of the ideas that Mr. Lindsey suggested to help resolve these issues and create more acceptance of diverse opinions was to create an "Equality Council". To implement this idea, we will consider a resolution at the 2/17 Town Board meeting to establish a Committee for Respectful Behavior Respect to develop and recommend to the Town Board:

- a) recommend to the Town Board a Code of Conduct for Town of Ancram elected and appointed officials, employees, volunteers, and residents to guide respectful behavior in all Town activities and communications;
- b) recommend to the Town Board a process and procedure to report, receive and investigate complaints from anyone who perceives they have been treated with disrespect by a town official, employee, volunteer, or resident in violation of the Code of Conduct;
- c) recommend to the Town Board a process and procedure to report the results of the investigation recommendation and subsequent action, if any, to the complainant, town Board and other affected parties; and
- d) recommend to the Town Board the content, timing, and audience for a series of training programs that introduce the new Town Code of Conduct and which focus on verbal and nonverbal communications (including examples of disrespectful behavior) to supplement the mandatory annual NYS Harassment Training.

5) Membership on the Committee for Respectful Behavior – We should plan to spend some time at our 2/17 Town Board meeting talking about the qualities and characteristics that members of the CRB should demonstrate and how to identify candidates for the CRB. I would suggest we aim at appointing the CRB at our March meeting.