

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Regular Meeting
October 20, 2022**

Present: Supervisor Arthur Bassin Councilman Hugh Clark
 Councilwoman Bonnie Hundt Councilwoman Amy Gold
 Town Clerk Monica Cleveland
 Highway Superintendent James Miller

Absent: Councilman David Boice

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

Mr. Bassin welcomed Jeff Domanski (on zoom) and Colleen Lutz to the meeting to speak about community solar. Ms. Lutz, a member of the CSCTF, said that the committee is exploring another community solar project for Ancram. She stressed that this is the fact finding stage. She reported that the proposed program would be different then the Solstice program in that this would be an opt out program. The Town Board would have to pass a town law which would enroll every property into the program and then the property owners would have to opt out if they wished to not be included. Mr. Domanski gave a slide show on how the program works. Councilman Clark asked who would be the administrator of the project and what are the qualifications to hold that position. Mr. Domanski answered that the requirements for the administrator are set up by the State and that at this time there are five to choose from. Councilwoman Hundt asked if the solar is generated in NYS. Mr. Domanski said yes, it has to by regulations be community fed solar. Councilwoman Gold asked for a time frame for implementation . The answer was typically nine months. Mr. Mike Citrin (zoom) asked how this compares with the current Solstice program. If this program launches, and a property owner wishes to be a part but already receive solar from Solstice, they can choose to change. But an owner cannot have both programs. The board thanked Mrs. Lutz and Mr. Domanski for the presentation.

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

A motion was made by Councilwoman Gold and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as read and have them placed on the record. Motion carried.

CRB

Councilwoman Gold gave an update on the committee. She announced that Bill Walters had resigned from the committee. The proposed policy is almost finalized and the committee is working on a complaint form. Mr. Jack Lindsey attended a meeting and discussed the town's Ethics Law and the complaint process. Ms. Gold said that the group is looking for a new name. They wish to convey that the policy is to educate and not to control behavior.

SIC

There were no members present to give a report. Mr. Bassin said that the engineer had been at the town hall to look at a possible pavilion spot. Also, the water survey sent out 119 mailers and have had roughly 40 returned.

Housing

Councilwoman Hundt gave a report on affordable housing. She met with the Tri town group. She also met with Mike Tucker of the CEDC, Al Valencia from Habitat and Didi Barrett to talk about affordable housing ideas. The County is forming a committee. Ms. Hundt also has been speaking to businesses about employee and housing issues. She was thanked by the board for her ongoing effort in this subject.

Town Garage Solar

The engineer is looking at the salt shed in regards to feasibility for solar panels. The town has the option to rent or buy the equipment.

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

Resolution #40 of 2022: BAR Reappointments – Resolved, that Steve Olyha be reappointed to a 5 year term on the Board of Assessment Review ending 9/30, 2027, and that Joe Brown be reappointed to a 1 year term as a temporary/alternate member of the Board of Assessment Review ending 9/30, 2023.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Gold and seconded by Councilman Clark to appoint Joe Brown and Colleen Lutz as co-chairs of the CSCTF. Motion carried.

The following resolution was offered by Councilwoman Hundt and seconded by Councilwoman Gold and moved for adoption. Resolution carried.

Resolution #41 of 2022: Letter Supporting NYS Climate Action Council Scoping Plan – Resolved, that the Ancram Town Board approves the letter drafted by Councilman Hugh Clark supporting the goals of the NYS Climate Action Plan which states that the Town of Ancram supports any NYS Scoping Plan explicitly stating that proposed actions affecting local landscapes and character will be executed only upon acceptance by the municipality in whose jurisdiction that project is proposed. and authorizes the Town Supervisor to send this letter to the Climate Action Council on behalf of the Ancram Town Board.

The following resolution was offered by Councilwoman Gold and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt and moved for adoption. Resolution carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Resolution #42 of 2022: Climate Vulnerability Assessment - AUTHORIZATION FOR THE TOWN OF ANCRAM TO ACCEPT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BEING OFFERED BY CDRPC TO DEVELOP A VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the TOWN OF ANCRAM pledged to take part in the NYS DEC Climate Smart Communities Certification Program that may include preparation of a Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Plan; and

WHEREAS, free technical assistance is available to support the development of these documents (PE7 Action: Climate Vulnerability Assessment and PE7 Action: Climate Adaptation Plan) from Cornell Cooperative Extension on behalf of the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) through a NYS DEC Climate Smart Communities Coordinator Services contract; and

WHEREAS, The Columbia County Board of Supervisors adopted resolution 347-2022 on August 11, 2022 to accept this technical assistance for a county plan; and

WHEREAS, the County CSC Coordinator in collaboration with Columbia County Climate Smart Communities Task Force will provide an opportunity to every municipality in the county to formally participate in the planning to create efficiencies, reduce redundancies, and increase coordination across the County; and

WHEREAS, the TOWN OF ANCRAM Climate Smart Community Task Force will lead the Climate Adaptation Process; and

WHEREAS, the municipality will provide an opportunity for public input and comment on the draft report; and

WHEREAS, the TOWN OF ANCRAM Climate Smart Community Task Force will present a summary of the vulnerability results and adaptation plan to the ANCRAM TOWN BOARD for consideration of adoption;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the TOWN OF ANCRAM hereby undertake the Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Municipal Board authorizes submission of these documents to the NYS DEC Office for Climate Change for consideration of points toward Climate Smart Communities certification for the TOWN OF ANCRAM.

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

Resolution #43 2023 Preliminary Budget - Resolved, that the 2023 Preliminary Budget is approved as presented.

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

Resolution #44 of 2023: 2023 Final Budget Public Hearing - Resolved, that the Ancram Town Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed 2023 Final Budget at 6:55 pm on Thursday, November 17, 2022 at the Ancram Town Hall, 1416 CR 7, Ancram NY 12502. 2023 salaries for elected Town Officials are budgeted to increase by on average 5% to the following amounts: Town Board members \$3200; Town Supervisor \$5250; Town Justices: \$6125; Town Clerk: \$35,650; Town Highway Superintendent: \$67,300. In addition, the Ancram Town Board will consider and may approve a one time, lump sum, non-recurring, inflation adjustment payment of up to 5% for all employees, including elected officials, at the December 2022 Town Board meeting to be paid in 2023 if the rate of inflation continues at current levels. The 2023 Final Budget will be available from the Ancram Town Clerk, will be posted on the Town website at www.ancramny.org and will be circulated to the Ancramemail list.

Supervisors Report

1) Financial Report – YTD through September we have indications of soft revenues in a variety of categories, which are reflected in a reduction to our year end cash projection of about \$50,000 to about \$1.4 million. Given the likely continuation of high inflation, rising interest rates, supply chain uncertainties, food and fuel cost increases and the situation in Ukraine, the economic environment is still unpredictable and could negatively impact our costs and revenues for the rest of 2022 and in 2023. We should plan to continue to be cautious and conservative in our financial management until we see how things evolve, and what happens with costs, sales tax and mortgage tax revenues over the balance of the year.

2) 2023 Preliminary Budget – We will have a public hearing on the 2023 Preliminary Budget prior to our 10/20 Town Board meeting. The Preliminary Budget indicates our 2023 property tax levy will be the same as our 2022 tax levy at \$714,000. We are projected to use \$98,000 of fund balance to maintain flat taxes, \$85,000 of which is in the Highway Department to cover salary and price increases. Major uncertainties continue to be the magnitude of price increases for general goods and services, highway

materials, health insurance and the risks to our sales tax and mortgage tax revenues from an uncertain economic environment. As we get more clarity on these issues over the next month, we will refine the budget and finalize it by our November meeting.

3) T-Bill Investment Program- We have invested about \$750,000 in 6 month t-bills through Key Bank which mature in March and April 2023 and which will yield about 3.8% compared to the .10% we have been getting for our funds in our bank account. By investing about \$1 million of our fund balance in 90-to-180-day t-bills in 2023 we should be able to earn an additional \$30,000 to \$40,000 in interest in 2023. \$30,000 is included in the Preliminary Budget

4) New York State Climate Action Council Scoping Plan Letter – We will be considering a letter drafted by Councilman Hugh Clark in support of the NYS Climate Action Council Scoping Plan assuming municipalities are allowed to control any investments proposed for their communities to assure consistency with town zoning laws and community character as defined by local Comprehensive Plans.

5) ANHNA Van – We concluded the purchase of the van to support the ANHNA food delivery program. The van cost \$48,394, of which the Town used ARPA money to pay \$40,000 and ANHNA paid \$8,384. We will be reviewing an agreement between the Town and ANHNS that will govern the use of van and the Town-ANHNA relationship.

6) Harassment and Workplace Violence Policies – We will be reviewing and considering for approval revised harassment and workplace policies.

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

Resolution #45 of 2022: Revised Harassment & Workplace Violence Policies & Training – Resolved, that the revised Harassment and Workplace Violence policies are approved as presented, and that the Town Supervisor is authorized to schedule mandatory annual harassment and workplace violence training at a cost not to exceed \$2500.

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

Resolution #46 of 2022: Pine Plains Vet - Resolved, that the Town Supervisor is authorized to enter into a contract with the Pine Plains Veterinary clinic to provide support for the Town Dog Control Officer and house lost dogs, if necessary, until owners are found.

The following resolution was offered by Councilwoman Gold and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt and moved for adoption. Resolution carried.

Resolution #47 of 2022: Community Rescue Squad – Resolved, that the Town Supervisor is authorized to enter into an agreement with the Community Rescue Squad for emergency medical and ambulance services for the Town of Ancram for 2023 at a cost of \$126,848, and to enter into a chargeback agreement with the County of Columbia to authorize the County to pay the Community Rescue Squad \$126,848 and include this expense as part of the annual County property tax charged to Ancram property owners.

The following resolution was offered by Councilwoman Gold and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt and moved for adoption. Resolution carried.

Resolution #48 of 2022: Delta Dental - Resolved, that the Town Supervisor is authorized to enter into an agreement with Delta Dental to provide dental services to Town of Ancram employees who enroll in the Delta Dental program and agree to pay for these services.

Town Board Member Comments

Councilwoman Gold noted that she is working with the watershed group along with Mrs. Colleen Lutz.

Highway Department

Diesel Fuel used: 441 gallons

Gasoline used: 317 gallons

*We are continuing to work on dirt roads as weather allows.

*We have been clearing ditches of leaves to prevent clogging of ditches and pipes during rain events.

*We assisted the Towns of Gallatin and Northeast with projects.

*We have been getting the Plow and Sanding equipment ready for the approaching winter season.

*Diesel Prices are up significantly again.... 10/13 delivery was \$4.63

*With the resignation of David Handlowich, I have hired Avery Heath to rejoin the crew effective 10/1/2022

*Received a quote from HL Gage on a new plow truck for \$299,308.10. This truck is priced fully equipped. It is estimated that it will take 1.5-2 years for the truck to be built. The truck is on the capital plan scheduled for 2024, which is the estimated delivery date. I am told the price is locked in but may fluctuate slightly due to freight and tire surcharges. The truck is priced through the Onondaga county piggyback bid contract.

*I also received the updated quote on a sand and salt structure with I emailed to you (the board) on Monday for \$179,300 from Eagle Associates in Cazenovia NY. The price is through Sourcewell.

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Gold to purchase a 2024 Plow truck in 2024, not to exceed \$300,000. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Miller agreed that given the current economic climate, the town will put off plans for a new sand/salt structure.

Town Clerk

The town clerk noted that it has been very quiet at the town hall. The office is working their way through several FOIL requests having to do with Planning Board agenda items.

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Gold to allow a budget of \$1000 for the 2022 Ancram Winterfest. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Hundt and seconded by Councilwoman Gold to allow for the Tech Committee members to be paid \$21 and hour to run the OWL system for town meetings. Motion carried.

Mr. Bassin noted that the draft contract for the NHN Van is being drafted and will be ready for the town board to finalize next month.

The following budget adjustments were made on a motion from Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Gold. Motion carried.

From Fund Balance: \$19,750.00

To: 1620.4 (Buildings) \$3,000; 1680.4 (Central Data) \$5,750; 8010.41 (ZBA, PB Clerk) \$3,000; 5132.4 (Dump Day) \$7,000; 1110.4 (Court) \$1,000.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Hundt and seconded by Councilwoman Gold to approve the warrants and pay the bills. Motion carried.

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

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica R. Cleveland
Ancram Town Clerk