

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Regular Meeting
November 17, 2022**

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

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

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

At this time Mr. Bassin welcomed Colleen Lutz of the CSCTF and Brian Buzzby from Ampion to speak about community solar with Ampion. Mr. Buzzby explained the process of the opt out program that will be offered to the town if the town wishes to take part. The company is looking at this program being approved in December by the State. Once there is more information, the CSCTF will bring it to the board.

Mr. Bassin welcomed Suzette Boeuy of the Columbia County Real Property department and the town assessor Rene Deleeuw to discuss the 2023 Revaluation. Suzette and Rene were both in agreement that the town needs to work towards equality within the roll. Suzette noted that the sales that the town revaluation will look at are sales from the last two to three years. At this time, sales are coming in 100-150% more than assessed value. Ms. Boeuy said that she felt that this is the Board's sole decision and that the county will stand by that decision. Ms. Boeuy was asked by Councilman Boice if it was better to have a higher or a lower equalization rate. Ms. Boeuy said that the goal is 100%. The town is currently at 74%. Mr. Deleeuw said that all of the new data and the inventory has been input and the town now has an updated data base. Mr. Deleeuw has been working on land breakdowns and corrections of such in the roll. Mr. Deleeuw said that he was fine if the town waits a year or goes forward. If the town goes forward and the sale prices significantly drop and the equalization rate spikes, the assessor's department can trend properties down. Councilwoman Gold said that she had heard from several residents that they are worried about the taxes increasing. A motion was made by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilman Clark to continue to proceed on schedule with the 2023 Town of Ancram Revaluation process. Yes votes: Boice, Hunt, Clark, Bassin. No Votes: Gold. Motion carried.

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

Committee on Respectful Behavior

Councilwoman Gold presented the Board with a draft Code of Conduct and Incident Report. The committee is also asking for a name change to Communications and Conflict Resolution Committee (CCRC). Councilman Clark suggested that the board table making a decision on these items until December so that the members can have time to properly review. The Board agreed.

SIC Update

Councilwoman Hundt spoke about her work on affordable housing. She said that she had taken part in a meeting with Habitat. The program is developing a booklet and discussing taxation. Councilman Clark asked if the three town group has a rough estimate of how many families need accommodation. How many are affected. Councilwoman Hundt stated that is hard to track but that she can see if she can get some numbers.

The Pavilion project had a meeting with the consultant. The question remains about location and if the town wishes to proceed with the project.

On the Solar project at the town garage, it was suggested to put the second step of the project first and figure out how much solar capacity we need to meet the Town's needs before we analyze the capacity at the Town Garage for solar.

NYS DOT

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

Resolution #49 of 2022: NYS DOT Study of Triangle Slip Ramp at 82/7 Intersection - Resolved, that the Ancram Town Board requests that the New York State Department of Transportation conduct a study to determine if designating the triangle slip ramp in front of the Ancram General Store at the 82/7 intersection as one-way is warranted to improve traffic safety and eliminate the risk of accidents resulting from two vehicles simultaneously entering the slip ramp from 82 and CR 7 or from a vehicle from CR 7 turning left onto 82 from the slip ramp because of the poor sightline looking west on 82.

Supervisor Bassin noted that he had invested on behalf of the town into the following T-Bills: \$750,000 for six months at 3.8% and 3.9% and \$250,000 for three month at 3.4%.

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

Resolution #50 of 2022: Adoption of 2023 Final Budget - Resolved, that the Ancram Town Board adopts the 2023 Town Budget as presented, with a Town tax levy of \$714,275, and a Lighting District tax levy of \$4,500.

Supervisors Report

1) Financial Report – October mortgage tax revenues came in stronger than expected at about \$60,000, which gives us a 2022 total of \$100,000 compared to a 2022 budget of \$60,000 and a

proposed 2023 budget of \$50,000. Given the possibility of continued 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 next year. Our year-end 2022 financial projection indicates we will have about \$1,468,000 on hand - \$477,000 in cash and about \$991,000 in 3 and 6 month t-bills million earning about 3.5%

2) 2023 Final Budget – We will have a public hearing on the 2023 Final Budget prior to our 11/17 Town Board meeting. The Final 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 and highway materials, and the risks to our sales tax and mortgage tax revenues from an uncertain economic environment.

3) Ampion Community Solar – CSCTF co-chair Colleen Lutz will introduce a representative from Ampion to give us a presentation on the Ampion opt-out community solar program.

4) NYSDOT – We will consider a resolution requesting that the NYSDOT conduct a study to determine if making the triangle slip ramp in front of the Ancram General Store at the 82/7 intersection one-way is warranted to improve traffic safety. This resolution has the support of members of the Ancram Hamlet Planning Group.

5) Reassessment – Suzette Booy, Director of the County Real Property Office, will be joining us via Zoom to discuss the pros and cons of postponing the reassessment scheduled for 2023 for a year, to 2024. Apparently some other towns in the County with planned 2023 reassessments have decided to postpone for a year to give the real estate markets a chance to settle down.

6) Annual Document Review – I have gotten a few suggested edits and comments on the Organizational Resolutions and Fee Schedule, but nothing on the Purchasing Policy or Financial Process Manual. While we will not consider these documents for adoption until January, please let mw have any comments or suggested edits you have as soon as possible.

Highway Report

Mr. Miller gave the following report:

Diesel Fuel Used: 485 gallons

Gasoline used: 509 gallons

We have been hauling in sand and took a 70 ton delivery of salt.

We have also been hauling in gravel to replenish our stockpile.

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

We have been getting the plow and sanding equipment ready for the winter season.

We had our first snow event Tuesday 11/14

Stickle Electric has agreed to rent us their bucket truck on a per day basis. We have taken down the flags and begun to so come badly needed tree trimming.

Diesel prices are up significantly again... Last delivery was \$5.27. I am also concerned about availability. Our usage skyrockets during stormy stretches.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Cleveland stated that she is getting ready for the tax season.

Mrs. Cleveland asked for permission to look into bringing the Hometown Hero Banner program to the Town of Ancram. A motion was made by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt to allow the Town Clerk to research and to form a committee to help bring the Hometown Hero's Banners to the Town of Ancram. Motion carried.

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt. Resolution carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Resolution #51 of 2022: 2023 Health Insurance Plans – Resolved, that the Ancram Town Board authorizes the Town Supervisor to enter into an agreement with CDPHP to provide the HDEPO and HDHMO Bronze 424 or Bronze 428 health insurance plans to eligible Ancram employees and their families, and be it further resolved that the Town of Ancram will pay 100% of the premiums for these policies for eligible employees and their families, and be it further resolved that the Town of Ancram will contribute \$750 to each eligible employees' HSA in January 2023, and be it further resolved that the Town of Ancram will reimburse all eligible employees for out of pocket medical expenses incurred by the employee and covered family members in excess of \$1500 until the policy deductible has been reached and the health insurance policy covers medical expenses.

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilwoman Gold. Resolution carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Resolution #52 of 2022: Ancramdale Neighbors Helping Neighbors (ANHNA) Agreement – Resolved, that the Ancram Town Board authorizes the Town Supervisor to enter into an agreement with ANHNA regarding the use of a Town vehicle and annual financial contributions totaling \$12,500 to support the ANHNA weekly food distribution program.

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Gold. Resolution carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Resolution # 53 of 2022: Planning/Zoning/Building Department Review – Resolved, that the Ancram Town Board authorizes the Town Supervisor to request that Town planning consultant Nan Stolzenburg review application processes and procedures for the Building Department, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals and develop recommendations to simplify and streamline those application processes and procedures at a cost not to exceed \$2500.

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

Resolution #54 of 2022: Town Hall Garden Cleanup - Resolved, that the Ancram Town Board authorizes the Town Supervisor to hire Jamie MacArthur to trim and do general landscaping work on the plants and shrubs around Town Hall at a cost not to exceed \$2500.

CSCTF

Colleen Lutz gave a report on the activities of the committee. Mrs. Lutz said that the committee is excited to be in the beginning stages of hiring a NYSERDA Intern to help with the groups projects.

A motion was made by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilwoman Gold to approve the budget adjustments, approve the warrant and pay the bills. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Supervisor Bassin and seconded by Councilman Clark to enter into executive session to discuss the employment history of particular individuals. Motion carried.

(Executive session.)

The town board reconvened at 9:30pm. There were no decisions made in executive session.

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

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica R. Cleveland
Ancram Town Clerk