

**Town of Ancram  
Town Board  
Regular Meeting  
March 16, 2023**

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

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

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

A motion was made by Councilwoman Hundt and seconded by Councilwoman Gold to approve the minutes of the last regular meeting and the two public hearings on Local Laws #1 and #2 of 2023, as read and placed on the record. Motion carried.

**Assessment Revaluation Update**

Rene DeLueew, Ancram Town Assessor, and Suzette Booy, Columbia County Real Property, gave an update on the 2023 Assessment Reval. Suzette noted that the notices of change had been mailed out by March 1<sup>st</sup>. The Town of Ancram website has been updated with many useful links and information. There have been approximately 100 phone calls at this point and the schedule has been filling up for appointments to speak to the assessor. All documentation will be reviewed and changes will be notified. After this step, the property owners have the option to attend the meeting of the Board of Assessment Review.

Rene reported that he has met with approximately 100 people at this point. Mr. DeLeeuw asked that if property owners cannot get an appointment, that they still fill out a worksheet and mail or drop it off. Mr. DeLeeuw noted that he is taking all concerns seriously and will speak to anyone who wishes to discuss. Councilwoman Gold asked about the tax rate and changes to it. Mr. Bassin said that at the end of all of this the tax rate will probably go down from \$2.27 per \$1000 of assessed value to under \$1.60 per \$1000 of assessed value but it was too early to have an accurate number.

**Building/ZEO/Planning Board application review**

The town board had received from Nan Stolzenburg an outline of the changes suggested to the process of applying to the building dept and the planning board for a building application. The proposal is on file. Councilwoman Hundt asked if the suggested committee will be the heads of the departments and boards which are included in this process. The next step is Nan sending out forms to the departments and boards for feedback.

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt to accept the proposed plan for changes to the Planning Board, ZBA and Building Department Application Process by Nan Stolzenburg. Motion carried.

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

**Resolution #14 of 2023:**

**Local Law #2 of 2023:** A resolution adopting Local Law No. 2 of 2023, “A Local Law Establishing a Temporary Moratorium on Certain Applications for the Approval of Building Permits, Abbreviated Site Plan Approval, Site Plan Approval and Special Use Permits Related to Hospitality-Related Land Uses That Are Pending or May Be Subsequently Filed with the Town of Ancram.”

**Whereas:**

1. New legislation, introduced to the Town Board in January 2023 as proposed Local Law No. 1 of 2023, and then subsequently renamed as Local Law No. 2 of 2023, establishes a temporary moratorium on certain applications for the approval of building permits, abbreviated site plan approval, site plan approvals and special use permits related to hospitality-related land uses that are pending or may be subsequently filed with the Town of Ancram pursuant to either Article VI (Special Use Permits) or Article VII (Site Plan Review) of the Town of Ancram Town Zoning Law.
2. Proposed Local Law No. 2 of 2023 is an appropriate mechanism for addressing long-range community planning and zoning objectives.
3. Consistent with New York State court cases holding moratoria to be lawful, the Town of Ancram’s proposed moratorium on certain hospitality uses meets the five key elements requisite:
  - a. It establishes a reasonable time frame to allow the Town of Ancram Zoning Revisions Committee (ZRC) and the Town Board to review and update, as necessary, hospitality-related zoning standards (9 months).
  - b. It articulates a valid purpose justifying the moratorium (The Town has recently seen increases in interest in developing land for hospitality-related uses for commercial purposes and a recognition that the Town’s Zoning Law needed improvement, clarity, definition and changes to ensure hospitality-uses are consistent with Ancram’s updated Comprehensive Plan).
  - c. It establishes that the burden imposed by this moratorium is being shared substantially by the public at large (the moratorium affects the majority of public and not visited upon a minority of landowners).

- d. The adoption of this moratorium strictly adheres to the procedures for the enactment of local laws pursuant to the New York State Municipal Home Rule Law (including newspaper notice of the public hearing, public posting, county referral, and filing).
- e. It has a time certain for expiration of the moratorium [nine (9) months from the effective date of the law, with two additional periods of six (6) months if there is a necessity for such extension].
4. In 2019, pursuant to the authority granted in New York State Town Law § 272-a, the Town of Ancram adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan. That Plan sets forth Ancram's vision for its future, and the blueprint for how the Town should grow and how Ancram should preserve the characteristics and qualities of the Town so valued by Town residents. The Comprehensive Plan consists of materials, written and/or graphic, including, but not limited to, maps, charts, elements, appendices and other descriptive material. Section 272-a (11) of the Town Law requires, in relevant part, that all town land use regulations must be in accordance with an adopted Comprehensive Plan. This moratorium will allow the Town to review and update the Zoning Law, where needed, to ensure this consistency.
  5. In addition to, and in confluence with, the implementation of the goals of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, it is also the purpose of the proposed Zoning Law to exercise our Town's right to protect our citizens by controlling the use of land so as to broadly protect the public health, safety and general welfare and to carry out locally established goals and objectives in accordance with a comprehensive plan designed to preserve and protect, for the benefit of the town as a whole, the basically rural-agricultural character of the Town. This moratorium will allow the Town to review and update the Zoning Law where needed for the purpose of ensuring the public health, safety and general welfare of the Ancram Town community.
  6. The Town Board has assigned the ZRC the task of conducting the review of the Zoning Law and the drafting recommended updates and revisions.
  7. Adoption of moratoria is a "Type II Action" under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) regulations, which means that SEQRA does not apply to the adoption of moratoria [6 NYCRR § 617.5(c)(30)]. Consequently, the proposed adoption of a moratorium does not require a determination of significance or the preparation of any other SEQRA documents.
  8. Pursuant to New York State Municipal Home Rule Law § 20, Local Law No. 2 of 2023 proposing a moratorium on certain hospitality-related uses was received by each member of the Town Board prior to this meeting. In its final form either: (a) upon the desks or table of the members at least seven (7) calendar days, exclusive of Sunday, prior to its final passage; or (b) mailed, in the manner prescribed by statute, to each of them at least 10 calendar days, exclusive of Sunday, prior to its final passage; or (c) e-mailed to

the e-mail in-box of each of them in the Portable Document Format (PDF) at least 10 calendar days, exclusive of Sunday, prior to its final passage.

9. The Town Board previously directed that the proposed Local Law be referred to the Columbia County Planning Board for its review and for an advisory opinion pursuant to Section 239-m of the New York State General Municipal Law. The referral to the County was made in conformity with the applicable provisions of New York State General Municipal Law § 239-m and the County determined that adoption of this Local Law would not have any county-wide implications and thus approved the Local Law.
10. In accordance with New York State Municipal Home Rule Law § 20(5), the Town Board scheduled and held a properly noticed Public Hearing on the Proposed Local Law on February 16, 2023. The Town Board also posted a copy of the proposed Local Law on the Town's web site, and made a paper copy of the proposed Local Law available for review by the public at the Town of Ancram Town Hall, 1416 County Route 7, Ancram NY 12502.
11. The public offered no substantial comments and subsequently the Town Board prepared a final version of the proposed zoning amendments, attached as Amendment A to this resolution.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,**

- Section A. That the Town Board hereby adopts Local Law No. 2 of 2023.
- Section B. That the Town Board directs the Town Clerk to inform the Columbia County Planning Board of its decision on such form as may be prescribed by the Columbia County Planning Board.
- Section C. That the Town Board directs the Town Clerk to file Local Law No. 2 of 2023, as adopted by the Town Board, with the New York State Department of State immediately.
- Section D. That the Town Board shall enter this law into the minutes of the Town Board and shall publish a summary or abstract of it once in the official newspaper of the Town.
- Section E. That the Town Board instructs the Town Clerk to maintain a file in her office in the Town Hall to contain all parts of this law and instructs the Town Clerk to ensure that all parts of the law be posted on the Town's website and that the Town Board cause affidavits of the publication and posting of the amendments be filed with the Town Clerk.

**Investment Opportunities**

The SIP committee will have a report at the April meeting. Councilwoman Hundt noted that the housing committee is waiting on the Strategic Investment Committee's decisions.

## **Supervisors Report**

- 1) Financial Report – A normal financial month. T-Bill portfolio is steady at \$1,758,000. Assuming rates stay at current levels of between 4% and 5% for T-Bills under 1 year, our T-Bill interest in 2023 is likely to be about \$50,000. Cash on hand is about \$300,000.
- 2) Revaluation Status – County Real Property Director Suzette Booy and Ancram Assessor Rene Deleeuw will update us on where we are with the revaluation process and what the next steps are.
- 3) Planning Process Proposal Review – We will consider a proposal from Nan Stolzenburg for consulting support to improve and simplify our Planning/Zoning/Building Permit application processes.
- 4) Local Law #2 of 2023 – Temporary Moratorium on Hospitality Related Applications – We will consider this local law for adoption. The County Planning Board has completed its review and has no objections.
- 5) Strategic Investment Committee – The SIC will be providing an update on its activities and will present investment recommendations for the Town Board to consider.
- 6) Enhanced Enforcement Patrols – We have an opportunity to contract with the County Sheriff's Department for Enhanced Enforcement Patrols from Memorial Day to Labor Day to cover the 82/7 intersection in Ancram, the 82/3/8 intersection in Ancramdale and other areas around town that we designate. We will discuss and decide if we want to do this again this year at a cost of between \$12,000-\$20,000 for the summer depending on the frequency of the patrols.

The board members discussed the EEP. Councilwoman Hundt felt that the extra patrols were not needed. Councilman Boice said that he sees state troopers in Ancram quite frequently. Councilwoman Gold felt that traffic safety is important. Councilman Clark noted that the town only pays for what services the town gets. Mr. Boice made a note that the town is in a bad place in regards to radio frequency's. Resident Libby McKee questioned the fact that the document is signing a contract without having the full details of the document.

A motion was made by Supervisor Bassin and seconded by Councilwoman Gold to sign the EEP Contract with the Columbia County Treasurer. Roll call vote as follows: Councilman Clark, yes. Councilman Boice, no. Supervisor Bassin, yes. Councilwoman Gold, yes. Councilwoman Hundt, no. Motion carried with a 2-3 vote in favor.

## **Camp/Pool**

The camp paperwork is out. All of the lifeguards are returning.

## **Board Members**

Councilwoman Gold noted that she is working with the Punchbrook Watershed Characterization Committee. There will be another meeting at the end of the summer.

Councilwoman Hundt spoke on the housing committee. She noted that the committee is growing. She noted several meetings she has attended and stated that the group is looking at ways to keep open spaces and land while still providing housing.

### **Highway Department**

Diesel Fuel: 383 gallons

Gasoline Fuel: 569 gallons

- Winter has finally made an appearance. We have conducted snow and ice operations on 6 separate days in February and 6 so far in March. We had many low hanging or down wires, trees and limbs to get around during this last storm.
- We continue to inspect our equipment between storms and make necessary repairs and change plow blades as needed.
- We have been hauling in sand as needed and stockpiling road material for summer work projects.
- I have received news that the bucket truck chassis has been delivered to the upfitter and is being assembled at their New Hampshire location.
- I received the quote to update bodies for the 2 2016 Kenworth Trucks that I spoke of last month. The bodies presently on them have structural defects (cracking), The cost to do this upgrade is \$72,400 each. This would include new bodies, computer sander controls (which would cut the sand and salt use by up to 40%), new load tarp, relocating the fuel tanks, and sandblasting and painting the truck frames. These upgrades could prolong the life of the trucks by 10-15 years. I have reservations about the idea of replacing the trucks at this time. Reasons being I do not believe would be wise to have our entire fleet of plow trucks being essentially the same age currently we are running a 2002, 2-2016s and a 2021. The 2002 replacement is a 2024 on order. IF the 2016s were replaced now,, our fleet would be 2021-2025 model years. I think it's better to have them spaced out in age some and purchasing one every 4-5 years. Who knows, maybe they will have electric heavy duty trucks that would be viable by the time we are ready to purchase another one.... The above quote beats others I have gotten by about \$20,000 each. Due to the way the supply chain is these days, Zwack Inc can't give me an estimated time frame to complete the upgrade until the bodies are actually ordered and he receives a delivery date. Then he can schedule the work.
- We will be hosting a rescheduled County DOH sponsored rabies clinic at the garage on Saturday 4/1 /23 from 10-12.

A motion was made by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilman Clark to order two new truck bodies and upgrades to the two 2016 Kenworths for a cost of \$72,400 per truck. Motion carried unanimously.

**Town Clerk**

The town clerk noted that the second notices for the 2023 taxes will be going in the mail by April 1, 2023. She also spoke about her upcoming Town Clerk Conference in Syracuse April 22-26<sup>th</sup>.

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

The following resolution was offered on a motion from Councilwoman Hundt and seconded by Councilwoman Gold and Moved for adoption. Resolution carried unanimously.

**Resolution #15 of 2023: Revised Organizational Resolutions** – Resolved, that the Organizational Resolutions dated March 16, 2023 which include proposed changes to the membership and leadership of the Conservation Advisory Council are approved as presented.

The following resolutions were offered by Councilwoman Hundt and seconded by Councilwoman Golf and moved for adoption. Resolutions Carried unanimously.

**Resolution #16 of 2023: ZEO/CEO Conference** – Resolved, that the Town Supervisor is authorized to reimburse the ZEO/CEO for attendance at the 2023 ZEO/CEO conference at a cost not to exceed \$1500.

**Resolution #17 of 2023: Town Clerk Conference** – Resolved, the Town Clerk is authorized to attend the 2023 Town Clerk conference at a cost not to exceed \$1500.

**Resolution #18 of 2023: Highway School** – Resolved, that the Highway Superintendent is authorized to attend the 2023 Highway School at a cost not to exceed \$1500.

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

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica R. Cleveland  
Ancram Town Clerk