

**Town of Ancram  
Town Board  
Regular Meeting  
May 18, 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 at 7:00pm by Supervisor Bassin with a salute to the flag.

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

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

**2023 Reval Update**

Mr. Bassin noted that the Board of Assessment Review (BAR) will be meeting on Wednesday May 24<sup>th</sup> from 3pm to 8pm to hear grievances. As of last count, town Assessor Rene DeLeeuw has spoken to about 200 property owners. Will Weiss, BAR member, noted that Suzette Boeoy had met with the BAR members on Monday.

**Planning Review Process**

Nan Stolzenburg addressed the board via zoom. She noted that she has been working with J Hoffman via email. They are making good progress and have many draft forms ready to be looked over. At this point they are reviewing the subdivision forms. The STR renewal process needs to be looked at. The ZRC will look at the STR renewal process.

Councilwoman Hundt asked Ms. Stolzenburg if it would be better for the town to have a separate ZEO from building officer. Nan said that the zoning law is enforced by the ZEO where as the building officer just looks at the building and zoning codes. Some towns have two separate people and other towns work like Ancram and have one person working both positions.

**O&G**

Mr. Bassin reported to the board that the Planning Board has looked at a renewal for the O&G mine in Boston Corners. Because the mine was preexisting to the Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone Law, it was grandfathered in. So, the mine did not need ongoing renewals and was not subject to Local Law #1 of 2003. The Planning Board though got the impression that there had been no mining there between 2018 and 2021 and if in fact there was no activity for more then two

years, the pre-existing use can be terminated and mining has to stop. This will be a decision of the town's ZEO/CEO, not the Town Board or the Planning Board.

## **SIC**

Will Weiss gave an update on the SIC. He noted that the committee has met 16 times in the last 12 months. He gave a rundown of proposed projects. The projects that the committee has looked at include the following:

More Solar energy: this is still being looked into. A proposal is panels at the Town Garage site.  
Hamlet Water Issue: There is no proposal at this time.

Blass Field Underutilized: No proposal at this time.

Workforce Housing: The committee recommends investing \$35,000 in start up costs to form a committee for a housing trust. At this time the housing committee gave thoughts. Councilwoman Hundt gave a rundown on the demographics of people living in this area, which showed that there is a decline in workforce able persons and younger persons. She stated that there is a great need for affordable rentals. Dave Hall, committee member, reported that if the town sets aside dedicated funding, there are others who wish to donate both funds and possibly land. Councilwoman Gold asked if the land that is proposed to be donated is appropriate for building homes. Mr. Hall said at this time the person is anonymous and the land is very non specific. Devon Rueger and Darren Mosher of the Company are investigating how Long Island communities set up Fireman housing. The \$35,000 will fund setting up a 501c-3 and clerical support.

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

### **Resolution #23 of 2023: Housing Plan & Housing Trust:**

RESOLVED, That the Ancram Town Board approved the Strategic Investment Committee's recommendation to allocate \$35,000 to support the development of a town housing plan to increase affordable/workplace housing and to investigate the establishment of a housing trust to help finance and manage the affordable/ workplace housing created as a result of the town housing plan.

Opera House: Councilman Boice inquired that if the town board does not approve this money, is there another source they can apply to. He felt that the town was passing on \$3,000 to look at a decades old problem of water in Ancram and yet is giving almost \$70,000 to a private group. Councilman Clark asked also if there were potentially other sources if this does not pass. He questioned if the town gave half the amount asked for if it would put them in a bind. Paul responded that they, the Opera house, do have other grant possibilities and individual donors. Jeff stated that they feel it is a community project. Councilman Clark did note that the renovation does fall in line with the Comp Plan in that it is part of renovation of downtown Ancram. Paul noted that the Opera house is a non for profit and that ½ of their events are free. The biggest pool of people come through Taconic Hills school programs and they feel

accountable to the community. Councilwoman Gold stated that she admires what they are doing.

The following resolution was offered by Councilwoman Hundt and seconded by Councilwoman Gold. The resolution passed with the following vote: Hundt, Yes; Gold, Yes; Bassin, Yes; Boice, No; Clark, No.

**Resolution #24 of 2023: Ancram Opera House Community Room-**

RESOLVED: That the Ancram Town Board approved the Strategic Investment Committee's recommendation to donate \$67,500 to the Ancram Opera House to support the construction of a community room.

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

**Resolution #25 of 2023: 2023 Roe Jan Ramble Bike Tour-**

RESOLVED: The Ancram Town Board designates the 2023 Roe Jan Ramble Bike Tour as a Town sponsored event.

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

**Resolution #26 of 2023: Records Retention-**

RESOLVED: by the Ancram Town Board, that the Retention and Disposition Schedule for New York Local Government Records (LGS-1), issued pursuant to Article 57-A of the Arts and Cultural Affairs Law, and containing legal minimum retention periods for local government records, is hereby adopted for use by all officers in legally disposing of valueless records listed therein. FURTHER RESOLVED: That in accordance with Article 57-A: (a) only those records will be disposed of that are described in the Retention and Disposition Schedule for New York Local Government Records (LGS-1), after that have met the minimum retention periods described therein; (b) only those records will be disposed of that do not have sufficient administrative, fiscal, legal, or historical value to merit retention beyond established legal minimum periods.

**Camp**

Ms. VanWagner reported that planning is going very well for camp. 41 Campers are registered so far.

**Pool**

Mr. Boice reported that the pool doesn't expect any issues this year. They are set for lifeguards and all have taken the CPR training.

A motion was made by Councilman Boice and seconded by Supervisor Bassin to put the infield back in at Blass ball field. Motion carried.

## Solar

Mrs. Colleen Lutz reported that Solstice would like to have a second campaign. The project would be the same as last time. The CSCTF is looking at a project to bring EV stations to the town. Possible places would be the Opera House, the Farmers Wife, the Little Store, the Pond, etc.

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt and moved for adoption. Resolution passed with the following roll call vote: Hundt, yes; Gold, No; Bassin, Yes; Boice, Yes; Clark, Yes.

**Resolution #27 of 2023:** Solstice – Resolved, that the Ancram Town Supervisor is authorized to sign a memorandum of understanding with Solstice Power Technologies to offer Ancram residents access to the Solstice Community Solar program.

## Supervisors Report

**1) Financial Report** – A normal financial month. T-Bill portfolio is steady at \$1,755,000. 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 \$60,000. Cash on hand is about \$180,000. 1Q sales tax was \$102,000, and our first mortgage check came in at \$19,500, both slightly under budgeted levels. Major near term economic uncertainties include how soon the debt limit issue is resolved, the tax cost to counties of the NYS Medicaid decision and the impact the NYC plan to relocate migrants to upstate counties will have.

I have updated the 2023-2027 Capital Plan which identifies possible capital spending projects of about \$2 million over the next five years. If we continue to set aside \$100,000 a year in capital project funds and we do all the projects that have been identified, we will have about \$150,000 in cash reserves on hand at the end of 2027, which is about \$600,000 less than our target level of cash reserves of about \$750,000. To avoid reducing cash reserves to under targeted levels without raising taxes or incurring debt, we will have to find grant money to support some of our projects, or delay or cancel some projects.

**2) Revaluation Status** – 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** – Nan Stolzenburg has started work on the project to simplify the Building Department and Planning board application processes and will give us an update on where she is and next steps.

**4) Strategic Investment Committee** – The SIC will be providing an update on its activities and will present investment recommendations for the Town Board to consider. We will consider resolutions 1) to provide funding for a water report which identifies possible solutions to the Ancram hamlet water problems (\$3,000), 2) to support establishing a housing trust ( \$35,000) and 3) to help fund the Ancram Opera House Community room (\$67,500)

**5) O&G Industries** – As the result of its review of a special use permit (SUP) application from O&G Industries for a 5 year extension of its Town permit to operate its mine in Boston Corner, the Ancram Planning Board concluded that O&G's mine was a preexisting nonconforming use that predated the 2003 Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone (SCOZ) law and therefore did not need Town Planning Board approval for a SUP to mine, but could continue to mine as long as it met DEC mining regs and relevant SCOZ conditions. During its review of the O&G SUP application the Planning Board also concluded that O&G may not have been extracting material from the mine in Boston Corner for the last 5 years, and decided to refer the matter to the Town Code Enforcement Officer to determine if O&G has or has not been actively mining over the past 5 years. This determination becomes significant because if there has been no mining for two years O&G would lose its preexisting, nonconforming rights to mine, and would not be allowed to continue to mine its Boston Corner property.

## Town Board Members

A motion was made by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilwoman Gold to allow the purchase of 3 AED devices, one for each the Town Hall, Town Garage and Town Pool. Motion carried.

Councilman Boice reported that the Ancram Union Cemetery needs additional funding. At this time the cemetery does not have any plots available to sell. They are going to possibly open up more of the property but excavation work will need to be done to do this. If the cemetery board can't keep the bills paid, they may end up having to abandon the cemetery to the town at which time the town would have to fully fund the cemetery. Clerk Cleveland noted that she had attended an excellent presentation on this exact subject and that she will try and track down contact information for the presenter.

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

**Resolution #28 of 2023:** Ancram Union Cemetery – Resolved, that the Town of Ancram will increase its annual contribution to the Ancram Union Cemetery from \$2000 to \$4000 retroactive to January 1, 2023.

Councilman Clark noted that the Town Board has looked at the possibility of building a salt and sand shed for years. He said that this is a safety issue and that the price of the build is about to go up. Councilwoman Gold asked what will happen to the existing facility. Mr. Miller said that the pure salt is kept in a lean-to that is falling down. That will just be taken down. The sand-salt mix at this time is in the old Milk House and it will instead be put into the new shed. Councilwoman Hundt asked how this will be paid for. Mr. Bassin stated that this will be paid for out of the fund balance. Mr. Clark noted that the facility is also in the Capital Plan.

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

**Resolution #29 of 2023: Sand/Salt Shed – Resolved,** that the Ancram Highway Superintendent is authorized to build a Britespan sand/salt shed for a cost not to exceed \$189,000.

Councilwoman Gold reported that she has been attending the meetings on the Columbia Memorial Hospital in regards to the proposed closing of the rapid care. They are experiencing both staffing and funding issues.

Councilwoman Gold is also working on the Route 82 triangle slip issue, insisting that the state make it a one way zone. She felt that the letter of rejection and the reasoning behind it from the state was not adequate. She is working on drafting a response letter.

Councilwoman Hundt noted that the CRB is working on finding training as set out in the recommendations from the town lawyer Elana DiFeo-Keen.

#### **Highway Department**

Diesel Fuel- 723 gallons

Gasoline: 432 gallons

We have been allocated an increase in CHIPS funding of approximately \$24,000 this year. Bringing the total state funding to just over \$322,000. Unfortunately, the cost of materials has risen as much if not more.

- Repaving of an additional mile of Hall Hill and a .4 mile section of Cottontail Rd is scheduled for next week.
- Our Chip sealing projects are scheduled for mid July. We will be treating approximately 9.4 miles this year.
- We have done extensive work reshaping ditches and adding gravel to Tims and Niver roads in preparation to oil and stone them later this summer.
- Regrading of the dirt roads has been completed.
- Roadside mowing will start soon.
- We began our 4-10 hour day summer schedule on May 1
- I would again ask that the board consider upgrading our sand and salt storage facility. I received and forwarded a quote to the board of \$183,800 to erect a 80'x80' structure, This is priced through the Sourcewell Coop. I'm told another price increase is imminent.

#### **Town Clerk**

The town clerk reported that she has collected 90% of her tax roll.

She attended her annual Town Clerk of NYS Convention, taking classes in Strategic Goal Setting, Ethics, Clerk Basics and NYS Archives/Records Retention. Mrs. Cleveland now has enough hours of classes to apply for her Registered Municipal Clerk License.

A motion was made by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilman Clark to approve the budget adjustments. Motion carried.

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 Boice and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica R. Cleveland  
Ancram Town Clerk