

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Regular Meeting
June 15, 2023**

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

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

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

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilman Boice to approve the minutes of the previous meeting and have them placed on the record. Motion carried.

BAR Update

Mr. Matthew Bernstein addressed the board via zoom. Mr. Bernstein reported that there were approximately 25 in person property owners on Grievance Day for a total of five hours. The board met a total of two times to deliberate. Approximately 1/3 were reduced and 2/3 no change. In addition to this Rene DeLeeuw, the assessor, had met with around 200 property owners. Mr. Bernstein noted that the board thought that next year will probably be busy as well.

Planning Process Review Update

Nan Stolzenburg gave an update via zoom. Ms. Stolzenburg reported that she is continuing to work on a checklist and forms. She has spoken with both J Hoffman, the Planning Board Clerk and Ed Ferratto, town ZEO/CEO and Building Inspector. She will be sending out drafts of the forms for a review period and to make edits.

Property Tax Exemptions

Mr. Bassin presented to the board proposed Tax Exemption Local Laws. The Local Laws will be for Establishing Income Levels for Disabled and Low Income Real Property Tax Exemptions, Establishing Income Levels For Senior Citizen Real Property Tax Exemption and Establishing Property Tax Exemptions For Volunteer Fire Fighters and Ambulance Workers. These Local Laws are in line with those passed by the County. Councilman Boice questioned whether the county and town has fixed the law to allow for the exemption for two property owners if two fire people own the home, ie: spouses. Mr. Bassin said that the law is based on the State and County and that the town has been told that there cannot be two full exemptions or more than 10%. Councilwoman Gold asked if there were other equivalents that the town could offer at the

local level for the fire persons. Mr. Boice suggested things like free garbage tags to the county transfer station. Or assistance with paying for community college classes. Councilman Clark asked if there was a state or county level association to lobby the State. Mr. Boice said there is the FASNY.

SIC

Ann Rader noted that there was no meeting in June.

Housing

Bonnie Hundt reported that she and David Hall have been busy figuring out how to allocate the money from the town. They are in the process of starting a land trust and are looking for an attorney who specializes in this area. They are also beginning the process of forming a 501C3.

Camp

Ruth Van Wagner addressed the board via Zoom. She said that the camp has passed the BOH inspection. They are at full capacity with 60 campers. Staff is in place.

Pool

The Pool is drained and being painted. It will be set to go on time.

Supervisors Report

- 1) Financial Report – A normal financial month. T-Bill portfolio is still at \$1,755,000, but will be dropping over the rest of the year as we start paying for planned major projects. We are heading into a period of heavy spending which over the next few months will include highway department road work (about \$180,000), the down payment for the sand/salt shed (about \$46,000), the grant for the AOH (\$67,500) and the final payment on the Town Hall ASHP HVAC system (about \$38,000). We have a treasury bill for \$505,000 maturing on 6/16 which will fund this and other spending over the next few months.
- 2) Revaluation Status – Ancram Assessor Rene Deleeuw And BAR Chair Matthew Bernstein will update us on where we are with the revaluation & BAR processes and what the next steps are.
- 3) O&G Industries – At the request of the Planning Board, ZEO Ed Ferratto has requested that O&G Industries provide information regarding their mining activities over the past 5 years to determine if O&G discontinued operations for more than two years, which would terminate their non-conforming, pre-existing use mining status and require that they discontinue all mining activities.
- 4) Property Tax Exemptions - The County has adopted local laws increasing the amount of senior and low income/disabled property tax exemptions and providing property tax exemptions for volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers. While the Town has already passed a local law providing property tax exemptions for volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers, I recommend we adopt the County version of the firefighter/ambulance worker property tax exemption local law so there is no difference between our law and the County law. We will review these local laws at our 6/15 Town Board meeting and schedule public hearings on these local laws prior to our July 15 Town Board meeting.

5) Town Hall HVAC – Work has been completed on the HVAC system at Town Hall, including final installation work on the two air source heat pumps, installation of a new 25,000 kw generator and conversion to 600 amp electrical service. We will pay the final \$38,000 installment on this project, and submit a request to NYSERDA for the remaining \$70,000 in grant funds we have available. Total cost of converting from propane to ASHPs was \$85,000, of which we hope to recover \$70,000 from NYSERDA.

Accident

Ruth Van Wagner addressed the town board regarding an accident involving her car in the town hall parking lot on Grievance Board night. Ms. Van Wagner said that this was a hit and run and that she was not provided in adequate time the video from the camera on the parking lot. Ms. Van Wagner was certain the video would have shown the car which hit hers. It is going to cost \$900 to fix the dented door and Ms. Van Wagner would like the town to pay for some or all of the repairs. Councilwoman Hundt asked if this would be an insurance claim on Ms. Van Wagner's insurance. Ms. Van Wagner said that she did not want to put it through her insurance as she had a car totaled last year and this will cause her insurance rate to increase. Ms. Van Wagner noted that the police did come. Ms. Van Wagner was addressing the board via zoom but drove down to the meeting in person to show the board the accident report. The board members gave the following comments. Councilwoman Hundt, Councilwoman Gold and Councilman Boice all felt this would set a costly precedent if the town was to pay for the repairs. Councilman Clark felt that while he was sympathetic to Ms. Van Wagner, the money is tax payer money. Ms. Van Wagner urged the town board to come up with a procedure in regards to the video in case there was a future accident in the parking lot.

Town Board Comments

Councilman Boice noted that he has been hearing a lot of pushback from the community regarding the money given to the Opera House. Mr. Boice said that people are not happy with money being put into a housing committee trust. He said that he was passing along the thoughts of residents who have approached him. Councilwoman Hundt said that the housing committee funding was meant to build affordable housing for young people and those in need of housing.

Councilwoman Gold reported on the ongoing work to keep the Rapid Care facility in Copake. There is funding available for Rural Healthcare that the committee is looking into. At this time Michele Hinchey's office is assisting them.

Councilwoman Gold reported that she is continuing her work on lobbying the state to reconsider the one way triangle slip in the Ancram center. She has Didi Barrett and Michele Hinchey's offices reaching out to the state as well.

CSCTF

Colleen Lutz gave an update on the CSCTF work. She proposed that the town allow her to apply for a NYSERDA grant which would give funding to purchase electric lawn tools for the town. These would include mowers, weed trimmers, chainsaws, etc. The town is under no obligation

to buy anything at this time and can take up to two years to make a purchase. The town board didn't see any reason not to apply for the grant. A motion was made by Councilwoman Hundt and seconded by Councilman Clark to approve the application for a NYSERDA Grant. Motion carried.

Highway

Diesel Fuel Used: 886 gallons

Gasoline Used: 501 gallons

*Repaving of an additional mile of Hall Hill rd and a .4 mile section of Cottontail rd is complete. We still need to add shoulder material in places after blacktop cures. These were both CHIPS projects totaling \$178,210.

*I've been forced to adjust our chip sealing plans after learning at highway school that the state has changed the rules for Chip sealing projects. Making some I had previously planned to do ineligible for CHIPS funding. Our CHIPS sealing projects are scheduled for mid July. We will be treating approximately 7.5 miles this year. The roads I plan to do are: East Ancram 2, Simons, Doodletown, .25 mi of Over Mt2, and 2 course Chip seal of Tims and Niver rds.

We have been doing some minor paving jobs on Simons and Wiltsie Bridge rds using our paver and assistance from other towns providing trucks and a roller. I still plan to do Roche Dr as a CHIPS project.

*We have been hauling in gravel and stone, stockpiling it for upcoming work.

We have helped the Towns of Taghkanic and Hillsdale with paving projects.

*We attended our annual safety training day at the Chatham Fairgrounds. Topics included First Aid, Work Zone safety, Chainsaw safety, Aerial lift safety, Equipment blind spot hazards, and Fire Hydrants. Our participation in this keeps us in compliance with OSHA-PESH requirements.

*Roadside mowing is ongoing. We are nearly done with the first round.

Colleen Lutz asked about maybe putting in some plantings to minimize some of the noise coming from the Highway Garage site. Councilwoman Gold said that she and Mrs. Lutz will look at the site and make suggestions.

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

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

Resolution #30 of 2023: Water Report – Resolved, that the Ancram Town Board approves the Strategic Investment Committee's recommendation to spend up to \$3,000 on a water report outlining options for solving or mitigating the water issues in the Hamlet of Ancram.

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

Resolution #31 of 2023: BAR Legal Support – Resolved, that the Ancram Town Board authorizes the Town Supervisor to retain attorney Patrick Seely of the law firm Jones, Hacker,

Murphy to provide legal support for the BAR to deal with any legal issues that arise from the 2023 revaluation and decisions made at the 2023 Grievance Day.

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

Resolution #32 of 2023: Ball Field Renovation - Resolved, that the Town Supervisor is authorized to spend up to \$4,000 for materials to renovate the ball field at Blass Park.

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

Resolution #33 of 2023: Public Hearings on Local Laws Regarding Property Taxes – Resolved, that the Ancram Town Board will hold public hearings on July 15, 2023 at the Ancram Town Hall to solicit public comments on local laws regarding property tax exemptions for seniors at 6:45 pm, low income/disabled individuals at 6:50 pm and volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers at 6:55 pm.

Mr. Paul Riccardi of the Ancram Opera House spoke to the town board and said that he would forward to them documentation as to how the donated funding will be spent on the Community Room.

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

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica R. Cleveland
Ancram Town Clerk