

Town of Canaan, New York

Town Board Regular Meeting Minutes:

October 19, 2023: 7:05 pm to 8:46 pm

Hybrid Meeting: In Person at Town Hall and via ZOOM

Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance

Present

Supervisor Brenda Adams

Councilperson: Alan Miller

Councilperson Ginny Nightingale

Councilperson David Patzwahl

Councilperson William Powers

Also in Attendance:

Town Clerk Joshua Weisbuch

Highway Superintendent Stephen Van Tassel

Audience: (6 in audience, 2 online)

APPROVALS

MOTION: September Minutes

Supervisor Adams asked for the minutes to be amended to align with the allocation in Resolution 95, the correct amount is \$1,450. Supervisor Brenda Adams called for an approval of the September Minutes as amended. Councilperson Ginny Nightingale made a motion, seconded by Alan Miller to approve the minutes from the July Town Board Meeting. 5 AYES: Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Alan Miller – yes
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes;
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

MOTION: September Bills

Supervisor Adams called for a motion to pay the bills. Councilperson David Patzwahl made a motion, seconded by Councilperson William Powers to approve the September 2023 bills. 5 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Alan Miller – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes;
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

MOTION: YTD Financials

Supervisor Adams called for a motion to accept the financials as presented. Councilperson Alan Miller made a motion, seconded by Councilperson William Powers to accept the financials as presented. 5 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Alan Miller – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes;
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

SUPERVISOR’S REPORT / read by Town Clerk Josh Weisbuch

TOWN CLERK REVENUES	\$ 457.30
HIGHWAY FUND	\$ 481,324.66
HIGHWAY FUND CAPITAL	\$ 32,333.62
LIGHTING DISTRICTS	\$ 616.21
AMBULANCE AND FIRE DISTRICTS	\$ 300.00
BUILDING INSPECTOR	\$
PLANNING BOARD	\$ 300.00
RECREATION	\$ 3,498.55
COURT REVENUES	\$ \$5901.00*
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS	\$
TAX COLLECTOR	\$

RESOLUTIONS & MOTIONS

RESOLUTION 99 of 2023 to Approve Inter-fund Transfer

In light of the unusual heavy rains this summer, additional, unbudgeted, maintenance projects have been recommended for 2023. The cemeteries will need to be mowed one additional mowing. The vendor that does the mowing can provide this work. The estimate to provide this work is not to exceed \$2,333. Be it resolved that the Town Board authorize the Supervisor to make the attached inter-fund transfer.

Transfer from General Fund Use of Money account 2401: \$2,333
Transfer to: General Fund Cemetery account 8810.4: \$2,333

Councilperson David Patzwahl made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Ginny Nightingale to approve Resolution 99 of 2023. 5 AYES: Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Alan Miller – yes;

Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes;
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

RESOLUTION 100 of 2023 Transfer of Funds to HRA accounts

The Canaan Town Board replenishes the Health Reimbursement Account annually in March or on an “as needed” basis. HRA usage and expenses are higher than projected year-to-date, resulting in a low account balance. Be it resolved that a transfer of \$10,000 to the HRA account, allocating \$5000 to the General Fund and \$5000 to the Highway Fund, be approved.

Councilperson Ginny Nightingale made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Alan Miller to approve Resolution 100 of 2023. 5 AYES: Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Alan Miller – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes;
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

RESOLUTION 101 of 2023 Budget Amendment

The Town of Canaan would like to make adjustments to its budget to reflect unanticipated revenues. Be it resolved, that the Town Board authorize the Supervisor to make the attached budget adjustments to the 2023 budget.

Revenues:

Highway Interest account	\$8,000	DA 1001
Sale of Equipment	\$12,000	DA 2665
Insurance Recovery Fund	\$12,348	DA 2680

Councilperson David Patzwahl made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Will Powers to amend the budget to account for these additional revenues and approve Resolution 101 of 2023. 5 AYES: Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Alan Miller – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes;
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

MOTION to Move the Tentative 2024 Budget from Tentative to Preliminary

The Town Board met for a budget workshop on October 19. Supervisor Adams asked if the board is ready to move the budget from “tentative” to “preliminary”. Once the budget becomes “preliminary”, a public hearing will be scheduled, and the preliminary budget will be made available to the public. Councilperson Alan Miller made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Ginny Nightingale to approve. 5 AYES: Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Alan Miller – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes;

Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

Supervisor Adams thanked all the department heads, employees and volunteers who participated in the budget process for timely reports and participation.

OLD BUSINESS

Status of Town Clerk 2022 audit / materials remain incomplete / DEC Reports/Reconciliation Hand off to Deputy Clerk/ materials complete? / tentative meeting with Deputy to review week of 10/16 or 10/23 / tentative meeting with Audit Committee week of 10/23 or 10/30 for November report to board / DEC reports / reconciliation hand off to Deputy Clerk

Supervisor Adams clarified the status of the reports. She said substantial progress has been made and she expects to be able to review and close out the 2022 Audit at the November 13th meeting if the Town Clerk hits the above benchmarks. The audit committee, Supervisor Adams and Councilperson Patzwahl, will meet with the Town Clerk once everything is in order. The Town Clerk reported that the checking account numbers are lining up and he is feeling positive.

Review ongoing virtual or hybrid meeting considerations and mask policy

The board agreed to continue with hybrid meetings, the recommended mask policy, and will continue to make masks available.

BOARD DISCUSSION

NYS Grub Chuk Rd land donation / report to board / next steps

The County Engineer has provided preliminary costs to improve the abandoned road. Supervisor Adams suggested the next step would be a meeting with the adjacent property owners to better understand their plans and timelines for development. She asked the board's permission to schedule a meeting for that purpose as soon as possible to include the Supervisor, Highway Superintendent, and Councilperson Patzwahl. The board concurred; a time and date will be scheduled. The Supervisor will inform the Thruway Authority that discussions continue.

Broadband grant update / unserved / underserved lists resolved w/CCI / final grant docs have gone to USDA for approval

Supervisor Adams reported the process is moving forward. USDA has accepted the initial documents and provided a list of open items, including additional engineering specs. Consolidated Communications will provide the supporting documentation for the open items. The grant will mean that about \$410,000 toward additional broadband access in the Town of Canaan will be paid by the federal government at no cost to local tax payers.

Request for private road (Fern Hill Road) donation to Town / town road specification review underway

Supervisor Adams reported that the updated road specification is moving forward, and the town will be able to have the necessary conversation soon.

Town Road Specification update review

Supervisor Adams, Highway Supervisor Stephen Van Tassel, and Councilperson David Patzwahl

spoke about the current status of the review. A draft, amended, road specification has been reviewed by the county engineer, the highway superintendent and senior members of the highway department. Discussion ensued about who will be responsible for the development of new roads, locations, uses, provisions, and costs. The next steps for the amended specification include: posting the draft road specification, holding a public hearing in November, and adoption of the amended road specification. Discussion continued, including identification of a typo, naming of roads, and town maintenance requirements. A request for the town to take over a private road starts with the baseline that a road must be built to town specification prior to acquisition. The town will consider the condition of the road as well as other factors such as resources and maintenance as part of its review of any such request.

Sexual Harassment training due before end of year / notices / link distribution in process

Notices are being set out to all staff and volunteers in front-facing positions. Deputy Clerk Heather O'Grady has sent out the virtual training link and will also collect certificates of anyone who has already completed the training for this year.

Transfer station follow up re: residents without stickers

A number of issues have been identified. Some residents have still not gotten their stickers after verbal warnings that a sticker is required to use the facility. In the recent on-site review, 35 to 40 percent of the cars did not have stickers which did not mean they were non-residents, only that they did not have a sticker.

Supervisor Adams reported a positive conversation with the attorney regarding Councilperson Patzwahl's suggestions for additional town action if residents fail to comply with sticker requirement: 1. a documented warning notice handed to or sent to resident, license plate recorded; 2. second time, a suspension of privileges letter, license plate recorded, until they get a sticker. It is a free sticker, for Canaan residents only. Discussion ensued about potential additional signage at the transfer station and other ways to advise residents of the requirement. Supervisor Adams will work on language for the notice/letters for the December board meeting.

Transfer Station / David

Overall usage for the year is under budget although there has been some unusual usage in the last couple of months.

Vandenberg / Vanderburg Road change of spelling request

There is a request to re-examine the spelling of the road, which has been represented by various parties / residents over the years with different spellings. The hope is to finalize the spelling of the road once and for all. There will be a public conversation over the winter, residents have been asked to submit their opinions with supporting documentation (deeds, letters, maps, etc) for consideration. In the spring the town board will review the material for a decision. It was suggested that Town Historian Dodie Gearing research the name spelling. Councilperson Nightingale volunteered to do some more research.

Canaan Fire District request for page on town website

Pat Liddle spoke about her request for a Canaan Fire District page on the town website. The fire district would have the responsibility to manage the page, which could be done through

independent access, and would assume any costs for the creation and maintenance of the page. The current town website does not have the capacity to incorporate this request. With the redesign of the town website, now scheduled for next year, space could possibly be expanded to include the request. Were this to move forward an inter-agency agreement that defines the responsibilities of each entity would be needed. Some discussion ensued about whether the fire companies would expect something similar. The board asked for some time to look into the matter and get back to Pat / the Canaan Fire District.

Planning / ZBA report / Ginny

No meetings this month.

Climate Smart Task Force / Will

With the remaining funds from \$6,000 grant, CSTF recently planted new, native, white and red oak trees and a bass tree. Councilperson Powers and Craig Westcott, chairperson of the Canaan Climate Smart task Force, attended a CARP meeting, led by Cornell Cooperative Extension. Canaan is ranked number three in in Climate Smart points in the Capitol District, behind Albany and New Lebanon. The town has achieved bronze certification and is now working toward silver.

Public Safety / David

The committee met September 28. Councilperson Patzwahl identified the process to get a road name changed with respect to the Vandenberg / Vanderburg request. There is no action to be taken on the change request at this time pending work/ resolution of the matter with residents over the winter. Supervisor Adams asked for an update on the request to meet with the NYS representative on the state denial of the town request to lower the speed limit on Route 295; the NYS representative has agreed to schedule a meeting with town representatives.

Maintenance projects: power wash & stain deck, power wash courts completed / road shoulder repair in front of Town Hall complete / park light repair/replacements underway / Canaan post office pot holes reported to postmaster / park tree planting complete /The utility pole cleared

Supervisor Adams reported on various projects: the handicap ramp maintenance has been completed although it used more stain than anticipated; thanks to Councilperson Powers for the repair of the basketball hoop; the park light repair has been requested on or before the election when the parking lot will be in use in early morning and after dark; the local postmaster has been notified of the pot holes in the Canaan post office parking lot and they are in line for repair; recognized the wonderful tree plantings; cleaned up the sight lines by the Town Hall parking lot and improved drainage around the Town Hall.

Budget workshop follow up / schedule date for public hearing

Budget workshop took place earlier today. Supervisor Adams proposed Monday, October 30th, at 7pm for the public hearing for the budget.

Phone system / WIFI upgrade / park WIFI update

Supervisor Adams met with S & F Technology, who subsequently provided a quote for a new phone system. She then met with Consolidated Communications, the current provider, who does not recommend replacing the system but recommends instead to update the system and

upgrade the services. With some tweaks to the existing system and upgraded service packages, the improvements can be made for substantially less than a new system would cost. CC will upgrade the phone package from two to three outgoing lines, and will add an external voice mail option outside the phone system to avoid loss of voicemails when the main line is busy. There will also be some improvements to distribution of the Wi-Fi in the building to improve video and audio quality of Zoom meetings. Another improvement will be with the EV charger that relies on the Wi-Fi to report and bill usage. A Wi-Fi line will be added at the park to better meet the needs of the EV charger and to provide Wi-Fi to park users.

Domestic Partner registry update

Supervisor Adams said she will continue to work on this in November at the county.

Covid masks / tests available again soon

A supply of covid tests was recently located by NYS Department of Health (DOH) and is being distributed by Columbia County DOH. Supervisor Adams placed an order for the town which is now in stock; expiration date on the packages is October 2023 but has been extended to January 2024. The town also has masks for anyone who needs them. Tests and masks are no charge to residents.

Flu / Covid vaccination clinic @ NL Jr/Sr high school October 26

The Columbia County DOH has scheduled a flu / covid vaccination clinic for October 26 open to the public. Pre-registration is required. An email has been sent to town employees and volunteers to encourage early vaccination; additional outreach to town residents via email, fliers, the town sign, and Facebook is underway.

Follow-up storm complaint

Suzanne Pemrick wrote a letter expressing her concerns regards utility company responses to recent storms that is included in this month's correspondence. Supervisor Adams sent the letter to NYSEG officials with a request for a reply which arrived today. If needed, Supervisor Adams and Ms. Pemrick will meet to discuss any gaps in information or remaining concerns. Ms. Pemrick requested the names of the people who lost power on Frisbee Street; the supervisor will follow up this request.

Events of interest coming soon:

- Climate Adaptability and Vulnerability Workshop / Town Emergency Plan / October 25
- Columbia County Housing Task Force November 1, @4 PM virtual meeting to report on the progress of the task force in the last 8-9 months.
- Columbia County Community Forum to discuss impact of the climate initiatives on December 2, @1 PM Columbia-Greene Community College

ASSESSOR'S REPORT: see attached

There will be a summary of the exemption changes in the upcoming Town of Canaan Newsletter.

HIGHWAY REPORT: read by Stephen Van Tassel – Full Report Attached.

Summary:

1. Winter preparations:
 - We have made some fleet modifications, replacing amber flashing lights for green and amber flashing lights. The green light makes our trucks significantly more noticeable.
 - We are focusing on clearing brush along the roads to improve better line of sight and snow storage.
 - We have received around 200 tons of salt so far and sand will be delivered soon after, we will then start mixing.
2. The Highway Department will be switching to Winter hours October 30th, from 6:00am-4:30pm to 7:00am-3:30pm.
3. One of the large culvert pipes we replaced on Cemetery Hill Road is going to have a 10 Ft extension added on to it either before winter this year or spring time next year.
4. The Town Park culvert pipe for the pond is becoming compromised at the coupler. I believe it should be replaced within the next 2-3 years and we will explore possibly using CHIPS funding for the project.
5. Fingar Insurance has sent their annual Vehicle and Equipment Schedule Update, we will be filling it out and sending it back within the week.
6. Last month NYMIR reached out with a battery disconnect switch compliance letter inquiring if our fleet meets their safety reequipments and we do.
7. Thanks to the Columbia County Association of Towns, I received the opportunity to attend the 2023 Fall conference fully paid for by the NYSAOTSOH. The classes were all very informative as always and I believe will help fill in the gaps when need be.
8. Radios for the trucks and equipment have been pushed off to January because of equipment supply issues, Rob Lopez from Columbia County 911 informed me he is dealing with the same problem as well.
9. Asplundh Tree service has been removing “Red H” hazard trees around town that were marked back in 2019-2020 by NYSEG and have offered to remove some trees we deem hazardous as well.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Two questions to Highway Supervisor Stephen Van Tassel and Councilperson David Patzwahl:

- Is there a list of people available to plow driveways?
- On 295 and County Route 5, there was “vandalism” on three or four road signs. Will the signs be fixed?

The “vandalism” or maintenance issue will be reported to the proper highway authorities; 295 is a state road so NYS has the responsibility to repair/replace any signs. The highway garage keeps a list of people who plow snow but the difficulty is in keeping the list current. If residents need assistance with snow removal on private driveways or roads, they should call the Highway Department for a referral. Referrals are strictly a list of people who supply services; they are not a recommendation for services.

There was another question regarding Beebe’s Pond Road, which is spelled Beebe Pond Road on one end and Beebe’s Pond Road on the other end. Research will be done to identify the correct spelling which can be a problem for emergency services and deliveries.

MOTION to Adjourn at 8:46 pm

Supervisor Brenda Adams called for a motion to adjourn. Councilperson Ginny Nightingale made a motion, seconded by Councilperson William Powers to adjourn the meeting. 5 AYES- Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Alan Miller – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes;
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

Next meeting:

Budget Public Hearing October 30, 2023 7 PM

Regular meeting of the board & public hearing on road specifications November
13, 2023 7PM

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Nebesar
Deputy Clerk II