

Town of Canaan, New York

7:00-7:02 Public Hearing Local Law #1 of 2024 Hearing Date for Tax Grievance Date

Deputy Town Clerk Heather O'Grady read an introduction to Local #1 of 2024. Supervisor Adams further explained the Local Law and called for any comments or questions from the board or the public. There were none. Supervisor Adams called for a motion to adjourn. Councilperson Patzwahl made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilperson Lifsec. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Brian Lifsec — yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale — yes; and
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes.

Town of Canaan, New York

Town Board Regular Meeting Minutes

April 8, 2024 7:02 – 9:09 pm

Hybrid Meeting: In person at Town Hall and via ZOOM

Present:

Supervisor Brenda Adams
Councilperson Brian Lifsec
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale
Councilperson David Patzwahl

Excused:

Town Clerk Joshua Weisbuch
Councilperson William Powers
Highway Superintendent Stephen Van Tassel

Also in Attendance:

Deputy Town Clerk Heather O'Grady

Audience: 1 plus 2 online

Moment of Silence

Supervisor Adams

Pledge of Allegiance

The Town Board acknowledged its appreciation and gratitude to Deputy Clerk Heather O'Grady for managing the Town Clerk's office and attending the board meeting(s) during the Town Clerk's absence.

APPROVALS

Minutes March 11 & March 22, 2024

Councilperson Lifsec made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Councilperson Patzwahl.
3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Brian Lifsec — yes; and
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale — abstained
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes.

Bills

There was discussion about highway vehicle repairs concerning vendors' specialties, procedures for selecting vendors, and the utility of creating an approved list of vendors and a spreadsheet to keep a record of repairs over the lifetime of the various vehicles. There was a question about who identified the error in a bill (a different vendor) in the amount of \$490 and how it was handled. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to accept the bills for payment, seconded by Councilperson Patzwahl. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Brian Lifsec — yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale — yes; and
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes.

YTD Financials

Supervisor Adams asked if there were any questions or comments about the financials. There were none. Councilperson Lifsec made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilperson Nightingale. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Brian Lifsec — yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale — yes; and
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT / Town Clerk (excused)

GENERAL FUND	
GENERAL FUNDS	858,580.70
GENERAL FUNDS - ARPA	<u>147,696.32</u>
HIGHWAY FUND	527,798.81
HIGHWAY CAPITAL FUND	<u>32,335.23</u>
Total Highway Fund cash	
CANAAN LIGHTING	4,895.38
RICHMOND HILL ASSOCIATION	229.45
EAST CHATHAM LIGHTING	<u>1,100.44</u>
Total Lighting District cash	
FIRE DISTRICT	
TRUST & AGENCY CHECKING ACCOUNT	5,526.87
RECREATION COMMITTEE	3,498.70
HEALTH REIMBURSEMENT	20,935.28
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDS	4,114.44

RESOLUTIONS & MOTIONS

Resolution 64 Local Law 1 of 2024 Revise Tax Grievance date

The local law modifies the tax grievance hearing date of the Board of Assessment Review (BAR) of the Town of Canaan. A public hearing was held by the Town Board on April 8, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. on the matter of the proposed local law. Notice was made and all persons appearing at the public hearing desiring to be heard were heard. Councilperson Patzwahl made a motion to enact and adopt Local Law 1 of 2024 of the Town of Canaan, seconded by Councilperson Nightingale. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
 Councilperson Brian Lifsec — yes;
 Councilperson Ginny Nightingale — yes; and
 Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes.

Resolution 72 of 2024 to appoint Planning & Zoning Board of Appeals Clerk

The Planning Board Clerk and Zoning Board of Appeals Clerk positions are currently vacant, These positions provide administrative support and take minutes for the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings. Supervisor Adams interviewed and recommends Kristine Sigler. Supervisor Adams called for a motion that Kristine Sigler be appointed, effective immediately, to fill both to the Planning Board Clerk and Zoning Board of Appeals Clerk positions at a pay rate \$18.01 per hour, payable monthly, to fill out a term ending December 31, 2024. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to appoint Kristine Sigler, seconded by Councilperson Lifsec. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Brian Lifsec — yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale — yes; and
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes.

Resolution 73 of 2024 to move funds for labor attorney expenses

The Town was notified by a certified letter from Teamsters Local 294 of the Town of Canaan Highway Department's decision to join Teamsters Local 294. The Town Board authorized the Town Supervisor to retain appropriate legal services for the negotiation of a contract with the Teamsters. These being estimated, unanticipated and unbudgeted costs, funds will need to be identified and allocated for this purpose. Supervisor Adams asked for authorization to make a budget neutral, inter-fund transfer of \$5000 to fund these expenses. Councilperson Patzwahl made a motion to authorize, seconded by Councilperson Nightingale. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Brian Lifsec — yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale — yes; and
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes.

Resolution 74 of 2024 for supervisor to attend training

The Town Supervisor has requested permission to attend the Association of Towns (AOT) training for local officials for budget preparation. The Town Board requires that all elected and appointed Town of Canaan officials successfully complete the necessary in-service training to ensure proper compliance with the duties and responsibilities of their office. The funding is budget neutral. Councilperson Patzwahl made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilperson Nightingale. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Brian Lifsec — yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale — yes; and
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes.

Resolution 75 of 2024 to move funds for ARPA purchases / tabled awaiting information from accountant

Approve the Propane Tank Rental Lease

For this year the propane tanks will be rented for \$1,000. Purchase of the tanks in the future would be \$6,000. Councilperson Lifsec made a motion to approve this year's rental, seconded by Councilperson Patzwahl. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Brian Lifsec — yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale — yes; and
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes.

OLD BUSINESS

Generator & propane tank installation

Everything is on site and installed except the electrical connection. The electrician needs to come back to complete the installation, which was delayed because of the recent power outage.

NLCSD letter for tax exemptions / county resource issue move to late March / remove?

Supervisor Adams explained that this has not yet been done because of a back-log in paper-work at the county. It is too late for this year, but the issue will be revisited in the fall to plan for the year 2025.

NYS Grub Chuk Rd land application / NYS confirmed receipt / initial review underway / no update

No additional news. Comment was made about the future naming of the road and there was a brief discussion about the correct spelling.

Broadband grant update /environmental review underway / one of last steps before contract / no update

Supervisor Adams briefly explained that she has had regular discussion with the grant facilitator with little news; stake holders are getting impatient. She will contact our congressman if there is no movement soon, by the end of the month.

Review ongoing virtual or hybrid meeting considerations and mask policy

The consensus is to continue with hybrid meetings and with voluntary mask policy.

The temporary law allowing for Board Members to attend meetings remotely will sunset soon.

Supervisor Adams clarified that the privilege was associated with the pandemic and is expected to sunset in June.

OWL / audio improvements for Zoom meetings / improvements made / thoughts?

Temporary table speakers were installed to pick up the table mics and to reduce background noise. A Zoom participant commented, "The sound is better! Wonderful!" The new borrowed speakers control the echo effect. Some discussion ensued and it was decided that a decision will be made about purchasing the speakers at the next meeting.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Vandenberg / Vanderburgh Road name request / winter project / public responses due by April 30

Supervisor Adams reviewed the process, responses from the public are due April 30. Emails from stake-holders will be sent to the committee will has been asked to make a recommendation in June.

Planning / ZBA report / Ginny

There was a short meeting. There were: an exempt subdivision application; a homeowner wants a large addition and would need a variance on the set-backs.

Climate Smart Task Force / Will

Family member brought a “bug” home from vacation, so there was an online meeting. Nothing to report at this time.

Public Safety / David

Councilperson Patzwahl explained the speed limit change letter of denial was on the agenda for discussion. Bill First, the new Region 8 representative has moved into Columbia County and taken the job. He knows Canaan and is familiar with the Route 295 hill. Councilperson Patzwahl gave him the letter of denial and he will take it forward. Supervisor Adams also discussed the recent accidents at the Route 295 /Post Road /County Route 5 intersection. Making the blinking light a genuine stop light or a blinking red light in both directions are possibilities.

Transfer Station / David

Councilperson Patzwahl explained the tonnages. We are up 23 tons in the first quarter of 2024. There is a growth in C&D tonnage, which is out of alignment with last year. Discussions are ongoing about being able to bill back, if individuals run over the permitted amount. The software that the transfer station uses cannot split the bills if the dumping is over the limit. We can't be 23 tons over every quarter – the extra expense is not budgeted. Originally, households were limited to two bags. Now people bring much more than that. As to C & D, two one-ton permits are allowed for Canaan Residents per year, and there is a window of two weeks to use the permit. License plates and stickers will be checked again this year. There have been observations of people dumping C & D into the household trash bin. The plan is to hand out information at the site about the use of the site and ways to reduce waste. There will be a first-time warning for residents without stickers and a sheet with the rules handed out. A second violation will have consequences.

Status of Oaths & Annual Financial Disclosures / Town Clerk (excused)

Extension for filing annual financial report / work underway

The request for an extension was filed and accepted. Supervisor Adams and Councilperson Lifsec will look over the report before sending it the board. The deadline for submitting the report is the 30th of April.

Community Day Planning / June 15th date confirmed / planning underway

Supervisor Adams explained that outreach to vendors and community groups is underway. A food truck has been identified.

Stony Kill clean-up (April 20, 2024) & Community Gardening Day (May 18, 2024) planning underway

The Stony Kill clean-up team has identified a crew of volunteers. DEC permission has been granted for the clean-up, with certain conditions, primarily no heavy equipment or operations that would alter the shape or course of the creek.

Community Gardening Day (managed by the town Climate Smart Task Force) has been calendared, volunteers solicited, and a work plan established.

Citizen Preparedness course with New Lebanon scheduled for April 26 @4PM @ Canaan Fire Company

All town board members and town residents are encouraged to attend this meeting which is free to residents of Canaan and New Lebanon. With more frequent storms, and longer power outages, residents are encouraged to learn how to be more prepared to care for themselves and their families.

Pro Housing Community letter / application / next steps

Supervisor Adams still hopes to move this forward this spring but acknowledges there are now other things in front of this project specifically the unanticipated union negotiation.

Health insurance renewals / buyout / documents to board / delay associated with HW union conversation

Supervisor Adams explained that the labor negotiations have caused a delay with the health insurance renewal. Some discussion ensued. Currently eight employees [one single plan, all else family plans] are covered by the town plan; the number of participants in 2025 will not be known until the labor negotiation is completed. In 2024, Canaan pays 75 percent of the co-pays and deductibles; next year 2025, the town will pay 50 percent. The town covers 100% of premiums for most employees; is at 90/10 for new hires. It is the best benefit the town provides.

Emergency Management Plan update / meeting with fire chiefs April 17th

Supervisor Adams said the current plan from 2002 has been reviewed with Emergency Response Coordinator Epi Sanchez and Logistics Officer Elisha Falkner. They will meet on April 17 with the three fire chiefs and report back to the board.

Drainage issue / town culvert on Stonewall Rd / letter from attorney / document sent via email

Supervisor Adams explained the culvert's history and the town's obligation are now better understood with the location of the signed easement letter. The town has an obligation to provide regular maintenance of the culvert. Should residents wish to pursue drainage or water run-off claims, they will need to supply a report from an engineer documenting their claim.

STR /Occupancy Tax & registration moving forward @ county / Home rule law to Senate & Assembly before end of June 2024 session / Resolution expected April 9

The Columbia County Board of Supervisors is working on an Occupancy Tax proposal. An occupancy tax of 4% would be charged by the county. The tax proposal would include required registration of short term rentals with the cost of the initial registration and subsequent maintenance of the registration data to be deducted from tax revenues. Remaining revenues would be shared by the towns similar to the sales tax distribution. Towns will be required to adopt a local short-term rental law with a local registration process to manage land use, health, and safety issues. The goal is to have a draft of a local short term rental law for the board at the June meeting. Input from the Planning and Zoning Boards will be requested prior to a public hearing.

April newsletter out to +/- 540 households

Supervisor Adams noted there are over 540 names on the email distribution list, there is a high opening rate, and all together positive reception and appreciation for regular communications from the town.

April Presidential primary election held / 96 in person votes

April storm response / notices / warming shelters @ Canaan & Red Rock firehouses / dry ice and water distribution day 3

Supervisor Adams reported there were a record number of NYSEG crews and tree-cutting crews in town in preparation for the storm. Hardest hit areas for the storm were Canaan, New Lebanon and the eastern edge of Rensselaer County. Full power restoration in Canaan took 4 days.

Change of accounting firm proposal

Supervisor Adams is interested in changing the accounting firm, which is a successor to the firm the town had used for many years. The current firm seems to be short on resources. There have been errors and delays and more recently the necessity to file an extension for the annual financial report. She has a proposal from a firm in Hillsdale that is experienced in New York municipal law and works with surrounding towns. There is not a contract with the current accountant, but it is unclear if notice needs to be given and how much time. There are changes in the air for other towns who chose to use the successor firm. It is not clear if choosing a new accountant needs to go out for bids first. More information next month.

Union update: meetings scheduled for April 17 & April 19

Supervisor Adams, Councilperson Patzwahl and Highway Supervisor Stephen van Tassel will meet with the labor attorney on the 17th, and on the 19th with the Teamsters.

Cemetery clean-up (added 04/04)

Lagerwall Maintenance would like to renew its cemetery mowing contract. Additionally, windstorms have caused damage over the winter. Mr. Lagerwall anticipates an additional expenditure of about \$1,000, no more than \$1,200 for the winter clean-up. Councilperson Patzwahl would like to move forward to renew contract with the 3% budgeted increase and provide the additional, requested funds for windstorm clean-up. The contract is based on nine mows, annually, at each cemetery.

Councilperson Patzwahl made a motion to approve the winter clean-up, not to exceed \$1200, seconded by Councilperson Nightingale. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Brian Lifsec — yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale — yes; and
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes.

Councilperson Patzwahl made a motion to approve the 2024 contract, the same terms as last year including the provision of a proof of insurance form, with the 3% increase, seconded by Councilperson Lifsec. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Brian Lifsec — yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale — yes; and
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes.

Update on Tax Collection

Supervisor Adams reported that as of today \$2,904,091.10, 90% of property taxes owed have been collected, which is 2% less than last year at this time. 109 second notices have been sent out, up from 83 last year. We are now in the penalty period. There is a collection deadline of May 31, after which collection is done at the county level.

ARPA prospective projects discussion

Supervisor Adams requested the board respond to a list of projects assembled from residents' comments and distributed to the board. She would like for the board to identify their priorities and to put some budgets for the projects together for a decision. Discussion of the benefits of quality-of-life improvements were discussed for the town tax payers that included potential improvements to the Town Hall, Stoddard Field and Town Garage.

- **Refurbishing the tennis court / adding a pickle ball court**
This idea originally came up at senior luncheon, and subsequently from other residents; it would especially benefit seniors. New lines could be added to the tennis court.
- **New playground equipment**
It's been some time since park equipment has been replaced and there is old and non-working equipment on site. During the school break, the park was full all day and the park remains a key recreation feature for families and children.
- **Improve the acoustics of the Town Hall**
A perennial complaint for many years, how to reduce noise and improve acoustics in the Meeting Room. Carpet tiles and foldable partitions were discussed.
- **Improved LED lighting and a heat pump at the highway garage**
If the town invested in a heat pump for the Town Garage offices and LED lighting, it would reduce operating costs for the garage and earn points towards the town's silver certification which comes with a grant of \$100,000.
- **The Town Clerk's office** needs reconfiguring, better organization to improve work flow, to provide visual and acoustical privacy, more filing etc. Dividers were suggested as improvements. A local interior designer has volunteered to do a layout plan.
- **Strategic Planning need**
Supervisor Adams explained there is a need for some long-term planning for the town, that our Strategic Plan has not been updated in twenty years. Best practices suggest these plans be updated every 3 to 5 years at most.
- **EV Charging Station behind the town hall**
Supervisor Adams said a second charging station has been requested and with current incentives could be a good idea at this time.
- **Hardwire the Sump Pump for the Canaan Town Hall**
Supervisor Adams and Councilperson Patzwahl made the case for a permanent solution to the flooding/water issue created by the heavy volume of water related to spring thaw and heavy storms. The hard wired sump pump installation designed as part of the original building construction was never installed; the temporary solution (now 20 years old) is not sustainable and results in water infiltration and damage within the building.

Supervisor Adams asked board members if they would like to be assist with coming up with costs for these projects for budget purposes.

EV, heat pump: Climate Smart group; pickleball: Brenda; playground: Brenda and Ginny; Sump Pump: David; Office redesign: Interior Designer; moving the Veteran's monument and park land uses: Brian & Brenda; carpet squares: Brenda. Nothing will be finalized until the Broadband grant funding is secured.

ASSESSOR'S REPORT: (see attached)

HIGHWAY REPORT: sent via email (SVT excused for fire training)

David Patzwahl gave a quick summary.

- 60 plus miles per hour wind caused damage that needed work
- Radios have been installed
- No word on the CHIPS funding
- Beavers have outsmarted the deceiver but ongoing work
- Truck tie rod and camshaft replaced
- Crew members attended an expo in Syracuse
- Scrap runs done
- New salt shed is leaking – looking to see if it is covered by warranty – some of the roofing nails and plywood nails were not anchored correctly
- Low salt usage tonnage will affect next year's supply purchasing – unused salt
- Madsen Overhead Doors came and fixed and replaced panel.
- Cleaning done at the garage was successful, up to standards for inspection

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Lauree Hickok commented the Recreation Committee should consider limiting hours of operation (due to noise issues) for a pickle ball court.

Peter Flierl request: *Please* fix the potholes at the Transfer Station. Response: Operators are planning for a repair as soon as the driveway dries out; material is already on site.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to adjourn at 9:10, seconded by Councilperson Lifsec. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Brian Lifsec — yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale — yes; and
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes.

Next meetings:

Special Meeting 5:00 PM April 22, 2024

Potential agenda: union contract update / annual financial document / health insurance

Town Board Meeting 7:00 PM May 13, 2024

Respectfully Submitted
Rebecca Nebesar
Deputy Clerk 2