

## **Town Board Regular Meeting Minutes:**

**September 9, 2024, 7:01 – 8:36 pm**

Hybrid Meeting: In person at Town Hall and via ZOOM

### **Present:**

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

### **Also in Attendance:**

Town Clerk Joshua Weisbuch

**Excused:** Highway Superintendent Stephen Van Tassel (training)

**Audience:** 2 plus 4 online

### **Moment of Silence**

Thoughts on the passing of George Hoover who was an exemplary community volunteer.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

Supervisor Adams thanked everyone who participated in the state required Sexual Harassment training before tonight's board meeting.

## **APPROVALS**

### **Minutes August 12**

Supervisor Adams asked if there were any corrections or comments. There were none. Supervisor Adams called for a motion to approve the August 12 Minutes. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to approve the minutes seconded by Councilperson Lifsec. 5 AYES - Motion carried.

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

### **Bills**

Supervisor Adams asked if everyone had a chance to audit the bills. She pointed out there are two invoices that need addressing and called for a motion to approve, with the caveat to address the questions about those two items, a bill from the prior accountant and a bill regarding truck parts and labor charges. There was some discussion about the truck repair charge overrun, and it was recommended that the overrun charge be further reviewed. It is expected that if a charge will exceed the approved amount, the vendor should contact the town for official approval before proceeding. Councilperson Powers made a motion to

approve and pay the bills, seconded by Councilperson Patzwahl. 5 AYES - Motion carried.

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

### **YTD Financials**

Supervisor Adams asked if everyone had a chance to review the financials. There was some discussion and clarification about the new format (this is first month of financials prepared by the new accountant). Prior month's numbers are not included in this report; this was a helpful feature in the past. The bank reconciliations are now sent monthly to Supervisor Adams. The financials themselves were discussed briefly. Supervisor Adams then asked for a motion to accept the financials. Councilperson Lifsec made a motion to accept, seconded by Councilperson Nightingale. 5 AYES - Motion carried.

Super Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;  
Councilperson Brian Lifsec – yes;  
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes;  
Councilperson David Patzwahl – yes; and  
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

### **RESOLUTIONS & MOTIONS**

#### **Resolution #105 of 2024 Appointment of Heather O'Grady to the Town of Canaan Ethics Board**

Supervisor Adams reviewed that Jack Leal had retired after long service on the Ethics Board. Ethics Board member John Kowalski was in attendance and addressed the suggestion that this is an opportunity to balance the board representation by nominating a woman to the board. It was also noted by the Supervisor that at least one member of the Ethics Board should be a town employee. The Ethics Board proposed Deputy Clerk Heather O'Grady be appointed to complete Jack Leal's term that expires December 31, 2024, with the expectation that the term will be renewed in January 2025. Councilperson Patzwahl made a motion to accept Resolution #105 to appoint Deputy Clerk O'Grady, seconded by Councilperson Lifsec. 5 AYES - Motion carried.

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

#### **Resolution #106 of 2024 to purchase heat pump for highway garage**

Supervisor Adams explained that the Climate Smart Task Force has recommended that the energy efficiency for heating and cooling of the Highway Garage offices would be increased with the installation of a heat pump. Having a heat pump would have several benefits: lower annual operating costs, reduce the carbon footprint by replacing the old air conditioner and using less fossil fuel, and the town would receive points that would advance the town's application for

Climate Smart Silver Certification and additional grant funding. Canaan has American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds that can be used for the purchase. Quotes from two vendors will be considered. One quote is in. Supervisor Adams explained the purchase of a heat pump would be at a price not to exceed \$7,900 for the equipment and installation plus an additional \$400 for the building permits and electrical inspection. If the second bid comes in lower, the town can move forward with the lower bid. There is some urgency associated with the purchase to meet a September CEC funding eligibility deadline. After some further discussion, Supervisor Adams called for a motion to move forward with the purchase. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to adopt Resolution #106, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 5 AYES - Motion carried.

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

#### **Motion to waive building permit fees for Highway Department heat pump**

Supervisor Adam called for a motion to waive the building permit fee. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to waive the fee, seconded by Councilperson Patzwahl. 5 AYES - Motion carried.

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

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **Broadband Grant Update / review completed / updated MOU for contract coming soon / special meeting**

Supervisor Adams explained that the USDA has indicated the project review is complete and they will be sending a contract for signature. The contract is expected later this month. There may be a special meeting necessary to approve the MOUs that are part of the contract with the Town of Ghent.

##### **Routes 295 & 22; Routes 295 and CR5 / request bumped to Poughkeepsie office**

Supervisor Adams explained that a trip to Poughkeepsie may be in order.

##### **Vandenburg Rd – intersection safety conversations continue**

The people on the road will replace their own mirror, because it is on private property. Councilperson Patzwahl said the town would help install the 24" mirror. It was suggested the mirror have more clearance for snow plows this time. Additionally at the Traffic Safety meeting on September 26<sup>th</sup>, the town will request additional signage with flashing lights.

##### **Implementation of Local Law #3**

Supervisor Adams would like to work with Councilperson Patzwahl on the next steps to prepare for the coming year in hiring the person who would monitor the transfer station including

determining an hourly rate, advertising the position and interviewing candidates. It was added that in August there was a 13-ton increase in household trash over the same time last year. (The C&D was 10 tons less.) YTD we are 63 tons over in 2024 from the 2023 amount. Discussion ensued about the increases in tonnage and financial details. Supervisor Adams mentioned that the town also needs to encourage recycling to reduce MSW and suggested that if people purchased the recycling sticker at the same time as the transfer station sticker, there could be a discount.

### **Transition of Accounting Services / new reports this month**

It has been a smooth transition to working with Robert Patterson. Supervisor Adams explained there have been minimal questions about procedures. There will be a meeting on September 10<sup>th</sup> to go over the questions and start working on the 2025 budget. She added that Deputy Clerk O'Grady and Highway Department Clerk Wemple have been working well with the new accountant.

### **Chatham Rescue Squad Contract Update**

Canaan's share will be lower in the coming year due to a previous imbalance in payments. In the past, contract payments were based on Assessed Values that were not adjusted to Full Market Value (FMV). As a result Canaan paid more than its fair share. The current contract and future contracts will be based on FMV and number of parcels. This formula will not depend entirely on land values but will also consider usage and population density. Some discussion ensued.

### **NYS Thruway Land Acquisition Update**

The NYS Thruway Board of Directors has approved the sale of the B3 parcel to Canaan. Next steps will include a sales contract.

### **Emergency Management Plan Update / approved plan sent to fire companies / no additional comments**

Supervisor Adams and Councilperson Lifsec discussed the Emergency Management Plan status. It will be submitted to the state.

### **STR /Occupancy Tax & Registration moving forward / draft local law next month**

A draft local law should be ready for distribution to the board in October or November.

### **ARPA Projects Discussion / Video Monitors(s), Highway Offices Heat Pump**

Supervisor Adams reviewed the progress and is optimistic the projects can be identified and under contract by the end of the year. She added that portable emergency generators for home-bound residents and a video monitor for meetings are in the pipeline. Capital improvement ideas for the offices were discussed, as was the strategic plan. The town did not qualify for a grant for the Stoddard Park Masterplan, it will still be considered as a possible ARPA project.

### **Union Update / Contract / Time Clock**

The town approved the agreement at the last board meeting. Board liaison David Patzwahl met with the Highway Superintendent and the Highway Clerk to review the agreement. The agreement not yet been signed by the Union and there are open items (appointment of steward, dues amounts, forms from employees approving payroll deductions for dues) that haven't been received. It was agreed that no changes to payroll will be made until the paperwork is settled. Pay increases will be paid retroactively once the agreement is signed. To improve record keeping and

efficiency, time clocks are being installed. Supervisor Adams thanked Councilperson Patzwahl for meeting with highway staff members. The town will now have union and non-union employees at the town garage.

### **CC Hazard Mitigation Plan Update**

Councilperson Lifsec spoke about being active and proactive to improve roads and culverts etc., the need to identify trouble spots such as steep slopes, to be prepared for emergencies and situations that could escalate to emergencies. A very helpful spread sheet with weighted priorities was created by Councilperson Lifsec.

There was some discussion about Fire Department ratings and their impact on insurance rates.

### **Strategic Plan update / draft RFP / Budget Calendar**

Town resident Mary Keegan and Supervisor Adams have had conversations with other towns and the New York State Planning Federation regarding the hiring of a planning professional for the Strategic Plan update. The supervisor also plans to reach out to Patrice Perry, Director of the Columbia County Planning Board, regarding the RFP process. Some towns have put out Requests for Proposals (RFPs), others have not. As it's a professional service, an RFP is not required. Supervisor Adams asked the board for their input, a plan update is estimated to cost about \$30,000. After some discussion, and a general agreement that a Strategic Plan update is a good idea, it was agreed that more time to gather information and engaging the public is needed. Supervisor Adams suggested a subcommittee of the board could decide how to proceed and meet the deadline. Supervisor Adams and Councilpersons Powers and Lifsec volunteered.

### **County Engineer / Red Rock drainage issue**

Next step is to schedule a meeting with the County Engineer and Highway Superintendent Van Tassel.

### **EMC Opening / call for volunteer**

Superintendent Adams will have the job posted on the website.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION**

### **Planning / ZBA Report / Ginny**

Onvo, current owner of the gas station and adjacent parcels across from Love's on Route 22, will appear before the Planning Board in the coming months to discuss planned improvements to the site. The ZBA held, and continued, a Public Hearing about a proposed shed at Queechy Lake pending receipt of information from DEC.

### **Climate Smart Task Force / Will**

Thanks were expressed for the improvements like the heat pumps. He added that one project leads to another, and everything is looking very positive. The Climate Carnival on the 14<sup>th</sup> is coming up. Anyone who has installed a heat pump should let the town know because it helps the town accrue points toward silver certification.

### **Public Safety / David**

Meeting will be on September 26<sup>th</sup>.

## **Transfer Station / David**

Already discussed. (See above Implementation of Local Law #3.)

## **Fall Newsletter Mailed**

The Fall Newsletter was emailed. Feedback has been positive including one comment, "Amazing what this town does."

## **ASSESSOR'S REPORT (sent via email)**

Supervisor Adams asked if all had received the report. They had. There were no questions.

## **HIGHWAY REPORT / Read by David Patzwahl**

### **Summary:**

- Two of the Canaan crew members were assigned in helping Trout Unlimited a few days a week in Chatham to train in the use of the large equipment.
- Director of Columbia County Emergency Management David Harrison along Deputy Director Bill Hilscher attended our monthly Columbia County Association of Town Superintendents of Highways this month to go over the latest FEMA guidelines.
- I completed the NYSDOT Policy, Planning and Performance group's Goals and Vision survey for input for their Statewide Transportation Master Plan.
- Christine and I have completed/revised the annual highway inventory, due the end of September a few weeks early, and will be providing the Town Hall with a copy signed and dated copy.
- Tree work that requires a bucket truck for removal that led to higher expenses has wrapped up for the year.
- The FCC sent out a reminder that our Low-Band radio frequently license runs out October 10th 2024. With the help from Rob Lopez Columbia County 911 we are setting up an account with the FCC, which will enable us to renew our licenses in the future with ease. Even though we are switching over to the High-Band radio frequency, I believe we should keep the Low-Band radio frequency as it could become useful to us in the future. The renewal is free and lasts 10 years.
- Last month Brenda sent out the 2025 budget request form which Christine and I filled out and sent back.
- The Highway garage roof project has been scheduled to begin September 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Truck 8 the 2006 International dump truck repair should be completed early next week. (9th-13th) There is an additional expense in this month's bills for some unforeseen parts that were needed for the completion of the repair. Once the truck is completed it will be looked over thoroughly to make sure everything is in good working order for this upcoming winter as it is one of the main snowplow trucks.
- After talking to John Deere in Chatham, the new tractor is still on schedule to be delivered to the dealership October 10th. Once they have it, they will notify us to come take a look to go over the entire unit and make sure everything is specced out exactly how it is on the approved quote.
- The Highway crew as well as myself will be switching hours after the last week of September, from our summer schedule to our winter schedule, the winter hours will be

7am-3:30pm starting September 30th.

- The three portable radios are still on schedule to arrive September 27th.
- Investigating whether Bridge NY funding might be available, I contacted the Association of Towns as well as other Highway Superintendents. I did not find out anything yet, but will keep an ear out.
- The Salt Shed roof shingles have been becoming damaged or falling off in multiple areas causing water damage throughout the building. David and I talked about the roof warranty predicament and haven't heard back from the manufacturers yet about the warranty status. I will be collecting three quotes moving forward for the roof repair, as well as a quote for a paint job to stain the outside of the building. The contractor is no longer in business.
- David and I thoroughly reviewed the new Union Contract, so I am now familiar with the new policies that took effect September 11. Should any questions or uncertainties arise in the future, I will contact David or Brenda for further clarification and guidance.
- Talking further with the NYS LHI (Local Highway Inventory) headquarters I have been trying to figure out how exactly and if we can add certain existing roadways to the LHI for 2025, which would have to be submitted this November. After talking to Phil Genovese at the Village of Chatham about this, he has recently submitted a request to NYS and will be providing me with a copy of the resolution needed for the request.

A short discussion ensued about road safety work, tree clearing etc., with an emphasis on proactive prevention rather than reactive clearing of trees. NYSEG has a deeded right-of-way where the poles are.

The Highway Department has been short two men for the past month, one with long-term disability and one has come back after an illness.

#### **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

There were no more questions or comments.

#### **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Supervisor Adams called for a motion to adjourn. Councilperson Lifsec made a motion to adjourn at 8:36pm, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 5 AYES - Motion carried.

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

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Meeting to Review Broadband MOU for Contract: September TBD  
Regular Meeting: October 14, 2024 at 7 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Nebesar  
Deputy Clerk 2