

## **Town Board Regular Meeting Minutes**

**October 14, 2024, 6:59 – 9:32 pm**

Hybrid Meeting: In person at Town Hall and via ZOOM

### **Present:**

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

### **Also in Attendance:**

Town Clerk Joshua Weisbuch  
Highway Supervisor Stephen Van Tassel  
Guest: Chris Brown / CC Housing Development Coordinator

### **Excused:**

Councilperson Will Powers

**Audience:** 9 for presentation / 5 for remainder of meeting

**Online:** no requests to be admitted to meeting

### **Moment of Silence**

Remembering Jean Morris & the Morris family

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

**Proclamation Chatham Rescue Squad (CRS)** read by Councilperson Brian Lifsec

Thanked in person and given a certificate were Carlos Chacon and Jeffrey Manor for their response to an accident in Red Rock. Superintendent Adams also recognized CRS Director of Operations Epi Sanchez and Board President Elijah Falkner.

**Columbia County Housing Task Force Presentation** guest speaker, CC Housing Development Coordinator Chris Brown

Housing Development Coordinator Chris Brown passed out copies of his presentation and spoke in detail about housing trends in Columbia County. He also distributed a Town of Canaan Housing Profile. He responded to questions and comments from the board. Supervisor Adams thanked Chris Brown for coming. She explained the information is useful for updating Canaan's Strategic Plan as it provides actual data to support the implementation and promotion of housing opportunities. Anyone interested in further exploration of the topic or looking for grant funding, such as the ADU Plus One can contact her or Chris Brown.

## **APPROVALS**

### **Minutes September 9 and September 20**

Supervisor Adams asked if there were any corrections or comments. There were none. Supervisor Adams called for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilperson Nightingale made

a motion to approve the minutes 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.

### **Bills**

Supervisor Adams asked if everyone had a chance to look at the bills and if there were any questions. A quote/charge for labor and parts by the highway department needed clarification. There was an additional charge for parts that was not in the accepted quote, which at the time was lower than two other bids. Discussion ensued about this being a learning experience going forward. There were no other questions or comments. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to approve and pay the bills, 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 explained some details. Sales tax payment are posted for two quarters YTD, there will be two more payments this year. Several accounts, accounting and payroll fees (expected & due to the change of accounting firms) and the labor attorney's account (unbudgeted and agreement has taken longer than anticipated) will need additional funding before the end of the year; one or two other lines may need small amounts of additional funding, those accounts will bear watching in the next weeks. The HW 5132 line seems to be in error as it's over the amount budgeted for the roof repair. Supervisor Adams will check on this and report back at the next meeting. Supervisor Adams then asked for a motion to accept the financials as presented. Councilperson Lifsec made a motion to accept, 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.

## **RESOLUTIONS & MOTIONS**

### **Resolution #109 of 2024 to approve Time Clock Policy**

Supervisor Adams explained that time clocks had been purchased and installed at the Town Hall and Highway Department. A Time Clock Policy will support timely, accurate, and efficient record keeping. She asked the Town of Canaan to adopt a Time Clock policy to establish a set of requirements and guidelines that will govern use of the clocks. She explained to the audience that more town employees and state regulations have created an administrative burden. The use of time clocks will provide efficiencies via computer software that will reduce the time to process payroll and retirement accounts. Two points were made: one of the items in the draft to change wording from "time in" to "time out"; and instead of using time cards there will be a time clock for

payroll purposes. After determining there were no more questions or comments, Supervisor Adams called for a motion to approve. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to accept Resolution #109 of 2024, 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 #111 of 2024 to reduce speed on SR 22 at B3**

Supervisor Adams explained that residents have expressed concerns about unsafe speeds, limited sightlines, and the volume of truck traffic on SR 22 in the area of the B3 exit of I-90, Flint's Crossing Road and Peaceful Valley Road. "Mafia" blocks have been installed by the town on Peaceful Valley Road to prevent large trucks from parking on the road. The authority to install similar measures on Route 22 is outside the town's purview and resides with the state. The speed limit of 55 MPH in this area is no longer safe given the proliferation of commercial activities and increased traffic volume in recent years. This area is the first exit on I-90 in New York State and functions as a gateway providing access to many seasonal activities in the Hudson Valley and New England putting drivers unfamiliar with the area into a confusing, fast-moving, often dangerous situation. The Supervisor would like to pass the resolution to get the speed reduction process moving forward. Discussion included a question about having a stop light or a blinking light. Supervisor Adams called for a motion to approve the resolution for speed reduction. Councilperson Lifsec made a motion, 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.

### **Motion to move Preliminary Budget to Tentative**

Supervisor Adams asked if the board had any additional budget questions since the budget workshop. For the public she noted there will be no increase in taxes this year. The budget included the exemptions roll; the tax cap document has been filed with the state. Councilperson Patzwahl made a motion to move the budget from "Preliminary" to "Tentative," 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.

### **Motion to schedule CRS contract hearing and schedule date for public hearing before Nov. 7**

Time was spent to determine a good date for the public hearing. Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM was selected and Town Clerk Weisbuch will post the date. Councilperson Patzwahl made a motion to schedule the public hearing October 29<sup>th</sup>, at 6PM on the Tentative Budget and the Chatham Rescue Squad agreement, 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.

### **Motion to accept Strategic Plan Scope of Work**

Supervisor Adams explained Mary Keegan substantially prepared the plan. They researched what other towns have done for requests for proposals. The Supervisor would like to distribute the scope of the work to a list of consultants, ask for a proposal, generate a short list of people to interview, and bring the recommendation to the town board for approval. The work would be done in 2025. Brief discussion was very supportive and appreciative. The Supervisor called for a motion to move forward. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to do so, 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.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

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

Supervisor Adams explained the contract between USDA & CCI has been signed. There are three outstanding questions that need to be resolved before CCI can sign a contract with the Town of Ghent, the lead town on the grant.

#### **Routes 295 & 22; Routes 295 and CR5 & Post Rd, SR 295 & Vanderburg, SR 22 & Love's / meeting October 16**

Supervisor Adams will meet this week with DOT engineers. There are several locations that will be discussed for reduced speed, signage, lights. Speed and safety are the concerns.

#### **Vanderburg Rd – intersection safety conversations continue / see above**

There are additional signage options. The people on the road will buy their own mirror and Highway Superintendent Van Tassel and Councilperson Patzwahl will install it subject to NYS DOT approval.

#### **Implementation of Local Law #3 / next steps.**

Supervisor Adams said the next steps are to put together a job description and a notice that the town is accepting applications for the position.

#### **NYS Thruway land acquisition update**

Supervisor Adams followed up: the acquisition has been approved by NYS Thruway Authority but not the Federal Transportation Board as yet. The Thruway Authority could not specify a time frame for the federal approval.

### **Emergency Management Plan update / training to be scheduled for January 2025**

The plan has been submitted to the state. Supervisor Adams asked that anyone who would like to participate in the training let her know. Training will be scheduled after the first of the year.

### **Chatham Rescue Squad contract review / schedule Public Hearing / with Budget Public Hearing**

No discussion necessary. (See above Motion.)

### **STR /Occupancy Tax & registration moving forward / draft local law review**

The occupancy tax is moving forward. The county has identified a vendor who will do the Address Identification and the tax collection for the county. Supervisor Adams has been asked to serve on the implementation committee; the committee will be meeting regularly until the end of the year. The tax is effective January 01, 2025 with roll-out of the tax collection process in the first quarter of 2025.

Councilperson Nightingale presented a rough draft of Short-Term Rental (STR) law which includes any rental of less than 30 days. The draft was based on a Granicus white paper which discusses the policy aspects of STRs and a review of the STR regulations in place in the half-dozen Columbia County towns and villages that have already regulated this use. The board recommended the following be added to the document:

1. Wording will be added that variances could be possible through the ZBA.
2. Language stating the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) would be able to do a certain number random inspections per year.
3. Sample affidavit for STR renewals.

Once these changes are made, the document will go to the attorney and CEO for review and/or revision. The plan is to have a draft before the board on November with a potential public hearing in December.

### **County Engineer / Red Rock drainage issue / site visit scheduled for October 22**

Next step is a meeting with the County Engineer and Highway Superintendent Van Tassel on October 22.

### **CC budget conversations / Rescue Squad conversations**

Supervisor Adams said the county is meeting with department heads to control rising costs with the least damage to programs. Looking like there could be a three percent tax increase at the county level this year.

### **Recommendation that we establish a Fund Balance Policy**

Supervisor Adams would like to establish a Fund Balance Policy. She will check with NYS and/or the accountant for see if it is a state requirement and provide an example for the board to review.

### **HIGHWAY REPORT / Highway Superintendent Stephen van Tassel**

#### **Summary:**

- Town of Chatham Highway lent a hand with their water/calcium chloride truck last month to help spray some dirt roads that were considerably dustier than others. We successfully sprayed 10 roads not entirely but in sections, typically sections that have no tree canopy.

- After the stream clean out day behind the Town Hall the Highway lent a hand with some brush removal/mowing, we reached as far back as the old swing set and slide.
- We have continued mowing on some various roads around town and as of last week our new mowing tractor has arrived to the highway garage. (see photo).
- The Electric Landscaping Equipment has been picked up from Chatham Hardware, thank you Brenda, the Climate Smart Task Force and everyone involved in getting this done. (Please see attached picture in email).
- Truck 8's repair has been completed. We are looking over the trucks before winter making sure they are all ready.
- The three portable radios have arrived and were programmed with almost all the frequency's that the mobile ones have in the trucks; we are missing the Canaan TA (Talk-Around) frequency in them as well as Truck 1. This will be addressed. Our Low-Band frequency for the Town has been renewed to October 11, 2034. We also have an online account.
- The half mile mark on top of Dean Road past the 911 address 134 is being designated a "seasonal limited-use highway."
- We will be ordering sand and salt soon to be mixed in the salt shed for this winter. The 2024-2025 salt prices were released at \$4.59 less than what we budgeted this year and next year until next September. This will save us roughly \$1,000 dollars in our minimum 200-ton salt order.
- The new roof material for the garage was delivered and the roofers have started the work.
- Fingar Insurance requested we update and renew our Auto and Equipment schedule. Fingar is requiring Brenda and me to sign a form verifying that all heavy and extra-heavy trucks are equipped with battery disconnect switches. They all are. The deadline for the update is October 21<sup>st</sup> and battery disconnect form October 25<sup>th</sup>.
- The new mini split unit has been installed in the highway garage office.
- The drain for the septic backed up last month and we had it snaked. Dells Plumbing checked it out. We concluded that sending enough water through the pipe will mitigate this issue.
- We received help from the Town of Chatham last month with some shouldering of our recently paved roads and reciprocated by supplying trucking when they shouldered all of their roads.
- A few crew members and I went to the Innovative Surface Solutions headquarters in Albany for a tour of the facility. A few of the products are Calcium Chloride and Magnesium Chloride that used for dust control/soil stabilization as well as a de-icer, anti-icer, and salt brine enhancer for roads and sidewalks. They provided classes and demos. Overall, it was a highly informative day informing us about new methods we can use in Canaan.
- An Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) Regulation will come in effect January 1<sup>st</sup> 2025 that will require applicable medium- and heavy-duty vehicle (M/HDV) manufacturers to sell a percentage of their total sales in NYS as zero-emission vehicles starting in model year 2025 with increasing ZEV sales through MY 2035.

Supervisor Adams added that outside-of-budget expenses for the landscaping equipment (\$5,000) came from the Climate Task Force Clean Energy Community grant and the mini split funding came from ARPA funds. She also brought up a Chatham HWD accident in which a Chatham worker was seriously injured. The injury was tied to working with insufficient staff and inadequate training on equipment. She asked if the Highway crew receives training for rental or borrowed equipment,

the Highway Superintendent confirmed they do.

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

There were no questions.

### **ARPA projects review & discussion**

Now that the USDA/CCI contract has been signed, ARPA funds previously earmarked for last-mile broadband build-out can be used for other purposes. Supervisor Adams reminded the board of the intended use of ARPA funds is for projects for the public good and/or projects that respond to unmet or urgent needs. The town board previously added another goal, that projects be visible to the public.

The Supervisor distributed an updated list of board suggestions with estimates attached, some of the quotes are higher than anticipated. Costs supplied to date exceed available funds so choices will have to be made. The projects encompass improvements to Stoddard Park— playground equipment, refurbishing the tennis and basketball courts, painting the tennis court as a hybrid court to also be used for pickle ball were discussed. Also discussed were: improving the acoustics of the Town Hall meeting room by carpeting the floor; replacing the Clerks' office furniture and filing cabinets to provide adequate storage and to comply with the fire code; Town Library improvements with minor building repairs around the windows and to the deck and new paint. Other plans are for three portable generators that will be stored at the fire companies to provide back-up power to homes of elder of infirmed residents that are without power and should not be moved; volunteer appreciation funding – the town has about 50 volunteers. ARPA funds have already been used to purchase generators for the Town Hall and Highway Garage. A large video monitor for the Town Hall meeting room was also discussed but the town may be able to purchase that out of 2024 contingency funds. Funding for the Town Hall parking lot redesign to accommodate more cars and water management will be sourced outside of ARPA. The park master plan might also move forward in 2025 with another source of grant funding. Relocation of the war monument is premature until there is a park masterplan; when that takes place the American Legion will share the cost of moving the monument.

### **Resolution #110 of 2024 to approve ARPA purchases**

Supervisor Adams asked for approval for the following items on the list: painting and exterior repair of the library at a price not to exceed \$5,900 (if a lower quote comes in, it can be re-visited in November); \$16,350 for the Town Clerk Office Furniture; and \$9,930 for the Meeting Room carpet. All projects must be identified and under contract by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024 with work to be completed by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025. Other items will be reviewed in November to meet the deadline. Supervisor Adams called for a motion to move forward with the above purchases. Councilperson Patzwahl made a motion to adopt Resolution #110, 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.

Ginny will identify another quote for the painting and repair of the library and a quote for the playground equipment. Brian Lifsec will identify another vendor for the tennis and basketball courts refurbishing. Supervisor Adams will work with Mary Keegan on the Strategic Plan quotes.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION**

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

ONVO is expected to have a proposal before the Planning Board this month. The ZBA did not approve the proposed variance for a shed on Queechy Lake.

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

As mentioned earlier the landscaping equipment has arrived. The town-wide yard sale and Repair Café at the park included 20 vendors and 5 off-site yard sales. Approximately seventy people attended. The Task Force met with local architect Bill Wallace to evaluate the energy audit of town buildings to come up with a list of projects for a \$100,000 grant that we should qualify for given recent completed actions. The grant is on a first-come, first-serve basis until funds are depleted. The Task Force is expediting requests for proposals for solar panels and heat pumps for the Town Hall and solar panels for the Highway Garage to identify a town project for funding. Silver Certification is a goal for early 2025.

### **Public Safety / David**

Road work is ongoing.

### **Transfer Station / David**

It is looking good: volume is down ten tons this month from this time last year. The hope is to hire someone before the end of the year.

### **Additional Remarks/rescheduling**

Supervisor Adams said she had received complaints that tonight's meeting is held on a holiday. She proposed rescheduling November's meeting that is scheduled for November 11<sup>th</sup>, Veteran's Day to November 12<sup>th</sup>. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to reschedule the November meeting to the 12<sup>th</sup>, seconded Councilperson Lifsec. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

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

## **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

After a brief discussion about transfer station problems and solutions with the Town Clerk, Supervisor Adams offered to meet with him to answer his questions with the purpose of framing the issues so that he can better communicate with townspeople. Recycling was also discussed.

## **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Supervisor Adams called for a motion to adjourn. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to adjourn at 9:32 pm, 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 MEETING**

Regular Meeting: November 12 at 7 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Nebesar  
Deputy Clerk 2