

Public Hearing and Town Board Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2025, 7:00 pm 9:18 pm

Hybrid / in person & via Zoom

Public Hearing Local Law #2 of 2025

Public Hearing Local Law #1 of 2025

March 10, 2025, 7:00 pm – 8:20

Present:

Supervisor Brenda Adams

Councilperson Ginny Nightingale

Councilperson William Powers

Excused/Recused:

Councilperson David Patzwahl (excused)

Councilperson Brian Lifsec (excused)

Also in Attendance:

Town Attorney Andrew Howard

Town Clerk Joshua Weisbuch

Highway Superintendent Stephen Van Tassel

Audience: about 34 plus 29 online

Supervisor Adams called the meeting to order.

Town Clerk Joshua Weisbuch read the Public Notices

Public Hearing Local Laws #1 and #2 of 2025

MOTION to open the Public Hearing on Local Law #2 of 2025

Supervisor Adams called for a motion to open the Public Hearing on Local Law #2.

Councilperson Nightingale made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;

Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and

Councilperson William Powers – yes.

Supervisor Adams explained the proposed Local Law # 2 of 2025 is to amend Local Law #6 of 2023 regarding tax exemptions for volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers that provide service within the Town of Canaan. She asked if there were any questions or comments from the board. There were none. She added that the assessor had asked the board to clarify the language that defines municipal boundaries, a non-substantive change that can be done by April. She then opened the floor to the public.

Elijah Falkner, President of the Canaan Protective Fire Company

Thanked the town board for supporting local firefighters and emergency workers through this

legislation.

Supervisor Adams called for any more comments from the public in attendance or online. As there were no further questions or comments, she called for a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing on Local Law #2 of 2025. Councilperson Powers made a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing, seconded by Councilperson Nightingale. 3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

MOTION to open the Public Hearing on Local Law #1 of 2025

Supervisor Adams called for a motion to open the Public Hearing on Local Law #1 concerning Short-Term Rentals. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to open, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

Supervisor Adams handed over the Public Hearing to Town Attorney Andrew Howard. Mr. Howard introduced himself and reviewed the timeline on the hearings and the purpose of public hearings, to receive input from the public. He said he would go down the list of people who signed the list to speak and after that anyone who came in late or is not on the list would have a chance to speak. He would also take comment from anyone online. He also requested that people limit their speaking time to approximately two and a half minutes. He added that if a written statement has been submitted, it will be included as part of the record, and that if anyone has a written statement to please submit it to the board.

Julie Currie

She brought up Councilperson Patzwahl's ownership of three properties that are not STRs and that are rented seasonally to Tanglewood artists. She thinks excluding seasonal rentals from the proposed STR law is wrong. She believes Supervisor Adams should recuse herself as her explanation, at a prior meeting, of Councilperson Patzwahl's use of his properties indicates a bias. She also believes Councilperson Patzwahl should recuse himself. She thinks seasonal rentals do not address affordable housing problems. She added that Canaan is not a starter home community like Pittsfield, MA.

Lisa Robinson Schoeller

She, along with her husband, thanked the board for their efforts. She asserted that she is a voice for the silent majority in town that is in favor of the board's work on STRs. She explained that STRs drive the rental market now because they are more profitable to owners, but they also limit housing options through rising rents, disrupted social cohesion, and decreased inventory for people who want or need to live in the area, not just for vacationing, but for living and making a living. She spoke of negative effects on the community because STRs are a commercial activity in the midst of residential areas, like hotels.

Sally Dessloch

She is concerned about Canaan becoming overrun with STRs as has happened in some communities, and concerned about safety and the sustainability of neighborhoods in the community. She supports the revisions to the proposed law and thinks it is a balanced and reasonable approach. She says the proposed law is less restrictive than in other communities and she is in favor of its passing.

Diane Mackie

With her husband Bob Mackie, her family has been taxpayers for 80 years in Canaan. She thanked the board. They own three properties. She is concerned that an abundance of STRs will alter the character of the community. She pointed out that although renters frequent restaurants and shops, they do not contribute in ways essential to town life in community organizations, such as houses of worship and service entities like firefighting.

Stephani Schott

Question: she would like to better understand how zoning is considered and defined [as part of this discussion].

Victoria Mills

She did research on STR laws in neighboring communities and found they are more restrictive than what is in the current proposed Local Law #1 of 2025. She agrees with the law's intent to reduce the pressure on housing stock *ie* to protect the town from having too much of its 'housing stock purchased for commercial purposes. The law should be about getting ahead of the issue rather than waiting for problems to happen.

Suzanne Michael

Thanked the board for their due diligence and stated that many of her thoughts have been expressed in prior meetings. She thinks it's important to look forward rather than look back and that the town has a sound plan.

Bob Mackie

Thinks the law is reasonable and a good compromise. He lives next to a STR with a field between that has had renters trespassing and leaving trash on his property. The road is no longer quiet.

Peter Bartlett

He owns Home Range Winery and is concerned about the appearance of the town entrance at the I90 / B3 exit.

Mitch Khosrova, Attorney for Polson family

He thinks not many people are against having rules, that garbage and noise are fair concerns. He believes the IRS treats STRs and long-term rentals the same, as businesses. His points have to do with: 1. Board of Health approval for Certificate of Occupancy should be sufficient approval for septic approval; 2. will complaints be anonymous, who determines if complaints are valid; 3. qualifying for a variance details; and 4. the need for grandfathering. He then added that if you consider the restriction of one property per owner, and the restriction to one structure per property, the count came to about ten units. He believes the limitation is onerous and unconstitutional.

Garrick Spears

He believes the proposed regulations are based on hypothetical problems and the town lacks sufficient documentation for a law. He thinks the law needs to respond to real issues. He stated that about 30% of homes in Canaan are listed as vacant and are most likely second homes that will probably never be turned into long-term rentals. He thinks STRs are not to blame for the shortage of housing. He believes the proposed law unfairly targets well-meaning homeowners. He did not find any relevant studies done in rural towns similar to Canaan. He spoke of the aging population and declining numbers of school-age children in the community. He also thinks that young families' use of STR income enables them to buy homes and live in Canaan.

Attorney Howard stated that that was everyone on the list and asked if there was anyone else in the audience who would like to speak.

Christopher Landy

He owns two STRs in Canaan. He referenced his earlier comments at the February Town Board meeting. He elaborated on Tanglewood's long-term rentals in the summer and referred to Councilperson Patzwahl's rentals to that organization. He does not believe there is a difference between the use of his rentals and those of Councilperson Patzwahl's that have turnover of tenants under the auspices of Tanglewood, some staying only a week. He thinks Councilperson Patzwahl should recuse himself from voting on Local Law #1 of 2025.

Andre Porter

He has owned his house on three acres for 10-11 years; it is intended as a summer home and for retirement. 40 percent of his guests are repeat guests. He thinks that there should be clearer distinctions – all STRs are being painted with a broad brush. He and his wife go for quality not quantity and said that STRs are not all negatively impacting the community.

Will Wallace

He said there are a couple of things he wants to add. Even though he understands the discussion is about STRs he would like to bring in a broader context. He pointed out that with long term rentals there is more risk if a tenant is a problem and an eviction has to be considered. With STRs troublesome renters do not stay long and the renters will not want a negative rating. Airbnb has excellent mechanisms for this. He advocated for the revenue that STR tenants bring to the area such as restaurant income. He also pointed out that that renters often end up buying homes in the community.

Attorney Howard opened the floor to the audience on Zoom.

Hank Poillucci

He has been a home owner at Queechy Shores for 35 years which has always been a community place. STRs have changed the character of the community.

Charlie Long

Three points: 1. Are inspections required for other types of rentals such as hotels or seasonal rentals, he doesn't think there should be a double standard; 2. he wonders about the definition of a STR, how many weeks can someone rent before they are required to go through the hoops of

the permit process, is a seasonal rental subject to the same permit process; and 3. some houses are not habitable all year round, maybe they should be in a different category.

John Polson

He said he has spoken to a lot of STR owners. He stated that his home will never be in the long-term rental market. He thinks that the decision to create the law did not come from documented problems. He stated that he thinks members of the board are biased against STRs. He thinks that private property owners have rights that need to be respected. He said the need is for clear enforceable guidelines without unnecessary bureaucracy. He spoke again of Councilperson Lifsec's recusal, his prior request that Councilperson Nightingale recuse herself, and his questions around Councilperson Patzwahl's rentals. He appreciates the town's efforts.

Suzanne Pemrick

She's concerned about the use of STRs by undocumented persons, wonders if it is reasonable to assume that everyone who rents in the STRs is a citizen and well vetted. She thinks the chairman of the Planning Board should be part of the process.

Amanda Harding

She is married to John Polson. She read a statement that pointed out that her family suffered a big financial setback during the covid pandemic and their STR helped them recover. She enumerated several other points, and added that she thinks some board members are biased. She requested that the town exempt through grandfathering certain STR properties that have operated in good faith, that have had no complaints, and that have actively contributed to the well-being of the town.

Hank Poillucci

He said Tanglewood is a commercial area, Canaan is not.

Back to the Canaan Town Hall Audience:

Courtney Lorenz

She grew up in Canaan, has a young family and lives in NYC and comes to Canaan and has a STR to make it affordable to keep the house. It is not as a business, it is to pay the mortgage.

Suzanne Michael

Zoning Laws prohibit STRs, so those currently using their properties as STRs have been enjoying a grace period; the town is catching up with itself. She knows anecdotally of Canaan residents who live adjacent to STRs who, when they have had a complaint, spoke directly to the owners and did not report to the town because they wanted to be good neighbors and work things out quietly. This means that even though there are not documented violations, there have been problems.

Mitch Khosrova

Asked to correct Ms. Michael's comment; he stated he had discussed STRs with Lee Heim (the CEO) probably in 2016; in that conversation he understood STRs were allowed under current law.

Lisa Hill

She is a resident of Columbia County and her daughter is a new resident of Canaan. Restriction of

the number of guests seems to not have a relationship to anything other than the zoning area. She questioned the practicality of the 120-day time limit to get the property inspected, and thinks that section needs revision. She also thinks that the STR occupants who cause trouble will be gone but tenants of a long-term rental can lead to disruption and difficulty that are harder to deal with. Overall, she thinks STRs are a benefit.

Another person

Asserted that long-term renters are of more benefit than a series of STR renters who are disruptive.

Garrick Spears

Wonders if there will be an opportunity for Q & A in this process.

Attorney Howard explained the purpose of the hearing, following the legal procedures, is for the public to express their views so that the Town Board can utilize the input, in their discretion as elected town board officials, to determine what is in the best interest of the Town of Canaan.

Bob Mackie

Likes that the law limits the number of rentals on a property. He says he knows a person who says he lives here, but he doesn't, and he rents his main dwelling and the accessory dwelling as STRs. The speaker thinks if you live there and rent on your property, an STR should be allowed. He pointed out the money-making advantages of STRs.

Peter Bartlett

He said if the STR problem revolves around properties at Queechy Lake, perhaps they should have their own regulations.

Charlie Long

With Supervisor Adams interpreting because of the poor audio connection, he expressed that there is no one organization that serves all of Queechy Lake.

Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to close the Public Hearing on Local Law #1 of 2025, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

Town Board Meeting Minutes

March 10th, 2025, 8:21 pm – 9:51PM

Supervisor Adams stated that with the close of the hearing they will open the regular Town Board Meeting and called for a Moment of Silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance

MOTION: Executive Session 8:20 to 8:45 PM

Supervisor Adams called for a motion to go into executive session for a matter related to potential litigation. Councilperson Powers made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilperson Nightingale. 3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

MOTION: Come back to meeting

Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to close the executive session and return to the meeting, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

Supervisor Adams reported that there were no decisions made in the executive session.

Town Board Meeting Minutes

APPROVALS

Minutes February 10, 2025

Supervisor Adams asked if everyone had a chance to review the minutes from February 10th. They had. The supervisor went on to say that there had been a couple of comments by a member of the audience about their remarks as reported in the minutes. She explained to the audience member that minutes are not a transcript of the proceeding but a summary. That said, the supervisor asked permission of the board to contact Deputy Clerk 2 with the information about the requested changes. Deputy Clerk 2 will review the tape and confirm the requested comments were part of the record and, if so, amend the minutes accordingly. The board agreed to allow this. She called for a motion to approve the February 10th minutes subject to the request being processed. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

Bills

Supervisor Adams asked if everyone had a chance to look the bills over. She asked if there were any questions. There were no questions. She wondered about whether the software charges for the computers for the clerk and code officer were duplicates and agreed to contact the vendor. Another question was about the LED remote light charge of \$700. Highway Superintendent Van Tassel explained that it is for three lights on top of the three trucks. Another question was about

invoice #27, the use of a hauler that was more expensive for gravel than one of the other bidders. Highway Superintendent Van Tassel clarified that the lower bidder was unavailable and there was time pressure to get material on hand. She called for a motion to approve the bills, including the software invoice if it's not a duplicate. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

YTD Financials (see attached)

Supervisor Adams asked if everyone has had a chance to review the financials and if there were any questions. There were none. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to approve the financials, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

Supervisor Adams then addressed the fact that a number of people were still in attendance and interested in the STR issue and what comes next. Based on the comments tonight, she summarized three points and general concerns that she will send to the attorney for clarification, and possible, additional language to bring back to the board and the public in April.

1. Grandfathering
2. Number of bedrooms
3. Septic system certifications

She asked if this was agreeable to the board.

Councilperson Powers agreed. Councilperson Nightingale brought up the hotline as another concern. Supervisor Adams said the town will independently decide whether to contract with a hotline service and that is not part of the local law. Supervisor Adams summed up that the attorney will look at the language regarding the above points and that there will potentially be a new draft for the April meeting. This was agreed to.

A member of the audience asked for clarification. Supervisor Adams explained the board will send the attorney a list of points or questions based on the comments heard tonight. He will then consider and/or frame answers to the questions and how it will affect the law.

A question was asked, Will there be another Public Hearing in April?

Supervisor Adams that advice from the attorney indicated that if the changes to the law are substantive, there will need to be another hearing. If the changes are not substantive, there will not be another hearing. A new draft will be posted before the next meeting, preferably a week before.

Supervisor Adams summarized and asked if there were any further comments or questions.

An audience member asked, Will the questions posed be public?

Supervisor Adams replied that the questions are protected by privilege as far as she knows.

Mitch Khosrova, attorney for the Polson family, commented that the public would like to know what the questions were, and who posed them, in order to know who to vote for and in the interest of transparency.

Supervisor Adams said that the board operates on consensus basis and she needs to think further about an answer to his comment. Some discussion ensued about the nature of the question and the different points of view.

Another audience member asked about the 120-day time limit for inspections. Supervisor Adams explained the law had been reviewed by the CEO and he thinks the inspection timeline is doable. She further explained that all the relevant staff have been consulted regarding the implementation of the law and they are agreeable to the parts of the law that concern them. An extra day was added to the CEO's schedule in this year's budget in anticipation of STR regulation.

Supervisor Adams wrapped up the discussion of STRs and the new law. She welcomed everyone to stay but stated there will be no further discussion of STRs.

RESOLUTIONS & MOTIONS

Resolution #63 of 2025 Budget amendments (2024 encumbered bill / court security)

Supervisor Adams explained the town had one invoice for court security that was encumbered for 2024; the budget line was depleted and needed to be further funded for payment of the invoice. She called for a motion to approve Resolution #63. Councilperson Powers made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilperson Nightingale. 3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

Resolution #64 of 2025 to Approve Local Law #2 of 2025

Supervisor Adams recommended tabling the motion pending any addition or clarification language based on tonight's hearing. She called for a motion to table. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to table it, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 3 AYES - Motion carried

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

Resolution #65 of 2025 to amend High Peaks solar contract & approve associated NYSEDA documents

Supervisor Adams explained the town has signed an agreement with High Peaks Solar for the installation of solar panels on the town Highway Garage. The vendor for the solar panels has changed, resulting in slightly more production (0.31 W) at a slightly lower price (lower by \$77.50). Supervisor Adams requested authorization to sign the change order and High Peaks Solar has requested authorization to apply for the additional NYSEDA incentives (\$5,265) for the project.

High Peaks Solar has also requested authorization to act as the town's agent for the purpose of applying for the NYSEDA incentives and coordinating the Highway Garage installation with NYSEDA. Supervisor Adams called for a motion to approve Resolution #65. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

Resolution #66 of 2025 to contract with Labor Attorney Elena DeFio Kean of Hinman Straub for review and negotiation of Family Medical Leave Policy (required for town compliance and for Teamsters contract)

Supervisor Adams asked for a budget of \$3,000 for conversations with the labor attorney because negotiations with Teamsters Local 294 have to be through an attorney. The town signed an agreement with the union in 2024 that requires the town to develop a Family Medical Leave Policy. She will need to retain appropriate legal services for the policy to become part of the labor agreement and would like to retain the services of Elena DeFio Kean of Hinman Straub for that purpose. Supervisor Adams requested approval to transfer the money from the contingency fund to the general fund. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to approve Resolution #66 of 2025, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

Resolution #67 of 2025 to de-acquisition certain playground equipment and sent to Auctions International

Supervisor Adams explained the town has a regular policy of upgrading and/or replacing equipment as needed. The town has identified playground equipment (one plastic jungle gym /climbing/slide unit and three, round, in-ground, tables) in need of replacement and ready to be removed from inventory. Highway Superintendent Van Tassel has shown them to Auctions International and they have determined the items in "as is" condition have resale value. She called for a motion to authorize her to send these items to auction. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to approve Resolution #67 of 2025, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

Resolution #68 of 2025 to approve HW inter-municipal agreements

Supervisor Adams explained it has been the policy of the Highway Superintendent to trade highway labor and/or equipment with other towns when it has been of benefit to the Town of Canaan. Authorization is being requested by the Highway Superintendent Van Tassel to enter into an inter-municipal one (1) year agreement by and between Chatham, New Lebanon, Stephentown, Stockport, Stuyvesant, Copake & Taghkanic. Each of the parties desire cooperation and assistance

by and between their respective Highway Departments for, but not limited to, the general maintenance, construction, and repair of municipal roads, highways, bridges and property. This agreement sunsets January 31, 2026. It may be renewed annually in January of each year for an additional term of one (1) year. Supervisor Adams requested that the Town Board authorize her to enter into the inter-municipal agreements, effective immediately and called for a motion. Brief discussion led to amending the agreement to include Austerlitz. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to approve Resolution #68 of 2025 as amended, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

OLD / NEW BUSINESS

Broadband Grant update / new contracts signed & returned to USDA

Approval is expected within the next few weeks; hoping to be able to report in the next newsletter that the work has started.

Routes 295 & 22; Routes 295 and CR5 & Post Rd, SR 295 & Vandenburg, SR 22 & Love's / site

meeting held October 29 w/ NYS DOT / some responses via Traffic Safety Committee

Supervisor Adams reported not much has changed. After a few more weeks to give them time to respond, Supervisor Adams will reach out to them one more time.

Hazard Mitigation Plan update / public comment period open

Supervisor Adams reported the update is more or less finished. Three towns, excluding Canaan, have not yet completed the submission requirement. Canaan was the first town to complete its submission. The public comment period will open at the end of March or early April and she will send out an email via the town list.

Draft Fund Balance Policy conversation to be rescheduled for April meeting

This will happen in April, not tonight.

Vacancies update: Planning Board, Ethics Committee

Supervisor Adams reported the Ethics Committee is interviewing this week and next and hopes to have a nominee(s) in time for the April Town Board meeting. So far no one has come forward as interested in serving on the Planning Board. Supervisor Adams said she thinks this opening may need to be advertised again.

2024 AFR completed & submitted

Supervisor Adams said the Annual Financial report (AFR) required by NYS has been completed, submitted to town board members for review, and submitted to NYS. Confirmation of receipt of the report has been received.

2025 Town Tax Collection update

Supervisor Adams reported that as of March 10th \$2,882,588.22 in taxes has been collected. This is 85% of taxes owed to the town, about 3% less than the same period year over year. Payments

continue to trickle in. Second notices will be sent out in the first week in April to those who have not paid by the end of March. After May the unpaid taxes will be turned over to the county for collection. The Tax Collector hopes that people will pay before the penalties start to accumulate.

Oaths of Office: Town Clerk update

Town Clerk Weisbuch reports that he has a list of all oaths that have been signed and last week he sent out an email to those who have not complied. Some discussion ensued about those who have not yet signed. The law requires that oaths be completed within 30 days of appointment, that is, January 30th, 2025.

Town email requests / charging stations maintenance or replacement

Supervisor Adams reported requests to: 1. change the town's email provider; and 2. change the EV charging station vendor in the park. The existing vendor for the EV charging has explained that the software component is no longer serviced by them and they would have to replace the entire unit. Because of this, she would like to look into hiring a new vendor for equivalent or better service, perhaps the vendor that works for the county. Councilperson Lifsec will work on it when he returns.

Spring Newsletter

Supervisor Adams reported the Newsletter went out, with positive reactions. It included a flier about tonight's public hearing.

Report from Columbia County BOS / NYS STR law

Supervisor Adams said the county implementation of the Occupancy Tax Law has included some changes to the original roll-out based on language in the new state law. Because of this, the occupancy tax collection for 2025 probably will not begin before June 1st. A 30-day notice letter will be sent out to all hosts/operators of STRs in Columbia County, to notify them of the responsibility to register. The compliance date will be in the letter.

BOARD DISCUSSION / COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning / ZBA report / Ginny

Councilperson Nightingale reported that neither board met the prior month.

Climate Smart Task Force / Will

Councilperson Powers reported the task force met on February 18th. They talked about the High Peaks Solar installation and the Capitol District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) Climate Action Plan (CAP). Supervisor Adams added that a subcommittee of the task force met to review the CDRPC CAP plan and submitted the first of what is expected to be several documents. Councilperson Powers added they are working on more points for the silver certification. They discussed various upcoming events including Community Gardening Day that will be on Saturday May 17th, invasive water chestnut removal, and Canaan Community Day on June 14th. Supervisor Adams added that the town applied for and received a grant from Columbia County Soil and Water of \$6,100 for mechanical root removal of the water chestnuts in Stoddard Pond. If this is successful, the hope is that money will be available for other communities to do the same thing.

Public Safety / David

Meets every other month; there is no report this month.

Transfer Station / Brenda for David

Supervisor Adams reported there was a good roll out with Harry McMann, the new town employee, at the Transfer Station. On the first day, March 1st – that was brutally cold — there were 74 people without permits. On March 8th there were 15 without permits. Many people have come in the interim to get their permits. McMann will begin checking the volume of trash after permits are more or less reconciled. When Councilperson Patzwahl returns they will work on a policy consideration to account for residents for whom the permit fee is a challenge, in order to provide a sticker at no charge. They also have identified three or four home owners groups that have one truck that brings the trash for everybody. A possible solution is for those individual households to receive two stickers – one for the truck and one for their own vehicle. For example, if there are six stickers on the truck then 12 black contractor bags are allowed. Another issue is figuring out how to handle multiple families that share one house over the summer.

Strategic Plan committee / Brenda

The committee was formed last month and they held their first meeting. Supervisor Adams reported there will be two initial actions a kick-off meeting and a community survey. The committee invited members of the various appointed town boards and committees (Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Board of Assessment Review, the Climate Smart Task Force, Emergency Management team) to a kick-off meeting to define the process, explore the timeline, and to ask them what issues and concerns they are facing. Second, the committee is going to create a community survey for input. Once the survey goes out, there will be a postcard sent to inform people that the survey is available online and on paper in the Town Hall. An email will also be sent out to the town email list. Once the results from the survey comes in there will be meetings to review the results. Councilperson Nightingale shared and Supervisor Adams agreed that things have gotten off to a very positive start.

Ethics Committee

Supervisor Adams reported there are one or possibly two openings to be filled. The committee is interviewing and hopes to have someone to confirm by April's meeting.

ASSESSOR'S REPORT: sent via email (see attached)

Supervisor Adams asked if everyone had received it and if there were any questions; they have received it and there were no questions.

HIGHWAY REPORT: Highway Superintendent Stephen Van Tassel

Summary

- Because of mud spots/ruts, I sent out an email to the town board and the town clerk's office, and posted an advisory on town Facebook pages, advising the public to avoid heavy vehicular traffic on dirt roads until further notice.
- On March 2nd, the crew and I spent over 12 hours working on the roads, grading, spreading, and smoothing out ruts and mud spots around town, focusing on the most problematic areas. I placed two large orders of stone the week before to address both past mud issues and those that may arise in the future.

- Freeze-thaw cycles are causing issues with blacktop roads including frost heaves and potholes. We purchased cold patch to fill the growing potholes, especially on Frisbee Street, the road designated for CHIPS funding this year and next.
- We've moved the transfer station sign to a better location where drivers approach when they meet Harry to check their transfer station stickers.
- The Post Rd "Road closed to thru traffic signs" will be installed once the ground is thawed.
- NYSDOT and Columbia County Highway signs department informed me that they were recently in our area doing an inventory and are almost ready to replace the missing signs. We're also looking into identifying which roads could benefit from additional signs, such as those bordering Richmond, West Stockbridge, Chatham, Austerlitz, and New Lebanon.
- To better prepare for upcoming storms, I purchased a Road Watch Road Surface Temperature Sensor, which is typically equipped on all the big trucks, except one.
- Two of the crew members and I attended the 2025 Advocacy Day at the Capitol building in Albany. One memo that stood out this year was about the 'Sea of Orange' that advocates for safer local roads and bridges. With over 750 representatives from towns, counties, and affiliated organizations in attendance, we are continuing to make a difference and ensure that the resources needed to maintain and improve our roads are available.
- We contacted Personnel Concepts to update our labor law posters at the garage last month. We bought a \$160 package that includes all required workplace posters and an annual subscription that ensures compliance with labor law posting requirements, employment laws, and other workplace obligations throughout the year.
- Auctions International came to take photos and collect details about the firetruck and playground equipment that will be up for the auction that will run from March 28th to April 11th. At the April 14th board meeting, we will decide whether to accept or reject the sale. This information will also be published in the newspaper and shared on both town Facebook pages.

There was a question from the audience about having a one-way sign on the Post Road, whether it would work better. A brief discussion clarified why the one-way sign is not going to be done for two reasons – not having the full authority according to a federal mandate, and the difficulty in enforcement.

Supervisor Adams asked if there were any other questions for Highway Superintendent Stephen Van Tassel from the board or from the public. There were no questions from the board.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Garrick Spears

He wanted to make sure that the February Town Board Meeting minutes did not say that he nor Will Wallace had legal representation present. He also is eager to understand how to engage in local government. As suggested by the town attorney, he looked at the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) regarding request he had made for information. He said that according to FOIA, the town has five days to respond to questions. He asked for copies of letters and had some trouble getting everything he wanted. He wanted to know who is responsible for getting the information out in a timely manner. He stated the Town Clerk had indicated it was not his responsibility. Supervisor Adams explained that the town clerk is the town's FOIA officer and it his job to reply to these requests. She said she would follow up with him regarding open requests. In fairness to him,

she explained that there have been quite a few FOIA requests recently. She also stated that he does care about getting things done but, sometimes, needs more time.

Will Wallace

He praised Harry McMann at the Transfer Station, but brought up the poor condition of the road there. Supervisor Adams explained the road is owned by the trucking company and the Transfer Station only has a right-of-way to use the road. The trucking company repaired the road three times last year but the time to repair the road is limited between repairs. Heavy truck traffic quickly undermines the work that has been done. Work and communication about ongoing repairs is underway. The road really needs to be rebuilt to solve the problem, but the trucking company does not want to have that length of pause in their business. She offered to share updates on the road work there.

A suggestion for having stickers on garbage bags was discussed. If a town resident needs assistance from a relative, friend, or neighbor [who is a resident], someone to bring their garbage because they are not able to, they can be issued a sticker that the helper can have on their car along with their own.

Supervisor Adams asked if there were any more comments or questions.

Greg Hickock

Spoke via Zoom and asked about the Broadband Grant. Supervisor Adams explained that the money for the build-out was approved by the US Congress before the new administration took office. Current information is that former commitments will be honored and paid but any new contracts would be vulnerable. There are additional concerns about CHIPS funding and other programs as changes to federal funding and staffing trickle down to the states.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Supervisor Adams called for a motion to adjourn. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 3 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;
Councilperson Ginny Nightingale – yes; and
Councilperson William Powers – yes.

Next meeting:

April Public Hearing / to be determined

April meeting April 14th

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Nebesar
Deputy Clerk 2