

**Town Board Meeting Minutes**  
**February 10, 2025, 7:00 pm – 10:09 pm**  
**Hybrid / in person & via Zoom**

**Present:**

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

**Excused:**

Councilperson David Patzwahl (traveling)

**Also in Attendance:**

Town Clerk Joshua Weisbuch  
Highway Superintendent Stephen Van Tassel

**Audience:** about 19 plus 12 online

Supervisor Adams called the meeting to order.

**Moment of Silence / Pledge of Allegiance**

**APPROVALS**

**Minutes January 13, 2025**

Supervisor Adams asked if everyone had a chance to review the minutes from January 13<sup>th</sup> and if there were any questions or comments. There were none. She called for a motion to approve the January 13<sup>th</sup> Minutes. Councilperson Powers made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilperson Lifsec. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

Supervisor Brenda Adams – yes;  
Councilperson Brian Lifsec – 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. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to accept and pay the bills, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

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

## **YTD Financials**

Supervisor Adams reviewed the financials briefly and asked for any questions. There were no questions. Councilperson Lifsec made a motion to accept the financials, seconded by Councilperson Nightingale 4 AYES - Motion carried.

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

Supervisor Adams asked for a show of hands as to how many in attendance are there for the STR discussion. She asked for the board to allow her to move up the STR discussion to the front of the agenda. It was agreeable to the board. Councilperson Lifsec recused himself and walked to the back of the room.

## **DISCUSSION and PUBLIC COMMENT on Proposed Local Law #1 of 2025**

Supervisor Adams explained that tonight's meeting is a workshop, not a public hearing. After a discussion with the board about the changes that are being made, she will open up the floor to the public. She said that she would like those who have written letters to allow those who have not sent letters to speak first. Emails and letters are already on the record and have been distributed to all of the board members less one. She further requested that speakers limit their input to new thoughts, new information, or responses to changes in the draft law. She thanked the public in advance and reminded them that the board have a full agenda after the public discussion. This is the third workshop on the law; there have been two prior workshops and a public hearing. There is documentation available for anyone interested. She also said there are two versions of the draft law on the town website, the discussion pertains to the most recent version.

Supervisor Adams summarized the changes to the draft Law:

- Augmented / expanded the purpose and intent of the law in the first paragraph
- Added the definition of Seasonal Rental
- Clarified the definition of a Short Term Rental
- Under the STR regulations, expanded/ explained the payment of the annual fee clause and the inspection clause
- Noted that inspections will be at the time of the initial application for 4 – 6 basic safety issues. On renewal the holder will submit an affidavit that the property is compliant. If the inspector determines an inspection for a renewal is merited, it is provided for in the law although it would not be "random." It would be for a purpose and scheduled.
- Some of the paragraphs were re-ordered to be more logical
- New explanation of the process for permit renewal
- Expanded on the variance language to make it clearer what would qualify for a variance and the process to obtain one

Councilperson Nightingale commented about some letter ordering in the document. She also brought up the time period for the sunset clause process that is two years and another two years, that gives a total of four years to resolve the issues. Considering that owners have four months to

complete the permit application, she wondered if technically they have four years and four months, should a variance be desired. Supervisor Adams clarified that the four years applies to the date the law goes into effect. Councilperson Nightingale also addressed the part in the law that says the permit is non-transferable should the property be sold. She asserted that new owners would be more likely to be familiar with the law. She added, the wording about the local contact person now says the response time to a problem is “promptly” not “one hour.”

Supervisor Adams asked if there anything from the prior discussion that is not reflected in the draft. It was noted that not all requests from the public had been accommodated in the revised draft. Supervisor Adams asked if the new draft adequately expressed the board’s goals to create a balanced document that would serve the community. The board agreed.

Supervisor Adams opened up the floor to the public, asking if there were any questions or comments.

Comments and questions from those in person in the room:

**Craig Skerkis**

Expressed concerns (cost and county backlog) about the county septic inspection. Supervisor Adams said this is being discussed, the document of record would be the property data card on file with the assessor. The data card states the number of bedrooms and bathrooms. As long as the use is consistent with what is on file and is approved, it would not require an additional county inspection. Final clarification is being worked on by the attorney. Craig also expressed concern about limiting the number of STRs for one owner.

**Nicholas Simmons**

His made the point that STRs enable people to afford housing especially younger people of his generation. He believes the requirements might be burdensome but has not been involved in the process yet. Supervisor Adams provided some background. Simmons is interested in being involved, thinks the good neighbor clause is wonderful but should go further. Supervisor Adams explained that there are those in the town who want no STRs, or that the owner should live in the town, or that the STRs should only be allowed for limited time periods in the year (not year-round). All points of view are being taken into account. The intention is to preserve the right to have STRs. She added there is a homeowner’s association in Canaan that prohibits STRs. He asked if there are any documented incidents. Supervisor Adams explained that this is not a reactive law; it is not in response to neighbor disputes. He asked if there is a committee. Some discussion ensued about an earlier Planning Board process to develop a law and the lack of available documentation. A citizen’s committee was formed in 2021 and developed a proposal for a draft law. It was more burdensome and restrictive. The town wanted to come up with a better law.

**Garrick Spears**

A number of questions about an earlier draft of a STR law, was it a fair and representational process. There was discussion about public participation and representation then and now.

**“Will” Wallace**

He shared his opinion that there is a lot of interest in this – money, livelihoods are invested. He sees it as a private property issue. He thinks that the board has failed to get enough community

input and said he thinks the board is not adequately representing or informing the community. He thinks that there is an air of confrontation that will certainly go to litigation. He spoke of feeling disenfranchised. Councilperson Nightingale said the board looked at what other towns have done. Germantown was held up as a better example by Wallace. He said he has an attorney here tonight. He brought up the conflict of interest of the board member who is recused tonight. Supervisor Adams read the letter of recusal dated February 4<sup>th</sup>. According to the letter, the board member chose to recuse himself because the issue was a distraction to the board's work and potentially an excuse for legal proceedings, not because of a conflict of interest.

### **Bob Connors**

He agrees with the STR Law proposal in general, but is concerned about the occupancy limitation in certain districts. He believes that had the law been in effect, he would have lost half his rental income because more than half of his renters in the past have consisted of groups of more than six people. Supervisor Adams clarified that because his property has four bedrooms and two full baths on file with his property data card, he could qualify for a variance. What the town has seen and is trying to address is owners advertising houses with three bedrooms and 1 ½ baths sleeping 10-12 people. The Code Enforcement Officer is the person who would issue the variance.

### **Mitchell Khosrova, attorney for the Polsons**

Commented that if the intent is about septic capacity, why not just have a law based on this? Supervisor Adams said the law also addresses parking that needs to be designated and off town roads and other issues. He added STR laws are usually pursuant to a Comprehensive Plan; the town needs more input from residents.

### **Another speaker**

He complained about the lack of documentation and that the town needs more input. He also emphasized that there is no documentation on how the law will affect housing affordability. Supervisor Adams spoke in response about the efforts of the town over the last two years to bring the town in alignment with Pro-Housing Community requirements and norms in the state, and updating the 20-year-old strategic plan, adding there is always more work to be done. The speaker reiterated his points. He said it's not that the STR law is not needed, but that the draft law is too vague. He thinks stakeholders could be better tapped to get the wording and requirements fair and appropriate to the needs. He thinks that limiting the number of properties owned by a person is not right.

### **Chris Landy**

He owns two STRs in Canaan, he is not opposed to common sense legislation. He has a letter to submit. He says there is inequity in the law; there is no appreciation for his investment. He was shocked by the tone of the board member who, in December, responded to his concern about his renting of two STRs. He does not understand why STRs are being targeted, but not seasonal rentals, or rentals longer than 30 days. He singled out a board member who rents in the summer and has more than one rental property. He alleged that the town board is singling out a small group in the community, the short-term rental owners. He enumerated all the things STR owners must do to have good and safe properties. Why not have these requirements for the entire town? Supervisor Adams apologized for his being offended, but she was sure that the board member, absent tonight, did not mean any disrespect.

**Dan Libardi**

Agrees that everyone who is renting should have a permit. He owns a large piece of property. He thinks that the law needs to take into account the fact that he might want to further develop his property and not be restricted unfairly.

**Julie Currie**

On the subject of affordable housing: there is a person in town who owns three houses that are sitting vacant. But that owner has them as investments for his children. She said that she believes the draft law is unconstitutional. She asked Councilperson Nightingale about her septic system; Nightingale clarified that her septic system is adequate and well-made but that there is no paperwork because at the time it was created, there were no inspections. Ms. Currie inquired about getting certification for septic systems and Supervisor Adams replied that if the number of bedrooms in the rental agrees with the number on the property card on file, no additional certification would be required. Supervisor Adams, in her capacity as a member of the Columbia County Housing Task Force, offered to meet and discuss housing issues later. There is no single answer to affordable housing issues.

**Suzanne Michael**

She has been trying to sort out the complex issues of short-term rentals. She agrees with the right to operate an STR but she sees how communities around the country have been negatively affected. She asked if other communities dealing with STRs had grandfathered existing short-term rentals. She spoke of looking at what other communities have created, not re-inventing the wheel. She pointed out that certain people in the room have strong, personal reasons for attending the meeting. She notes there are many more people in town not present tonight who have concerns of allowing STRs and the impact on the town. She does not believe those in the room expressing strong opinions are speaking for the majority of Canaan residents. She gave the examples of Catskill and Colorado as places where STRs have caused problems

Persons online were giving a chance to speak.

**John Polson**

Stated he loves that people are so engaged in the conversation and appreciates their efforts. He thinks that STR regulation is realistic and a good idea. Yet he said the town has been handling the process inappropriately and is not being transparent. He thinks the new draft is as onerous as the previous one. He expressed that there is a massive divide between the board of elected officials and the Canaan community. Supervisor Adams spoke up that this is not a public hearing and that she thinks he has made it clear that he is not happy with the new draft of the law. The opportunity to fully express himself will be available at the public hearing in March. This is a workshop. Polson continued speaking. Supervisor Adams said she is trying to keep the meeting on track. Polson continued speaking and said he believes the board has a long-standing bias against STRs, took particular aim at individual board members who have disregarded public sentiment and he threatened litigation.

Supervisor Adams asked if there was anyone else who would like to speak.

**Greg Vines**

He bought his property because his purchase offer was the highest offer. He thinks the STR owners were probably also the highest bidders. He thinks that restricting STRs will depress property values and that will hurt the community. He asked about a private equity firm that the town has been working with. Supervisor Adams explained Granicus provides data management services to municipalities and is currently employed by the county to help with the registration of STRs for taxation purposes. Granicus works with information available online; STR owners have previously provided that information for publication on web media platforms.

**Alexandra Vines**

She continued the discussion about Granicus, and a hot line. Supervisor Adams clarified that the town has not hired Granicus. Columbia County has hired Granicus for address identification for taxation purposes for the county Occupancy Tax. It may be owned by a private equity firm, but she does not know of any privacy issues. She agreed to ask whether Granicus had a privacy policy and whether Granicus shared information with its parent company.

**A follow up question from the audience in the Town Hall:** is the town hiring Granicus? Supervisor Adams responded that the town may hire Granicus through an agreement with the county for a hotline or other services. The purpose of a 24-hour hot line would be to fill the gap [between business hours and after business hours]. The Code Enforcement Officer operates during regular business hours but many of the issues that come up occur outside normal business hours.

**Julie Currie**

She added that Airbnb has a system that if an owner such as herself is being contacted, she can set up her phone so that it immediately dings. Supervisor Adams explained that not all STR owners are on Airbnb. There are now over 65 platforms associated with STRs; nor she continued is everyone the Super Host that Currie is.

A quote from Copake about their using Granicus was read. Supervisor Adams reiterated that the town's code officer works two days a week but that identifying addresses is a state requirement. The town will need assistance in identifying addresses and owners and filing required reports to the county/state. The registration fee will offset some of this additional cost to the town.

**Alexandra Vines**

She believes that a sense of community is desired by all; she does not feel that limiting the number of STRs will strengthen or bring that back. She worries about the 24-hotline potentially fielding anonymous complaints that are mean-spirited and false. She added that there is no provision to grandfather owners who are already operating and who provide jobs and support community theatre, music festivals, shops. She asked why the town wants to discourage outside, weekend visitors. She and her husband were visitors and fell in love with Canaan. She wants Chatham to be a thriving town. They want to retire here in ten years. She does not notice traffic problems.

Supervisor Adams thanked the speaker and called for two more speakers before the board would move on the rest of the meeting.

**Nicolas Simmons**

He understands how much work is involved and he appreciates it. He commented that there are a

lot of good things being discussed and he is willing to organize a committee to deepen the discussion including all parties especially STR owners and users that are affected by the proposed law. He stated that there is respect for the aim of the law, but that what is currently in the draft is not enough and suggested opening the process up to a broader demographic. He said he would be adversely affected by the law that he characterized as punitive; the law would limit his ability to earn income. There was a brief exchange with Supervisor Adams who asked for specifics, does he currently operate a STR in his home and/or an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). He does not have an ADU at the current time. He asserted he thinks Canaan could craft a very good law that other communities could emulate it, if the process were improved.

### **John Polson**

He requested that those who are already here be grandfathered.

### **Mitchell Khosrova**

Asked if the draft for the March hearing will be changed.

Councilperson Nightingale said she would like to digest what was contributed to the discussion tonight and leave the draft as is until after the March hearing. Supervisor Adams was of two minds. Discussion ensued.

### **Victoria Mills**

Victoria reminded the people present that tonight is not a public hearing, which is a reason more people were not present. If any changes were made to the draft as a result of tonight's comments and questions, it would leave people out. Supervisor Adams agreed and added that people had called and asked if tonight is a hearing and they were told it was not.

Supervisor Adams summarized that the biggest issue from tonight seems to be grandfathering. The board agreed that no changes should be made to the draft until after the March 10th hearing. She asked if we know how many existing properties grandfathering would affect. The exact number was not clear, but from polling the room, it seemed like four current properties and three potential properties. Density/owner definitions were discussed.

Supervisor Adams tried to wrap up the discussion. Someone in the audience questioned property inspections, suggesting that inspections in the new law are duplicative. Supervisor Adams shared that Columbia County was recently awarded \$2,000,000 in grants to distribute to owners who would create ADUs for affordable housing, including family members. A condition of the funding is that the ADUs could not be used for short-term rentals. She said the state understands there is a connection between short term rentals and scarcity of housing stock. She also pointed out that even though STRs are more profitable, long-term rentals would bring in residents who could serve the town in other capacities such as in the volunteer fire company or rescue squad.

Supervisor Adams summarized the key points from the public comments:

1. Grandfathering
2. Number of bedrooms and variances
3. Burden of the registration requirements, particularly the inspections.

Her summary was interrupted with a question about the difference between STR and longer than 30 days rentals, which seemed arbitrary to the speaker. A hypothetical example of how the

process could be abused by an entity renting for the season but then subletting, such as for seasonal and transient performers was discussed. Supervisor Adams responded with a question, are you suggesting the law be applied to seasonal rentals too? The answer was yes. It was further added that there are no stipulations on occupancy in the draft law. Supervisor Adams added a fourth summary point:

#### 4. Re-visiting the “30 days” definition in the draft law.

Supervisor Adams said historically we have been a community with fewer rather than more regulations and have tried to respect the rights of neighbors to manage their own properties. Supervisor Adams wanted to move onto the meeting. There were further questions about if there would be more discussion about STRs on the agenda for the meeting tonight. She welcomed people to stay if they would like to be there. It was 9:17 pm. Supervisor Adams offered to let Highway Superintendent Van Tassel speak first so he could leave.

#### **HIGHWAY REPORT:** Highway Superintendent Van Tassel

Full report attached.

Summary:

##### Activities:

- Busy month due to the bitter cold, 10–12 inches of snow, and frequent rain showers. Our trucks winged back a majority of town roads and scraped off the steep hills and corners.
- We used some of the new insulation that was left over from the roof job to replace the old insulation on the back wall in the shop between storms. (See attached photos of before and after pictures).
- Re: signage NYS/MUTCD on the “Post Road,” to discourage traffic from using Post Rd as a detour from State Route 295 as well as County Route 5. County Engineer Ray Jurkowski Columbia and Cornell Cooperative Extension recommend documentation of why we are utilizing these signs and of the Town Board’s approval. The style sign we are looking at installing is a “ROAD CLOSED TO THRU TRAFFIC” (R11-4), the intention of this sign is
- We have refilled our inventory with plow blades. However, we have discovered that there may be a superior longer-lasting blade available that can be used on both gravel and blacktop roads. We will be visiting some other Towns that use these currently to identify which brands they prefer.
- We had a little over a 100 tons of 3/8”-1/2” stone delivered that is mixed with an equal amount of sand in the salt shed. This is primarily used for dirt roads because they tend to ice up for frequently than blacktop roads because the sand mix for blacktop roads has a much higher salt ratio. This stone creates additional traction on top of potential ice buildup as well as helps break through thin ice on the dirt roads and prevents using too much sand/salt mix that creates mud.
- The old firetruck requires repairs with estimated costs ranging from \$8,000 to \$10,000; we are considering auctioning the firetruck. As its replacement, we plan to acquire a 2000-gallon plastic tank, which will not only fulfill the current functions of the firetruck but also



provide other advantages. We historically budget \$10,000 for dust suppressant, the purchase of the tank would come out of this line while leaving sufficient funds left over for liquid/dry calcium if needed.

- At the Columbia County Traffic Safety Board meeting at the Sheriff's office, on behalf of Councilperson Patzwahl, I raised several ongoing issues within the Town, including the intersection of State Route 295 and Route 22, the request to lower the speed limit near Loves, and the parking concerns along Route 22 and the intersection with Vandenburg Road. Tom from the Department of Transportation (DOT) said that new signage has been ordered for installation between Peaceful Valley Road and the entry points of the Loves parking lot. The signs are backordered six months. In the interim, they are planning on installing some delineation in the no-parking zones. There were no updates on the turning zones in front of Loves, 22/295 intersection nor speed reduction in front of Loves truck stop. I informed the board that we received a letter from DOT acknowledging our concerns that stated they are actively addressing them, which aligns with the previous correspondence from DOT representatives Matthew and Gerald in December. Upon reviewing that email, I noted that it mentioned the necessity for a designated individual from the Town to borrow and receive training on the generator for potential blackout situations. Have we identified someone for this responsibility?
- A new mirror is up at Vandenburg Rd intersection; residents are very pleased to see it.
- The replacement water heater, 10 gallons smaller, is installed at the highway garage; it is efficient and serves our needs.

Requests:

- Permission to go out to bid for Materials and Services, once approved bid packets will become available and the public notice will be posted in the newspaper for a month.
- Permission to auction our 1985 Ford CM tanker (Firetruck), once approved I will contact Auctions International to schedule a time to meet.
- Permission to buy and put up 2x "ROAD CLOSED TO THRU TRAFFIC" (R11-4) sign for Post Rd.

## **RESOLUTIONS & MOTIONS**

### **Resolution #59 of 2025** HW to auction surplus equipment

Supervisor Adams called for a motion to approve the auction. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

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

### **Resolution #60 of 2025** HW out to bid for materials & services

Supervisor Adams explained Town Highway Superintendent Van Tassel has requested to go out to bid for 2025 goods and services. Supervisor Adams called for a motion to authorize the Highway

Superintendent to issue a request for proposals (RFP) and proceed with the review and analysis of same for recommendations to the Town Board. Councilperson Lifsec made a motion to authorize, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

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

**Resolution #61 of 2025 HW Post Road traffic limitation**

Supervisor Adams would like to support the Highway Superintendent's recommendation that we post "Road Closed to Through Traffic" (R11-4) signs on both ends of Post Road. Supervisor Adams called for a motion to approve the recommendation of the Highway Superintendent to limit through traffic on Post Road, through the use of signage, as soon as possible. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to approve the signage, seconded by Councilperson Lifsec. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

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

Supervisor Adams introduced the next two motions.

**Resolution #51 of 2025 NYSERDA grant contract**

Supervisor Adams asked if there were any questions. There were none. The Town has been awarded \$100,000 in Clean Energies Communities (CEC) grant funds for its completion of various eligible climate actions; these funds can only be used for town projects to further reduce carbon emissions; the Town wishes to enter into an agreement with NYSERDA for the purpose of allocating and funding additional projects, specifically heat pumps for the Town Hall and solar panels for the Highway Garage; both of above projects meet the requirements and have been pre-approved for the grant funding program. Supervisor Adams requested a motion to approve the grant contract with NYSERDA for the commitment and use of these funds. Councilperson Powers 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 William Powers – yes.

**Resolution #52 of 2025 NYSERDA vendor approvals for grant contract**

Supervisor Adams Supervisor Adams briefly went over the information that has been provided and asked for any questions. There were no questions. Canaan has been awarded a total of \$110,000 (two grants \$100,000 and \$10,000 respectively) in Clean Energies Communities (CEC) grant funds for its completion of various eligible climate actions; these funds can only be used for town projects to further reduce carbon emissions; the Town has entered into an agreement with NYSERDA for the purpose of allocating and funding additional projects, specifically heat pumps for

the Town Hall and solar panels for the Highway Garage; both of above projects meet the requirements and have been pre-approved for the grant funding program. The Climate Smart Task Force solicited proposals from four vendors from the approved NYSEDA vendor list for each of the projects, Ridgeline (heat pumps) and High Peaks Solar (solar panels) met the project requirements and offered the lowest prices. Supervisor Adams asked for a motion to authorize her to sign agreements with Ridgeline and High Peaks Solar for the heat pump and solar panel projects. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to authorize, seconded by Councilperson Lifsec. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

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

Supervisor Adams congratulated Victoria Mills and the board applauded. Supervisor Adams also thanked her for her input during the earlier discussion on STRs.

**Resolution #53 of 2025** to appoint Transfer Station employee

Supervisor Adams briefly went over the background of the hiring process. Harry McMann's qualifications were shared. He has a background in law enforcement and lives near the Highway Department. The Transfer Station Enforcement Officer manages on-site access and use by town property owners of the privately owned Transfer Station. This position is an annual, part-time, appointed position with a salary of \$20.00 per hour that was budgeted for 2025. In subsequent years, this appointment will be made at the January Organizational Meeting. Supervisor Adams requested a motion that Harry McMann be appointed, effective immediately, to the Transfer Station Enforcement Officer position at \$20.00 per hour, payable monthly, for a term of February 17, 2025 through December 31, 2025. Councilperson Powers made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Lifsec. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

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

**Resolution #54 of 2025** HRA replenishment

Supervisor Adams explained the Canaan Town Board replenishes the Health Reimbursement Account on an "as needed" basis. In December of 2024, there was a low balance in the account which needs to be replenished. Supervisor Adams requested that a transfer of \$30,000 to the HRA account, allocating \$15,000 to the General Fund and \$15,000 to the Highway Fund, be approved. Councilperson Lifsec made a motion to approve the HRA replenishment, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

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

**Resolution #55 of 2025** to appoint Community Day Co-Chairs

The Town of Canaan organizes and holds a Community Day celebration for residents and visitors each summer. This event is centered around bringing the community together, family fun, and the promotion of local artists, crafts persons, and businesses. Community volunteers Elijah Falkner and Carrie Whiteman successfully planned and executed the inaugural event in 2023 and second event in 2024. Supervisor Adams explained Elijah Falkner and Carrie Whiteman have agreed to serve again this year in this capacity. Supervisor Adams requested that Elijah Falkner and Carrie Whiteman be appointed to serve as Co-Chairs of Community Day 2025. Councilperson Powers made a motion to approve the appointments, happy to have them, seconded by Councilperson Nightingale. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

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

**Resolution #56 of 2025** Strategic Plan Committee appointments

The Town of Canaan approved funding to undertake a Strategic Planning process in 2025. The Town of Canaan hired a planning and environmental consultant to manage and facilitate the planning process. A Strategic Plan Committee composed of community volunteers will work with the consultant and the Town Board to engage the community and to gather and review data for the purpose of drafting a plan for Town Board review and acceptance. Supervisor Adams said the Town Board has identified community volunteers with experience, skills, and capacity to participate in this planning process. Supervisor Adams asked that Mary Keegan, Tom Platten, Paul Naamon, Carrie Whiteman and Kate Childs Jones be appointed as members of the Strategic Plan Committee, and, that Ashley Garrett be appointed as an alternate in the event that someone becomes unavailable. She said we are fortunate and pleased to have such a capable group that represent a broad section of the community with professional skills and community experience. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to approve the appointments, seconded by Councilperson Lifsec. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

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

**Resolution #57 of 2025** to approve cash audits

Supervisor Adams explained that the Canaan Town Board audited the Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Supervisor, and the Town Justices' financials for the FYE December 31, 2024 on January 29, 2025. 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 William Powers – yes.

**Resolution #58 of 2025** to appoint Planning / Zoning Board of Appeals Clerk

Supervisor Adams explained that the Assessor's clerk Margaret Norway has applied for the Planning Board / Zoning Board of Appeals Clerk's position that is currently vacant. The Planning Board / Zoning Board of Appeals Clerk provides administrative support and prepares minutes for the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings. She requested that Margaret Norway be appointed, effective immediately, to the Planning Board / Zoning Board of Appeals Clerk position at \$18.55 per hour, payable monthly, to fill out a term ending December 31, 2025. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to approve the appointment, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

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

**Resolution #62 of 2025** 2024 Budget amendments (final 2024 adjustments)

Supervisor Adams explained higher costs and fees have resulted in adjustments to contractual and retirement accounts. She pointed out a few details (see below). Insurance plans have changed and the number of claims and use of town copay / deductible contribution has substantially increased. Supervisor Adams requested that the Town Board authorize her to approve budget amendments.

Decrease <b>A1120 Sales Tax</b>	\$1048	Justice contractual
Increase <b>General Fund Account 1110.4</b>	\$1048	
Decrease <b>A1120 Sales Tax</b>	\$59	Assessor contractual
Increase <b>General Fund Account A1355.4</b>	\$59	
Decrease <b>A1120 Sales Tax</b>	\$1415	Building contractual
Increase <b>General Fund Account A1620.4</b>	\$1415	
Decrease <b>A1120 Sales Tax</b>	\$363	Building Inspector contractual
Increase <b>General Fund Account A3620.4</b>	\$363	
Increase <b>General Fund Account A90108</b>	\$149	
Decrease <b>A1120 Sales Tax</b>	\$15,986	Hosp/Med
Increase <b>General Fund Account A90608</b>	\$15,986	
Total	19,020	

Councilperson Lifsec made a motion to approve the 2024 budget amendments, seconded by Councilperson Nightingale. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

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

There was a brief break.

**Motion** to move the STR law to a Public Hearing for **March 10th**

Supervisor Adams asked for a motion to schedule a Public Hearing for March 10<sup>th</sup> at 7PM,

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

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

## **OLD / NEW BUSINESS**

Supervisor Adams went over each topic below.

### **Broadband grant update** / new contracts prepared for signature

USDA indicates funding w/be forthcoming upon receipt of new contract. The USDA funding for the grant is not expected to be held up by whatever is happening in Washington.

### **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 said she will give them another month to provide fuller answers. They have agreed to provide “no parking” signs on Route 22; deflectors will also be needed. The speed limit reductions are the most important items. There has not been progress on the other signs along Route 295.

### **Vandenburg Rd** – mirror installed @ intersection

The mirror is installed at Vandenburg.

### **Implementation of Local Law #3** / recommendation for hire / sign approved & ready to install

Less than \$150 dollars will be spent for the mounting of the sign at the transfer station.

### **Hazard Mitigation Plan update** / revised timeline in correspondence file / town committee comment period

The plan is in print now and there is a response period until Friday Feb 14<sup>th</sup> at noon. Supervisor Adams asked the board to look it over. She praised Councilperson Lifsec's work on the spreadsheet.

### **CEC grant funding for \$110,000** / funds approved / contracts w/ NYSERDA / recommended vendors

The contract is approved. Work should move forward quickly for heat, air conditioning, and fresh air flow in all of the town hall as of March. Solar panels will reduce electrical use at the Highway Department and surplus credit will be applied to the town hall and maybe even to the library.

### **ARPA purchases update:** ecode / Strategic Plan / painting Meeting Room / furniture installation for Clerks 'Office

Work is underway. The meeting room is being painted the week of February 10<sup>th</sup>. The clerks '

offices will be closed for three days **February 26, 27 & 28** during furniture removal and installation. Supervisor Adams requested that the information be posted on the website and at the Town Hall.

**Computer replacement plan:** CEO & Town Clerk completed; Deputy Clerk budgeted for this year

The 2024 computer allowance allowed for the Code Officer and Town Clerk computers to be replaced. The Deputy Clerk's new computer is calculated as part of this year's budget.

**Strategic / Comprehensive Plan update** / committee appointments / data gathering begins

Christine Wemple is collecting data from the departments and agencies. The first meeting will be with the consultant, the strategic planning committee and all the boards.

**Draft Fund Balance Policy** conversation to be scheduled / March meeting

Will be scheduled for March.

**2024 Cash Audits** completed

**Town Hall closed:** **February 17<sup>th</sup>** for President's Day holiday, **February 26, 27 & 28** for Clerks ' Offices renovations Town Clerk said the notice about the clerks 'office closings is up on the website.

**Vacancies update:** Planning Board, Ethics Committee

We have advertised for the Planning Board and there have been announcements to publicize the vacancies. The Ethics Committee has received letters of interest. So far no letters for the Planning Board.

**Property tax receipts & disbursements**

As of today 1,299 payments have come in for a total of \$2,751,206.42. That reflects 82 % of taxes, 2% less than last year at this time. \$862,849.34 has been dispersed to the three fire companies, the lighting districts and the Town of Canaan.

**2024 AFR** underway / submission date February 28

Due date end of February to the state.

### **Oaths of Office: Town Clerk update**

20 plus people need to take oaths. There is a compliance issue. The Town Clerk will try to get back on track for the March meeting.

### **Report from Columbia County BOS / NYS STR law**

The Occupancy Tax Implementation committee met recently to review the gaps/overlap between the state and county laws. They talked about Julie Currie's point: which responsibilities will be put to the towns and which to the county. Most will be the responsibility of the towns.

### **Local Law #2 of 2025 Volunteer Firemen exemptions**

In the original exemption, there was an unforeseen circumstance; some people who live in New Lebanon, volunteer for Canaan were not eligible for the exemption because of the residency requirement. This law was prepared by the county office of real property as a template for the local towns to be consistent. This proposed law will be discussed at the March 10<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing and Supervisor Adams asked Town Clerk Weisbuch to post it on the website along with Local Law #1.

### **Motion to approve paying 2025 Budget Bonuses**

Supervisor Adams explained that there are 3 to 4 employees to recognize who did work above and beyond or whose salaries are less competitive. There is no policy as to when to pay the bonuses. Because we are at the end of the fiscal year, it would be a good time to pay the bonuses. She called for a motion to pay the bonuses that were approved in the 2024 budget. Councilperson Lifsec made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

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

### **Supervisor Training: AOT February 17 & 18, NYSAC February 24 & 25**

Supervisor Adams has town training and county training coming up. Cyber security will be on the program. As Deputy Supervisor Patzwahl will not be in Canaan on those dates, the Town Clerk or other staff should call or text the supervisor if there are any issues when she is away.



## **BOARD DISCUSSION / COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Planning / ZBA report / Ginny**

Zoning did not meet, but Planning did and they approved the ONVO plan for a new convenience store to replace the old one that will be torn down. They will get started right away. Plan include the convenience store and a new Burger King. The Code Enforcement Officer is in conversation with ONVO about the derelict building on the site.

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

Supervisor Adams reported the CDRPC pre-draft report for a regional CAP plan will be sent tomorrow to the task force for review. Co-chair Victoria Mills will lead the review.

### **Public Safety / Stephen for David**

Already reported earlier in the meeting.

### **Transfer Station / Brenda for David**

Total waste was up 3% in January. MSW up 23%, 45 tons, but C & D was lower. Now with the new hire, there should be consistent monitoring of the site and we will get a better understanding. About 430 permits have been issued. If people want the senior discount for the recycling, the permit has to be bought at the Town Hall. It was the only way to preserve the discount that the county had planned to discontinue.

Councilperson Lifsec added that it would be good to discuss ways to incentivize younger people to volunteer for the Fire Companies, such as an additional tax exemption. Supervisor Adams said that many of the younger volunteers live with their parents because they can't find local, affordable housing, so a property tax exemption may not be the answer. Also, whenever a group is exempted, the rest of the population pays the taxes that subsidize the exemptions. Supervisor Adams said this is an issue for the Strategic Planning Committee to discuss – a “how do we continue to provide services” conversation.

### **ASSESSOR’S REPORT: sent via email next steps / correspondence file**

Not going to need to do an interim adjustment. Data collection is a challenge and work is ongoing to improve the process.

## **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

Sharon called out, Thank you!

## **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Everyone having been heard, Supervisor Adams called for a motion to adjourn. Councilperson Nightingale made a motion to adjourn at 10:10 PM, seconded by Councilperson Powers. 4 AYES - Motion carried.

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

**Next meeting:**

**March Public Hearing / STR / Firemen's Exemption** March 10th

**March meeting** March 10th

Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Nebesar  
Deputy Clerk 2