

DATE: AUGUST 28, 2014

KIND OF MEETING: TOWN BOARD

WHERE HELD: SCHODACK TOWN HALL

CLERK: DONNA L. CONLIN

PRESIDING OFFICER: DENNIS E. DOWDS

MEMBERS PRESENT: FRANCIS CURTIS
SCOTT SWARTZ
MICHAEL KENNEY

MEMBERS ABSENT: JAMES E. BULT

ATTORNEY: DAVID GRUENBERG

COMPTROLLER:

OTHERS PRESENT: BRUCE GOODALL, DIRECTOR OF TRANSFER STATION
BERNARD PETER, POLICE CHIEF
KEN HOLMES, HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

Supervisor Dowds called the August 28, 2014 meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and dispensed with roll call. All present as noted above.

Items to be discussed:

Human Resources (HR) - The Supervisor shared information with the Board that appeared in the newsletter for the Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce. The articles addressed accessing HR services through outsourcing and consultants. The article was written by Mary Martinez from The Phoenix Companies, Inc., which offer such services. He said the Board has to decide soon regarding the direction they would like to take regarding hiring a consultant or an in-house person.

Fall Clean-up rates – The Supervisor said the rates will be same as last year and the resolution will be on the next agenda. The dates are Oct. 16th – Oct. 18th. C. Curtis asked the Director of the Transfer Station (TRS), Bruce Goodall, if the town is getting charged for bringing televisions to the recycling plant. Mr. Goodall said currently we are only charged for rear projection televisions. We charge the resident \$24.00 to dispose of it to cover our costs. With respect to charges for disposing of certain items, Mr. Goodall said they are dealing with a new company for recycling tires. There is fairly detailed pricing list for oversized and truck tires, based on tire size and rims. While they do not get a lot of these, he felt it was prudent to pass those costs on to the customer plus a small handling fee. On another issue, Mr. Goodall thanked the Board for allowing him to participate in the jointly sponsored shredding day with East Greenbush and Rensselaer. It will be held at the East Greenbush Town Hall on September 13th and is free of charge to the residents.

Snow/Ice Agreement with Rensselaer County – The Supervisor said the resolution to contract with Rensselaer County for plowing Stony Pt. Rd. (they pay the town to plow) will be on an upcoming agenda.

Water & Sewer Hearings – The Comptroller requested that the Board waive the requirement to hold the water and sewer hearings by the specified date of October 20th. She said she has set October 23rd (workshop meeting) as her target date and hoped to have all the districts analysis ready by that time.

BANS – The Comptroller explained that a resolution will be on the September meeting for a BAN. She is proposing to have it mature in July so it can be part of the larger BAN that comes due at that time. That way, next year, the town will only have one BAN renewal.

Open Discussion:

Government Efficiency Plan: S. Dowds said he received a letter from Kathy Jimino, County Executive, regarding the Governor's property tax freeze credit program. In addition to complying with the 2% tax cap, all taxing jurisdictions within Rensselaer County must develop and submit a government efficiency plan by June 2015. The plan must collectively generate savings of at least 1% of the levy. Each taxing jurisdiction (includes fire districts, etc.) can submit their own plan, but the County has been strongly encouraged to convene and facilitate a process to develop and submit a county-wide plan. The letter continued that it has been recommended that the County act as lead agency to coordinate the submission of a county-wide plan. It was the Supervisor's opinion that this was a good idea and asked how other members felt. C. Curtis said he favored going in with the County. He feels it is better to have a cumulative 1%, rather than an individual 1% reduction.

Route 9 Sewer/Rensselaer County Planning: The Supervisor said he received a letter from County Planning regarding the plan to possibly connect Schodack Central Schools (high school and middle school) to the Village of Castleton's sewer system. Mr. Pasinella, Director of County Planning, felt this would be a good opportunity to explore extending the potential sewer line further, from the vicinity of Maple Hill High School to some point on Rt. 9. He continued that if the school district's project proceeds, and if there are combined efforts, they could substantially reduce the distance to public sewers in the southern portion of the Rte. 9 corridor. They have contracted with the Laberge Group to study the cost of extending those services on one of the three different routes. They are:

- 1) Along Maple Hill Rd. to US Route 9
- 2) Along So. Schodack Rd. to Van Hoesen Rd. to US Route 9
- 3) Along So. Schodack Rd. to Eleanor Drive, to Bame Rd., and then to US Route 9

Mr. Pasinella asked the Board to consider those routes and forward any ideas they may have regarding other potential routes.

Battista Water System: S. Dowds said he received an inquiry from Mr. Keller to see if the Town was interested in taking it over. Currently, it is privately owned and under the direction of the PSC and residents pay very low rates. If the town takes ownership, it would have to be significantly upgraded to meet the current DEC standards which are required for municipal water systems. Thus, the rates would see a significant increase. **Determination:** After a brief discussion it was consensus of the Board to notify Mr. Keller that they were not interested in assuming ownership at this time.

Clarks Chapel Cemetery: C. Curtis said he has reviewed documents that were given to the town when the cemetery was transferred to the town. He concentrated on sales (of lots) from 1965 – 1992 (none were sold after that date) and believed there were only five lots that the board needed to be concerned about; unfortunately, there is no monumentation for these lots. Therefore, he proposed that the Board consider putting in small cornerstones on each lot to outline them for potential interment. Although he has not obtained quotes yet, he

believed the cost would be about \$100.00 for four cornerstones per lot. Since he is familiar with laying out graves he believes he could direct where the cornerstones should be placed. The costs would eventually be reimbursed at the time of burials. The Board felt he should proceed with getting a firm price and move forward. In discussing burial costs, it seemed to be the consensus of the Board to charge actual costs rather than adding additional charges for cemetery maintenance fees. C. Curtis also made the recommendation that the Town require concrete vaults for burials to help to mitigate settling. Atty. Gruenberg will call the NYS Cemetery Board for more direction and report his findings to the Board.

Department Liaisons: S. Dowds stated that he handed out liaison assignments, which he believes would not be burdensome and would give each of the Board Members more insight into the departments. C. Kenney said he would like to discuss how these assignments were disbursed. The Supervisor said it was really up to him. He was willing to make adjustments, but he would like them to try it first. C. Kenney felt the assignments put more of a burden on some board members than others. S. Dowds asked C. Kenney to give him his recommendations and he will take them under consideration.

Deputy Supervisor: S. Dowds announced that he has appointed C. Curtis as Deputy Supervisor. C. Curtis thanked the Supervisor for his vote of confidence.

Police Overtime/New Officer: The Comptroller explained the analysis she prepared regarding overtime costs vs. new officer costs for the police department. If hired, the new officer would be on a Tues – Friday daytime schedule (8 a.m. – 6 p.m.). Currently, when a daytime officer (there are two that cover Tuesday – Thursday and one that covers Friday – Monday), takes time off, it causes shift coverage and automatically creates overtime. In doing the analysis, she made some assumptions regarding the time that could be taken by the officers based on the contract, took a percentage and estimated the overtime costs of the shift coverage. She estimated the overtime costs, including benefits, for approximately 800 hrs. of shift coverage at \$49,000.00. A new officer, including all benefits, would be about \$73,000.00 for 2,080 hrs. of shift coverage. She noted that the hours she used in the analysis were very subjective as she is not able to predict if someone were to be out for an extended medical reason, etc. C. Curtis said the bottom line was that overtime was less costly than hiring a new officer. The Comptroller agreed but offered that a full-time person would provide more hours of service. Advocating for an additional officer, Chief Peter noted that a new hire mitigates officer issues and provides more hours of service for the community. He said the Board should also take into consideration that he has an aging department and the new position was budgeted for in 2014. A new hire would bring the department back up to the previously approved staffing levels. C. Curtis asked the prior officer's salary with benefits. The Supervisor said it was around \$90,000.00+. The Board reviewed the 2014 overtime and part-time budget. The Comptroller projected that there would be deficit of approximately \$14,000.00 by the end of the year, but part of that could be offset by a surplus of approximately \$5,000.00 in the part-time budget, leaving a deficit in that line item of approximately \$9,000.00, which would be taken from surpluses in other line items. The Chief said it was his recommendation to hire the officer that was recently interviewed and asked the Board to consider filling the position. In terms of the 2015 budget, the Comptroller stated that she has budgeted for the new officer. If the Board is not going to hire someone, she will have to shift that money out of that line item to the overtime line.

Sweets Crossing Rd. Bridge: Ken Holmes, Highway Superintendent, informed the Board that he will be closing the Sweets Crossing Rd. Bridge. Although it was only built in

1990, it has deteriorated rapidly. In the course of one year, it has gone from a restriction of 8 tons down to 3 tons, which is his main reason for closing it. He said it is brightly and clearly marked that it has a 3-ton weight limit, but he is afraid that someone will disregard it. He explained that even though it will be closed, it remains in our inventory and NYSDOT will inspect it annually until we take it out of the inventory. He will advertise the closing in the paper and on our website, as well as posting "Bridge Ahead Closed" signs on the approaches. Additionally, the Town will install guiderails on both approaches to the bridge. Since one entrance is from the Town of Nassau, C. Kenney suggested that Nassau officials be notified. Mr. Holmes said he will do that. It was also noted that emergency vehicles and school buses have not been using the bridge for several years. Essentially, it is very low-volume short-cut. Preliminary costs for repairing the bridge are between \$200,000 - \$300,000 and there is not any available funding from the State to address such a project.

Human Resources: In response to the Supervisor's earlier comments, C. Kenney said he believed it was the consensus of the Board to hire someone for the Human Resource (HR) position, whether it be full-time with the additional duties of payroll or part-time for HR only, and asked if anything has been done to move in that direction. Board discussion ensued regarding the title, full-time or part-time and sharing someone with another municipality. The Supervisor's opinion was that a higher level position, not clerical, was needed and the two functions, payroll and HR, should not be combined. The Comptroller said it may cost more in 2015, but you may be adding a different level of service.

Determination: It was the consensus of the Board to advertise for an HR person. The Comptroller stated that even though her office has an increased workload by taking on payroll, she wanted to remain in control of it because she believed that they have gained a lot of efficiencies by overseeing this function. C. Curtis expressed concern that it was putting too many responsibilities on that office. She responded that it only became an issue recently. Essentially, they are about a month behind, but they are working extra hours to do the jobs.

Lighting in Town Hall: Based on a concern raised by C. Swartz regarding the after-hour lighting at the town hall, a brief conversation was held. The Supervisor explained what steps had been taken to shut down as many lights as possible after hours. C. Swartz asked if they could look into installing some motion lights so they only came on if there was movement in the building. The Supervisor said that would probably require rewiring of fixtures, but he will look into it.

Assistant Police Chief: C. Curtis said he was talking to Rensselaer County Civil Service and the town needs to let them know that the Board created the position. Officer Belardo is on the list, so it is just a matter of following up with the paperwork. The Comptroller said she was in the process of doing that now.

Assistant Building Inspector: C. Kenney said Nick DeFruscio was hired as the assistant at \$20.00/hr. Since Gary Ziegler retired, Mr. DeFruscio stepped into the responsibilities of Building Inspector, plus he is still doing code enforcement. He felt he was being underpaid and would like to see his hourly rate increased to be more in line with the responsibilities. Board discussion ensued, but no determination was made. Board members were asked to forward their suggestions to the Supervisor for a possible resolution at a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business before the Board, C. Curtis made a motion to adjourn the 08/28/14 Town Board meeting at 8:00 p.m., seconded by C. Swartz. Meeting adjourned.
Respectfully Submitted,

Donna L. Conlin
Schodack Town Clerk/RMC/CMC

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