

TOWN OF WILLSBORO

TOWN BOARD MEETING MINUTES

WILLSBORO TOWN HALL

May 11th, 2022

Present: Supervisor Shaun Gilliland, Councilors: Steve Benway, Lorilee Sheehan, Scott Christian, Lane Sayward

Guests: Travis Crowningshield, Win and Polly Belenger, Darren Dickerson

CALL TO ORDER @ 6:30 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING- Local Law to Set Board of Assessment Review to 3 members instead of 5- there has been difficulty in recruiting for these 5 positions. It was brought to the attention by the director of real property that the majority of towns in the county have three. So we are bringing this forward as a possible option to go forward.

Public comments: Darren Dickerson made a point that by dropping to three.. In the event of a sickness, (especially with covid still being so prevalent) you're looking at only two people. There's also the fall out meetings that sometimes come with short notice, if one or two people can not make it, you are down to only one member. Given that the assessments are dramatically increasing in many areas there is probably a number of people that will be more substantial than usual. Looking at it from a public standpoint, it might be viewed as more permissible when 5 versus 3 are making the decision. Members' positions are appointed versus elected, he wants to think everyone is given a fair and impartial judgment of their assessment. He feels that they would be more roundedly served with a table of 5 members given this particular service, also someone may have to excuse themselves. If you're already down one person and then another person has to excuse themselves there is only one person left to make the decision on their assessment.

Win Belanger- agrees with Mr. Dickerson. What happens when a relative of a member comes up and they excuse themselves? The question was, can we keep it to three this year and continue recruiting and change it back to five for next year.

Shaun said that it is too late to change for this year. Win said again that he agrees with Dickerson about working towards having five.

Lorilee said that the three that we do have are very representative of our community- we have one from Reber, one from town and one representative from the point. It is well represented.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING-

OPEN REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING-

REVIEW OF MINUTES- April 13th, 2022 meeting. The board will approve them at the next meeting, there were technical issues.

Reports:

Supervisor- We had a flooding problem this week in the basement. We were doing some work outside with concrete and water infiltrated into the basement. Maps and other items were wet, we will be down doing some restorations of things that were on the floor. There was no significant damage to anything.

Correspondence: Adirondack Associations Town and Villages is having their Annual Meeting on June 5th-6th. There are forms and information in the board packets and all are encouraged to attend.

Town: The AUD (Annual Update Document- financial report) was submitted to the State successfully last week, a copy of it is on the website.

We received the 2021 water quality report from the Department of Health, that is also posted and will be mailed out to all of the water district customers as per law.

The town newsletter was mailed and people are receiving it.

Board assessment review- we went through a reevaluation and assessments and generally most assessments went up, most assessments throughout the state went up significantly. The last two years have caused a real hit on the real estate market. The last time Shaun talked to the assessor and Real Property on average the property in the county in the last two years sold for 36% above assessed value. The state takes a 5 year rolling average for comparisons and because of the formulas this is affecting everyone. If anyone is interested in seeing, we have available the percentage increases and assessments throughout the entire County. Willsboro appears to have gone up significantly compared to other towns. The State land has not published the change for state land. They have not come back to say what they

will pay for state land. The state could say they are not raising the assessment on state property. Willsboro has the smallest percentage of state land in Essex county with only .08%, so it would appear on the surface the Willsboro took a bigger hit, however if they took off the state land on private land of assessed value, it is a comparable increase. The county tried to get the state real property to make the last 2 years aberration on the 5 year rolling average. The state refused to do that.

Pickleball courts are well on their way, it is currently curing. New courts will not be open until at least Labor Day. Playground removal has been completed, we will be building a new one at some point with the Parks Commission working on the planning.

One of the grants we have secured is a 2.5million dollar septic system district in Buena Vista Area. The rules have changed in the EPG. They will not let us do individual replacements any longer. They will not pay for a formation or a map plan or report. They would approve a community septic system district or a full waste water system. We could have a district The economic shifts poorly with this change. We could have a district with 43 users or we could increase the district larger. If we increase the district larger, the problem would be where would we do the inground treatment. The first problem would be that part of the point has been discussed and how to get the wastewater treated because of the water would be an issue. A sand pit is an engineering problem. The second problem would be you would be looking at annually septic district fees of \$2000.- \$3000 a year. How we approach this is a very complex problem. Sand Shed grant - we are put at a standstill awaiting formal word documentation that they approve the money.

County- The regional ignite development council ADC awards grant period window is open again. The State Governor has put out 3 focus areas that they want to have for rural New York. Workforce development. The small community revitalization is for 10 million dollars. In a small town like ours it is hard to spend that amount of money on one project, the governor is allowing small towns to do 2-3 downtown areas. Revitalizing lighted building restoration, this could go through municipalities or private contractors. The 25th of May the county will know more about these. The new Governor seems to be listening to the problems in the area.

Town Clerk Report- The clerk's financial report is in the council's packets. She settled up with the county on Monday for the land taxes. The clerk's office has

been very busy with the water and sewer bills coming in steady and Sue stated she is learning new things everyday and has had the opportunity to go to another office to observe the way another office is run. She asked the Town Board for their approval to appoint another deputy to help with bringing the accounts up-to-date, updating files, etc. at no cost to the town due to the fact of not having enough time in the day to do it all. She suggested Kyli Miller as the 2nd deputy. Shaun stated that the clerk can have 3 deputies and that she has the authority to appoint 2, the board has the selection of compensation and if she wanted a 3rd it would be the board's discretion. **Benway made a motion to ratify the appointment of Kyli Miller as the second deputy clerk. Christian seconded the motion. All in favor. Resolution to accept the Town Clerks report was made by Christian. Benway seconded the motion. All in favor.**

DPW

The playground was removed yesterday. Top soil is being put in. Hometown Hero banners are being put up. Michael Phinney was appointed as the Deputy Highway Superintendent. Getting the golf course equipment serviced. We should be getting the new greens mower in a few weeks. Sweeping will start next week. Trucks are all taken apart. Highway school is June 6-8th in Ithaca and Travis and Michael will be attending. Travis is actively looking for a new water truck because the old truck will not pass inspection. The county looked at ordering a truck on state contract and they are 1 ½-2 years out with ordering one. They have been told to find one on a lot because everyone is on state contract pricing. They have to give a 28-30% discount. He has called on one and it wouldn't be ready until the end of July. He asked a dealership to reserve a truck that is coming in July for a municipal bid.

Benway made the motion to seek bids on a new water truck from dealerships. Christian seconded the motion. All in favor.

Crowningshield stated that Perry Marsh will be retiring in August and he will be advertising for the building and grounds position right away. He feels that instead of advertising for a heavy equipment operator to replace Scott Blanchard, he wants to fill Marsh's position first, to allow that person to be trained in all the areas of the job by Marsh before he retires. The job does not require a CDL, but it is preferred to be able to plow snow.

Supervisors Report- There was no supervisor's report due to the Supervisor's secretary being on vacation.

Sheehan made a motion to accept the warrant. Benway seconded the motion. Roll call. All in favor.

Ambulance District Report - No one was present to give an ambulance report. The ambulance financial report was put into the council's packets.

Youth Commission Report -Krissy Leerkes could not attend due to attending youth sports and sent correspondence. This was put in the council's packet.

Summer Camp Report- Victoria Wilkins could not attend and sent a written report. This was put into Council's packet. Victoria has been doing interviews and back-ground checks on all applicants for the summer program.

Parks Commission Report-

The committee met last and elected co-chairs, Alan Thompson and Darren Darrah. They are waiting to confirm the by-laws. Shaun is talking to the town attorney because one of the members expressed concern regarding personal liability when being involved with the parks commission. They have a meeting Wednesday, May 18th, and they are hoping to be able to present the by-laws at the June Town Board meeting. The committee has been working with Hannah Neilly from community resources. They have a map of the wetlands and Hannah has been a great asset to the committee. Steve Benway is going to talk to the codes officer about wetland litigation, to enable them to move forward with planning. They have developed a survey to be put out to the community to see what people would like to see at the parks, with Florence Hathaway Park being the focus right now. They are hoping to complete a lot at the next meeting. They are down one member and hoping to fill the open seat soon.

Christmas in the 'BORO- The committee has decided to have a town celebration on the 2nd Saturday of December, and hopes to stay on that date each year. They have reached out to other towns and celebrations and chosen this date because of not conflicting with anyone else. Tentatively there will be a parade that will start at Carson way and go through town, ending at Commonwealth. Commonwealth has agreed to allow them to use the parking lot for a receiving area and they will serve hot chocolate, donuts and s'more in a tent. They will purchase banners for approximately \$1000. Advertising \$500. for this event. They have planned a story hour, hoping to be at the Champlain Valley Senior Center on Saturday and will

hand out books to children. A Christmas light contest and will contact the beautification committee about this. Also they will have prizes for the parade. We will be having a DJ for the event on Saturday that has volunteered to do it at no cost. The Willsborough Hardware is going to sponsor the tree lighting as well as donating \$500., toward expenses. The committee has met 4-5 times. Christian stated they meet the 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30 pm at the town hall and encourage anyone to come to give suggestions and offer help. Roost has given the town \$25,000. To boost people coming into town. This would be a good way to use this money. Gilliland asked the committee to refine the budget and bring it back to the board.

Old Business:

The interviews were completed for camp counselors and they were all given background checks. Gilliland suggested hiring Jared Joslyn as an assistant director at a rate of \$18.00 per hour. He would be assisting Victoria Wilkins with camp and help her to organize the Monday/Friday lessons as well. He also suggested hiring the counselors at a rate of \$13.20 per hour. Those counselors are Kyla Crowningshield, Hailey King, Cleo Lobdell, Harvey Merrill, Lacey Nolette, Lexi Nolette and Sayge Stafford. **Motion was made by Sheehan to hire the summer program staff at the rate of \$18.00 for assistant director and \$13.20 for counselors. Sayward seconded the motion. Roll call. All in favor.**

Gilliland has made the proposal to the board to follow the recommendation of the county and to go forward and accept the RFP to go to contract with SLR Engineering for well within our budget of \$70,000. from the state grant. We will not award it until we get the final commitment from the state and called in to brief us before we award it. **Christian made the motion for a resolution to accept the RFP with SLR Engineering for Lake Bank Engineering. Sheehan seconded the motion. Roll call. All in favor.**

New Business:

Benway made the Motion to adopt Town of Willsboro Local Law NR. 1 of 2022- A Local Law to set the number of Board of Assessment Review Members from five to three Seconded by Sheehan. Benway asked what the

latest date in 2023 that you would have to pass this law and could they look for people interested in being on the BAR. Gilliland stated he was not sure and it wasn't an urgent issue but it usually came up last minute. **Benway amended his motion and tabled this until the next meeting. Sayward seconded.** Christian stated he had a call today from a person that was on the assessment review from another town. The person stated that there were going to be a lot of lawsuits because if your assessment went up more than double of the average in your town, that is called - assessing real estate boom. Which this person stated is illegal in the State of New York. Christian said he feels that having more people is better. The large increase in assessments would cause them to take it to court if they don't get a reduction. He is not sure if the above statement is true, however if this is out there it will cause people to think they have even more reason to fight these higher assessments. Gilliland will call tomorrow to find out if this is true. **All in favor of table. Motion carried.**

Sheehan made a motion to appoint Hannah Carson to the 2022 Board of Assessment Review. Christian seconded the motion. All in Favor.

Christian made the motion for a resolution to introduce a proposed Town of Willsboro Water Ordinance and set a public hearing for Jul 13, 2022 at 6:30pm. at the Willsboro Town Hall. Sheehan seconded the motion. All in favor.

Sheehan made the motion for a resolution to oppose the passing of the Adirondack Conservation Design Bill in the Legislature. Sheehan seconded the motion. All in favor.

The pumps for the lift stations are approximately 28 years old and have been rebuilt at least once and possibly twice. They are starting to fail from age and Pat McCaullife got a quote to replace these pumps and the quote is \$34,000. **Christian made the motion to go to bid for new sewer lift station pumps. Sheehan seconded motion. All in favor.**

The wastewater system has a software system that allows us to do integration. The computer system would be the pumps and the integration system. With anticipation of going to a new municipal water system, we would also get more up-to-date

automotive systems which require an integrator to make the software work better. The recommendation was to formally appoint an integrator for our water and wastewater systems. This would allow us to use this person to move forward and work with the systems integration or consult for new software systems without having to go to bid every time. The recommendation from Pat was to use the individual that has done some tremendous amount of work in our waste water system. Nick Bradley from North East Controls out of Syracuse. **Benway made the motion for a resolution to designate the town's water/wastewater systems integrator, Nick Bradley from North East Controls. Sheehan seconded the motion. Roll call. All in favor.**

Gilliland brought up that people looking for food from the Food Shelf goes through the town hall. We have had a good working relationship with the Mountain Lakes Services. They are going through some changes and we are not sure where the houses will be and who will be able to work the food shelf for us. The hours, availability and location is not convenient to getting food for people. We have been trying for years to obtain a new location for the Food Shelf. We have reached out to churches, Champlain Valley Senior Community and different areas that would be better for everyone involved. One place that has always come back to discussion was the media room at the Visitors Center. The problem with that is that there is not enough room in that area. Terry Pulsifer and Shaun went to the visitors center to measure and look at the usage of the area. If we took the back corner, riverside/diner side 8ftX12ft. and built false walls with a door and put in the plastic shelving, we could store the dry goods in that area. CHAT has not had a meeting to discuss this option with the members yet. It is a town building and Gilliland wanted to brief everyone that he was looking into this idea. The corner that is being discussed is not used for meetings or during elections. We also have a couple of volunteers that said they would be willing to designate hours and go there when needed. Win Belanger stated all the shelves, refrigerators and freezers are property of CHAT.

Meeting adjourned at 7:38pm