



TOWN OF WILLSBORO

5 FARRELL ROAD WILLSBORO, NY 12996

518-963-8668

TOWN OF WILLSBORO TOWN BOARD MEETING WILLSBORO TOWN HALL March 19th, 2025

ATTENDES-Joseph Walsh, Terry Pulsifer, Roger Sayward, Patrick McCauliffe, Travis Crowningshield, Allen Alterie, Jessie Morgan, Laura Carson, Greg Gordon, Jonathan Franke, Lori Franke, Thomas Doolittle, Victor Putman, Jeremy Vanderpool

BOARD MEMBERS-Steve Benway, Lorilee Sheehan, Scott Christian, Lane Sayward, Shaun Gilliland

CALLED TO ORDER @ 6:30pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Accepted the minutes as submitted from the February 20th meeting.

Supervisors Report

Correspondence-

-Justice Gregg Dickerson and Justice Clerk Angeline Dickerson both handed in letters of resignation effective April 30, 2025.

Town-

-Sewer and Water will be doing a Tire Collection Day at a later date this year.

-Board of Assessment Review training will be May 8, 2025 1:30-4:30 at the Board of Supervisors chambers.

-The comprehensive plan RFP for the planner was put out and only one response came in that was very high. This is going to be re-issued with hopes of more response this time. There are a few additional members that would like to serve on this committee.

-Lily Land property- The \$842,000.00 property that was purchased by the Adirondack land trust and then the town of Willsboro was going to receive it from the land trust for development as a park and water front recreational area for the town. A grant was secured for over a million dollars from the Lake Champlain Basin Program to execute the purchase of the land and to start developing the park. The change in the Federal administration over the last few months, there was concern that this money was going to disappear. Gilliland had a conference on March 18th with the Lake Champlain Basin Program and this money is still going to be available and they are going to contract. There will be a gap in time between the closing dates and the town will be required to take out a short term bond or BAN (Bond Anticipation Note) for the cost and the interest. This will all be covered by the grant and will not cost the Town of Willsboro any money. This will be happening in the next few months.

-Updates on the accounting and Annual financial reports. The accountant has gone back to 2021. Initially the 2022 report was submitted to the state and then rejected, due to a significant mistake that was done in 2021 for approximately \$50,000.00. The accountant suggested bringing on an additional person, his name is Richard Blackfield, he worked for the State Comptrollers Office for 50 years and retired in 2021 and now does AUD (Annual update documents) for towns.

County-

-The old jail has been demolished and the old probation building will begin to be repaired.

5 FARRELL ROAD, WILLSBORO, NY 12996

PHONE: (518) 963-8668 WEBSITE: www.townofwillsboro.com

-The Youth & Ag building on the fairgrounds will have ground breaking in May. This is being built through Federal funds through USDA.

-budget impacts from Federal cuts- Nothing has been affected yet. If this happens, Medicaid reimbursements from the state could be affected. There are some Federally based employee positions also. Grants have all been reviewed and cleared.

Discussion on the warrant - Christian questioned a grass seed bill from September and it was due to the company having the wrong email to send the invoice to. He also asked if the \$40,000 bond payment was for the Salt and Sand Shed? Gilliland stated it was from the water extension that ran all the way to the Bay.

Sayward made the motion to accept the warrant. Benway seconded the motion.

Roll Call-

Benway, Sheehan, Sayward, Christian, Gilliland

Ayes-5

Nyes-0

Clerks Report- verbally by Susan Thompson

The clerk's office in the month of February took in \$1,790.10 paying \$3.00 to NYS Ag and Markets and \$22.50 to the NYS Health Department. Decals for the month took in \$55.00 of which \$51.96 went to the state and the town's commission was \$3.04. Water/Sewer took in \$18,199.89. Since our last monthly meeting I have collected \$116,801.83 more in property taxes and I am looking forward to settling with the county next month. We received a nice thank you note from the American Heart association for our donation of \$2,510.00 however the total was \$2,930.00 as some made their checks directly to the Heart Association. We also were able to donate \$3,235.00 to the Fitzpatrick Cancer Center with a total of \$6,165.00 brought in from the Christmas in the 'BORO Polar Plunge.

Christian made a motion to accept the Clerk's report. Benway seconded the motion.

All in favor.

DPW- Verbally by Travis Crowningshield

-They have been getting all the equipment ready for road clean up that will begin in the middle of April. In the beginning of May as soon as the road clean up is finished they will begin on the Pavillion at Hathaway Park. They will need the exact location of where everything is going before they begin. Crowningshield gave a quote for 4 tires for the backhoe from Warren Tire for \$3,778.83.

Sayward made the motion to purchase the 4 tires for the backhoe for \$3,778.83 from Warren Tire. Christian seconded the motion.

Roll Call-

Benway, Sheehan, Sayward, Christian, Gilliland

Ayes-5

Nyes-0

Crowningshield stated the box on the 2009 GMC 5500 work truck is totally rotted out. The truck is still in good shape, no rust, 80,000 miles on the motor. They would not need the subframe or the hoist for the box, just the upper part of the box is needed. The price of this is \$9,240.00.

Sayward made a motion to purchase a box for the 2009 GMC 5500 work truck from Trius for \$9,240.00. Sheehan seconded the motion.

Benway, Sheehan, Sayward, Christian, Gilliland

Ayes-5

Nyes-0

Water/Sewer- verbally by Patrick McCauliffe

The Water plant will be getting new seals on a pump, these seals were not the right size from the manufacturer and they have made it good and will replace them. While waiting for the seals to be delivered they spent three days disinfecting the pumps.

They received the results from the disinfection by product samples. These samples on the halo-celic acids need to be below 60 parts per billion and they were 47.3. The total trihalomethane was 54.7 and they need to be below 80. These results being low will help a lot in the warmer weather. The results should be back soon from the annual quality water report. This report has to be mailed out by the end of May.

Waste water membranes were cleaned in place, to prepare for spring. Everything has been running well. There was a 30 year old check valve failure on one of the digested blowers. They found a replacement on-line for \$180.00. They now have a spare to have because there is another one that has also been there for 30 years. The plus side to the warmer weather is 3 out of 4 of the drying beds have thawed out. The 4th bed will take longer to thaw out.

Sayward stated that she had a question about the roof at Noblewood, she has been approached by several people that it needs to be replaced and questioned if this was true? Crowningshield stated that the Visitors Center, Noblewood and the Gazebo downtown all need new roofs. He is going to get them measured and come back with measurements to get quotes. Sayward asked where this money for the roofs came from? Gilliland stated that it will be taken out of the Buildings and Grounds-General Fund.

Ambulance District- Written report submitted by Kira Crowningshield

Youth Commission Report- Written report submitted by Krissy Leerkes

Parks Commission Report- They are in the middle of finalizing the proposals for the planning/engineering for the grant from Parks and Rec. There will be a meeting March 25th and is open to the public.

Zoning Report- written report submitted by Jonathan Franke

Codes Report- None

OLD BUSINESS-

-There was discussion last month on the reduction of the number of Town Justices. One of the questions was to obtain data in case numbers and the pay. Gilliland brought back to the board information that was obtained from the DA's office and the Town of Willsboro. Justice salaries are currently \$14,733.94 and court clerks are \$7,413.90. The anticipated budget line for salaries is \$44,295.68. Gilliland showed comparisons of other towns with one and two justices. In 2023 Willsboro had 33 cases and 2024 there were 29 cases, this does not include traffic or civil cases. He also had a procedure from the attorney of a sample resolution to go to one justice, up to the next election. This would be subject to a permissive referendum. If the resolution was made, the clerk would immediately publish that the resolution had been made in the subject of a permissive referendum within 10 days. This would start a 30 day clock that a petition could be brought to the board with valid signatures, equaling 5% of the total number of voters in Willsboro that voted in the last election. The number of the last election was 855 and that would be approximately 44 signatures. Gilliland asked the board if they had anything to discuss.

Sheehan stated I did some homework as well, in anticipation of this situation that we have been talking about. This information we were given is from the DA's office. I reached out and maybe other board members did too, but I don't believe so. Before I go on anymore... We have two people sitting in front of us and I am wondering what kind of conversation has happened with them and if we make a decision to go to one judge, where does that put them in terms of potentially a double work load, their pay, what do they feel about this? I do have a lot of information that I would like to share with the public. Justice Morgan stated we only heard about it through word of mouth, so we have personally had zero communication about it. Part of our code of ethics is that we are encouraged to not attend town board

meetings, unless it is specific to us. As far as data goes, when looking into other courts if it was considered how many days a week the judges are working or how many hours worked. So their case loads are going to be much higher because their populations are much higher. Sheehan reached out to three surrounding towns that would be arranging or taking a case if our judges were unable. Lewis Judge could not give exact numbers but there are numerous cases that have come from Willsboro, either late at night or daytime. Judge Jackson in Essex said there were maybe 3 cases during the day in the last year. The Town of Chesterfield said they are the same and they have covered us for a few daytime ones. I then went to (in my opinion) the God Father of the justice system and Essex County, Bill Garrison and asked him his opinions on this. To quote him exactly "if you are asking a judge to take on double the case load you should pay them double. If you're going to do that, why wouldn't you have two judges? If one is sick, on vacation or at a child's event." Sheehan said she agreed. He also explained in his over 25 years to the justice system, Westport and Crown Point are in the same situation with one judge and they are putting quite a strain on Moriah. When you think about it, it is really quite a small amount of money in the overall town budget to stay with two judges, you do not want to leave your town unprotected. Sheehan stated she was in the town hall this morning and was not able to see this information when an email was sent yesterday. Sheehan stated that she was disappointed that the town board talked last month and they are for the people, not against the people and she thought our parties should be reaching out to publicize that there were even seats available. That did not happen and is not the town's responsibility, but when we have a member of our town board go to the Republican committee and ask for their blessing to not endorse another judge. She stated I think it's wrong. Gilliland stated he did not know what she was talking about. Sheehan stated the Republican party does not endorse. Gilliland asked who it was? Sheehan stated "I am just making a statement! I would hope that the people would really think about this and the two people in the hot seat right here...I don't believe we have talked salary with them and they have not even been approached." Gilliland stated salary comes at budget time. Sheehan asked what would happen if they resigned. Gilliland asked do you have any inside knowledge that they are going to resign? She said no one communicated with them. She stated she feels "we are negligent!" that we did not reach out and ask them how they feel about the situation. Then stated, we have a judge that is resigning, rightfully so, that is his right. What would happen if he didn't resign? Were we going to stay with two judges? Gilliland stated that initially before he resigned that he was not going to run again and that was the subject of why it was discussed last month. Sheehan stated the resignation letter was not received yet and that last month the board decided to see if maybe there was a candidate that would come forward, who might be available during the daytime. She said she feels that it is a disservice to the people and that it is putting a strain on the Justice and Clerk. Sheehan asked Benway how he feels? Benway stated that the current Justice is a relative and this puts me between a rock and a hard place. We are looking at 11 town justices with one judge, 8 with two. We have \$44,000.00 for 2 Justices with 29 cases this year. That's approximately \$1,500.00 per case. There was a lot of static over the budget this year. This is an opportunity to look at reducing our budget. Christian stated that he is not going to argue over this and he stated it last month, that the town should have two judges and going to one judge is a disservice to the town. Laura Carson asked if she could speak and that she learned of the resignation of Judge Dickerson "through the grape vine" and that no one has spoken to Morgan or herself regarding it. She said she did not have time to get anything together to present to the board for a number of cases. Gilliland asked if the Judges and Clerks share an office? She stated they did not communicate with them and that they are in office every other Thursday and never in the office at the same time. Carson stated there is zero communication between their team and our team and I could not even tell you what is on their case load right now that they are responsible as of 4/30 to take over. She stated if she had a few days she could pull actual numbers with VNT and civil cases and criminal cases. Sayward stated she did not know of the resignation until today and she only knew that he was not running again and she wanted to see more information. Christian stated that as of May 1st there will only be one judge and there needs to be a meeting with Judge Morgan and Clerk Carson and see what their opinions are of what is going to happen from May 1- January 1. The resignation was received March 12th. Gilliland stated it is an elected

position and the only thing that the board has the authority over is the budget number and he is surprised that the expectation is that the board would take care of their business.

-WCS Summer Camp Agreement draft was given to the supervisor. This contract is the same as last year's contract.

Sheehan made the motion to have Supervisor sign the contract with the Willsboro Central School for the 2025 Willsboro/Essex Summer Program. Christian seconded the motion.

Roll Call-

Benway, Sheehan, Sayward, Christian, Gilliland

Ayes-5

Nyes-0

Willsboro/Essex Summer program is a proposed 5 week program, July 7th-August 8th- 8:30-3:00 at the Willsboro Central School. Jenna Ford would like to come back as Director this year, she graduates in May. She is 21 and meets the requirements with the Health Department to be the Director and Health Director. She made \$20.00 per hour last year. The qualifications for this job is so many weeks of supervisory experience or bachelors degree. Base pay for a starting teacher at Willsboro Central figures out to be \$22.50 per hour. Sheehan is proposing to bring Ford's pay from \$20.00 to \$22.50 per hour. Sheehan also proposed to advertise for an assistant Director and that pay would be \$17.00 per hour. She stated that she feels they will be able to cut some positions this year, as last year it was the first year at a new facility and the anticipation of some special needs children attending also that more staff was hired. They can down-size from 10 counselors to 7 this year. She proposed that returning counselors would get a \$1.00 per hour raise and a beginning counselor would get minimum wage. Also needed is a cook position and this position has to have kitchen experience and is accepted by the school. She is proposing that the cook would receive \$25.00 per hour. Christian stated he would like to see the Assistant Director be paid \$18.00 per hour. The counselors needing training will be paid for training days and 7 counselors will be hired.

Christian made the motion to pay the following wages per hour for the 2025 Willsboro/Essex Summer program. Benway seconded the motion.

Director- \$22.50

Assistant Director - \$18.00

Counselor (returning) - minimum wage plus \$1.00

Counselor - minimum wage

Cook- \$25.00

Roll Call-

Benway, Sheehan, Sayward, Christian, Gilliland

Ayes-5

Nyes-0

Gilliland brought to the board information on the text/message Alert system that the Towns of Essex and Minerva have in place and are very satisfied with. This is a web based system. This program is capable of calling, texting and/or emailing. The cost is based on the reception of these messages. You pay for credits and once the credits are used, you purchase more. Each reception is one credit. 20,000 pre-paid credits is \$1,300.00 and 5000 is \$375.00. This program can differentiate ie: sewer district, roads, summer program, etc. Ken Hughes from Essex has agreed to come to give the staff a tutorial if we decide to go with this company. Gilliland is having a zoom meeting with a salesperson tomorrow. Questions from board members and the public were how much time does this take to set up? Is there an opt-out? Can it be only for Willsboro residents? Gilliland will ask all these questions and bring them back to the board.

Benway made a motion for Supervisor Gilliland to sign a contract with One Call Now if the cost does not exceed over 15% of the information that was presented to the board. Sheehan seconded the motion.

Roll Call-

Benway, Sheehan, Sayward, Christian, Gilliland

Ayes-5

Nyes-0

NEW BUSINESS-

The Parks commission after reviewing the 9 RFQ's for the Hathaway Park Playground/Fitness Trail project recommended that cost proposals be obtained from AES Northeast, AEDA, and Saratoga Associates. The Community Resources office suggested that we also include EDR and GPI. EDR, AEDA and GPI did not respond to this request from the town. Three proposals came back, AES for \$16,000 that was only for design. GPI \$42,250.00 and Saratoga Associates \$42,079.00 both came back with proposals that were through the completed project. The grant authorization is for \$46,000.00 with no match. Gilliland has suggested going with GPI as he has had experience working with them with the memorial monument and he has had no experience with Saratoga Associates. Sheehan stated she sees that Saratoga Associates has had a lot of experience with playground projects and she couldn't find where GPI showed any experience in this field. Benway asked if we could go back to AES to ask for a proposal through the completed project. It would be a time frame issue to do this. Benway stated that they could bring it to the committee and come back. Gilliland stated that a Special Board meeting could be called if necessary.

A recommendation from Krissy Leerkes to appoint Ashley Lee to the Youth Commission and a recommendation from Anna Reynolds to appoint Peter Sayward as an agricultural rep., Justin Gardner rep. from the school and Nathan Dutell, Operation Manager of Imerys to the Comprehensive Plan update Committee.

Christian made the motion to appoint Ashley Lee to the Youth Commission and Peter Sayward, Justin Gardner and Natan Dutell to the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee. Sheehan seconded the motion.

All in Favor

Sheehan made the motion to authorize Supervisor Gilliland to sign the contract with Northern Dtar Fireworks for the 4th of July fireworks pending DEC approval for the Boat Launching Site Christian seconded the motion.

Roll Call-

Benway, Sheehan, Sayward, Christian, Gilliland

Ayes-5

Nyes-0

Public Comment-

Greg Gordon

- Thanked the board for allowing him the opportunity to attend the Association of Towns conference in New York City. He stated it was a very good training and a lot of networking which will be beneficial for the Planning board in the future.

Victor Putman

-Congratulated Shaun and Linda Gilliland for receiving the Hugh Hammond Bennett Award for Conservation Excellence.

- DEC's project down by the river needs permission to use the land owned by the town.

-Request for a new proposal for the Cold Brook Culvert

-BRASS line in budget/ Support from town

Tom Doolittle

-DEC and US fish and wildlife service consider the Bouquet to be the primary river in the whole Lake Champlain Valley due to the native run of Atlantic salmon.

-BRASS has come alive again in the last two years. The projects planned for this year is estimated at \$15,000.00. He is in support of the town giving \$600.00 toward BRASS.

Terry Pulsifer Jr.

The 1203 annual report for building and fire safety has been submitted to the state, filed on March 5, 2025, accepted March 6, 2025 and is under review by the department of state. He has done 34 hours of continuous education credits last year that qualifies him until December 31, 2025 as a licensed code officer. Travis Crowningshield, Highway superintendent is allowing Pulsifer time off to attend the Northern Adirondack Code Council Conferences in Lake Placid on March 24th- 27th. This will give him 24 hours of continuing education for next year.

Christian made the motion to go into executive session to discuss personnel issues. Benway seconded the motion.

Entered into executive session @ 8:15pm

reopened regular meeting 8:34 pm

Adjourned @8:35 pm

Submitted by Susan Thompson