

A Town Board Meeting was held Monday, November 08, 2010, at 7:00pm at Town Hall, 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena, New York

PRESENT: Dawn Rogers, Councilwoman
Thomas A. Boehm, Councilman
Richard N. Touchette, Deputy Supervisor/Councilman
Thomas E. Dolan, Councilman

ABSENT: James C. Youmans, Supervisor

ALSO PRESENT: Diane L. Millious, Town Clerk
Albert Deering, Highway Superintendent
Greg Darlington, Chief of Police

Deputy Supervisor Touchette opened the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

OPENING COMMENT

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated that he wanted to note that there was a full Town Board present with the exception of Supervisor Youmans who is out of town on business and added that there is a fairly light agenda.

AGENDA

- Public Announcement
 - Offices Closed Veteran's Day, November 11, 2010
 - Albany County Soil & Water Conservation, Water Analysis Kit
 - R-C-S Community Library
- Public Comment
- Approval of Minutes
 - Special Town Board Meeting, October 5, 2010
 - Town Board Workshop, October 19, 2010
 - Special Budget Workshop, October 23, 2010
 - Town Board Meeting, October 25, 2010
 - Special Budget Workshop, October 30, 2010
- Department Report Review
 - Police Department, August & September
 - Summer Recreation Program, 2010
- Old Business
 - Lease Addendum with P&M for Tower Construction
- New Business
 - Special Town Board Meeting for 2011 Budget Adoption
 - Capital District Titans Baseball Club

- Town Board Workshops/Meetings
 - Town Board Workshop, November 16, 2010, 6:00pm
 - Public Hearing, November 22, 2010, 6:30pm
 - Town Board Meeting, November 22, 2010, 7:00pm

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

Office Closed – Veteran’s Day

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated that on Thursday, November 11, 2010 all Town Offices will be closed in observance of Veteran’s Day with the exception of the Police Department, which is a 24/7 operation.

Albany County Soil & Water Conservation – Water Analysis Kit

Deputy Supervisor Touchette read the following:

The Albany County Soil and Water Conservation have asked the Town’s assistance in notifying residents of the availability of a free Home Water Analysis Kit to residents whose water is supplied from a private well. Kits include tests for: bacteria, nitrates, chlorine, copper, alkalinity, lead, iron, ph, hardness and pesticide. Residents may pick up their free Home Water Analysis Kits at Albany County Soil & Water Conservation District, 24 Martin Road, Room #2, Voorheesville, NY. Any questions call Albany County SWCD Office at (518) 765-7923.

R-C-S- Community Library

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated that the R-C-S Community Library will be closed this week, November 9th to Thursday November 11th to move back to Village Hall with limited services on Friday and Saturday.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Deputy Supervisor Touchette invited the public to comment.

Ms. Donna Pasquini stated that she lives at 29 Westerlo Street in the Hamlet and continued by reading the following:

Since March of this year the Town's storm sewer behind my home has been on Workshop agendas, has been tabled on Town Board Meeting agendas but has never been put on Meeting agendas. I would like to know when the Town is going to fill the storm sewer in that you abandoned this spring, which is still causing more damage to my home. I am tired of getting the run-around. I am disappointed that this Board by its inaction would allow continuing damage to be suffered by a taxpayer. We are now into November and I would like an answer and some positive action taken to remedy this problem.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated that he does not have an answer for her this evening but will discuss it with other Town employees and get back to her within a week or two.

Ms. Pasquini stated that she hopes so because she has been waiting since March for answers and she looks forward to hearing from him.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette asked if anyone else wished to speak.

Mr. John Allen stated that he lives at 37 Westerlo Street and continued by apologizing for not being at the Budget Public Hearing but he has a couple of questions in looking at and trying to understand the budget and added that unfortunately he was out of town traveling. He continued by saying that overall it looks like the Town did a pretty decent job of managing and controlling costs in the budget but there a couple of areas that it didn't seem that the Town either was making sense or maybe there were people given favors because there was a huge increase overall in retirement benefits of 50% across the board. He added that at the same time it looks like they reduced overall personnel services, which doesn't seem reasonable unless they are all of the sudden going to be contributing more for retirement for one or more individuals when hopefully those agreements have been fairly static. He went on by saying that there is a 300% increase in other employee benefits across the board in several of the accounts with one going from \$19,000.00 to \$60,000.00 and in the times of prudence and where they are budgetarily, it does not make sense that there should be that dramatic of an increase in a single line item. He continued by saying that there are a couple of expenses that generally don't make sense and the ambulance, which he understands is a volunteer service, the Town Board rightfully so held the line on Town expenditures for all other employees yet provided a 15% increase for ambulance services across the board, which looks like the only real area where direct service was increased. He added that he didn't realize how much the Town pays the Town Attorney to sit and answer questions and from what he has heard at Town Meetings, \$41,200.00 to hear "I'll have to get back to you" as an answer, it might be more efficient to call him when there is a question rather than having \$41,200.00 of expenses when he has to go research it anyway. He continued by saying that he applauds the Board for holding the expenses in the areas that they did but he questions why some of the anomalies are there as well as why there is very little in the Sewer Budget, with no debt service at all for sewer and his understanding is that they BAN'd as an expense yet there is no interest for the BAN, no expenses, no service for the debt, which would be a pretty good wave of the magic wand for financing if they can do it and no one is going to charge interest on what amounts to a huge set of expenses. He went on by saying that there are no carry forward items on the current budget, which there should be some retained revenues somewhere in the budget from taxpayer collections because they are not going to spend all of them instantly on December 31st. He concluded by saying that at some point before the budget is adopted he hopes that they will share some rational why there are some huge increases in some areas, why they awarded the ambulance service when they are not taking care of their own Police Officers and other departments where they held the line on their expenses, which he thinks is appropriate but to award one to an outside contractor that is a volunteer service makes no sense.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette asked the Town Board if there was any response, hearing none he continued by saying that with the ambulance service, the additional allocation this year or appropriation is for additional shifts, with most shifts being covered by paid EMT's because the volunteers are not available to do that and for a number of years they have been employing paid EMT's. He continued by saying that the additional appropriation is to cover some additional shifts because the volunteers are not there.

Mr. Allen inquired as to whether that would be the Paramedic Service.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated this is in addition to and added that Albany County Sheriff's Department provides a paramedic but this is for the EMT's. He continued by saying that in regard to his question about the pension cost, the Town has no control over this because it is mandated by the State and the Law Enforcement pension cost went from a 17% increase last year to a 21% increase this year and it is a number that is given to them by the State Comptroller Office and they have to pay it.

Mr. Allen stated that he absolutely understands that but there is a 50% increase in pensions which is not 8% and went from \$143,000.00 to \$202,000.00, which is almost exactly a 50% increase and nowhere in the State have pensions gone up that much for any contribution when the overall personnel costs have dropped. He added that pension costs go up when you raise personnel costs because it is a percentage of the personnel cost and not an indiscriminate number and it should have increased 7-8% but it increased 50%. He went on by saying that globally for most companies if they are contributing to pension, it did go up in a varying percentage and some places could be as high as 10-12% but the Town is budgeting a 50% increase from \$143,000.00 to \$202,000.00, which is not a marginal increase or an increase from the Police Officers or Town personnel and something has changed either in the contributions that the Town is now going to make and reiterated that it is a huge increase and not a marginal increase. He added that pension costs are typically a percentage of the overall personnel line items and across the board they appropriately held the personnel costs to either last year or reduced them in a number of areas but the pension costs as they are showing them have increased 50% with a 300% increase in other employee costs, which went from \$9,000.00 to \$63,000.00. He continued by saying that the numbers seem out of whack if they are holding the budget down and he is not suggesting that they are because they have been responsible in a lot of areas, but these are areas that people tend to typically hide money in the budget for other projects or hide money for special payments to individuals or other things. He concluded by saying that as a taxpayer he wants to be sure as a taxpayer that they are applying all the due diligence in all the budget accounts and overall he would say that the budget overall looks excellent but these couple of areas clearly calls for some concern as a taxpayer given the rate of increase and given that there is not an explanation in budget footnotes or other areas where you would find a footnote as to why there is such great discrepancy or disparity.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated that he can tell him again that the percentage of payroll that they are mandated to pay for pension has gone up 30-35%, which is not a small amount and that is a number that they have no control over in addition to telling him that they have exercised due diligence and they have examined everything that went into the budget and he stands by it but

appreciates his comments. He continued by asking if there were any further comments, hearing none he moved to the next item on the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated that there were five sets of Town Board Minutes for approval, a Special Town Board Meeting on October 5th, a Town Board Workshop on October 19th, a Special Budget Workshop on October 23rd, a Town Board Meeting on October 25th and a Special Budget Workshop on October 30th and continued by asking for a motion to approve the minutes.

MOTION

On motion of Councilwoman Rogers, seconded by Councilman Boehm, the Town Board Minutes were approved as presented and read.

VOTE – AYES 4 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT 1 (Youmans)

Councilman Dolan stated that he wanted to point out that he was not at the October 5th Meeting.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated that he was not at the October 23rd Meeting.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Police Department – August & September

Deputy Supervisor Touchette asked that Chief Darlington give the Police Department Reports for August and September, which were tabled from a previous meeting.

Chief Darlington continued by giving the reports.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette asked for a motion to approve the reports.

MOTION

On motion of Councilman Boehm, seconded by Councilman Dolan, the Police Department Reports were accepted as presented.

VOTE – AYES 4 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT 1 (Youmans) – SO MOVED

Summer Recreation Program 2010

Deputy Supervisor Touchette asked that Councilman Boehm give the 2010 Summer Recreation Program.

Councilman Boehm continued by reporting the following:

- The Summer Recreation Program was held in conjunction with the Village of Ravenna and the cost is split with them.

- The average attendance for this year was between 35-60 participants depending on the weather.
- This was the fourth year of the Program and attendance overall has been up each year.

Councilman Boehm continued by saying that he wanted to thank all the counselors who worked very hard, especially Eric Stott who led the Program and a special thanks to the schools for lending equipment and the Village for sharing their park.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette asked for a motion to approve the report.

MOTION

On motion of Councilwoman Rogers, seconded by Councilman Dolan, the 2010 Summer Recreation Report was accepted as presented.

VOTE – AYES 4 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT 1 (Youmans) – SO MOVED

OLD BUSINESS

Lease Addendum with P&M for Tower Construction

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated that there is a request to sign a Lease Addendum with P&M Brick for the tower construction, which Chief Darlington has taken the lead on and continued by asking that he give a summary.

Chief Darlington stated that it was approximately 3½ years ago when then Supervisor Hotaling and he entered into a Lease Agreement with P&M Port of Coeymans to build a tower on Gedney Hill for the emergency radios. He continued by saying that since then they were approached by JNS Towers to get involved in a municipally owned Tower Program, which would generate revenue for the Town of Coeymans to operate a tower with cell service on it. He added that there was a carrier that was interested in the site and in order to do that, under the Lease Agreement with P&M, they were only authorized to put up the emergency tower and not allowed to profit from it. He added that with the addendum that they have, P&M has authorized them to move forward with the current carrier JNS and any additional but part of that Agreement is that they will receive part of the revenues that they generate. He went on by saying that he sent a copy of it to Attorney for the Town Wukitsch who reviewed it and in turn gave a copy of the e-mail to the Board showing that he has reviewed it and it looks good to him and as such AT&T was hoping to be up and running by now and gave an ultimatum that if the Town did not start moving forward they were going to go elsewhere. He concluded by saying that it would be based on the net, with the Town's administrative costs coming out first for electric, plowing, and paperwork and then the bottom line would be split 50/50 with the Port of Coeymans.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated that he wanted to thank Chief Darlington for his work on it and then asked the Town Board if they had any questions or discussion.

Councilman Boehm stated that it makes sense to take the costs out before they split the profit and he also wanted to thank the Chief for working on it because it will be a revenue source that is important to the Town.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette asked for a motion to authorize Supervisor Youmans to sign the Lease Addendum.

MOTION

On motion of Councilman Boehm, seconded by Councilwoman Rogers, authorizing Supervisor Youmans to sign the P&M Lease Addendum.

VOTE – AYES 4 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT 1 (Youmans) – SO MOVED

NEW BUSINESS

Town Board Meeting for 2011 Budget Adoption

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated that they need to schedule a Special Town Board Meeting on November 18, 2010, 7:00pm for the purpose of adopting the 2011 Budget and continued by asking for a motion.

MOTION

On motion of Councilman Boehm, seconded by Councilman Dolan, authorizing a Special Town Board Meeting for the adoption of the 2011 Budget.

VOTE – AYES 4 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT 1 (Youmans) – SO MOVED

Capital District Titans Baseball Club

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated that there is a request from the Capital District Titans Baseball Club and continued by reading the following excerpts:

“The Capital District Titans Baseball Club provides competitive baseball experiences for local players 10 years of age and younger. As a member of the Eastern New York Travel Baseball League, we strive to provide an experience that promotes sportsmanship, teamwork, community service, respect for, and enjoyment of the game of baseball. Our primary goal is to develop the character of the young men who play for us.

I am writing to you because we need your help. Our team is searching for a suitable field within the Town of Coeymans to practice and play our home games during our upcoming 2011 season. Typically, our games will be scheduled for Sundays and we will practice at least once a week. The baseball field located at Coeymans Landing Park could be the perfect place for us to play.

However, this field is in need of some repairs and minor modifications in order for our team able to use it.”

Deputy Supervisor Touchette continued by saying that these are the enhancements that they would like to see.

- Purchase of an appropriate dirt mixture to add to the infield.
- Purchase and installation of 2 permanent benches for players to use during games.
- Installation of fencing extending beyond both sides of the backstop to protect players from being hit by foul balls.
- Minor repairs to the fencing of the existing backstop.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated that the letter goes on to say that they have a number of volunteers from the community who are ready to donate their time and expertise to make this happen and he would like to meet with the Town Board to discuss how this can help improve the field and benefit the town. He continued by saying that the letter was signed by Jeff Sorenson, President of the Capital District Titans Baseball Club and then asked if there was any discussion from the Board.

Councilwoman Rogers stated that the Youth Soccer Club uses the field too and they should get together to make sure that there is not a conflict and added that as far as the dirt, she is sure that they can get the Highway Department to put some down there.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated that conceptually he thinks that it is a good idea and added that they have a newly organized and formed Parks Committee and this might be something for them to look at and discuss because there are limited resources and there could be conflicts between soccer and baseball players and the Town does not have a policy on how to allocate and use those resources. He continued by saying that with the Board’s permission he would like to forward it to the Parks Committee and in turn come back with a recommendation.

Collectively the Board agreed.

Councilman Dolan inquired as to if the Soccer Club signs up for the field when they want to use it and if there is a process.

Town Clerk Millious stated that they send their whole schedule for when they want to use the field and added that they had said that if other people want to use it, to just let them know.

Councilman Boehm interjected that the school uses it as well.

Town Clerk Millious stated that it is the one that she is talking about.

Chief Darlington stated that one of the issues is that the only thing that is truly reserved in any park is the gazebo or pavilion and added that if everyone is going to start using the parks, it is something that the Parks Committee should look at because the field down there gets used a lot and they might want to look at the possibility of expanding to the other parks.

Mr. Mike Keel asked permission to comment and continued by saying that he was representing Mr. Sorenson and added that he had spoken to Supervisor Youmans in trying to understand what they could do within the Town in keeping the team here. He continued by saying that they are in tough financial times and concerned about whether there is money available for improvements and added that as far as the dirt, the Club has offered to make improvements at no Town expense but the biggest issue is the fence, which is a safety issue and they can't use the field without fencing. He went on by saying that it would be non-obtrusive to the Soccer Field and would be an extension of the backstop that is there and he does not think that it will be a huge expense and as an organization they have talked about raising funds to assist in doing this. He added that the problem is that they are a small organization and they would be making improvement to a Town property, which he is not sure that it makes sense for them to incur the expense when they can have a whole field in Colonie and just pay for a field but they would prefer to have it here because ½ the team is local kids. He concluded by saying that they can build benches and things like that but they are afraid that they will walk away and they are looking for something more permanent, which would be fixture enhancements to Town property that will be there for years.

Councilman Boehm inquired as to if there is a design for the backstop and fencing.

Mr. Keel stated that it is 25 feet long by 8 feet high down the first and third baselines which would protect the kids and if they step it back from where the backstop is now, they could have an entrance for the kids on and off the field.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated that an issue that they need to look at first is how they handle the request for use and then they need to develop some sort of policy on how they handle it.

Mr. Keel stated that their practice schedule and season would run until mid July and not so much in the fall.

Councilman Dolan inquired as to when it would begin.

Mr. Keel stated that it would begin in April 2011 and would be April through July and added that once a week they could be very flexible with other programs but the Sunday dates would be a must.

Ms. Donna Pasquini asked to speak and added that she wanted to let the Parks Committee and Town Board know that the storm sewer that runs down through, the Highway Department has dug up along the whole south side of that field and it is at least 10 feet deep. She added that if they are going to put a fence, they will have to fence the whole south side so no one falls in.

Mr. Rodney Krzykowski stated that he wished to comment and continued by saying that a number of years ago a softball field was built at Joralemon Park, which he was part of and it extended to two fields, which he does not know if they are being used and they might be an option to look at.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette stated that this is something that the Parks Committee will look at.

Mr. Keel stated that he took a look at Joralemon, which Supervisor Youmans stated would be less of a conflict with the Soccer League and added that it is very unimproved and for their level of ball play it would be massive, extensive renovations, which financially would not work for anyone.

TOWN BOARD WORKSHOPS/MEETINGS

- Town Board Workshop, November 16, 2010, 6:00pm
- Public Hearing, November 22, 2010, 6:30pm
- Town Board Meeting, November 22, 2010, 7:00pm

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Deputy Supervisor Touchette asked if there were any final comments.

Town Clerk Millious stated that there will be a Public Hearing for the Proposed Local Law for Dog Licensing as well as the additional Special Meeting on November 18th that was discussed previously.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette asked if there were any other comments.

Chief of Police Darlington stated that with the tower that is being put up, they talked about the revenue and added that he wanted to bring up what it is going to save the Town of Coeymans. He continued by saying that when he and former Supervisor Hotaling originally went on this

venture, they were looking at over a \$200,000.00 expense to build a communications tower for emergency services and it is now being built at no expense to the Town and in fact they will generate revenue from it. He added that he has for the Board, scenarios of the breakdown of rents and what the income will look like and at the next Workshop he will have a Master Management Agreement for the Board to review with J&S authorizing them to do this and how it will work and he will forward it to Attorney for the Town Wukitsch as soon as he receives it from J&S. He concluded by saying that hopefully they will move forward and construction will start.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette asked as to the timeframe of when it will be up and running.

Chief Darlington stated that with good weather they said between 3-4 months and added that they have already started that paperwork with AT&T who will be the first carrier going on and AT&T was hoping that it would be up and running by June 2010.

Deputy Supervisor Touchette asked if there were any other comments, hearing none he asked for a motion to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

On motion of Councilman Boehm, seconded by Councilwoman Rogers, the Town Board Meeting was adjourned.

VOTE – AYES 4 – NAY 0 – ABSENT 1 (Youmans) – SO MOVED

Time: 7:35pm

Respectfully Submitted,

APPROVED:

Diane L. Millious, Town Clerk