

**MINUTES BOOK\*\*TOWN OF COEYMANS  
February 18, 2016 – Town Board Workshop – 6:00pm**

**A Town Board Workshop was held Thursday, February 18, 2016, at 7:00pm at Town Hall, 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena, New York**

**PRESENT:** Philip A. Crandall, Supervisor  
Thomas E. Dolan, Councilman  
Kenneth A. Burns, Councilman

**ABSENT:** George E. Langdon, Councilman  
James Youmans, Councilman

**ALSO PRESENT:** Cindy Vatalaro, First Deputy Clerk  
Scott Searles, Highway Superintendent  
Nelson Perry, Parks & Recreation Supervisor

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Supervisor Crandall opened the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance, Councilman Burns offered a prayer.

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**OPENING COMMENT**

Councilman Dolan stated that the record should reflect the absence of Councilmen Langdon and Burns.

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**AGENDA**

- Proposed Local Law #1-16
- 84 Main Street
- Sewer Project Progress
- Coeymans Housing Task Force
- Highway Request for Operator I

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**DISCUSSIONS**

**Proposed Local Law #1-16 – Increasing Planning Board to Seven Members**

Supervisor Crandall stated that it had been discussed at the last meeting and there is a proposal to increase the size of the Planning Board from 5 to 7 members, which it had been previously. He added that Councilman Dolan did some calling around to other Towns inquiring about the number on their Boards and then asked him to report his findings.

Councilman Dolan stated out of 10 other Towns in Albany County, seven of them have 7 member Boards, three have 5 members.

Supervisor Crandall stated that he had gotten some calls indicating that they were in favor of an increase and think that more minds on the Board is better.

Councilman Burns stated that he thinks that the members that there are now work together well, he had discussed it with the current members and they like it with five members and personally he would like to keep it at 5.

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Councilman Dolan stated that he thinks they can always legislate by who the players are and he will wait and hear if there are any additional comments.

**84 Main Street Demolition**

Supervisor Crandall stated that as discussed, a work stoppage was enforced by the Department of Labor and he believes a fine was issued to Mr. Laraway. He added that he really can't say much more than that because Mr. Laraway's lawyers have called and threatened litigation so he was advised by Attorney for the Town Wukitsch not to speak too much more about the situation.

Ms. Segal asked if members of the audience spoke about it.

Supervisor Crandall stated that they could say all the wanted.

Discussion ensued amongst the Town Board and members of the audience, there were many questions and comments, key points were.

- Whether or not it would rescind the agreement the Town has with Mr. Laraway because he didn't follow through on his side of the bargain.
- Whether or not the Town has had an Engineer check the plans for the drainage of water that comes down the hill because in the Hamlet, everything gets flooded because there are no sidewalks or curbs.
- Concern with flooding to the houses below the demolished house because the house is now gone.
- Town Highway unable to intervene because it is a State Road.
- Gaps in authority in Town Law of what the Building Inspector/CEO can demand for a permit and things that the State may demand from someone doing demolition.
- Suggestion that the Building Inspector/CEO and Attorney for the Town see if there are things that can be put into the process to address the issues.
- In the event of heavy rain, Highway could put sandbags to divert the water.
- What will be put where the house stood?
- Potential law suit against the Town when Mr. Laraway was the one at fault.

**Sewer Project Progress**

Councilman Crandall stated that he had a meeting with the Town's Engineer, Mr. Flores and Chief Operator, Project Head, John Kerr as well as Clerk to the Supervisor Chmielewski. He added that the project is moving along nicely and Mr. Flores will be at the next Town Board Meeting to give a synopsis of everything that has gone on to this point and the progress that they are making, which everyone will be pleased with. He continued by saying that they are setting the money aside that they had and were going to use that was borrowed and they are going to set up another fund, just for the grant money, which is free to the Town. He concluded by saying that they are going to do the whole project with the grant money and hopefully the money they had set aside and the money that they borrowed to start the project, they will be able to pay back to the bank.

Ms. Lawler stated that she sits in on the Albany County Water Quality Coordinating Committee meetings and they are excited about it and appreciate how careful the Town is being with the grant money.

Discussion ensued amongst the Town Board and members of the audience, there were many questions and comments, key points were.

- It is two grants that the Town is receiving, one for 2.5 million and the second grant is \$800,000.00, which replaces what would have been the Town's match but no a match is necessary.
- They got the grant because C.T. Male put together a plan with the Town and Village in response to a Consent Order which did not allow the Town or Village to have any other users hooked up to the sewer system until they addressed the inflow and infiltration.
- During rain events it could go from 600,000 gallons a day up to 2.4 million gallons a day.
- The system was rated for 800,000 gallons but can take up to 1 million gallons a day.

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- Any gallonage over would back up in the streets and flow into the river.
- This is work that had to be done anyway and it is work that has to be done.
- There is enough work to be done that they can utilize all the money; any unused money would have to be given back.
- Properties on Stone House Hill Road that do not have septic tanks, effluent is going into the creek and has been for years and years.
- When the work is done it will increase the capacity of the Plant as well as lowering the amount of water that infiltrates.
- It will allow for an increase in the number of users by quite a bit.

**Coeymans Housing Task Force**

Supervisor Crandall asked that Councilman Dolan address the Coeymans Housing Task Force.

Councilman Dolan continued by outlining some of his thoughts as follows:

- Hooking the houses on Stone House Hill Road will enhance the Hamlet.
- Possibly giving some leeway in assessments of newly purchased property between the time of purchase and completion of fixing it up.
- Working with Building Department to find out the number of vacant homes in the Hamlet as well as how many are condemned, and how many are in foreclosure.
- Working with the Building Department as to what revisions need to be made to Building and Demolition Permits.
- Working on the disconnect between the Town and State for asbestos abatement rules.
- Working with the Chief of Police and Police Department to identify what is going on as far as property damage and what the Police Department can or cannot do.
- Working with Parks and Recreation Supervisor relative to the Town owned property in the Hamlet.

Parks and Recreation Supervisor Perry interjected that a thought for vacant property could be a community garden or a green space area with a walking path, benches and trees. He added that there would have to be a master plan because you have to work around water, sewer and drainage and it all has to be taken into consideration in the development.

Discussion ensued between Councilman Dolan and Parks and Recreation Supervisor Perry relative to green space and parking in the Hamlet.

Mr. Laraway interjected that he believes that Councilman Dolan's idea of having a Housing Task Force is a great one and it will benefit the community and all of the things that he mentioned are really important and have not been addressed in a long time and he encourages the Board to move ahead on it.

Ms. Segal stated that she thinks it is a great idea for different areas of the Town to have a Task Force and in turn meet to share things because she would like to enjoy other areas of the Town.

Councilman Dolan interjected that it wasn't meant to be exclusionary; however he believes that the Hamlet is almost at a critical mass where they are seeing some buildings for a variety of different reasons that could be taken down that have fallen into disrepair as well as the issues of drainage and the visual impact. He added that while he was campaigning, more people outside the town and village brought up the Hamlet; they view it as an eye-sore and asked that they do something about it and this is where the impetus to start there came from.

Councilman Dolan continued by outlining other things that he wanted to do in the Hamlet as follows:

- Historic Coeymans Landing Neighborhood Association has historically done some clean-up days in the Hamlet, which he would like to work on again in conjunction with the Highway Department.
- Talk of the Hamlet becoming a Historic District, which would make tax credits available and there are certain protections to your property.
- Pride in the neighborhood, an attractive riverfront.

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- Grants, loans and homebuyer program that Albany County Rural Housing has to offer.
- A number of programs that can be administered by the Town in cooperation with the Town and a not-for-profit in town for individual or community grants.
- Technical assistance for the CDBG money for communities of low to moderate income.

Councilman Burns stated that there are many houses available in the Town of Coeymans and Hamlet and then asked if there is an easy way of finding out if they are for sale, how much they are and who you would see about it because there are a lot of people asking about buying houses in the Hamlet.

Councilman Dolan stated that you would continually check with the County because it changes.

Councilman Burns interjected that they as a town should be able to make it easier.

First Deputy Clerk Vatalaro interjected that there are foreclosures either by the bank or by the County and it is almost impossible to find out when it is a bank foreclosure.

Discussion ensued amongst the Town Board and members of the audience relative to other issues in the Hamlet as follows:

- Possibly having an Ordinance for landlords not being held accountable.
- The Town doing reasonable repairs if there are safety issues and charging the owner.
- A State Law holding landlords responsible for taking care of the view shed of their property.
- A Housing Task Force could take people's complaints/suggestions and come up with a plan to present to the Town Board.
- Establish Neighborhood Associations throughout the entire Town.

Councilman Dolan stated that anyone willing and able to help them work on this, their help would be appreciated.

### **Highway Request for Operator I**

Highway Superintendent Searles stated that the Board suggested at last week's meeting that they discuss his request for an Operator I at the Workshop.

Supervisor Crandall asked if he had gone through his budget.

Highway Superintendent stated that he has been going through his budget and added that he has six big trucks and two smaller trucks to go out in a snow storm and right now he is down to seven people. He added that in 2014 he did a calendar from January 1<sup>st</sup> to October 1<sup>st</sup> and there were 196 working days and of those days he had 49 days with a full crew, which was 147 days in 2014 that he was down people. He continued by saying that he then did it for the whole year 2015, which was 260 working days and he had 32 days with a full crew so for 288 days he was missing at least one person and without the extra person that he is requesting, they can't get a lot done.

Discussion ensued between the Supervisor, Councilman Dolan and Highway Superintendent Searles relative to the request to hire an Operator I, key points were.

- No money for the position now and they won't know for six months where the Town stands financially.
- The positions status in the 2016 budget, it was put in at the last meeting of 2015 and taken out in the first meeting of 2016.
- Starting the year with \$900.00 in the Highway Fund.
- \$15,000.00 in unpaid bills for 2015.
- Comptroller Report showing a \$400,000.00 deficit.
- Parks and Recreation Supervisor Nelson offer to help.
- The cost to include the position, \$19,739.00 for the summer and \$19,739.00 for the winter plus benefits.
- Savings on salt and overtime due to the mild winter.

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- Further discussion in Executive Session.

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**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Supervisor Crandall asked if there were any other comments.

Ms. Lawler stated that she thought there was going to be discussion about an Environmental Conservation Board on the agenda.

Councilman Dolan asked if she had something to add.

Ms. Lawler stated that they discussed the possibility of re-establishing an Environmental Conservation Board and a woman by the name of Ingrid Hinkle with the Hudson River Estuary Program will be coming down Tuesday morning at 10:00am to meet with a few interested citizens and would very much enjoy having Town Board participation if any of them are available and if are available, they thought they should have the meeting at Town Hall. She continued by saying that there are some very good models for Environmental Conservation Boards that they can look at and one of her roles with the Estuary Program is to help towns within the estuary, to establish Environmental Conservation Boards or Environmental Advisory Committees and they do a number of round tables in communities. She concluded by saying that if any of them are able to join them, they will meet at Town Hall to gather information and in turn present it to the Board.

Councilmen Dolan and Burns stated that they can attend.

Councilman Dolan stated that he had spoken with Attorney for the Town Wukitsch and as she indicated, there are a number of names that this type of Board can go by and each name has functions reserved specifically to them. He added that Ms. Heinzen had mentioned a committee serving several function so they don't have to find 4-5 people for several committees and he thinks a meeting on the topic would be in order.

Ms. Lawler stated that they will plan on meeting at Town Hall and asked that they share the information with Councilmen Langdon and Youmans

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**ADJOURNMENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION**

On motion of Councilman Dolan, seconded by Supervisor Crandall, the Town Board Workshop was adjourned to Executive Session.

VOTE – AYES 3 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT 2 (Burns & Youmans) – SO MOVED

Time – 7:00pm

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**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Executive Session convened in the Supervisor's Office immediately following the Workshop to discuss a personnel matter. Discussion ensued amongst Supervisor Crandall, Councilman Dolan, Councilman Burns, Highway Superintendent Searles, and Parks and Recreation Supervisor Perry, no action was taken or decisions made.

Time – 7:35

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**ADJOURNMENT**

On motion of Councilman Dolan, seconded by Councilman Burns, the Town Board Meeting was adjourned.

VOTE – AYES 3 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT 2 (Burns & Youmans) – SO MOVED

Time – 7:35pm

**Respectfully Submitted -**

**APPROVED –**

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**Diane L. Millious, Town Clerk**