

**MINUTES BOOK\*\*TOWN OF COEYMAN**

**August 13, 2020 –Public Hearing – 6:30pm**

**A Public Hearing was held Thursday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 6:30pm at Town Hall, 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena, New York.**

**PRESENT:** George D. McHugh, Supervisor  
Daniel D. Baker, Councilman  
Kenneth C. Burns, Councilman  
Zachary S. Collins, Councilman  
Brandon L. LeFevre, Councilman

**ALSO PRESENT:** Cindy L. Rowzee, Town Clerk  
Jaclyn Hakes, M.J. Engineering  
Andrew Gillcrist, M.J. Engineering

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Supervisor McHugh opened the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He stated that all Town Board members were present.

Supervisor McHugh stated that this was a public hearing on the Proposed Local Law - Board of Assessment Review. He then asked the Town Clerk to read the notice.

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**NOTICE OF  
PUBLIC HEARING  
ON PROPOSED LOCAL LAW**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the Town Board of the Town of Coeymans will hold a Public Hearing on August 13, 2020 at 6:30pm at Town Hall, 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena, NY on a proposed law.

“Board of Assessment Review.” The purpose of this proposed law is to decrease the membership of the Board of Assessment Review from five (5) members to three (3) members.

The proposed local law is available for public inspection at the Town Clerk’s office at 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena, NY, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday and on the Town website.

At the above date, time and place all interested persons are welcome to attend and will be heard. Due to limited space the Town Board encourages you to submit your comments on this matter beforehand by submitting a letter, email or telephone call to the Town Clerk’s Office at [townclerk@coeymans.org](mailto:townclerk@coeymans.org) or 518-756-6006, Ext. 3 until 4:00pm the date of the meeting.

**By Order of the Town Board  
of the Town of Coeymans  
Cindy L. Rowzee  
Town Clerk**

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Supervisor McHugh stated that this was a public hearing on the proposed local law to reduce the Board of Assessment review from five members down to three and an informational purposes only public hearing for the issue of chickens and livestock in the hamlet of Coeymans. There is no local law being proposed, it is for information purposes only as the Town Board has received several complaints about chickens and livestock in the hamlet.

Supervisor McHugh said that State Law stated that the Board of Assessment Review has to be at least three members and no more than five. This year the Town did a full revaluation of the Town, however, the plan is to do systematic reviews going forward and so it should never be as busy as this year. He stated that five people do not make lighter work for the others as they all have to be part of the process and deliberate on each case. The assessor feels that this would be more efficient. Supervisor McHugh named a number of other Towns that only have three members. He then stated the costs of having a five person board over the last several years. He also stated that he is changing the payment back to \$200 per person per day and the Town will no longer be paying for the food for the BAR members, instead, they will have time to go out and eat. This should equate to the costs being less than half of what they were.

Supervisor McHugh stated that he had only heard from one person regarding this proposed law and that was Mike McGuire, a resident who is also an assessor in other Towns. He only asked why and left no comment after receiving a detailed response from the Supervisor.

As there were no comments on the proposed law at this time, Supervisor McHugh moved on to the informational only public hearing on the issue of chickens and livestock in the hamlet. Supervisor McHugh had received two written comments that were read into the record.

### **Public Comments**

**Carl and JoAnn Firstiun**, were present and Supervisor McHugh read a letter that they had submitted to the Town Board:

We are writing regarding a concern that we have with our neighbors located to the west of our property on Westerlo Street. Recently, the neighbors acquired one rooster and one hen which are being kept in a fenced in dog pen with a makeshift cardboard box that is being utilized as a “chicken coop”. Upon further discussion with the family, we were advised they have approximately 28 more hens they are raising inside of their home that are currently too young to be kept in the outside pen. It was stated that once they reach three weeks in age, they will be moved to the outside location with the other chickens.

We have several concerns with the current makeshift setup and the amount of chickens that will eventually be in a fenced pen approximately 10' x 10' in size. Our first concern is there is not adequate space in this pen for 30 chickens, which could potentially lead to health and safety issues (spread of diseases, pest infestation, water pollution, etc). Another concern is predatory animals that have already begun to try and gain access to the chickens by digging under the pen.

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The neighbors have stated that they had to add protective fencing to prevent whatever predator is trying to gain access to the pen. Imagine the predators that will be drawn to the chickens and the feed when there is 30+ chickens. The rooster is very vocal all day long, including very early in the morning and throughout the day. With the neighboring property being less than a quarter of an acre, there is no escaping this noise.

For the reasons stated above, we believe this issue should be brought to an upcoming town board meeting for a discussion of adopting an ordinance pertaining to the ownership of chickens within the town. While we are not against the ownership of chickens, we do believe there needs to be an ordinance set forth for certain residential areas /zones within the town. Please find attached, the Town of Bethlehem, “Best Management Practices for Backyard Chickens”, for your reference as to what a neighboring town has researched / developed.

**Gail and Michael Rienti** submitted the following written comments to the Town Board:

We have lived in the hamlet of Coeymans for 35 years and are concerned about the question of farm animals being raised in a residential neighborhood.

Recently a new neighbor has erected a chain-link chicken pen which is approximately 8' x 12' x 6' high. The pen sits less than a foot from our property line, which makes it very intrusive.

We feel that this is in violation of the zoning laws, but even more concerning is what we were told by another neighbor – that he has acquired two dozen or more baby chicks to put out when they are big enough. This seems to be borne out as the property owner himself told me he plans to enlarge the pen and build a wooden coop inside it in order to house them as it gets colder.

This would seem to increase the risk of attracting skunks, rats and mice into the area and might also increase the risk of salmonella. We have read that this can be a problem in backyard chicken coops which aren't especially well taken care of.

It is our opinion that this sort of practice would be extremely inappropriate in a residential setting, especially when they are so close to other homes. Thank you for your consideration.

There was discussion among the Town Board members regarding allowing chickens in the hamlet. Councilman Burns stated that roosters serve no purpose except for breeding; you will still get eggs without a rooster. He also stated that people who have chickens should be required to have an approved pen so that no rodents are coming after the chickens. He stated that it has to be done right and kept clean.

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Supervisor McHugh stated that he had looked at some laws in surrounding communities to come up with a rough draft. He stated that the Village is currently working on allowing chickens as well and he had met with Trustee Rosato to discuss the issue.

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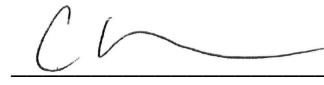
**Motion to Adjourn Public Hearing**

On motion of Supervisor McHugh, seconded by Councilman Burns, the Public Hearing regarding Proposed Local Law – Board of Assessment Review was adjourned to August 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm.

APPROVED – VOTE – AYES 5 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT – SO MOVED

Time – 6:59pm

*Respectfully Submitted,*

  
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*Cindy L. Rowzee, Town Clerk*