

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Regular Meeting
May 21, 2009**

Present:	Supervisor Thomas Dias	Councilman John MacArthur
	Councilman James Miller	Councilman Robert Mayhew
	Councilwoman Donna Hoyt	Town Clerk Monica Cleveland

Supervisor Dias called the regular board meeting to order at 7:04pm with a salute to the flag.

Mr. Dias stated that the board has several guests in attendance this night. They include Greeley Ford and Jim Jeffreys on behalf of the cell tower committee. Also in attendance for this purpose are Betty Young from the Town of Taghkanic, Linda Scheer of the Town of Gallatin and Joe Laporta from the Town of Copake. Also in attendance was Pat Johnson of the Public Service Commission to speak about the Charter Communications situation.

A motion was made by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilwoman Hoyt to approve the April town board meeting minutes and have them placed on record. Motion carried. A motion was made by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilwoman Hoyt to approve the May Workshop minutes and have them placed on record. Motion carried.

Mr. Dias reminded those in attendance that the Town Board will hold their workshops on the first Monday of the month at 8:00pm. Mr. Dias encouraged the public to come to the meetings. He thanked Councilwoman Hoyt for filling in for him at the last workshop meeting.

Supervisor Dias read the following financial report:

General Account:	\$406,266.60
CDBG:	\$1,000.00
Highway:	\$469,834.57
Light:	\$299.55
Cap. Building:	\$147,334.17
Cap. Equipment:	\$19,636.55
Trust & Agency:	\$49,937.32

Mr. Dias stated that the financial report does look different and that the accounts shaded in gray are the ones that were closed and consolidated into the general checking account. A motion was made by Councilwoman Hoyt and seconded by Councilman Miller to accept the financial report as read. Motion carried.

Councilman Miller stated that some of the account lines are running low and that money should be moved into them. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that she, Mr. Dias and the

accountant are working towards categorizing the bills so that each item and line can be tracked easier.

Old Business

Mr. Robert Roth introduced Mr. Greeley Ford from the At&T mobile company. Mr. Greeley gave a presentation which showed several possible sites for the conjoined towns to place a cell tower. Mr. Greeley stated that this will not happen in 2009 because the work plans for this year are already earmarked. He is confident if a place can be decided on, the preliminary actions can begin before the year is out. The proposed sites are the Ancram Town Hall, The Copake Town Hall, The Ancram Highway Garage, Taconic Hills school, County Route 7 and Pumpkin Hollow & Hilscher Cindy in Ancram. Mr. Stone stated that the company can do a blind study to come up with more optimal sites but that the sites proposed are possible. Mr. Ford stated that once the tower is built, AT&T will have the rights to the tower and that the town can lease out the lower sections to other companies. He also stated that the town will be able to possibly break ground within the year with the possibility of going live in 18 months. Mrs. Hoyt asked if the site could be privately owned. Mr. Ford answered that they like to work with municipalities.

Mr. Dias asked Mr. Jim Jeffreys to speak. Mr. Jeffreys stated that he is with Northeast Communications and that they build cell towers. He stated that they will build the tower and then rent the use of the tower to companies. He stated that the town can make revenue by renting out the use of the tower. He stressed that there is a public safety issue with the lack of cell tower service. Mrs. Hoyt asked what the cost was to build a tower if the town was to fund it. Mr. Jeffreys stated that it is between \$150,000.00 and \$200,000.00. Mr. Dias stressed that if Mr. Jeffrey's company was to build the tower then the upkeep would be done by the company. Mr. Dias asked for a time frame to build the tower. Mr. Jeffreys stated that it could be 6 months.

Mr. Art Bassin gave the following Comprehensive Plan update.

1. Comprehensive Plan Committee Activities -- *The Comp Plan Committee held a public hearing on April 25 attended by over 90 people, will revise the Plan as necessary based on the public hearing comments, will schedule another public hearing, and present the draft Comprehensive Plan to the Town Board at the July Town Board meeting.*

2. CDBG Activities -- *The CDBG Project Team will develop a "Community Development Strategic Plan" over the next few months to summarize its findings and recommendations regarding hamlet revitalization, affordable housing and economic development. As part of this effort, the CDBG Committee will conduct a survey of Ancram businesses, and develop a business directory of Ancram businesses. The next CDBG grant opportunities are for a Technical Assistance Planning Grant (application due in November 2009) requiring a \$15,000 match, and a no-match \$400,000 construction/renovation grant (application due in April, 2010). We have applied for and received about \$11,500 of our \$21,000 CDBG grant funding so far in 2009.*

3. Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan (AFPP) -- *We have been notified that the contract for the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Grant funding has been approved, and have applied for the first \$6250 advance. The AFPP Committee is finalizing a Farm Inventory and list of agricultural businesses in Ancram, and will develop a budget outlining how the \$33,333 in*

grant funds will be spent over the next 18 months. A portion of these funds will be available to help fund the zoning revisions efforts related to the Comp Plan.

4. Budget – *Comp Plan spending in April was about \$2300. Year-to-date we have spent approximately \$8000 of the \$16,500 full year budget.*

Councilman Miller stated that there have been several good comments made on the plan in the last few weeks and that they have been added to the plan. Mr. Dias stated that the committee has put in a lot of work and that he encourages the town to read the plan and put in their comments. Mr. Bassin said that there will be another public hearing in June.

Mr. Dias stated that there is a building department report in the boards packets.

Mr. Dias stated that he owed Hank and Jeanie from the Community Rescue Squad an apology for misspeaking in regards to the amount that the town was paying to them for their services. He stated that he had not remembered the meeting correctly and has since gone over the minutes and that the increase had been approved. He stated that the County offices have been having meetings about the rescue squad and that he hopes some resolutions will come for them. Mrs. Hoyt stated that the extra \$193.00 was given to the squad on purpose from the 2008 budget. She stated that one payment has already been made and that it was decided to pay the rescue squad in full this month. Jeanie Scottie asked if the contract has been signed. MR. Dias stated yes, that he had it for her.

Mr. Dias stated that the Ethics Committee has decided to make improvements to the current law. He stated that there are some limitations in the current document. Mr. Dias stated that once the committee has a complete product to present the town will schedule a public hearing.

Mr. Dias asked Highway Superintendent MacArthur if he had a cost for fixing the water problem along Town Road and the homes along County Route 8. Mr. MacArthur stated that he has a figure of \$10,000.00 to lay pipe down Town Road. Mr. Dias stated that a Mr. George Casey of the Corp of Engineers is interested in coming and looking at the road.

First Privilege of the Floor

Mrs. Adrienne Citrin asked if there was a way for the public to look at the correspondence or if Mr. Dias could read it. Mr. Dias stated that the correspondence consists mainly of e-mails and faxes and is included in their packets to be read. He stated that he has a public copy usually for the public to look over.

Mrs. Israel stated that she thought that at the workshop it was approved for another appraisal to be done of the Matthew's property. Mr. Dias stated that the board had approved to have Condra and McEnroe to do appraisals. The town is still waiting for something in writing to come from Condra and that McEnroe contacted Mr. Dias and stated that the appraisal is too complex for them to complete.

It was asked of Mr. Dias to read into the minutes the Concra letter of denial to do the appraisal. Mr. Dias stated that he has not received a letter. Councilman MacArthur stated that the board is still waiting to receive something written from Concra. Mr. Dias clarified that since declining to do the appraisal, Concra has since decided to write the appraisal.

New Business

Mrs. Johnson from the Public Service Commission addressed the board concerning the Charter Communications. Mrs. Johnson stated that as far as the bankruptcy is concerned, the company has regrouped. The Public Service Commission does not see this as an issue. She stated that the towns contract has expired. The towns contract is not exclusive and that other companies can be contracted as well. Mr. Dias stated that no other offer has come in. Mrs. Johnson stated that cable will not share lines. She stated that she will contact Ancram when there is another meeting between the other towns who have Charter so that Ancram can be involved. She stressed that the town should look over their expired contract and negotiate with the company. Mrs. Hoyt asked if Mrs. Johnson could review the contact and give some suggestions.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Hoyt and seconded by Councilman MacArthur to approve Local Law #2 of 2009, Cold War Exemptions on Areal Property Assessments. Motion carried.

Mr. Dias stated that in the boards packets was a letter giving the times that the VFW would be at the monuments in Ancram and Ancramdale on Memorial Day.

Councilwoman Hoyt commented on an E-mail that had circulated that had very harsh comments regarding the comprehensive plan and the intersection and businesses in the Ancram town center. She stated that some items in the letter needed to be clarified. First, she stated, the letter stated that the town was holding the Bottle Tree back from getting a liquor license. She corrected this by informing the residents that the town has no authority over liquor licenses and that the only part that the town plays is that the clerks office has to verify through a signed registered letter postcard that the town was notified that the business had applied for the license. The only item, in reference to the Bottle Tree, that the town has authority over is the building permits. Mrs. Hoyt stated that the letter makes the rift between the two “groups” in town wider. She stated that the references to her business in the letter angered her greatly. Mrs. Nickerson, who wrote the Thriving Ancram e-mail letter that this subsequent letter was in response to, stated that she did not want her letter to be joined with this one and that the point of her letter was that the town should discontinue the “us and them” mentality and should all work together.

Mr. Dias stated that Mr. Thomas Gumm has finished his training for the Board of Assessment Review.

Mr. Dias stated that he has shown the insurance company the waiver form for the Tractor Pull to be held during Ancram Community Days and that they are happy with it. Councilman Miller stated that plans for the Community Days event were progressing. He stated that the committee has been pricing tents and that they have decided to rent two small tents for the price of \$700.00 with additional costs for the tables and chairs. A motion was made by Supervisor Dias and seconded by Councilwoman Hoyt to allow the Community Days committee to use the earmarked \$3,000.00 in celebrations to cover the costs of the event. Motion carried.

Councilwoman Hoyt stated that the appraisals on the Mathews Property (the proposed highway garage) were coming in much lower than the asking price. She stated that this put a halt to purchasing this building. She asked the board where this left them. Councilman Miller suggested getting estimates for a new building at the current location. Mrs. Hoyt stated that the Houghtaling property that borders the highway garage has a bite on it. She asked about relocating the milk shed and whether to reactivate the Highway committee. Councilman Mayhew stated that there should be a bid packet and that the Highway Department should come to the workshop meeting with a plan. Mrs. Hoyt stated that if the board is considering the Houghtaling property that they better move on it. Mr. Dias stated that unfortunately, this is not a fast process. Mrs. Hoyt stated that the assessment on the property has been lowered to \$90,000.00. Mr. Dias stated that someone knowledgeable in the building business needed to look at the current property and let the board know for sure what is needed. Mr. Dias stated that himself, Councilman Mayhew and Highway Super. MacArthur will look at it. Mrs. Hoyt stated that Mr. Ron Brant has a site plan made up and that the board should ask him for it. Mrs. Hoyt stated that Linden Chase talked to Dan Slott and that he was still interested in working with the town for the back piece of property. Councilman MacArthur stated that there is not that much land back there. It is a big hill. Councilman Mayhew stated that it is not wet land and that drainage will help.

Mrs. Hoyt commented on the Steele House and the Tin Smith House. She thought the Town should look into buying the properties and fixing the intersection. Councilman Mayhew stated that the Highway Garage needed to be fixed first. Mrs. Hoyt stated that she spoke to the accountant and was told that this could be added to the Garage bond. She stated that this is a public safety issue and that she, being an owner of the "Porters Store" would work with the town. Supervisor Dias made a motion seconded by Councilwoman Hoyt to have appraisals done on the "Steele House", the "Tin Smith House" and the Houghtaling property. Motion carried. Libby McKee stated that there may be funding available for some of this.

A motion was made by Supervisor Dias and seconded by Councilwoman Hoyt to pay the bills. Motion carried.

Mr. Dias asked for a moment of silence in respect for former tax collector and Councilman Andrew Dietter who passed away on April 30, 2009.

Moment of Silence for Andrew Dietter

Mr. Dias stated that the Town Board will be planting a tree in his memory and dedicating it on Community Day.

A motion was made by Councilman MacArthur and seconded by Councilman Miller to adjourn. Carried.

Respectfully submitted by;

Monica Cleveland