

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Regular Meeting
November 21, 2013**

Present:	Supervisor Arthur Bassin	Councilman James Miller
	Councilman Chris Thomas	Councilman Hugh Clark
	Councilwoman Madeline Israel	Town Clerk Monica Cleveland

The regular meeting of the Ancram Town Board was called to order at 7:10pm by Deputy Supervisor James Miller with a salute to the flag.

Joe Plotken spoke to those gathered about broadband that is being made available via the new cell tower on Wilmer Hill. The company is looking for people on Poole Hill Road and Hall Hill Road to try the new broadband on a two month free basis.

A motion was made by Councilman Thomas and seconded by Councilman Clark to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Motion carried.

Supervisors Report

Financial Report: Revenues for the ten months ending October totaled \$1,292,000 including \$811,000 in property tax receipts and \$251,000 in sales tax revenues received in January, April, July and October. Full year revenues for sales and mortgage taxes look like they will exceed the 2013 budget by \$25,000 to \$50,000. Expenses for the ten months ending October totaled \$1,077,000, or about 80% of our full year budget. Cash on hand at the end of October totaled \$872,000. Barring any extraordinary events, I expect revenues and spending for the rest of the year to be on budget, resulting in a year end cash position of about \$700,000 which is about \$50,000 better than we budgeted.

Town Issues

- 1. Ridgeline Protection** – We will have a public hearing at 6:30 pm on 11/21 to review the proposed zoning revision and revised map which designated parts of 29 parcels for ridgeline and steep slope protection. Concerns raised about the dramatic reduction from 170 designated parcels to 29 parcels because of the visibility, elevation and size tests may require us to revise the ridgeline/steep slope concept once again. One option we should consider is to eliminate the map of designated terrain completely, and just go with guidelines for building on the visible portions of all steep slopes and ridgelines that would be mandatory for major subdivisions and recommended for all minors and all one and two family projects. Under this concept, the determination of “visibility” for parcels part of a major subdivision could be done at the time someone applies for planning board approval, and for single and two family homes, a copy of the recommended guidelines could be shared with the applicant by the Building Inspector at the time of the building permit application.
- 2. 2014 Budget** – We will review and consider the 2014 Budget for adoption at the 11/21 TB meeting following a public hearing. The proposed property tax levy is \$799,770, which is down slightly from the 2013 tax levy of \$805,849. The budget keeps total spending and revenues about flat to 2013 levels, while including a \$51,000 contingency account for unexpected revenue shortfalls or cost overruns. We have also allocated \$41,000 of 2013 unexpended fund balances to the 2014 budget, which compares to \$56,000 allocated in 2013. We have also excluded from our budget the 414 Library Tax increase of \$30,000. If the proposition passes because of support from absentee ballots, the \$30,000 will be set up as a

separate line item on the January tax bill and will be treated like the Fire District and Lighting District, and will not be part of the town tax line or the town tax cap calculation.

County Issues

1. **Airport** – The County has set up an airport committee to review the facts and circumstances related to the plan to expand the runway safety zone. I have been named as chair of that committee. Stay tuned.
2. **County Budget** – We are having a County budget review next Wednesday, so I will be able to update you on the status of the 2014 county budget when we meet on Thursday 11/21.

Highway Department

The Highway Superintendent asked for permission to purchase a bucket truck.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Israel and seconded by Councilman Clark to allow the Highway Department to purchase a bucket truck from the Highway budget, not to exceed \$2,250.00. Motion carried.

Town Clerk

The town clerk stated that she had found a computer for her office. It is a Dell because she needs a computer that runs on Windows 7 for the clerk programs. She also gave an update on the new Hunting License software program that will be implemented by the state in early 2014.

The FAC will be meeting this Saturday to talk about the town's insurance.

ZBA - Leah Wilcox will be resigning from the ZBA at the end of this year. The board will be in search of a replacement.

CAC- Jamie Purinton stated that the CAC was awarded \$500 from Hudson City Foundation.

There will be a meeting at 10am this Saturday on Historic District designations.

The Library Referendum vote was defeated by 20 votes. Councilwoman Israel stated that she feels the town should increase their contribution from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for 2014. She stated that on a personal note, as a resident she feels very bad that it was voted down. Donna Hoyt stated that she cannot understand why the issue has come down to the property owners through a tax. Adrienne Citrin stated that this is the library that is used by the Town of Ancram. She stated that it helps many people in need and that it has computers and is a place to go. Mike Citrin stated that much of the funding for the library comes from fundraising. The issue is the consistency of the cash flow. Councilman Thomas stated that he feels that by building the large new library, the library board was living outside their means. He stated that he was told that it was an issue of donor fatigue. His feeling is that since the residents voted down the 414, the budgeted amount should not be increased.

Councilwoman Israel offered a motion that the library be budgeted \$10,000 for 2014.

Councilman Clark stated that he agrees with Councilman Thomas's vote. He stated that by the 414 being voted down, a signal was sent by the residents. He stated that he could see a suggested increase to \$7,500.00.

It was suggested from the floor that the town voted down the 414, so the \$5,000.00 should be removed from the budget.

Donna Hoyt stated that the Public Hearing for the final 2014 budget had been closed with the \$5,000.00 in it. This should not change.

At this point, Councilwoman Israel withdrew her motion.

Bonnie Hundt stated that she agrees with Councilwoman Israel but yet respects the community vote.

Jane Shannon stated that 33% of the Ancramdale district came to vote. She stated that the feel was that people are fed up with taxes and the government. Of the 133 people who voted in Ancramdale, only 9 did not vote for the library.

Donna Hoyt suggested making the library increase next year in the budget and not have it as a line on the tax bill.

Councilman Clark spoke on the ridgeline. He stated that the feel is that this issue should return again to the ZRC and that the planning board attend the meeting.

Councilman Thomas stated that he took offense to the letter that stated that there were "nefarious" actions involving the Town Board members. He stated that the comment that 3 of the 5 board members referred to him. He stated that his major issue has been with people's property rights being taken away.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Israel and seconded by Councilman Miller to pay the bills. Motion carried.

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Thomas and seconded by Councilman Clark and moved for adoption:

Resolution #22 of 2013: Dog Shelter: Resolved that the Columbia Green Humane Society be appointed as the official dog shelter of the Town of Ancram, and that the Town Supervisor be authorized to enter into an agreement with the Columbia Greene Humane Society to provide dog shelter services in 2014.

Carried by unanimous vote.

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Thomas and seconded by Councilwoman Israel and moved for adoption:

Resolution #23 of 2013: Rescue Squad Fee:

Resolved the proposed 2014 fee totaling \$92,193 assessed by the Copake Rescue Squad for services provided to the Town of Ancram be approved, and that the Town Supervisor be authorized to approve an agreement authorizing the County of Columbia Treasurer to pay the Copake Rescue Squad \$92,193 in 2014 from the county tax levied on Ancram property tax payers.

Carried by unanimous vote.

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Thomas and seconded by Councilman Clark and moved for adoption:

Resolution #24 of 2013: Town Budget:

Resolved that the 2014 Ancram Town budget which, which has been the subject of a public hearing, and which proposes a property tax levy of \$799,770 is adopted.

Carried by unanimous vote.

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Thomas and seconded by Supervisor Bassin and moved for adoption:

Resolution #25 of 2013: Propane for Town Hall:

Whereas the town Hall ran out of propane in November, and whereas neither of the current propane suppliers to the town was able to provide an emergency delivery, and whereas Dutchess Oil was able to provide an emergency delivery to avoid having the Town Hall freeze up, therefore, it is **Resolved** that the contract for providing propane to the Town Hall for the rest of 2013 and 2014 be awarded to Dutchess Oil of Millerton, NY.

Carried by unanimous vote.

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilman Thomas and moved for adoption:

Resolution #26 of 2013: 2014 Employee Health Insurance:

Resolved, that the Town Supervisor is authorized to commit the Town to an agreement with CDPHP to provide health insurance coverage for eligible town employees with a \$5000 deductible, at a monthly premium of approximately \$330 per month, and it is further resolved that the Town will fund eligible employee's HSA accounts with a \$750 contribution, and will reimburse any employee medical expense over the \$1500 deductible level up to the \$5000 deductible level, at which point the health insurance will pay all out of pocket costs, and it is further resolved that the buyout for eligible employees who elect not to take the Town's health insurance plan shall be increased from \$3600 per year to \$4800 per year.

Carried by unanimous vote.

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Thomas and seconded by Councilman Clark and moved for adoption:

Resolution #27 of 2013: 2014 Retiree Health Insurance:

Resolved that the health insurance buyout amount for eligible retirees will increase from \$5000 to \$5336.

Carried by unanimous vote.

There being no more business before the board, a motion was made by Councilwoman Israel and seconded by Councilman Clark to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica Cleveland
Ancram Town Clerk