

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Regular Meeting
September 19, 2013**

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

The regular meeting was called to order by Supervisor Bassin at 7:00pm with a salute to the flag.

A motion was made by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to approve the minutes of the 8/15/2013 meeting as read with proposed changes to reflect the comments of the ZRC chair. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to approve the minutes of the Public Meeting on the Highway Superintendent Appointment. Motion carried.

Town Assessor Ken Leggett spoke and stated that he wished to remind everyone that they need to renew their basic star exemptions. Mr. Leggett stated that he is not involved with this as it is being taken care of by the state. This must be done on the phone or the internet.

Fire District

Chief David Boice stated that this has been a busy middle of the year. The company attended the Chatham Fair. October 4th they will host Fire Prevention Day at Taconic Hills. The addition is getting close to completion and on October 1st, the installation of the doors will begin. There will be a raffle at the October 12, 2013 lobster and beef bbq. On July 12, 2014 the department will celebrate their 75 anniversary.

Supervisors Report

Financial Report: Revenues for the eight months ending August totaled \$1,101,000 including \$811,000 in property tax receipts and \$182,000 in sales tax revenues received in January, April and July. 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 eight months ending August totaled \$755,000, or about 56% of our full year budget. Cash on hand at the end of August totaled \$1,019,000. 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 \$680,000 which is about \$25,000 better than we budgeted.

Town Issues

1. **Ridgeline Protection** – Hugh Clark and I have continued to work with Don Meltz to better understand how visible each of the designated ridgelines is. We have found that many of the designated ridgelines are visible from under 10% of the town's road miles. We have also found that most of the "visible" portions of the designated ridges are not the ridgelines themselves, but the steep slopes that lead up to the ridgelines. These steep slopes are not part of the ridgeline protection concept as originally presented. We will discuss these visibility issues again at the 9/19 TB meeting. Hugh is working on a revised ridgeline law, which we hope to have before the 9/19 meeting.

- 2. Carson Rd Wind Turbine Notices of Violation** – The Zoning Enforcement Officer has withdrawn the Gershon wind turbine notice of violation, and is considering withdrawing the Crocco NOV. The Gershon decision and possible Crocco action are based on the repair and maintenance work done on both turbines in May and June, which seems to have eliminated the low wind speed noise issues with the turbines. There have been no complaints since the repairs were done, but there have not been any high winds, either. Withdrawing the NOVs will give the Town the time to evaluate if the repairs and maintenance work done has also reduced or eliminated the high wind speed noises that have been a problem during heavy winds. Withdrawing the NOVs also will allow the turbine owners to focus on working with the manufacturer and installer to keep the turbines quiet, without also having to defend against the NOV. If turbine noise problems reoccur, the ZEO will determine if the NOVs should be reissued, based on the facts, circumstances and conditions at the time the noise problems reoccur. If it turns out that the turbine noise problems were in fact installation and maintenance related, and can be eliminated by better maintenance and management, that will be very good news. But we will have spent a couple of years and a lot of money to deal with an issue that the turbine owners, manufacturer and installer could have taken care of when the noise issues started, which, in retrospect, is troubling.

2014 Tentative Budget - The Tentative 2014 budget, which we will discuss at a public hearing starting at 6.30 pm on 9/19, shows a property tax increase of about 4.6%, or \$37,000. This is caused primarily by a \$30,000 "library tax", assuming the 414 referendum passes, and by expected increases in health insurance and retirement fund payments. The Library has done some research which indicates that the Town may be able to exclude the \$30,000 414 payment from the Town tax cap, and that the Town may be able to establish a separate line on the tax bill for the library tax, as is done for the Lighting District and Fire District. There is also no fund balance carry forward budgeted for 2014 at this point, which reduces revenues by about \$65,000, but we have budgeted increased sales tax and mortgage tax revenues at expected 2013 levels, which adds \$40,000 in revenues to the 2014 budget. The 2014 Tentative Budget assumes no salary increases, but makes provisions for a deputy historian position at \$500. There are things we can do to reduce the \$37,000 tentative property tax increase, which we will discuss over the next few months as we get a better feel for costs that are not under our direct control, like the library tax, health insurance and state retirement.

Highway Report

The Highway Superintendent is away at conference.

Ag Council

The Farm Tour will be held this weekend.

Ridgeline

Mr. Clark stated that there have been changes made to the maps. Mr. Bassin and Mr. Clark have spent much time on this. There will be fewer and smaller ridges. They are likely to recommend reverting to the Comp Plan guidance related to applicability to major versus minor subdivisions. The map will be available in October with a public hearing in November or December.

There was a question about the reduction of ridges. It appears as though that most of the reduction was based on visibility. It was asked if the storm water management, erosion and topography was part of the ridgeline law. Mr. Clark stated that this was covered in previously approved amendments.

Bob Wilcox asked if there was an effort to define the scenic quality effect. Mr. Bassin stated that this was a good point. Leah Wilcox stated that there is no distinction of distance. There is no indication if the ridge is seen as a head on view or a side view and if there is a more prominent land feature in the foreground. This is not taken into account with the 300 or 400 points of visibility approach.

Wind Turbines

Mr. Bassin stated that the NOV was withdrawn based in the fixes made to them. There have been no noise complaints since then. They will be looked at again when there are high winds. If there is a problem, then the NOV's will be filed again. Councilman Thomas asked if the town could get back any of the spent on attorney's fees.

Mr. Bassin stated that the Assessor may have reached a tentative agreement with Woodhull.

A motion was made by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to make the following Highway Account adjustment: From 5110.4 General Repairs \$15,000 to 5130.4 Machinery and From Fund Balance additional Chips revenue \$36,000 to 5112.2 CHIPS. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Israel and seconded by Councilman Miller to make the following General Account adjustments: To 1620.4 Buildings (vestibule) \$2,500 from Fund Balance; To 8010.4 Zoning (BAS) \$3,500 from Contingent; To 7020.1 Camp \$1,000 from 7020.4 Camp; To 1420.4 Attorney \$2,500 from Fund Balance; To Central Data 1680.4 \$2,500 from Contingent. Motion carried.

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

Mike Citrin announced that the library will be celebrating 100 years this Saturday and that on October 10th, there will be an information session at the town hall on the proposed 414.

A motion was made by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilman Thomas to adjourn the meeting at 7:50pm. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica R. Cleveland
Ancram Town Clerk