

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Regular Meeting
September 17, 2009**

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

Supervisor Dias called the regular meeting of the Ancram Town Board to order at 7:00 pm with a salute to the flag.

Mr. Dias asked that the exits be open and that the audience has to adhere to the rules of a public meeting. He asked that when speaking to the board, the person state their name and stand. Councilman MacArthur asked if the board thought that the meeting acceded the occupancy level. Mr. Dias told Councilman MacArthur to count those present.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Hoyt and seconded by Councilman Mayhew to approve the minutes as read. Motion carried.

Financial Report:

General Checking: \$5,555.81
Money Market: \$823,177.50
T & A Checking: \$10,855.32
CDBG: \$22,000.00

A motion was made by Councilman Mayhew and seconded by Councilman Miller to accept the financial report as read. Motion carried.

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

Mr. Dias stated that in the boards packets are the e-mails and correspondence for the month. He asked that the board read them.

Mr. Dias stated that there was a building department activity report in the packet.

Mr. Dias stated that in the packet there is a Selective Insurance claims report.

Councilman Mayhew stated that he spoke to Lyndon Chase about the delineation of the wetlands on the Town Barn property. He was told that DEC will flag the wetlands. After several phone calls, Councilman Mayhew spoke to a Mark Heegans who told him that there is an application process

and once approved the DEC will send down a representative to flag the area. This will then be put on the map with a 100 foot buffer. Mr. Dias thanked Mr. Mayhew and stated that although Councilman Miller and himself had taken on the job, Mr. Mayhew had been able to see it through.

Mr. Dias asked if Mr. Citrin had heard any information on the locations of the proposed highway garage he was seeking. Mr. Citrin stated that he has sent out 136 letters and that he has heard back and is working on 3 or 4 responses. He will have more information within the next two weeks.

Mr. Bob Roth gave an update on the cell phone services. He stated that he has been told that AT&T will be building a tower in Ancram and in Copake. The company has an engineer in the towns picking spots. They are looking for other sites and finding the radius. Mr. Roth stated that the towers are in AT&T's budget for 2010.

Mr. Dias asked Mr. Shaw for an update on the Charter contract. Mr. Shaw stated that he has gone over some errors in the contract with the company and is waiting to hear back from them. He believed that in a few days the town will have a signed contract.

Mr. Dias stated that there will be an informal meeting on September 23, 2009 at 7:00 pm in regards to the towns emergency plan.

Councilwoman Hoyt asked Mr. Mike Citrin if he has a time limit as to when he will finish looking for new properties. Mr. Dias suggested that board come up with a timeline at the workshop meeting. He will put this on the agenda. Mr. Dias stated that there was no way that this decision, the highway garage, could be put on the ballot. Councilman MacArthur disagreed. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that the board does not have all of the figures. Councilman MacArthur stated that the vote does not have to have a figure. Mr. Shaw stated that the vote has to document what the costs will be in the signed contract. He stated that all points have to be lined up with a vote on the ballot. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that she has bond quotes but none of them are up to date.

Councilman Jim Miller stated that the board had had overwhelming support to adopt the Comprehensive Plan at the current time. Mr. Dias stated that he felt the board had decided to wait and adopt the Comp Plan and the Zoning revisions together together. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that she was not comfortable with adopting the plan at this time. Councilman MacArthur made a motion to not adopt the Comprehensive Plan at this time. Councilman Mayhew stated that he knew there were complaints received and he felt they should be discussed. Councilman Miller stated that they were not any letters against the plan in any of the prior packets. Councilman MacArthur stated that he needed time to further review the plan. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that she would like to contact the county and speak to them along with the state and other towns in Columbia County as to their procedures on the Comprehensive Plan procedure. Councilman Miller stated that he is in favor of adopting the plan at this time. Mr. Dias stated that there was a motion on the floor from Councilman MacArthur that the board not adopt the Comprehensive Plan at this time to allow for further review. Mr. Dias seconded the motion. The vote was called with 4 yes (Councilman Mayhew, Councilwoman Hoyt, Councilman MacArthur and Supervisor Dias) and 1 no (Councilman Miller) in regards to the motion. Motion carried.

Privilege of the Floor

Mr. Jack Lindsey asked if the public comment period was closed. He stated that he felt that those at the Public Hearing were greatly in favor of passing the Comprehensive Plan. He thought that if a "wave of letter" was presented to the board then they needed to be documented. He stated that he sent a letter to the board in favor of the adoption of the Comp Plan and that he has yet to receive a response. Councilman Miller stated that he has not seen a negative letter in regards to the plan. He stated that he has spoken to the town attorney and that the consequence in waiting would be not being able to obtain small grants and funding from private foundations. It is not an absolute yes that the town would get funding with the plan but that it gives the town a foot up. Mr. Miller felt the board was doing a disservice to the town by not adopting the document.

Mr. Steve Roberts addressed the board. He stated that he had previously asked the board about the possibility of gaining interest with the town's money in other avenues. He stated that the town of Livingston puts their money into CDs and other interest bearing accounts until it is needed.

Mr. Roberts addressed the health care for the employees. He thought the ideal situation would be the town joining the County Health insurance plan. He suggested the board look into this.

Ms. Jane Shannon asked if the public hearing letters in regards to the Comp plan would be available to the public to look at.

Mr. Terry Boyles stated that he wondered why the town was continuing to look for a place to put the highway garage. He asked how many offers the town is looking at. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that the board decided to allow Mike Citrin time to find additional locations. Supervisor Dias stated that the town highway is looking at another winter when this project began in 2008. Mrs. Adriene Citrin asked if the town had ruled out the current site. The board said yes. So, she continued, the Matthew property is the current site the town is interested in. She stated that the appraisal came in lower than fair market value on the property. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that the town cannot purchase a property higher than the appraisal. Mr. Shaw stated that the town can if the property has unique qualities and that every situation is different.

Mar Murffet stated that the Comp Plan committee spent far more time on their document than has been spent on the Highway Garage situation and yet the Comp plan was put on hold. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that the board has not made a decision on the garage.

Mr. Keith Bendis asked if there was a time line for the comp plan decision. Mr. Dias stated that the board is still trying to understand the Comp Plan. Other towns, he stated, take 18 months for this. It is not unusual to pass them together he explained. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that the county planning department advised them to pass the documents both together.

Mr. Dias stated that he had received a letter from Mr. Chris Thomas and that he was going to read it and his response into the record. It was suggested by the audience that Mr. Thomas be allowed to read his own letter. Mr. Dias would not allow this.

September 14, 2009

Tom,

There is talk around town that Councilwoman Donna Hoyt and Councilman Bob Mayhew have tried to fire the Town Assessor, have presented to the Town Board a "secret review and analysis" of

everyone's property tax assessments, based on formula different than the one used by NY State certified assessors, and have identified changes to increase certain, targeted people's property tax assessments. They have done all this while in the midst of suing the Town of Ancram, in small claims court, over their own personal property assessments. (Tom's response) No one is firing the Town Assessor, there is no "secret" review and analysis by your Town Board, it is a public document, and no one is suing the town. By NYS Law: Assessments for the town are done by our assessor. The town board has no authority and control over this activity.

In the secret report Councilman Mayhew and Councilwoman Hoyt have identified 77 properties owned by 21 taxpayers for whom they seem to be proposing property tax assessment increases totaling \$6.4 million. They have also apparently identified certain individual properties, which they have asked the Town Assessor to check into based on their personal sense of property tax issues, which need "investigation". (Tom's response) Again, no secret report by your Town Board. No such request to anyone. No Plan to take any action whatsoever.

Our assessor, Mr. Leggett, says he has heard that this review was done, but knows nothing about the specifics, did not participate in it and would not be bound by it. Mr. Leggett noted that he is required to follow NY State guidelines while doing property assessments in order to make sure assessments are fair and comparable across towns and across all parcels in a town. Mr. Leggett was not familiar with the methodology or logic used by Councilwoman Hoyt and Councilman Mayhew to develop their revised assessments, but suggested whatever they were doing was not consistent with NY State law. (Toms Response) This is a correct statement.

I also recall back at the June Town Board meeting, Town Attorney Jason Shaw cautioned Ms. Hoyt and Mr. Mayhew away from meddling with property tax assessments, as property assessments were not a part of a Town Board's responsibility and any appearance of political influence over property assessments could cause serious legal problems for the Town. (Toms response) This is a correct statement.

As you can imagine, people I have talked to about this situation are outraged that this secret tax assessment review process could be undertaken by you, Mrs. Hoyt and Mr. Mayhew outside the normal property tax assessment review structure, and without the participation of the Town Assessor or the knowledge and participation of the Town's taxpayers. (Tom's response) Again, no secret report or such request by your Town Board.

It is especially troubling that Mr. Mayhew and Ms. Hoyt are undertaking these assessment review activities and their efforts to fire the Town Assessor while they are in the middle of their own personal tax grievance lawsuits against the town to have their own assessments lowered. (Tom's response) Ms. Hoyt and Mr. Mayhew like all property owners have a right to grieve their property assessments, they do not lose this right due to the office they hold. Ms. Hoyt and Mr. Mayhew have previously been informed and acknowledge that due to their grievance proceedings, have recused themselves from all matters relating to the assessors office.

Some questions for you and the board:

- 1. Given our Town Attorney advised the Board to stay out of property taxes, why have you permitted two Town Board members to perform this "secret review and analysis" of Ancram property tax assessments and to target certain land owners.* (Tom's response) Town Board has no authority to tell a private individual what they do on their own time. Again, now secret review and analysis by your Town Board, no landowners targeted by your Town Board.
- 2. How can concerned Ancram property owners and taxpayers get a copy of this secret report to see if they are on the "list"?* (Tom's response) No secret report, but they can review the assessment roll at the assessors office or foil it.

3. *Has this secret review and analysis been reviewed with the Town Attorney, the County Attorney and the County Real Property Office to make sure it's methodology and intent is legal and consistent with NYS law?* (Tom's response) Again, no secret report or analysis by your Town Board. Non issue as to Town, County or Real Property office review.

The town's taxpayers look forward to hearing from you about this at the next Town Board meeting scheduled on September 17, 2009.

Very Truly Yours,

Christopher Thomas, member Board of Assessment Review

Councilman Robert Mayhew read the following statement into the record:

I am reading to you my response to an email I received 9/15/2009, written by Board of Assessment Review member and Republican Candidate for Town Counsel, Chris Thomas to Tom Dias.

As Supervisor Dias is putting this letter from Mr. Thomas up on power point, I will assume that everyone here has seen it, if not, I am sure copies are available.

As everyone here knows, this is an election year, and there are three town board positions being sought by various individuals as well as incumbents. As has been the case in this town, sadly, for the past several years at least, politics in Ancram have become a public forum for character assassination and petty rivalries to be aired, whether accurate or not. People we have counted as friends and neighbors for years get out the biggest knives they own to stab each other in the back with. There is no explanation for this, no full moon or unidentified water or air contamination, it just seems to be the nature of the political beast here in Ancram. Integrity goes out the window, friendships are lost, resentment and anger take over the day.

This is the second time I have rewritten what I wanted to say here tonight, and at first I was going to go through Mr. Thomas's letter line by line and answer his allegations, but as I thought about it, I realized there are probably no people left in town who have not seen his letter or at the very least heard his ridiculous accusations. I will try to answer to the very best of my ability what Mr. Thomas had to say.

I never tried to fire the town assessor. The details of the Executive Meeting in question are not made public for some very good reasons by law. My major concern in this regard is how did any information from an Executive Session become public?

There was no "secret review and analysis" of anyone's taxes. There was no formula used. The folder passed out to town board members contained a copy of the town's assessment rolls with notes in the margin made by Ms. Hoyt. All of the information in the folder submitted is available online at the New York State website under Town Taxes, Ancram. Anyone has access to this document. This information is open to the public. As a matter of fact, you can get a copy right here at our town hall. No single individual has been targeted and no "formula" has been used. Ms. Hoyt simply made note of assessments that she felt were inconsistent with others.

"They have done all this while in the midst of suing the Town of Ancram, in small claims court, over their own personal property assessment." This is a play on words, deliberately made to incense the public. I have copied and pasted an excerpt of the NYS Office of Real Property Services explaining grievance procedure in this letter, which I obtained at the NYS website. The play on words regarding "lawsuit" is, and I quote directly: NYS Office of Real Property Services. Initial grievance must be filed with the board of assessment review, upon notice of board of assessment review's determination an appeal can be filed with the small claim assessment review section of the NYS Supreme Court. This is not a "lawsuit against the town". I don't understand how anyone in or running for public office would be so deceiving as to use this kind of deliberate language trickery for political gain.

"In the secret report Councilman Mayhew and Councilwoman Hoyt have identified 77 properties owned by 21 taxpayers for whom they seem to be proposing property tax assessment increases totaling \$6.4 million". I have not had a chance to look at this document in full, so I have never counted how many assessments were in question or who the landowners are.

"They have also apparently identified certain individual's properties, which they asked the town assessor to check into based on their personal sense of property tax issues, which need "investigation". I have never discussed this file with Mr. Leggett. In January of this year however, I did ask Mr. Leggett, my right as a tax payer, if he would look at a piece of property that is receiving an agricultural exemption and has been for many years and that has not operated as a farm for a few years. Mr. Leggett informed me in January that he would look into this matter and get back to me. As a matter of fact, I spoke with Mary Faith today and she said that the farmer called and stated that he is spreading manure on this property in preparation for cropping next year. I will not address paragraph three, as this is hearsay and I was not present for any of it. Mr. Leggett has never told me that I was doing anything inconsistent with NYS law, I don't know what, if anything, he said to the author of this letter.

"I also recall back at the June board meeting, Town Attorney Jason Shaw cautioned Ms. Hoyt and Mr. Mayhew away from meddling with property tax assessments, as property assessments were not part of the town board's responsibility and any appearance of political influence over property assessments could cause serious legal problems for the town." I have never, in any way, tried to politically influence any person in this town over property assessments. I do not have the knowledge or the authority to do this.

"As you can imagine, people I have talked to about this situation are outraged that this secret tax assessment review process could be undertaken by you, Mrs. Hoyt and Mr. Mayhew outside the normal property tax assessment review structure, and without the participation of the town assessor or the knowledge and participation of the town's taxpayers." I can only say that if people are "outrages" it is because they have been given a whole lot of misinformation. I believe the rest of this paragraph has been addressed above.

Paragraph six has also been addressed above.

When I was first made aware of this email over the phone on Tuesday, I laughed and stated "this is just an attempt of a political assassination". Once I actually received the email and read it myself, I became very angry and frustrated at Mr. Thomas's behavior. I then realized that not only is he questioning my integrity, but he is putting my personal career and livelihood in jeopardy. Mr. Thomas is not only email this to Mr. Dias, he sent it to Mr. Bassin, who forwarded it to several other people, who in turn forwarded it yet again. By this morning this email had been circulated via email to the entire mailing list of a very good and honest organization in our town, Neighbors Helping Neighbors by a member of that organization who is friends with Mr. Bassin. Needless to say, much damage has been done to my good name and reputation and all of it is based on lies. The lack of integrity and personal decency of these individuals floors me and although I realize the damage done to my political career is irreversible, I would like this town to know that I have carried out the duties of my elected position to the letter of the law and with the highest regard for our citizens.

I would ask people to take a hard look at this letter, and the extreme wording which goes way beyond the happening of any event I know. Are his phrases "talk of the town", "fire the assessor", "secret reports", "Targeted people", "outraged people" and "political influence" all designed to elicit an emotional response? And by the way, if I had any political influence or tried to use it, why would I be grieving my own assessment? Would I not have had a private conversation with the tax assessor in such an effort? NO- I simply followed the law.

Let's not forget that Mr. Thomas is also candidate Thomas with an election coming up and I trust this letter to our Supervisor will be reviewed appropriately and recognized for what it is. Accordingly, perhaps Candidate Thomas should answer for a few questions respecting his integrity and honesty in presenting as fact that which is "TALK AROUND TOWN". I would be happy to further discuss or debate any of these issues he has misrepresented in his letter in a formal debate setting, which setting is certainly more appropriate than the innuendo and name-calling this candidate has engaged in. Yes, let's have a real debate and deal with real issues and real facts. Mr. Thomas, as a member of the Board of Assessment review, you are perfectly aware of the fact that no lawsuit exists, you, before anyone here, understand the language in the law and deliberately made a play on words to incite people. As a citizen of this town, not a board member or candidate, I am asking that you remove yourself from your position on the board of assessment review due to your lack of integrity and questionable ethics. It is obvious that you are using your position on this board for political and personal agenda. If this is an example of how you operate on a simple board, how can the people of this town be expected to trust you in the position of councilman?

I would also like to "thank" Mr. Bassin, my Democratic running mate and Joan Roberts for forwarding the letter in question to more people than I can even begin to count. It is no secret where your loyalties lie and I can no longer say that I am honored to be on the Democratic ticket with you this year.

I thank you all for your time and patience.

Councilwoman Hoyt addressed the room. She stated that the notes and her review of the assessment roll was not a secret. She stated that the only reason she did not make a lot of copies was because she could not afford this and did not have an open ended account with Staples like Mr. Bassin. She stated that her formula was simple. She took the 2009 assessment roll and divided the individual properties into their assessments. She stated that she found several inconsistencies as she went through the book and those were the notations and the properties she pulled out. She stated that this was done for her own information and that she had stated when running for office that she was going to look into the unfair tax amounts on properties. She stated that she will not look for a revaluation of the town unless she feels it will be done fairly and honestly. She stated that anyone is welcome to view her small claims.

Mr. Dias stated that he had many concerns with what he read, the inconsistencies. He also stated that he would like to review with the town board Article 18 of Town Law.

Councilwoman Hoyt stated that the public hearings for the CDBG should be put off because the committee is not prepared.

Mr. Dias stated that the town received \$108,293.68 in CHIPS money. Mr. MacArthur stated that this was for paving Poole Hill and Pats road.

Mr. Dias stated that the board did receive a petition from property owners in Ancram who have concerns with several points in the Comp Plan. He will give it to the board to read.

Mr. Dias stated that the board will schedule another budget workshop. Councilman Miller stated that the workshop needed to be in the big room because at the last meeting nobody could fit in the room and people were turned away.

Mr. Dias stated that there were letters from the Columbia County Board of Health in the packet.

Privilege of the Floor

Mrs. Clara VanTassel addressed the board. She asked how much the town had paid Nan Stolzenburg for her consultant services on the Comp Plan. Mr. Bassin stated that over the two years it has totaled \$33,000.00. Mrs. VanTassel asked then why the board was not taking her recommendation. Mr. Dias stated that the board needed to better look at the plan and be comfortable with it. Mrs. VanTassel stated that Mrs. Stolzenburg recommended passing the plan now, not along with the zoning. Mr. Dias answered that Mrs. Stolzenburg must know the boards responsibility in this matter. The Town Lawyer, Mr. Dias said, knows the laws for this issue and that where he does agree that she was paid good money, the board must be responsible.

Mrs. VanTassel asked Councilwoman Hoyt what happens when a grievance goes to small claims. Mrs. Hoyt stated that the property owner has to wave their right to a lawyer and that the assessor goes before an arbitrator. The information is presented and then the town and property owner is notified by a letter. She stated that it is called a Small Claims Assessment Review.

Councilman MacArthur stated that the board has read the comp plan numerous times and that just because they are not adopting it at this time does not mean that they do not agree with it. It is a footprint for zoning laws, he said, and it should wait for those laws. He stated that the town may not get grants but that the board wants more time to review it. Mr. Dias stated that in the last year he has learned that all towns interpret laws differently. In regards to Mr. Thomas's letter, Mr. Dias stated that no one is suing the town and that it is the terminology that is confusing. He felt that the public did not understand this.

Mr. Peter Antell stood and stated that he is suing the town in superior court over his assessment. He believes there is a core problem in the town with the assessment. The town just revaluated to 100% and yet there is a core problem with the assessments. He saw the discrepancy in his own taxes. He is wondering if he can stay in town. Mrs. Hoyt stated that the assessments begin on the town level and that there is no consistency in her mind, as to the per acre pricing. Her next step, she said, is to find out what is involved with the soil maps.

Mr. Jack Lindsey addressed the board. He stated that when he bought his property it had an 18 year old assessment. Until last year they were over paying their taxes by \$4,000.00 a year. Mr. Leggett, he stated, was very fair when working with them. On his assessment, he stated, there was an apartment in the barn that didn't exist and Mr. Leggett remedied this. Mr. Lindsey stated that the people who have lived here for 6 years or less were paying the most and many people in town had 20 year or more assessments. Mr. Lindsey said that to equate this to a bad assessor if a dismissive thing to do. Councilwoman Hoyt said that she never blamed the assessor. Mr. Lindsey stated that there were names on the "review" list which were visited by the assessor in the last week. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that it was wrong for him to have seen the book. It was not anyone's business and is now causing such a problem. Mr. Lindsey reminded Mrs. Hoyt that the town attorney asked her not to meddle in the assessments, at least until she is no longer on the board. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that she found blatant inconsistencies in properties owned by the same people. She stated that this was what she had run on to begin with. Councilman Miller

stated that he showed the book to Mr. Leggett because he did not understand what he was looking at. He showed it to Mr. Thomas because his name has a star by it.

The following resolution was offered by Mr. Dias and seconded by Councilwoman Hoyt:

Resolution Establishing an Environmental Committee

WHEREAS, the Town Board of the Town of Ancram feels it is in the Town's best interest to establish an Environmental Committee.

THEREFORE: It is hereby declared that the public welfare and interest of the citizens of this municipality will be best served by establishing a committee for the environment.

THEREFORE: The committee shall consist of 7 or more members appointed by the Town Board. To the extent possible, the members shall represent a cross section of the community and possess some of the following qualifications (a) substantial experience in areas that would be beneficial in carrying out the purposes of the committee and (b) ability to devote the time necessary to the business of the committee.

THEREFORE: The Town Board shall designate the time and place for the first formal meeting of the committee. After its first meeting the committee shall establish its meeting schedule. Special meetings may be called by the Chair, or in his absences, the Vice- Chair, or upon the request of a majority of the members of the committee.

THEREFORE: The committee is authorized to appoint committees from its membership or the community at large. Said committees function shall be fixed by the committee at the time of the appointment. Committees shall be standing or ad hoc in nature and shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the commission.

THEREFORE: The Town Board shall be entitled to such periodic reviews and reports as to the progress of the commission as it may, from time to time, request.

THEREFORE: Any member of the committee may be replaced by the Town Board at any time when, in the opinion of the Town Board, such member failed to adhere to the requirements of this resolution or has failed to abide by the terms and conditions of the charge referred to above.

Resolution passed by unanimous vote.

Mrs. Jennifer Nickerson addressed the board. She asked what the formula was that the Assessor used and if it could be placed on the website. Mr. Dias stated that ORPS was in town last year and that the NYS website makes an attempt to explain this process. The assessor makes the determination on the properties and the board has no say.

Cindy Shay stated that there is a link to this site on the town website. She stated that the people of the town have to police themselves and watch where the budgeted money goes.

Mr. Mike Citrin asked Mr. Shaw if the assessment review was a board responsibility and he referenced Mr. Shaws statement in the June minutes. Mr. Dias stated that Mr. Citrin was right and that the town board was not going to spend anymore time on this issue. There have been in his opinion many misleading statements and that people need to read the NYS law. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that the board makes the decision to call for a revaluation. Mary Murfett asked why the town would want to do another reval. Councilman MacArthur stated that the first was done improperly.

Mr. Dias made a motion seconded by Councilman MacArthur to adjourn to executive session to discuss a personal matter. Motion carried. Mr. Paul Spencer stated that he still would like to address the board. Mr. Dias called Mr. Spencer out of order.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The board resumed the privilege of the floor.

Ms. Jane Shannon stated that the board was told not to proceed with the assessment review in June. She appreciated the passion for the subject but suggested appointing a committee or hiring someone to investigate. She stated the way it was done made it appear as a political issue.

Ms. Bonnie Hunt asked why, if the reval was bad, the board did not pursue an appeals process. Mr. Dias stated that the town hired a vendor. Councilman MacArthur stated that the board at the time decided not to appeal. Mr. Shaw stated that the town got what they paid for with Mr. Dorsey and paid \$35,000.00. For a better job, it would cost far more.

Mary Murfett stated that she had purchased a cabin on Pats road in 1998 and that it has been reassessed three times. She stated that she felt a lot of the new comers were paying for the local residents. She stated that the issue has balanced out some. She stressed that there is an us and we mentality. She felt as though the new comers were being paid back and the long time residents were mad because their taxes were raised. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that her taxes have gone up every year and she has done the small claims five times. She stated that she was reassessed during building and that it was not an us and we issue.

Mr. Terry Boyles stated that the highway committee has spent a lot of time on the project and it has become a vicious circle. He wondered why, when he has heard that the comp plan needs tweeking, would the board ram it through. Councilman Miller stated those in favor used the public forum to make their comments about the plan, during a public hearing.

Ms. Bonnie Hunt asked why the town set up the Enviromental Committee. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that the comp plan requested it and deals with vernal pools. She stated that she would like to see the sensitive animals specified more in the plan. She stated that she has three names for the committee and would like to see Jamie Purinton chair it. Bonnie Hunt asked if the board was seeking members. Mrs. Hoyt said yes.

Mr. Jim Stickle stated that he remembered a meeting when the reval originally came up and it was a heated discussion. Mr. Dias stated that it is a hot topic. Councilman MacArthur stated that the budget will have to be increased a lot to afford another reval.

Mr. Terry Boyles asked about the Bottle Tree across the street and if the health department had been there. Mr. Boyles stated that those going to the business are still parking at the Town Hall. Councilman MacArthur stated that this is public parking. Mr. Dias stated that the board will need to get a municipal only parking sign.

A motion was made by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilman Mayhew to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica Cleveland
Ancram Town Clerk

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