

**Town of Ancram  
Town Board  
Regular Meeting  
April 21, 2011**

**Present:** Supervisor Arthur Bassin                      Councilman James Miller  
                 Councilman Chris Thomas                      Councilwoman Madeline Israel  
                 Town Clerk Monica Cleveland  
                 Highway Superintendent James MacArthur

**Absent:** Councilman John MacArthur

---

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

A motion was made by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to accept the minutes of the previous meeting as read and have them placed on record. Motion carried.

**Supervisors Report**

**Financial Report:** Revenues and expenses came in as expected during the first quarter. In terms of revenues, we have received all \$933,000 in town, highway and lighting district taxes, and, based on information from the County, expect both sales and mortgage tax receipts this year to be slightly better than budget and last year. Total revenues for the first quarter were \$956,000. Based on the first quarter results, it looks like we are on track to achieve the full year operating budget. We plan to spend about \$160,000 on un-budgeted capital projects, which we plan to fund spending less

Expenses for the first three months of 2011 were \$379,000, basically on budget, despite the higher than expected costs of snow removal. Cash in the bank as of 3/31/11 was \$1.3 million. We expect to receive an additional \$440,000 in sales and mortgage tax revenues, state highway aid and town fees over the rest of the year, and incur budgeted expenses of \$1.1 million. This will leave us with a year-end 2011 cash reserve of \$636,000. We also expect to receive FEMA aid for the December 26 storm, and there may be FEMA aid to deal with the costs of the March storms, but the timing and amount of this aid is still uncertain.

**2011 Projects and Priorities: A Brief Update**

1. **New playground** at Town Hall: Work started on site prep Monday 4/18. Volunteers wanting to assist with the assembly of the playground on April 29, 30 and May 1 should contact Bob Wilcox at rbwilcox@hotmail.com.
2. **New Ethics Law:** The Ethics Board held five ethics law orientation sessions at Town Hall over the last month, and is dealing with two issues.
3. **Convert the Milk Factory building into a salt shed:** The Garage Committee continues to explore converting the Milk Factory into a salt shed for under \$50,000 using concrete silo

blocks. Final plans and a recommendation will be coming to the Town Board in the next month or two.

4. **Highway equipment:** We have purchased a new Case Loader for \$82,000 cash, which is a 5% reduction over the price had we financed it. We expect to take delivery in May or June. The Highway Department will “borrow” the money from the town for the purchase, and will repay the loan over the next 4 years with a \$25,000 per year reduction in the highway budget. We also plan to buy two used plow trucks from Copake for a total of \$40,000, but timing is uncertain.
5. **Town laws on the internet:** General Code has started the process of adding all town laws to the web site. We may have something to look at in the next 60 days.
6. **Develop an employee manual:** Jack Lindsey, Jim MacArthur and I continue to work on this, and should have a draft for the Town Board to review this month or next.
7. **Complete and adopt zoning revisions:** Hugh Clark and the ZRC are likely to have the first part of the proposed revision to zoning ready for adoption before mid-year, and anticipate having the entire zoning revisions process completed and presented to the Town Board by the end of the year.
8. **Adopt the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan:** The Town Board public hearing on the Ag & Farmland Protection Plan was held 3/17/11 at 6 pm. The TB will decide at the 4/21 meeting if it wants to make any changes to the Plan prior to considering the Plan for adoption as an addendum to the Comp Plan.
9. **Emergency preparedness plan:** We will incorporate “lessons learned” from our March 6-7-8 experience in the emergency preparedness plan, and have a draft for the TB to review by mid-year.
10. **Better Cell service:** No new news on cell tower activity. But ATT has just launched a program to offer subscribers in areas where there is poor ATT cell reception a free “mini-cell tower” which plugs into your DSL line, and gives you cell coverage at your home or office.
11. **Review and revise town fees:** John MacArthur and Madeleine Israel have agreed to lead this effort, and will be reporting on progress over the next few months.

## County Issues

1. **County Manager:** The County continues to work on developing a proposal for the County Manager position. The County Manager proposal will go to the Board of Supervisors in June for a vote. The County Manager committee is developing a document outlining the “case” for the county manager, which should be available to the supervisors and the public before the middle of May.
2. **Walmart Consolidation:** The chair of the County Board of supervisors recently announced a plan to buy the Walmart building in Greenport and consolidate most of the health, human services and administrative functions of the County there. There are no estimated costs for this consolidation yet. The expectation is that the consolidation will make sense because the Walmart build out will be relatively inexpensive and partially offset by selling three or four excess empty buildings. In addition, there will be a significant reduction of rent and utilities at other sites, and possible operational efficiencies from having everyone in one place. The next step in this process is to have the Board of Supervisors approve funds to do the preliminary space planning and architectural work to develop costs and timetables for the build out and move.

### **Board Member Issues**

Mr. Bassin stated that although Councilman MacArthur was ill and could not attend the meeting, he had planned on talking about the Undermountain Road parking problem. Mr. Bassin thought Mr. MacArthur would address this at the next regular meeting.

### **Town Clerk Issues**

Town Clerk Monica Cleveland stated that she had received notice from the Department of State that the Speed Limit reduction for Hall Hill road had been approved. The speed on the town road is now 35 miles per hour.

### **AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN:**

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

### **Resolution #15 of 2011: The Town of Ancram Town Board Intent to be Lead Agency and Identification of a Type I Action**

#### **Action: Adoption of Ancram Agriculture and Farmland Protective Plan as an Addendum to the April 2010 Town Comprehensive Plan**

WHEREAS, the Town Board has duly appointed a Farmland Protection Plan Committee to draft a strategic plan designed to help implement the April 2010 Comprehensive Plan and outline methods to promote and protect farmland in the Town of Ancram; and  
WHEREAS, the Town Board of the Town of Ancram desired that this strategic plan related to agriculture be formally incorporated into the Town's Comprehensive Plan; and  
WHEREAS, the Town Board must follow procedures of Town Law 272-a for making amendments to an adopted comprehensive plan; and  
WHEREAS, the Farmland Protection Plan Committee has drafted this agricultural plan and has held public workshops and a public hearing pursuant to Town Law 272-a; and  
WHEREAS, the Farmland Protection Committee has submitted a draft Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan to the Town Board of the Town of Ancram for their consideration on March 17, 2011; and  
WHEREAS, the Town Board has held a second public hearing according to Town Law 272-a on April 17, 2011; and  
WHEREAS, the proposed action has been determined to be a Type I action, pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) 6 NYCRR Part 617.4, and  
WHEREAS, the proposed action will not require permits and approvals from any other local, regional and State agencies prior to adoption of the plan; and

WHEREAS, the Columbia County Planning Board is required to review and approve the draft plan pursuant to the applicable standards of New York State General Municipal Law 239-m but this approval is considered an advisory opinion under SEQRA and the agency is not considered to be eligible for lead agency status in this action.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, pursuant to the application standards of SEQRA 6 NYCRR Part 617, the Town of Ancram Town Board concludes that it is the appropriate agency to serve as, and declares itself lead agency for the environmental review of the proposed Type I action; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town of Ancram Town Board hereby authorizes development and circulation of a copy of the EAF pursuant to the requirements set forth in SEQRA 6 NYCRR Part 617.

WHEREUPON, this Resolution was declared adopted by the Town Board of the Town of Ancram.

The Resolution was passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

LONG FORM EAF: The Town Board reviewed the long form EAF SEQRA form for the Farmland Protection Plan. Supervisor Bassin suggested that the Town Board plan to review the long form SEQRA again prior to the may Town Board meeting , and come prepared to raise any other issues they may have. Supervisor Bassin also commented that the town CAC would also review the long form EAF and make its report on the EAF at the May town board meeting.

AUDIT REVIEW - Mr. Bassin stated that he had given the Town Board members a copy of auditor Joe Notro's report. He stated that he will share the report with the financial advisory committee. He invited the Town Board members to also audit the Supervisor's books at some point over the next month.

FEE SCHEDULE REVISIONS - Mr. Bassin stated that Councilman MacArthur and Councilwoman Israel are looking at the Town's fee schedule and that there will be some changes in the future to the building department fees.

SENIOR OF THE YEAR - Councilwoman Israel stated that she had not heard anything about the Senior Citizen of the Year Nominations.

HIGHWAY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK Mr. Bassin reported that the Employee Handbook and policies are being brought together still and that there are some edits being made. They hope to have this ready for the next Board Meeting.

COMMUNITY CLEANUP DAY - Mr. Bassin stated that the town will hold a Community Clean up day on May 14, 2011. Residents are to bring their garbage to the Town Garage from 8:00am to 12:00 noon.

CELL TOWER - Mr. Bob Roth gave an update on the Cell Tower. He stated that the Town of Copake Planning Board has received an application for a cell tower installation. In the town of Ancram, ATT is reevaluating the locations and hopes to kind a site over the next few months. Libby McKee stated that she has a cell router for her home. Mr. Bassin stated that Shelt Waldorff received a call from AT&T stating that they will give him a cell phone router free.

#### Ethics Committee

Mr. Jack Lindsey stated that the Ethics Committee held five orientation sessions that were well attended. He stated that there have been two requests for consideration before the board. One of them has had a ruling with a recommendation to the Board. Mr. Bassin stated that the first one was a recusal matter. Mr. Bassin stated that the recommendation from the Ethics Committee is that the individual recuse himself from a matter before the Planning Board, or that the town board suspend him from the vote if he does not voluntarily recuse. Mr. Bassin suggested that the town board members talk with th4e individual before making a decision on this case, and schedule a special Town meeting to deal with the matter. .

#### Youth Commission

Janice Miller stated that the Youth Commission will be building the playground at the end of April. She also stated that the Egg Hunt had brought in around 55 children.

#### Communications

Councilwoman Israel gave thanks to Jane Shannon and Barbara Docktor for their work on the newsletter. She thanked Sue Bassin for her effort in updating the Ancram Directory.

#### Garage Committee

Emile Racenet stated that the committee is looking at specs for materials for the Salt Shed and is speaking to contractors for prices. He also stated that trees are going to be planted to shield the garage from the neighvor. Donna Hoyt asked what the whole project came in regarding costs. Mr. Bassin said that we have spent about \$493,000 of the 500,000 approved for the garage, plus \$30,000 for the garage planning which had been appropriated separately. In addition, Mr. Bassin indicated that the highway department had spent about 50,000-60,000 of highway money for items not included in

the original budget. Mr. Bassin stated that the CAC may want to make the retention pond larger.

### ZRC

Mr. Clark stated that the lawyer is still tweaking the first part of the law and that there should be some drafts in the next few weeks for the town board to read.

### Community Day

Councilman Miller stated that community day will be held on September 17, 2011 and will include antique cars, vendors, chili contests, a bake off and a pedal pull.

### Town Historian

Mrs. VanTassel stated that the Roe Jan Historical Society will be holding a Civil War exhibit this summer. Ancram Historians VanTassel and Massa have found that 160 men served in the Civil War from this area. They asked that people allow to be used for the exhibit any period home front pieces they may have on hand. Mr. Jack Lindsey stated that on Saturday the Mary Moon quilt will be placed in the town hall, weather permitting.

### Assessor

Ken Leggett, the town assessor stated that his office has been working on the 10% residential value assessment rededuction. He stated that the basic star has been changed at State level to basic star of 33570 and enhanced star to 67250.

### Building Department

The Building department is working on the enforcement of the zoning laws with the town lawyers. Mr. Bassin stated that the town had passed Local Law #1 of 2007 and that the fee for not being compliant is \$200.00 a day. Jane Shannon asked how many properties are not in compliance. Mr. Bassin stated that Mr. Feratto felt it was about a dozen properties. Many have fixed the problem.

Donna Hoyt asked what had happened to the Senior Citizen Committee. Adriene Citrin stated that she had resigned as head of the committee. Mr. Bassin asked Mrs. Hoyt if she wanted to head the committee. Mrs. Hoyt stated that she did not and that she had been taken off another committee. She felt that the youth commission and the children of the town received a lot of time but that the seniors did not. Clara VanTassel asked if the town had that many seniors as permanent residents. Mrs. Hoyt felt so. Mr. Bassin stated that he had sent out 550 emails and 750 newsletters which asked for seniors who needed to be "checked in on" to let the town board know. The town received 3 responses, one for a "check in on" and two from people willing to do the checking. Ruth

Thomas stated that at the County level, the seniors have several programs. Jane Shannon suggested having Linda Sheer come to the town for a presentation.

The Taste of Ancram survey brought in 150 responses. Some of the questions included why in Ancram and not Ancramdale, and parking. The committee did not receive a lot of responses from those wishing to be vendors. 80% of the responders were weekend people. Mr. Lindsey suggested that there be more development in the project. B. Docktor asked if there would be non-food sold. Jack Lindsey responded that the farmers felt that it may be dicey to sell items other than food at a farmers market.

Ruth Thomas addressed the board regarding a summer program for kids. She reported that the town had a program 30 years ago and it had ended 19 years ago. She is looking to start a six week program starting on July 5<sup>th</sup> running from Monday through Friday from 9am to 3pm. The camp would be educational with a weekly theme and including swimming lessons. The price would be \$65.00 a week for residents and \$75.00 for non residents. There would be space for 50 kids. If all of the spots are filled, there will be a profit of around \$3,000.00. She stated that the ball field would be fixed by the Fire House. She stated that the basketball courts, the back boards and the benches need to be fixed. She also asked that the town put in a railing leading to the pool.

Mr. Bassin stated that he had received a request from Dan Slott to have a 35 mile per hour speed limit past his farm on County Route 3. Donna Hoyt asked why this was? Ron Brant stated that the road is windy and not to be driven on fast anyway, but that a speed change was not necessary. Chris Thomas suggested the farm try other options.

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 Miller and seconded by Councilman Thomas and moved for adoption.

**Resolution #16 of 2011: Buy Two Used Plow Trucks:**

WHEREAS; the town's fleet of plow trucks are nearing the end of their useful lives, and whereas the cost to maintain the oldest of these trucks is becoming too expensive to justify,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED; that the Highway Superintendent be authorized to seek used replacements for the two oldest plow trucks at a cost not to exceed \$40,000, and ,

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that the cost of these replacement trucks will be paid for by re-allocating currently budgeted funds in the highway or general budget, the sale of

the vehicles that are being replaced and the receipt of FEMA funds or other unbudgeted revenues.

The resolution was passed by unanimous roll call vote.

The following resolution was offered by Councilwoman Israel and seconded by Councilman Miller and moved for adoption.

**Resolution #17 of 2011: Code Enforcement Officer Salary Adjustment:**

WHEREAS: the salary for the Code Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector was set at \$18,000 for the 2010 and 2011 budgets, and whereas the compensation for the Code Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector was not changed to reflect this approved budget, THEREFORE IT IS RESOLVED; that the Code Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector's compensation be increased to \$18,000 effective January 1, 2010.

The resolution was passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Donna Hoyt asked that Councilman Thomas, head of the Reval Committee, look over some questions she had written down. He agreed to.

Mr. Bassin introduced Mr. Peter Bujanow, Councilman for the Town of Kinderhook. Mr. Bu stated that he was impressed with the town of Ancram and the board meeting. He is in the process of doing a tour of all the town' in Columbia County. He stated that he was impressed with Ancram and the amount of information available and the website.

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

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica Cleveland  
Ancram Town Clerk