

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Regular Meeting
February 20, 2014**

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

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

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

Fire Chief

Fire Chief David Boice stated that they have been very happy that the winter has been a quiet one. Ancram will host the Memorial Day parade and will be holding a 75th anniversary in July. There will be a chicken BBQ Saturday February 22, 2014 and the Firemen's banquet will be on March 26th, to which the town board members are invited. Mr. Boice reminded the public that there is no open burning March 15th through May 15th.

Supervisor's Report

Town Issues

1. **Financial Report** - We received \$805,000 in town taxes in January. January 2014 spending was affected by high costs for sand and salt in the Highway Department. We used up about 40% of our \$60,000 sand and salt budget in January, and probably as much again in February. We ended the month with \$1,428,000 in the bank, excluding the \$62,000 4Q13 sales tax check, which we received in early February.

2. **DEC Culvert Study** – DEC has agreed to do a study of the Town's culvers as part of a statewide effort to study water management statewide. The objective is to identify culverts that are likely to be compromised depending on the severity of various weather events. This can help the Town prioritize plans to expand culvers over time to accommodate more severe weather. Kick off meeting is April 10.

3. **Community Cleanup Day** – May 10. Details to follow.

4. Grants Coordination - I have asked Gerry Fultz to become the point person for the Town in coordinating efforts to secure grants to support our various activities.

5. Rail Tales – Lynne Perrella, and a strong supporting cast including Jim Miller, will launch a railroad exhibit in the Historic Vestibule with a party on Sunday, February 23 at 2 pm at Town Hall.

6. Fee Schedule – FAC is recommending we keep the Town fee schedule pretty much as it is, with a change proposed for title searches (to \$50 from \$25) and with the addition of a “research fee” of \$25 per hour for any work done by the town Clerk or Historian to respond to non-routine requests for information. I will have a draft of the revised fee schedule for your review and approval Thursday night.

County Issues

1. **Airport** – The Airport Committee is close to a recommendation to shorten the runway and build a safety zone on County land, eliminating the need for any land from the Meadowgreens. The Meadowgreens’ owner has now proposed selling the entire golf course to the County. The County will review this proposal over the next before finalizing a decision on the runway safety zone.
2. **Pine Haven** – The County has formed a committee to review the plan to build a new facility at a cost of about \$35 million. The Committee will also probably consider options to sell or outsource the management of Pine Haven. While it is important that we keep Pine Haven’s 120 beds available in the County, there are organizations that more skilled at managing the facility than the County is. We need to get Pine Haven into the strongest possible management hands we can, for the benefit of Pine Haven’s residents and the County’s taxpayers.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Israel and seconded by Councilman Clark to create a budget line for the Historical Resources Committee. Motion carried.

Mr. MacArthur stated that when the CD held by the Ancram Monument Committee matures, they will be turned over the Town accounts. These were funds collected when the Ancramdale monument was built.

Highway Department

Mr. MacArthur stated that the roads are all in rough shape due to the winter months. He stated that the dirt and gravel roads will be thawing out soon. He asked that people remember this and only travel them when most needed. The Town Board signed the 2014 284 contract.

Community clean-up day will be held May 10th from 9 to 1pm.

Town Court

Mr. Bassin stated that the court offices have received \$420.00 in grant money towards computer programs.

FAC

The FAC is working on the town’s fee schedule and looking at outstanding checks, which they determined should be turned back to the general account after six months.

Planning Board

The Planning board has been quiet for some time. They are looking at a possible subdivision.

Communications

The communications committee is looking at sign designs for the town entrances.

CAC

They are finishing the 1st draft of the Natural Resources Plan.

ZRC

The ZRC continues to look at the ridgeline law and have established some criteria for scenic and topographic terrain around town. They are verifying visibility maps. Nan and Hugh will be beginning work on making the amendments into a law. The Planning Board continues to make helpful comments as to the ZRC work.

Heritage Resources

Mrs. Donna Hoyt asked at this point to address the board. She stated that she had received an email from a member of the APG which she would like to read to the Town Board. Mrs. Hoyt stated that she would not like to disclose the name of the person who sent the email because she felt that that would serve no purpose. (Following the meeting, it was brought to the attention of the Town Board that the person who wrote the e-mail, is in fact not a member of the APG.) The email chastised Mrs. Hoyt for her comments at an Heritage Resources committee meeting, where, according to the letter, Mrs. Hoyt stated that she did not like seeing the refurbished Simon's store, which sits empty, and she stated is off the tax rolls. Mrs. Hoyt read a reply to the email. She stated that while she commended the presentation on the septic system, she feels it will be an economic burden to those involved. She stated that she did not understand why she is being labeled a hypocrite when she was just stating an opinion.

Mr. Bassin stated that the town is looking at possible community septic solutions for the center of Ancram.

Mr. Bassin also stated that he would like to make a response to the email sent to Mrs. Hoyt.

gerry Fultz of the FAC stated that the town is looking to reapply for an engineering study for the septic system. With funding, the town will be able to have options as well as set up a process to bring in all parties involved with the septic system.

Building Department

Mr. Bassin stated that Mr. Feratto has chosen Carol Smillie as the Deputy Building Inspector. A motion was made by Councilwoman Israel and seconded by Councilman Clark to hire Carol Smillie as the Deputy Building inspector with a salary not to exceed \$17.50 but starting at \$15.00 with increases once certifications are achieved.

Animal Control

Mr. Bassin stated that he has received paperwork from our Animal Control Officer Wes Powell to be made a peace officer in Ancram. Mr. Bassin will call Mr. Powell and research this.

Camp

Ruth Thomas, Mr. Bassin stated, will be camp director again this year.

Emergency Plan

Mr. Bassin will work on a draft of a short emergency plan, which will be more of an advisory for the residents.

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

The town board discussed the upcoming priorities.

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

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica R. Cleveland
Ancram Town Clerk