

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Regular Meeting
July 16, 2015**

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

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

As Mr. Leggett was present at this time, Mr. Bassin decided to discuss the open Assessor's clerk position. Mr. Bassin stated that since Mrs. Boice had retired, the town would have to hire a replacement. The town has published a notice looking for such a replacement and has received 8 applicants. Mr. Bassin said that the board will interview all of them as the town may need someone to fill a position in the future. Mr. Bassin has been talking to Mr. Leggett who has expressed that he really does not need a clerk here 3 days a week. There are discussions about adding the Assessor's clerk duties to the Town Clerk job, adding an extra day to the Town Clerk's time at Town hall, and in essence having both offices open four days out of the week. It was discussed about hiring a deputy that could cover the offices when the Town Clerk was out sick or on a vacation day. The board will look into this more and will make a decision next meeting.

Fire Chief

The Fire Chief David Boice said that the department has been very quiet with only 5 calls this month.

Supervisors Report

Town Issues

1. Financial Report – We ended June with \$1.1 million in the bank. Revenues and spending through the end of June were as expected, with spending down about \$25,000 this year to date compared to the same period in 2014, due mostly to the timing of costs. Assuming no extraordinary financial events, we are on track to come in pretty much on budget for 2015.

2. 2016 Budget - Preliminary indications are we will be able to reduce town taxes by about 1% (\$8,000) as part of the 2016 budget. We will start the formal budget process later this month.

3. Plow truck purchase - We expect to take possession of the two new plow trucks late in August or early in September. The major issue for the Town Board is to decide whether to finance both trucks and

borrow about \$400,000, or to borrow for one and pay cash for the other. We currently have about \$700,000 in cash reserves. If we pay \$200,000 cash for one truck, we would end 2015 with about \$500,000 cash in the bank, and would probably end 2016 with about \$550,000 to \$575,000 in cash.

4. Assessor's clerk - We have received 6 applications for the assessor's clerk position. Assessor Leggett and I have discussed two options. Option one is replacing Mary Boice with a dedicated assessor's clerk working two half days (8 hours) a week. Option two is to expand the Town Clerk's responsibilities to include assessor clerk duties, adding 1 additional day a week to the Town Clerk's normal Town Hall schedule, which will give us assessor clerk coverage four days a week. Under this option we would hire a deputy town clerk/assessor clerk for one to two days a week on an as needed basis, which would average out to another 4 hours a week. Assessor Leggett is comfortable with option 2, as is Town Clerk Cleveland. We will discuss these options at the Board meeting next week, and if the TB approves, Assessor Leggett and I will interview the assessor clerk candidates in the next few weeks and will bring a specific proposal to the TB at the August TB meeting.

5. 82/7 Intersection - I have been in touch with NYS DOT over the past month about the safety issues at the 82/7 intersection. I have requested they consider taking action to further improve the sightlines east and west on 82 from the north side of 7, the turn radius north from 82 going west, and to lower the speed of traffic on 82 both ways to 15 mph. NYS DOT continues to take the position that there have been no accidents reported at that intersection, and they have more serious, higher traffic areas to deal with. DOT is getting close to deal with the retaining wall behind Simons, which is deteriorating and likely to collapse, closing down 82, if it's not repaired soon.

County Issues

1. Airport - We have an agreement with the owners of the golf course to remove two clusters of trees.

2. Pine Haven – Nothing new to report. We are still working on the contract of sale. We are close.

3. CEDC - CEDC has hired a new interim executive director, and the County has asked the ABO to conduct an expanded investigation of CEDC. The major issue facing the County BOS is whether to continue funding CEDC or not. That issue will depend on negotiating a satisfactory contract with CEDC which provides adequate governance, control and reporting processes to allow for County oversight over the use of the \$437,000 of taxpayer money the County currently provides CEDC.

A question was raised by Susan Hillel as to why in the 2016 budget the town had eliminated the \$7500 line for an outside audit. Mr. Bassin answered that the volunteer Financial Advisory council (FAC) normally does the annual audit of the Town books according to NYS Comptroller Division audit checklists, and does a very good job of it. But because the town had not had an outside audit in many years, the town board had decided to have one done in 2015. Going forward the town would probably do an outside audit done every three to five years. In a town this size, with a financial oversight board such as an FAC, there seems to be no reason to have an outside audit every year. Councilwoman Israel agreed that the FAC really scrutinizes the numbers. Mr. Mike Citrin, FAC member, felt that the town is very lucky to have such a professional board looking over the town finances.

Gerry Fultz addressed the board about the Simons Store/ Route 82 retaining wall situation. The wall is continuing to move and is now showing significant cracks. Mr. Fultz said after several emails, the DOT has not gotten back to him with a response in about a week. Another issue in that same area, according to Mr. Bassin, continues to be the intersection. He has gotten several calls about people speeding through the intersection. This is an issue for the mill as they have

slow moving forklifts that cannot get out of the way fast enough. Mr. Bassin suggested the state cut the speed limits down in the intersection. The state DOT did not comment on that. Mrs. Hoyt stated that she felt the problem with the turning radius continues to be the house on the corner of 82 and 7. She felt the town needs to take an initiative, purchase the house, take it down and fix that corner. Mr. Bassin questioned whether the town could do the work on the corner if the state and county allowed us to. Mr. MacArthur stated that he felt that would never happen. He said the state DOT does not allow work done in their right-of-way.

Planning Board

The planning board reported that they are busy at this time working on applications for solar panels.

Youth Commission

The youth commission has been working with the camp this summer. There were 36 kids enrolled in camp this week. The pool has been very busy with an average of 60 to 70 people using the pool every day. This number is not including the camp kids.

Mr. Bassin stated that the town is not charging for use of the pool this year. The pool is a fixed cost to run on a yearly basis. The average amount of fees that are collected in a season runs about \$1500. At this point between the pool and the kids camp, there have been close to \$10,000 in camp feeds and contributions given. The town would like to make improvements to the pool this fall, including updating the decking, fence and bath house area.

CAC

Mr. Bassin stated that he has been informed by the Fire Chief that there is an issue with the field at the town hall not being mowed and the ability of the medivac chopper being able to touch down in an emergency. The helicopter will not land on an overgrown field because they cannot see what they are landing on. The medivac has landed at the town hall several times in the past and it is the landing spot for the town. The CAC will work with Mr. Boice on this.

Building Manager

Stella Slater, the town hall cleaning lady, will not be returning from her leave. The town will advertise for a new cleaning person.

Kids Camp

The kids camp had to pay for buses this year that were used for field trips last year. Mr. Bassin stated that this was a \$1100 item and there had been \$1600 left over last year.

Volunteer Event

The Volunteer event will take place sometime in the middle of November. The ZRC will be honored.

Grants

The Culvert Grant has been submitted and the town awaits the results.

Judges

Judge Wittlinger and his clerk Ruth Wittlinger asked for permission to go to training. The cost will be \$1500 but \$600 of that will be returned to the town by the magistrate's & clerk's associations. A motion was made by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to allow Mr. Wittlinger and Mrs. Wittlinger to attend training. Motion carried.

Mr. Gerry Fultz announced the dates for the Care Givers Café.

Hunter Training Course will be held at the town hall on August 1 and 2nd. There are only a few spots left to reserve.

The following budget adjustments were offered by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilwoman Israel and moved for adoption. Carried.

To: 1355.4 from 1355.12 \$1000.00; To 1910.4 from 1920.4 \$25.00; To 5130.4 from 5110.4 \$2000.00; To 5130.4 from 5110.4 \$4,500.00.

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

A discussion began about the detour signs that have been placed on State Route 82 and County Route 7. A pipe will be replaced just north of the town hall. Traffic will be diverted over Simons Road. Some discussion was had about moving the traffic to Four Corners. Mr. Bassin will look into this.

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

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica Cleveland
Ancram Town Clerk