

**Town of Ancram  
Town Board  
Regular Meeting  
September 18, 2008**

**Present:** Town Supervisor Thomas Dias      Councilman John MacArthur  
                 Councilman Jack Lindsay              Town Clerk Monica Cleveland

**Others:** Art Bassin, James Miller, Imogene Morey, Willard Morey, Mike Citrin, Sue Bassin, Bill Grossi, Lynn Miller, Casey Miller, William Miller, Joseph Kilmer, Sandy Kilmer, Adriene Citrin, Jane Shannon, Madeline Israel, George Wittliner, Leah Wilcox, Robert Wilcox, Mike Roper, Bill Kraus, Bob Murphy, Linda Dias, Mary Boice, Suzanne Bressler, Irene Dietter, Avery Dietter, Jean Brant, Ron Brant, Tom Gumm, Jean Lilley, Mary Boice, Nancy Bryant, Jane Boyles, Terry Boyles, Bob Roth

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

Mr. Dias introduced appointed Councilman Jack Lindsay to those gathered. He stated that Mr. Lindsay is doing very well. Mr. Dias explained to those gathered that Mr. Lindsay was the Councilman appointed by Governor Patterson. Mr. Dias stated that the Town now has a quorum with three votes but that the board will not be a full board until the new terms of the elected officials begin in January of 2009. The board may decide not appoint any other new members for the time being although, Mr. Dias stated, they have discussed appointing, following the election, the winners of the election with the most votes to the board. These appointed members would not have full board voting rights until they are sworn in at the January meeting. Mr. Dias also stated that there will be not action taken on the Town Highway Garage until the new board takes over. Mr. Dias turned the floor over to Mr. Lindsay. Mr. Lindsay stated that he was honored that the governor had chosen him. Mr. Lindsay read a statement. He stated that he grew up in western North Carolina and has been a full time resident of Ancram for five years living on Doodletown Road. He spent his career as a museum curator managing an annual budget of 125 million dollars. He stated that he will only fill the councilman position until the new elected board was installed. He stated that he is on the board to work with Tom and John and to ensure that the town runs within the rule of the law. He believes that the town board should wait until the new elected town board takes over to make any decisions about the proposed town garage. Mr. Lindsay stated that he is in favor of doing what the town can to make the current garage more comfortable for the workers this winter. He suggested possible renting a temporary shed to accommodate outside equipment changes and having a state of the art port-a-john placed inside. Mr. Lindsay stated he will donate his salary as a board member towards that effort. Mr. Lindsay stated that the discussion around town is less about whether a new town garage is needed and more about what is the most cost effective way to do so in this financial climate. He suggested that the board work together to reduce the 2009 town budget wherever possible or at least hold it at 2008 levels to prevent further tax increases. He

stressed that he wants to work with Tom and John and ensure that the meetings are kept civil and respectful. He stated that everyone should be allowed to ask questions without feeling intimidated or being shouted down by other people. Mr. Lindsay stated that all are united in the love of Ancram and want to do the best for it and he is honored to be working with the town.

A motion was made by Supervisor Dias and seconded by Councilman Lindsay to accept the July 17, 2008 regular board meeting minutes and the August 21, 2008 Gathering minutes as read and entered into record. Motion carried.

Supervisor Dias read the following financial statement.

General Checking:	\$6,394.86
General Savings:	\$233,391.28
T & A Checking:	\$1,690.00
Capital Equipment:	\$19,573.63
Capital Building:	\$545,652.58
Highway Savings:	\$51.22
Highway Checking:	\$33,263.33
CDBG	\$1,000.00

Mr. Dias stated that a CHIPS check came for \$65,682.48 and will be deposited. A motion was made by Councilman Lindsay and seconded by Councilman MacArthur to accept the financial report as read. Motion carried.

### **Old Business**

Mr. Dias stated that a legal ad was placed in the paper to advertise for the Code Enforcement Officer assistant. Councilman MacArthur and Mr. Dias interviewed two candidates. Mr. Ferrato also sat in the interviews. A decision was made that Mr. Bill Hunt was the best candidate. Councilman Lindsay suggested that the board have a 6 month probationary period for the candidate. A motion was made by Councilman MacArthur and seconded by Councilman Lindsay to appoint Mr. Bill Hunt the assistant ZEO/CEO with a 6 month probationary period. Motion carried.

Mr. Dias stated that he was asked questions regarding a Town Road that has only one home located on it. Mr. Dias asked Highway Superintendent MacArthur how many dead end Town roads do not have adequate turn a rounds. Mr. MacArthur stated that only one that he knows of. Mr. Dias asked the cost of giving the roads adequate turn a rounds. Mr. MacArthur stated that Finkle Road was changed last year and that all should be this way. He will have a cost analysis at the next meeting. Councilman Lindsay asked if the town already has a right of way on these roads or would land need to be bought. Mr. Dias stated that it may fall under emanate domain.

Mr. Dias stated that the Aiken noise issue has gotten better as per a discussion with them.

The parties involved with the Ancramdale noise issue have reached some agreements. The issue has been better to date.

Mr. Bob Roth gave an update on the Cell Tower Committee. He stated that he had received a fax from Congresswoman Gillibrands office and that she stated that it she feels it is important the Eastern section of Columbia County have cell service. The towns of Copake, Ancram and Taconic will be having a meeting with the cell tower representative in two weeks. Mr. Dias thanked Mr. Roth for his time and efforts. Mr. Dias will approach the Copake supervisor to set up a meeting.

Mr. Dias stated that the survey of the ball field is not yet ready. He reminded the board that the mill had been interested in the field some months ago but they have since become involved with other issues.

Mr. Dias stated that the Town Highway Department along with other towns and 20 trucks were able to make the Hall Hill Washout area once again a full two lane road. Mr. Dias thanked the Highway Department for their hard work and stated that there will be a photo on the website.

### **Privilege of the Floor**

Mr. Dias stated that this was the audiences opportunity to ask questions about topics that were just addressed.

Mr. Terry Boyles asked if the turn a rounds the town will be looking at will be adequate for the fire trucks. Mr. Boyles stated that they are very large trucks. Mr. Dias stated that this would be considered.

Mr. Thomas Gumm asked the board what laws they had used to appoint the Town assessor rather than allow him to be elected. He was under the understanding that there needed to be a mandatory referendum with a vote within twenty days. Mr. Dias stated that Mr. Shaw had drawn up an explanation about the procedure and that Mr. Shaw would make this available again at the next meeting. Mr. Dias said that it was his understanding that the town was within their legal rights as explained to him.

Mr. Mike Citrin asked if the board was going to look at the second part of his proposed resolution presented at the July board meeting. Mr. Dias stated that the board has spoken and that a decision will be made about this matter when there is a full elected board. Mr. Citrin stated that at the August 21<sup>st</sup> Gathering, he had offered to find another possible location for the town garage at his own expense and make a presentation by the first of the year. Mr. Dias reminded Mr. Citrin that he will be acting on his own. Mr. Lindsay stated that the board should look into what can be done in the interim. As far as the committee is concerned, he thought that new people could possibly be brought in and old members remain if they like. He would like to see the Garage be adequate for the winter. Mr. Bob Mayhew asked if Mr. Lindsay could be on the committee because it was brought up that this may be a conflict of interest. Mr. Lindsay stated that his previous objection to Mr. MacArthur being on the Highway Committee was not that he was a Councilman but that he was the brother of the Highway Superintendent. Mr. Lindsay stated that he

was surprised that a flag was not raised when Mr. MacArthur volunteered to be on the board. Mr. Shaw stated that he did not see the conflict with a Councilman being on the board. Mr. Lindsay asked his feelings about him being family. Mr. Shaw stated that yes, this could give the appearance of a conflict of interest. Mr. Terry Boyles asked Mr. MacArthur if he had declined from the committee. Councilman MacArthur stated that he had not been on the committee for months.

## **New Business**

### **Resolution #14 of the Year 2008: Budget Amendment #1**

RESOLVED: That the Town Board of the Town of Ancram does hereby resolve to make the following budget amendment: \$35,102.00 moved from the General Account to the Highway Account.

Motion made by Councilman Dias, seconded by Councilman MacArthur. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Councilman MacArthur and seconded by Councilman Lindsay to allow the Register Star Newspaper to be added to the list of official Town newspapers. Carried.

A motion was made by Councilman MacArthur and seconded by Councilman Lindsay to allow the Town Historian Clara VanTassel to set up an office for herself in the empty cubical in the building department office. Motion carried.

Mr. Dias asked Councilman Lindsay to speak on the quilt being acquired by the Ancram Preservation Group. Mr. Lindsay stated that he had been contacted by a quilt dealer in New York stating that he had come across a quilt made by Mary Moon of Gallatin in 1856. The quilt has many families listed on it that are from Ancram and the surrounding area. The APG, after acquiring this quilt, would like to gift it to the Town of Ancram. They hope that the town will display the quilt. The APG will have the quilt mounted and framed and asks that a curtain be placed over it when not being viewed. The upkeep of the quilt will be done by the APG as long as the organization exists. If the APG disbands, the town would have to commit to the curatorship or turn it over to the Columbia County Historical Society. Mr. Lindsay stated that he would like the board to make the decision after the November election. This was agreed. Mr. Dias asked Mr. Lindsay to reclude himself from the decision. Mr. Lindsay agreed.

Mr. Dias informed the board that the Department of Ag and Markets has awarded the Town of Ancram a sum of \$25,000.00 to assist the Town in its agricultural and farmland protection program. This will help the town develop a Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.

Mr. Dias stated that the STAR exempt amounts have arrived and Ancram's Basic STAR is 37,810 and Enhanced STAR 71,580.

Mr. Dias stated that he decided to appoint Donna Hoyt his Deputy Supervisor. She will handle his duties in his absence. She will have all of his powers except the power to vote and attend county board meetings.

Councilman MacArthur stated that he would like to change the towns official bank to one of the banks in Copake. Mr. Dias stated that he would look into this and also into electronically depositing monies. A motion was made to this effect by Councilman MacArthur and seconded by Councilman Lindsay. Carried. Mr. Shaw advised the town to check into how much the accounts are insured for. Councilman Lindsay suggested moving the daily accounts and leaving for now the investments.

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

### **Privilege of the Floor #2**

Mr. Murphy asked the board is the Town could host a moderated debate one night. Mr. Dias directed Mr. Murphy to contact the Republican and Democratic Parties and then arrange the use of the Town Hall.

Mrs. Nancy Bryant read a letter she wrote regarding the Town Hall building being overcrowded during meetings. She stated that she has been told that the room holds 85 people and wondered why it was not posted. She stated that at the Gathering meeting, one exit was blocked by tables and the other by people. She wondered who enforces the occupancy and if the town should continue to hold meetings at the Town Hall and should another location be used. She wanted all of this put on the record. She also would like to see the exits pointed out at the beginning of the meetings. Mr. Wittinger, building manager, stated he thought the occupancy was 80 but he would look into it. Mr. Dias stated that Mrs. Bryant is correct to bring it to attention. He stated that at the caucuses there was at no time 133 people in the room at once. He would hesitate to turn people away from the meetings but will always strive for safety. Mr. Wittlinger will post the occupancy. Mrs. Anne Carrier suggested wiring the meeting into another room. Councilman MacArthur suggested looking into this.

Mr. Art Bassin of the Comprehensive Plan Committee asked that the board appoint Suzanne Bressler and Hugh Clark to the Committee. A motion was made by Councilman MacArthur to that effect and seconded by Councilman Lindsay. Motion carried.

Mr. Bassin stated that in order for the town to secure the \$25,000.00 from Ag and Markets, the board needs to authorize Mr. Dias to authorize Mr. Bassin to be the point person. A motion was made by Councilman Lindsay to that effect, seconded by Councilman MacArthur. Carried.

Mr. Bassin stated that he needs authorization from the board to allow him to file the 5 page certification from for the Block Plan Program. A motion was made by Councilman MacArthur to that effect, seconded by Councilman Lindsay. Motion carried.

Mrs. Israel asked Mr. Dias how she can get back on the Town Wide e-mail list. Mr. Dias stated he is working on the problem. Due to all of the addresses, Fairpoint thought he was a spammer.

Mrs. Donna Hoyt asked what the problem has arisen with the Town Garage Committee. Mr. Dias stated that there has been a FOIL request. Mrs. Hoyt asked if new members will be put on the committee. Mr. Dias stated yes, if the committee is redirected.

A motion was made by Mr. Dias and seconded by Councilman MacArthur to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica Cleveland, Town Clerk