

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Workshop Meeting
June 1, 2009**

Present: Supervisor Thomas Dias Councilman Robert Mayhew
 Councilman James Miller Councilman John MacArthur
 Councilwoman Donna Hoyt Town Clerk Monica Cleveland
 Deputy Town Clerk Ruth Wittlinger

The regular workshop meeting of the Ancram Town Board was called to order at 8:15pm by Supervisor Dias with a salute to the flag.

Mr. Dias introduced town bookkeeper Brian Fitzgerald. He stated that Brian was present for questions and answers. Brian stated that there are now three bank accounts for the town. The first is a money market account with most of the towns money in it. This will bring the most interest. The second account is the checking account and will be used to pay the bills. The third is the Trust and Agency account. There is also a community Development Block Grant fund.

Highway Superintendent James MacArthur stated that an inspection was done by DEC for the Highway fuel tanks and that they were written up for 7 violations. Mr. MacArthur stated that the tanks have to be emptied, sand blasted, painted and moved out of the containment area. Fill pipes will have to be put on them and labeled. He stated that where they are now are out in the elements and on the ground. He would like to put a concrete pad down and put them on it. He has been given 30 days to comply and that following that there is a \$37.00 fine per day. Councilman Miller asked if the town could get a preformed containment area. Councilman MacArthur asked if the town could have a smaller containment area and wondered what the minimum was. Highway Super., MacArthur stated that the clock is running and that the town has to get moving. He stated that a new 1000 gallon tank and a 500 gallon tank plus the containment area will be around \$6500.00. Mr. Dias stated that the highway department will need set prices, options and a time line. He asked to be given these numbers in the next two days and a special meeting can be called.

Councilwoman Hoyt asked Mr. MacArthur if he had done the pricing for the pipe to be placed down Town Road. He stated that He had and that it was about \$7,000.00 for the pipe and the gravel. Mrs. Hoyt stated that this was something that had to be done due to the water undermining the road. Mr. Dias stated that this cannot be voted on until the next town board meeting. He also stated that the town will be getting \$21,655.80 from the County for mortgage taxes and \$50,416.68 for County Sales Taxes.

Councilwoman Hoyt stated that the towns equalization rate is 93.5% and wondered if this could be appealed to get it closer to the 100%. She stated that the properties have to be gone through one by one to keep the rate at about 96%. She stated that the town needs to

contest this and send our assessor to the state board hearings. She felt that the board should send a letter explaining why the town feels it is at 100% and that this could be done by the assessor. Mr. Legget joined the meeting and was asked if the town should submit a complaint. Mr. Legget stated that this would not hurt. He stated that he may need to get Jason Shaw to help him write this.

A discussion ensued about the Town Highway Garage. Mr. Dias stated that a bid package needed to be put together. Highway Super MacArthur asked if the town will do this in stages. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that this will need a bond so it will have to be done all at once. Highway Super. MacArthur suggested radiant heat and that the town needs to be careful not to go over \$500,000.00 to stay away from the WICKS law. Councilman MacArthur asked if the town would take down the existing buildings due to their proximity to the swamp. Highway Super MacArthur stated that he would like to bid out the building first and then bid the electric, septic and heat separate. Mr. Dias stated that he would like to have this done ASAP. Mr. Mike Citrin stated that if the project has a general contractor then it does not fall under the WICKS law. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that the town is talking about buying the Houghtaling property and would that be part of the bond she wondered.

Councilman Jim Miller asked about the new truck the board had spoke about purchasing. Councilman Mayhew asked about building the salt shed at a later time. Highway Super. MacArthur stated that he has looked at Gallatin's building and that was built by Wes Conns. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that there has to be one package to go to the voters.

The board discussed the appraisals of the Houghtaling Property, the Steele House and the Tin Smith House and Mr. Mayhew stated that the town needs the actual house numbers for these.

Mr. Dias directed the boards attention to the Chargeback Agreement for the County for the balance of the Rescue Squad. Councilman Miller explained that he felt that the towns people were being charged twice for this. Mr. Dias stated that the town does this for the Fire Department. Highway Super. MacArthur stated that the town will be charged twice for the same service. Mr. Dias stated that the rescue squad wants to do this but that they support five towns and only collect from three. If a rescue district is formed, he explained, the town does not have to stay in it. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that this would be another tax district and that the town of Copake does not pay their \$154,000.00 part of the bill. Councilman MacArthur stated that he will not pay them twice for one service. Mr. Dias stated that Copake does not pay all of their costs because they pay for the fuel and the housing of the vehicles. He understood though that if Community goes out of business then Northern Dutchess comes in and the cost is twice as much. Councilman MacArthur asked why it cannot go back to volunteer. Councilman Mayhew stated that there are not enough people to volunteer and take training. Councilman MacArthur stated that there are many times that they do not show up at fire calls and yet the fire department goes for mutual aid for them. Councilman Hoyt asked what he suggested. Mr. MacArthur stated that he thought the county should take over. Mr. Chris Thomas asked if their books were transparent and if there was any accountability for the

funds. Councilman Mayhew stated that they told the board that it costs them \$1,000.00 every time the truck goes out. They will ask them to bring the books to look at them. Councilman MacArthur stated that if they are a business then they should serve as a business. Mr. Dias stated that if this goes through the town will have to vote on it as a referendum.

Town Animal Control Officer Gary Deitch suggested that the town allow an exemption for persons over 65 years or older who have a dog. The board will look into this.

Mr. Dias stated that the town received a FOIL request for the Bottle Tree Store and that Town Clerk Monica Cleveland has taken care of it.

Mr. Dias informed the board that St. Johns Lutheran Church has been placed on the NY State list of historical properties.

Mr. Chris Thomas stated that the State Comptrollers office says that the pension funds are down. Mr. Dias stated that there is enough money to cover presently.

Councilman MacArthur stated that the Local Law listed in the boards book in regards to the Assessor is old and asked for a copy of the new one. Clerk Cleveland will get this. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that she read the Non-For-Profit tax law and questioned if places like Woodhull would qualify.

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

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica Cleveland
Town Clerk