

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Workshop Meeting
November 5, 2009**

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

The regular workshop meeting of the Ancram Town Board was called to order at 7:00 pm with a salute to the flag.

The board decided to hold a public hearing for the 2010 Town of Ancram Budget at 6:00pm on November 19, 2009 followed by the Regular November Board meeting at 7:00pm.

Mr. Dias told the board that he had received notice from the Town Attorney regarding the bid for the vinyl siding. He stated that it was the attorneys advice that the board bid the project over due to the fact that there was not technical paperwork included with the bid. Mr. Dias stated that there needs to be a signed letter of non collusion and that there has to be a timeline for the project. Mr. Dias stated that most of the board has seen the sample sheet for the possible colors of the siding. Mr. Dias stated that the board is discussing changing the color of the building.

Mr. Dias stated that the town received a check for \$45.00 from John Deere but that he did not know what the check was for.

Mr. Dias pointed out to the board members that in there packet is a list of the Maximum Income Levels for the Aged Exemption for 2010. Councilman MacArthur stated that at this time Ancram is in line with the States recommendation. Mr. Dias stated that the state would like the town to be at the 29,000.01 to 29,999.99 line. Mr. Dias stated that he planned on going to the County Real Property and discuss the exemptions. He asked for volunteers to go with him. Councilman Mayhew stated that he would go with Mr. Dias to the County offices 10:00 am Monday morning. Councilman MacArthur stated that the town should also look into the Fireman's exemption. The board decided that they would hold a public hearing for the Maximum Income Levels for the Aged exemption to take place on November 19, 2009 at 6:30pm following the public hearing for the 2010 budget and before the regular November board meeting.

Mr. Dias stated that the board was served with a petition from Kit White and that the board each has a copy of the petition. Councilwoman Hoyt asked what the board should do about the petition. Mr. Dias stated that the members need to read it. Councilwoman Hoyt stated that she has done a lot of research on the vinyl siding. She stated that she found out that the siding is only toxic when it is made and when it was burned. Mrs. Hoyt also stated that she has spoken to the firemen and found that they have no problem with the fumes when they wear their respirators and proper equipment. Mrs. Hoyt stated that the fumes from the siding are not as bad as the fumes from the burning of the PVC pipe in a house fire. Mrs. Hoyt stated that she cannot justify the cost of painting the building every few years. She stated that she felt any siding that lasted longer was more ecologically friendly. She stated that she went through the paints as well and also found them toxic. She stated that she can get all of this information for anyone who may wish to see it.

Mr. Dias stated that the board received a refund check from Blue Cross and Blue Shield the same day as the monthly bill came. Clerk Cleveland stated that there was a problem some months ago with the insurance and found that the company had changed the policy number. She suggested when Mr. Dias called that he find out if this was the old policy or the new one.

Councilwoman Hoyt read the following letter into the record;

I would like to make a statement before the election results are official because my opinion won't change whether I get in or not. I have made a copy of my statement for Monica so my words are put on record exactly as I said them and not slanted toward Monica's opinion. I am deeply saddened and disappointed in the people of Ancram for believing the lies and half truths that this election has produced. I struggled with the idea of congratulating my opponents for their victory. I have always done the right thing but in this case I believe the right thing is the truth. Art, Chris and Madeline-

You have taught me a lot about politics in these last few months. And, I am appalled at how anything goes just to get elected. Including going to my seventy year old sister in law and telling her lies about me until she told you she was my sister in law. You need to know how extremely upset she was. My family should not be put in the position to have to defend my honor. You won this election by deceit and I will not condone that. You attacked my integrity with lies and I will not forgive that. And now you will be running my home town with your personal agenda and that terrifies me. Jim, you sent me an email saying you hoped we would still be friends. I struggled with this most of all because I don't give up on my friends easily. But, in my heart I know I can't be friends with someone I don't trust. I promise you all this. I will work diligently to make your time in office as memorable as you and your cocktail party elitists have made mine.

Upon finishing the reading of her statement, Mrs. Hoyt left the meeting. (A copy of this letter is on file in the Town Clerks office.)

Councilman Miller questioned the board about an e-mail that he received along with the other Board members from the Town Attorney Jason Shaw. Mr. Miller asked why Mr. Dias was asking about leasing the Matthews Garage. Mr. Dias answered the it was an option he was looking into. Mr. Dias stated that this was an answer to a question that he had asked the attorney and that himself along with the other board members have a right to ask him counsel. Mr. Dias stated that he was trying to do things correctly and that was why he was asking the attorney. Mr. Dias stated that like all the board members he is trying to do things correctly and appropriately. Mr. Miller raised concerns with the leasing of the building. Councilman MacArthur reminded Councilman Miller that he only has one vote.

Privilege of the Floor

Mr. Jack Lindsey addressed the board. He stated that he had an update from the APG in regards to the Stiehle House. Mr. Lindsey read the following statement; *"To set the record straight on the issue of the Ancram Preservation Group's right of first refusal to purchase John Stiehle's house, APG attorney, Warren Replansky, notified Mr. Stiehle on October 16, 2009, by certified mail, for which Mr. Stiehle signed, that APG was invoking its right to purchase the property. On the same day, Mr. Replansky notified Rod McLeod, the attorney for the Ancram Fire District of the same. Mr. McLeod has failed to return calls to Mr. Replansky or Kit White, President of APG. But the rumor that APG failed to exercise its legal right is false."* Mr. Lindsey stated that it has always been the hope of the APG to keep the house standing. Mr. Lindsey stated that the APG hopes to work with the Fire Department until the intersection is remedied.

Mr. Bob Murphy addressed the board. He stated that Mr. Kit White could not attend the meeting but he asked Mr. Murphy to read the following statement into the record. *"In my necessary absence, I have asked that this letter concerning the proposal to re-clad Town Hall in vinyl siding be read into the record. As you know, you have been presented with a petition signed by close to 20% of Ancram's voters who are opposed to proceeding with this in the absence of a thorough public vetting of the proposal. At the outset of this discussion, there is one thing that must be made absolutely clear: Town Hall belongs to the taxpayers of Ancram, not to the Town Board, not to the Supervisor. They are merely the custodians of a public property built after an exhaustive design process, overseen by a committee representative of the community that produced the existing building to specifications determined by those same citizens who paid for it. Any substantive alteration to Town Hall must meet the approval of a majority of those owners.*

There are several issues that this proposal has brought up that must be addressed. The first is the matter of procedure. The re-cladding was never on any agenda of a monthly Town Hall meeting. There was never any public discussion either of the proposal or of the request for bids, and the acceptance of a single bid for the work violates all sense of responsible management of public funds.

Secondarily, the re-cladding of an existing building with identified mold and rot with a non-permeable skin is an invitation to far larger problems than that presented by the need of a new coat of paint. To quote a 2002 study on vinyl siding funded by the National Trust and the National Park Service, vinyl siding "keeps water inside a building. When you wrap your house in plastic, moisture can build up in wall cavities... (and) unlike wood, vinyl does not breathe. Water vapor trying to pass to the outside is trapped in the wall, where it reaches its dew point temperature and condenses. The water then puddles at the base of the wall, leading to rot in sills and other structural components, along with unpleasant problems like mold and insect damage." Unlike wood siding, where "moisture conditions become quite obvious" vinyl siding hides the problems until the damage is severe. This could lead to a toxic building.

Additionally, most of the claims made for the benefits of vinyl siding are false. Among the points noted by the same study are these, "the installation process itself is potentially destructive." This would certainly be the case with Town Hall where the battens for the vertical siding would have to be removed. According to the study, "the insulation value of vinyl siding is minimal." Additionally, the study claims that the true life of vinyl siding is only 20 years. After that time, it "is subject to denting, cupping and warping, and over time, (it oxidizes) from exposure to sunlight.

Repairing and replacing damaged vinyl siding can be difficult. Eventually the service will need to be cleaned and, yes, even painted. Painting vinyl is a risky business. In fact many manufacturers void their guarantees if vinyl is painted." Contrary to the claims made for it, vinyl is NOT final. In fact, vinyl siding has existed for only forty years. And a few of those early examples now exist except for broken and fractured remnants. According to this study, though "it looks like a bargain, ... over 20 years, the usual guarantee period, the cost of installing the vinyl siding is more or less equal to the cost of two quality paint jobs.

There are also other important points that must be considered. In the case of fire, vinyl siding produces toxic fumes that are a threat both to firefighters and to residents within a half-mile radius. Vinyl is not an organic surface and its installation would be in direct conflict with the stated goal of making our Town Hall more green. It is a step backward.

Aside from these considerations about the health of the building, the last issue which must be considered is the fact that our Town Hall was not designed for vinyl siding. Its vertical board and batten was specifically considered to counter its long horizontal configuration. A horizontal siding on this well considered building will make for a drastic alteration in appearance. I would suggest that a vast majority of the residents of Ancram are justifiably proud of this symbol of their public identity, which they spent a great deal to create, and this change would cause an irreparable alteration to the building. Taking all of these factors into consideration, there is ample reason to table this proposal until there has been a complete public discussion of it by the owners of the building: all of the taxpayers of Ancram. Sincerely, Kit White

Mr. Bob Murphy also stated that the building is only six years old and he wondered why the Board would want to spend a large amount of money to a new building. Mr. Murphy stated if the building was to burn, the fumes from the siding would kill the people in the building faster than carbon monoxide and smoke.

Councilman Miller then proceeded to read a section of the e-mail for the record. Mr. Miller read, "*Siding Resolution: This resolution was premature and thus improper. Pursuant to Town Law section 222, plans, specs and estimates had to be obtained before seeking to put the matter out to bid. Moreover, this resolution was pursuant to Town Law section 220, subject to a permissive referendum and the procedure for such a resolution was not followed. Moreover, the town received a petition from Town Voters. If the town board wanted to challenge the petition it had five days thereafter under the Town Law section 91 to raise written and filed objections to the validity of the petition.*" Mr. Miller stated that he felt that the board should wait to make this decision considering the attorneys letter and feelings. He felt that he feels that the attorney thinks the board should start from the beginning.

Mr. Dias asked if there was anymore business. There being none a motion was made by Councilman MacArthur and seconded by Councilman Mayhew to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by:

Monica Cleveland
Ancram Town Clerk