

State of New York
County of Fulton
Town of Stratford

Minutes of the Stratford Town Board meeting held on Thursday, April 11, 2013 at the municipal building located at 120 Piseco Rd.

Present:

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| Robert Johnson Jr. | --- | Supervisor |
| Allan Perkins | --- | Councilman |
| Bernard Leavitt, | --- | Councilman |
| Dawn Youker | --- | Councilwoman |
| Diana Massicotte | --- | Town Clerk |
| Leigh Anne Loucks | --- | Assessor |
| Peg Klages | --- | Deputy Town Clerk |
| Charles Goodwin | --- | Highway Superintendent |

Absent:

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| Lorraine Rumrill | --- | Councilwoman |
| Lita Hillier | --- | Bookkeeper |

Supervisor Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm with the Pledge to the Flag.

Residents in attendance: Forty-three residents were present at the meeting.

REPORTS

Superintendent Goodwin gave the following report:

During March, the Highway Department has been plowing and sweeping the roads. Men have been working on the snowplow. We have to provide too many items in order to use pit. If pit is not up to code, we could be fined. Superintendent Goodwin felt if Sacrider wanted to sell sand, then it should be up to him to accommodate the regulations for running a pit. He felt that the sand pit should not be in the Town's name. Superintendent Goodwin said he would check on Timman's pit on Middle Sprite Road which is about five miles from the Barn. Supervisor Johnson said that they saved \$20,000.00 using the sand at the barn in the back. Superintendent Goodwin called that junk sand because it was clogging the screener. Councilman Leavitt asked Superintendent Goodwin if he was going to look around the Stratford area for sand. He said they were checking on it.

Superintendent Goodwin said bucket truck is not safe and felt we should not put any more money into it. Said he could take it to Eastern Metals maybe get a good deal. Has a few potholes to fix. Supervisor Johnson said an assessment should be made of the barn before someone got hurt or the Town could be fined by OSHA.

Supervisor Johnson suggested that the men should take a first aid and CPR course. If they wanted it, he could set it up.

Supervisor Johnson introduced the interim Highway Superintendent Goodwin who has been with the crew for thirty-eight years and is a dedicated employee, may be running for the office this year. Supervisor Johnson said he was doing a good job and thanked him for stepping in.

Supervisor Johnson read the Dog Control Officer's March 7, 2013 to April 10, 2013 report as follows:

Received one call for feral cat and directed them to local rescue.

One call for a stray dog on March 17, picked it up and transported it to Brennan on March 18.

Rabies clinic is set for April 27, from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm. Advertising on Town sign, website and in My Shopper for two weeks.

Town Clerk Massicotte distributed the Treasurer's Report to the Board members.

Supervisor Johnson reported that the Code Enforcement Officer was trying to get caught up on the tickets that were issued last year. He will have a report next month.

Assessor Loucks reported that the motion that was made at the March meeting to table the reval was not legal and the reval would be kept in place. The Board does not have the authority to table the reval. Assessor Loucks stated that Supervisor Johnson, the Town Attorney, Bob Jacobs from the State and the Fulton County Director met to discuss the serious issues that were brought to the Board's attention at the last meeting. The numbers will go through May 1, anyone who is not happy can bring their paperwork to Grievance or to the Assessor. The State and the County were comfortable with how the reval was done. Assessor Loucks said we take our cues from ORPTS. The rolls will be filed May 1st and will be available online.

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Supervisor Johnson made an apology to the Board and Assessor Loucks for the motion that was made to table the reval which was discussed at the meeting with the Director. After the meeting Supervisor Johnson sat down with the Real Property Service Director who said that in the late 70's, the State Legislature turned the authority of the reval solely over to the assessor or assessors basically to keep a barrier between the Board and the taxpayers and shift the responsibility to the assessor. Assessor Loucks has the authority to put the reval off. Supervisor Johnson said there are definitely some problems but the Assessor felt she could resolve them. The State and County said we were in the normal complaint percentile. The Town Attorney felt the serious issues could be resolved. The Appraiser used land values from 2008 forward. The values of the property are as of July 1st of the prior year.

Assessor Loucks said the State mandates that she has to be in the office at different times to discuss the revals. She said if there are people who do not understand the process to grieve their property, she will help them, but she cannot fill it out for them.

It was brought up that in the minutes of the last meeting it was stated that Caroga Lake was used for comparison of properties. This was a misstatement. Caroga Lake properties were not used for the appraisals. Assessor Loucks was asked if she felt the assessments were fair and reasonable and she responded that she felt they were. There were 232 parcels out of 950 parcels that went up 10% or more in

taxes throughout the town. Supervisor Johnson said he would hate to see the Town go through a lawsuit and would like to see it resolved.

Assessor Loucks stated that the Town tax rate went down. The rates are set by the Town, County and State. She asked that residents wait until May 1st when the roll comes out before making any determination.

Susan Fogarty stated that the big factor in this Town is the State owned land. She brought it to the attention of Assemblyman Marc Butler. She said that Assessor Loucks and the Board need to put pressure on the State Legislature to have the State taxed appropriately. She doesn't know if they are paying their full taxes, but is researching it. We have no businesses in this community to help with the taxes and the residents cannot afford the taxes.

It was brought up that some properties in the town were in poor condition and should be made to clean up their property. Supervisor Johnson said that our new Code Enforcement Officer, Norman Wright, would be addressing these situations and asked that the residents give him a chance to get accustomed to his position.

The school tax was also brought up. Peter Szczebak said there is a town East of us which pays a per diem rate per student. Since the Stratford School was annexed not consolidated, we are not eligible for this program. Supervisor Johnson said we would have to check with a lawyer or Assemblyman Marc Butler to see if we could change this designation.

A resident said we should all join together to fight our taxes. We have three problems: The state land, school taxes and Medicaid.

Heidi Christiansen asked if Maxwell had been paid in full. He has not. She felt he did not complete his contractual duties and should not be paid. There were many complaints.

Assessor Loucks stated the roll and the letters would come out the same day, May 1st. ORPTS sets the rules and she has to follow them.

Supervisor Johnson said that he read the many letters and emails that were sent to him which he takes seriously. He did not respond because he thought that a number of residents would attend this meeting. He requested that when you speak, to first give your name and address.

OLD BUSINESS

It was brought to the residents' attention that the streams are being treated with BTI.

Diane Keck who was hired to be custodian broke her leg. She wants the job. Supervisor Johnson said if it was not prolonged, he would like to keep the position open if the Board agreed. Councilwoman Youker said we need someone to clean because this is the time of the year the Hall is rented. Supervisor Johnson suggested Lorraine Rumrill to fill in temporarily until Diane can take over. The salary is already set and she knows the job.

Motion made by Councilman Perkins, seconded by Councilman Leavitt to keep the position available for Diane Keck and have Lorraine Rumrill fill in temporarily.

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Johnson, Perkins, Leavitt, and Youker
Nays 0

Supervisor Johnson said it was discussed last month to change the threshold of purchasing in the Highway Department which had been adjusted back to \$1,000.00. He talked to Superintendent Goodwin regarding the amount he felt he needed and they decided that \$2,000.00 would be enough if approved by the Board. Supervisor Johnson said by bringing the purchasing before the Board, it kept a better handle between the Supervisor and Highway Superintendent regarding the spending of money.

RESOLUTION #14-13 to Raise the Highway Department Purchasing Threshold to \$2,000.00

WHEREAS, The Stratford Town Board decided at the Town Board meeting on April 11, 2013 and

WHEREAS, the Supervisor had discussed the amount with the Superintendent

RESOLVED, that the Highway Department threshold of purchasing would be raised to \$2,000.00

Offered by: Councilman Perkins, seconded by Councilman Leavitt

ADOPTED: Ayes 4 Johnson, Perkins, Leavitt, and Youker
Nays 0

NEW BUSINESS

Supervisor Johnson asked the Board if they would mind meeting May 8 instead of May 9th.

A motion was made by Councilman Perkins to schedule the next Board meeting on Wednesday, May 8 instead of May 9, Seconded by Councilwoman Youker.

Ayes - 4 Leavitt, Johnson, Perkins and Youker
Nays - 0

The Board received an invitation to join the Senior Citizens of Stratford for a ham dinner on May 14 at 11:30 am. The invitation was extended to the Highway Department also.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Councilman Perkins, seconded by Councilman Leavitt to approve the Board meeting minutes of March 14, 2013.

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Johnson, Perkins, Leavitt, and Youker
Nays 0

AUDIT OF CLAIMS

Motion made by Councilman Perkins, seconded by Councilman Leavitt to approve the bills on Abstract #4

Ayes - 4 Leavitt, Johnson, Perkins and Youker
Nays - 0

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| General Fund | Voucher Nos. 57 through 74 | \$3,685.41 |
| Highway Fund | Voucher Nos. 42 through 54 | \$8,728.16 |

Alicia Rice asked about the audit. Town Clerk Massicotte stated she had put a number of copies out before the meeting. Ms. Rice asked about the payroll, how was it handled. Bookkeeper Hillier does the payroll. Supervisor Johnson said he signs the checks and distributes them.

The only audit the Board is responsible for is the Town Clerk and the Judge because they are receivers of monies. Ms. Rice asked about the annual audit of the Supervisor's records. Supervisor Johnson stated that Bookkeeper Hillier filled out the forms for his records and they were sent to the State. He receives a letter reporting that the report was received. The Auditor gave Supervisor Johnson a booklet of procedures to follow when completing the audits of the Town. The State Auditor said they did a fine job with the Town's finances. The suggestions that were made were incorporated into the process.

Gary Rumrill asked about the new truck. Supervisor Johnson said the lawyer has the paperwork to fill out and then it goes to the bank and they set the rate on it. The truck is suppose to be in Syracuse by the end of April.

With no further business, on a motion by Councilman Perkins, seconded by Councilman Leavitt, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Massicotte, Town Clerk