

State of New York
County of Fulton
Town of Stratford REGULAR MEETING MINUTES & PUBLIC HEARING ON 2020 BUDGET
Municipal Building, 120 Piseco Road
November 14th, 2019

Present:

Alicia Rice	Supervisor
Allan Perkins	Councilman
Richard Fogarty	Councilman
Joan Ploss	Councilwoman
Heather VanDenburgh	Town Clerk
Charlie Goodwin	Highway Superintendent
Norman Wright	Codes Enforcement Officer
Karen Jaquay	Dog Control Officer
Michael Sokira	BTI Director
Moira Marshall	Historian

Absent:

Lorraine Rumrill	Councilwoman
David Galarneau	Assessor

Number of Residents in Attendance: 20

Supervisor Rice called the Regular Board Meeting to order at 6:31pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARING ON 2020 PRELIMINARY BUDGET

Supervisor Rice opened the public hearing on the 2020 budget at 6:32pm. She stated that the 2020 budget stayed under the 2% cap and the budget is similar to the 2019 budget. She stated that the Board of Supervisors voted to change the recycling fees at the transfer station from \$10 per ton to \$20 per ton as of 2020, which will increase our solid waste fees by approximately \$500/year. There was a decrease in expected revenue from sales tax in 2020 to accommodate the downward trend. Councilman Fogarty asked about the pay increase for the Supervisor. Supervisor Rice stated that certain town officials have not had a raise in 4 years and that in the 2019 budget workshop it was decided to give these individuals the same percentage raise that the union negotiated for the highway department in this year's contract. She stated this is how Fulton County approves raises. There was an across the board 3% pay increase for Town Supervisor, Clerk, Codes Enforcement, and Dog Control officer and that the salaries have already been published so we could not change them. Councilman Fogarty asked if this was a 3% raise every year; Supervisor Rice said that the budget changes every year and that salaries change. A motion was made to adopt the budget, with Councilman Fogarty opposing. Super. Rice asked why, and he stated his reservations on past monthly budget reports and Super. Rice's bank statements. Supervisor Rice closed the public hearing on the 2020 budget at 6:38pm.

RESOLUTION 34-19 ADOPTION OF THE 2019 BUDGET

RESOLVED, that the Stratford Town Board adopts the final budget as presented at the November 14th, 2019 regular meeting with a final total appropriation cost of \$1,289,149.00, including the Stratford Fire District of \$70,000.00.

Offered by Councilwoman Ploss, seconded by Councilman Perkins

3 AYES **Rice, Perkins, Ploss**
1 NAYS **Fogarty**
1 ABSENT **Rumrill**

Correspondence: We received a letter from BOCES regarding the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Drug and Alcohol (FMCSA) Clearinghouse with questions/answers to how driver records can be queried. CDPHP sent a letter explaining certain benefits. The 2018 NYMIR annual report came, along with a letter stating the increase to town insurance for the addition of the 2020 Mack dump truck to our policy.

Highway Superintendent Goodwin's report was reviewed by the Town Board (See attached). Supt. Goodwin stated that the sand hauling is completed. He reviewed the damages to Stratford's bridges and roads from the 10/31/19 storm. He stated that Powley-Piseco Road sustained major damage. The East Canada Bridge on Piseco Road will be closed on November 15 due to safety issues. The Town of Arietta is working with the Stratford Highway Dept. to repair bridge between Fulton and Hamilton County on Piseco Road. Andy Bell, bridge engineer, is putting in for a full replacement of the East Canada Bridge. FEMA will work with town on funding as damages are found. Steven Santa Maria (Emergency Management Coordinator for Fulton County) and Supt. Goodwin did a pre-assessment of damages on November 11. Funding is determined by total damage amounts within town, county, and state. Super. Rice stated that Stratford has well over a million dollars in damage, and costs could rise as more damage is found. Council. Fogarty asked why Andy Bell had been hired without board approval; Supervisor Rice stated that the town has not hired Andy Bell yet, she only had him write estimates that were due almost immediately to be eligible for FEMA aid. FEMA requires many things, such as pictures, GPS coordinates, and damage descriptions. Supt. Goodwin has to maintain a very detailed daily log of any work pertaining to the flood damage. Much of this information is due November 15. Santa Maria stated it takes 2 weeks for FEMA to come out, and if the monetary threshold is met, they will declare disaster designation. Super. Rice gave the Board a FEMA public assistance fact sheet for review in their packets.

Public speaking was opened at 6:52pm to discuss storm damages and bridge conditions.

Stratford Snowdrifters offered to help with any repairs to ensure snowmobiles can cross the creeks. Super. Rice recommended that the snowmobile club and Highway Supt. work together. G. Rumrill asked about the trees that the hwy. dept. cut up and threw into the ditches; he stated that if they aren't picked up, this will cause further damage with more blocked culverts. It was asked how the Town of Arietta got help so quickly; Super. Rice stated that Santa Maria is currently working with Hamilton County to find out how. Council. Fogarty asked about prevailing wages to the Hwy. Dept. N. Rissmeyer asked if there would be any liability to the Town if the snowmobile club made repairs; Super. Rice stated that all repairs will be engineer-approved, but she would double check. She also reminded the public that due to the possibility that snowmobilers will not be able to frequent our local stores that it is very important that Stratford patronize our local businesses. R. Snowman asked about an island down the East Canada Creek towards Salisbury that has a pile of trees on it, which could cause issues with the ice buildup in the winter. Super. Rice will investigate. Council. Fogarty mentioned the Army Corps of Engineers reinforcing the edge of the creek in Dolgeville, asking if we could also see about similar help to our creek sides.

Public speaking was closed at 7:10pm

RESOLUTION 35-19 Employing Andy Bell as Engineer

RESOLVED that the Stratford Town Board approves hiring Andy Bell as the official Engineer to assess the bridges of Stratford for damages and reconstruction from the October 31, 2019 storm.

Offered by Councilman Fogarty, Seconded by Councilman Perkins

4 AYES Rice, Fogarty, Perkins, Ploss
0 NAYS
1 ABSENT Rumrill

A motion was made by Councilwoman Ploss, seconded by Councilman Fogarty, to decline a \$2600 bid from Arlene Cramer in Salisbury, NY for the Highway Department wood boiler.

4 AYES Rice, Fogarty, Perkins, Ploss
0 NAYS
1 ABSENT Rumrill

Code Enforcement Officer Wright's report was reviewed by the Town Board (See attached)

The Assessor's report was reviewed by the Town Board (See attached). Super. Rice reminded the public that Assessor Galarneau will have a public meeting on Saturday, 11/16, for anyone wishing to attend.

Dog Control Officer Jaquay read her report to the Town Board and provided a copy to the Clerk.

BTI Director Sokira's report was reviewed by the Town Board (See attached) Director Sokira evaluated the 2019 treatment season as "fair" to the DEC due to the late thaw and inability to treat the creeks in time before the first hatching.

Town Historian Moira Marshall verbally conveyed her report this month. She offered a Historical Collections Management Policy to the Town Board for their review. She is hoping to implement this policy so that donations to the Town are made official.

Justice Arena's report for this month was reviewed by the Town Board.

Town Clerk VanDenburgh read her report to the Town Board. (See attached)

A motion was made by Councilman Perkins and seconded by Councilwoman Ploss to allow Matthew Huestis to volunteer his time cleaning out the upstairs of the Town Hall to earn volunteer hours for his senior year.

4 AYES Rice, Fogarty, Perkins, Ploss
0 NAYS
1 ABSENT Rumrill

Supervisor's Report: The Board of Supervisors has accepted the Fulton County budget for 2020. There will be a .43 per thousand tax increase to Stratford; this is due to our decrease in equalization rate from 100% to 97%.

LED STREET LIGHTING UPDATE: National Grid did not replace our street lights with LED lights as Super. Rice was told they would. She is currently fighting with National Grid to fix their mistake.

Financial Report

Super. Rice gave bank statements and sales tax distribution history forms to the Board members. Stratford has received \$3,552.62 less in sales tax than this time last year.

SEPTEMBER ABSTRACTS:

2019 GENERAL FUND	VOUCHERS 110-121	\$ 8,279.56
2019 PREPAID FUND	VOUCHERS 127-140	\$ 5,674.62
2019 HIGHWAY FUND	VOUCHERS 126-138	\$157,555.31

A motion was offered by Councilwoman Ploss, seconded by Councilman Fogarty to approve the payment of these vouchers.

4 AYES Rice, Perkins, Fogarty, Ploss

0 NAYS

1 ABSENT Rumrill

PUBLIC SPEAKING: Commenced at 7:39pm

A resident asked about the power to the transfer station compactor dimming lights. G. Rumrill asked about plowing N. Avery road and the status of the road to the house under construction. Supt. Goodwin stated that the road was removed from NYS and we no longer receive CHIPS money to maintain it, so they will not be doing anything beyond what is already paved. N. Rissmeyer asked about using propane heaters in the town barn instead of a fuel furnace. Super. Rice stated that if funds are available after the roof and flooring repairs needed, they will look to replace the heating system. Super. Rice also asked the public to put their address into their GPS and see where the GPS shows their house is located. If the address shows your house in the wrong spot, you will need to contact Fulton County dispatch at 518-736-2100 to have your 9-1-1 address reevaluated. If the GPS doesn't show your house in the correct spot, it could become an issue if the fire department or ambulance cannot find you. Many members of the public stated that when they put their address into their GPS, their home is in the wrong spot. She requested that the public tell her so she can report the amount of errors to the Sheriff.

PUBLIC SPEAKING: Closed at 7:55pm

OLD BUSINESS: Council. Ploss asked N. Rissmeyer about the men's bathroom floor; he stated he was available to do it, and would come in on Monday the 18th to start when the Town Clerk is open.

NEW BUSINESS: No new business.

With all business concluded, on a motion from Councilwoman Ploss and seconded by Councilman Perkins, the November 2019 regular meeting and public hearing on budget was adjourned at 7:56pm.

4 AYES Rice, Perkins, Fogarty, Ploss

0 NAYS

1 ABSENT Rumrill

-Heather VanDenburgh, Town Clerk

1. Call to order
2. Public hearing on budget
3. Vote on budget
4. Correspondence
 - BOCES
 - CDPHP report
 - NYMIR Annual Report
5. Reports
 - Highway Superintendent
 - ✓ Storm damage report/FEMA process
 - ✓ Resolution as to who will do the estimates
 - ✓ New truck
 - ✓ Town barn: DASNY, heating system, outdoor wood burner
 - Codes Enforcer
 - Assessor: Public meeting Saturday Nov 16th 4 PM
 - Dog Control Officer
 - BTI Director
 - Judge
 - Historian - Historical Collections Management Policy
 - Town clerk
 - ✓ Tax collector software
 - ✓ Disposal of files
 - Supervisor
6. Insurance
 - New truck
 - NYMIR renewal
7. LED street lighting update
8. Financial report
9. Monthly budget update report
 - County sales tax
10. Payment of bills
11. Public speaking
12. Old Business
13. New Business
14. Adjournment

11-11-2019 Highway Report
Down Hill Sand in
Getting Trucks set for plowing Shawt Sand Roads
Got Big Washout on Pisco Road just Bridge to
Harrison Cabin on the East Canada Creek.
Washout on Harris Road from Last Camp to
Bridge The Bridge has Damage
The Pisco Road Bridge has Damage to West
Side Wind Wall
Edick Road Bridge on Steep Brook has Damage
And Wind Fall Bridge has Damage And there is
4ft pipe Washout Between Steep Brook Bridge And
Wall Fall Bridge
Voorhies Road Mill The Bank on west side
of Road is going into The East Canada Creek
About 16.5ft to 20ft West side of Road on
The Edge of Black Top

Highway Superintendent
Chris Foster

CEO REPORT
OCT-8TH-NOV-11TH
ISSUED 6 PERMITS- SHED-
SEPTIC-DEMO-PORCH-
RENEWAL-ADITION
ISSUED 3 C OF C'S
ISSUED 1 APPEARANCE TICKET
1 COURT APPEARANCE
7 INSPECTIONS
2 MEETINGS
ISSUED 1 ORDER TO REMEDY

MANY CALLS

Board Meeting Notes

November 2019

BTI

1. Used 32.3 gallons of VectoBac 12AS for the 2019 treatment season.
2. 2019 spending for BTI was \$7,049
3. As reported to the DEC on the November aquatic insect control report, the evaluation of the treatment season was rated fair. Late start on creeks, as ice was late going out. High water levels hampered treatment effort early on.
4. Our aquatic permit, business permit and our certifications all have to be renewed in 2020 before treatment can begin.
5. We currently have five people interested in becoming pesticide technicians. The 30 hour class is scheduled January 4th 5th 11th and 12th at the Caroga Town Hall, pending DEC approval.

November 14th, 2019 Town Clerk Regular Meeting Report

-I have donated an Olympus VG-160 digital camera to the Code Enforcement Department to use towards inspections. I purchased a new battery and charger for it that I am requesting the Town to reimburse me for, approximately \$10.00.

-A citizen was concerned about the destruction of documents from my own office and the Assessor office. Please note that I adhere to strict timeline and destruction guidelines from the NYS Archives MU-1 Schedule, and I document everything I destroy in a special binder. Any document that is easily FOI'able (in the public domain) with no personal addresses or sensitive information, I place in the recyclable bin at the transfer station. Any document with personal or sensitive information is shredded.

-I placed our 2020 transfer station permit order with Brilliant Designs in Gloversville. The 2020 stickers will be maroon.

-My son Matthew Huestis is earning senior hours by donating his time towards worthy causes. I would like the Town Board to consider allowing Matthew carry down and recycle the electronics above the Town Hall and clean out any excess debris with my supervision.

-I spoke to Felicia Duesler at the Fulton County Treasurer's Office regarding the migration of our tax software to their system called Systems East. At this time, I do not feel it would be beneficial to our township to convert to a new system. Although their software has many positive uses, it also had multiple issues that could make processing payments more difficult. I believe certain aspects need to be addressed before we consider migrating to it.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather VanDenburgh

Assessor's Report

October 2019

11th 1:45pm - 2:15pm 0.50 Hours

Receive keys to office and complete required paperwork for employment, including oath of office. Began looking into office situation and property assessment files. My observations are the files are over-loaded with outdated paperwork that can be removed. Office itself is very un-organized. Will be looking into giving it a good cleaning and purging outdated materials.

19th 11:45am - 5:15pm 5.50 Hours

Held public meeting with about 10 people in attendance. Made available several handouts on property tax and assessment issues. Though not many people attended I believe it is a good start. I intend on holding one or two more of these meetings this year, likely one in November and one in December.

Responded to Senior looking for income information provided previously for an exemption but lost her copy. Began cleaning office and eliminating old assessing manuals and law books no longer kept updated since all of it is available online only. Also removed outdated equipment.

Will be obtaining a copy of the Record Retention Guidelines for assessment offices and using it to further purge assessment files. Though these guidelines offer specific timelines, I intend on retaining any and all documents I believe are important to keep, including photographs.

Finally, I was unable to access the RPS program or Microsoft Office on the new laptop. It was returned to the County for a review. Later, after leaving the office I was able to determine what the situation was regarding the laptop. The Town of Bleeker provided me with a new laptop as well so I worked on that to see if I could resolve the access issues. I did and now understand what needs to be done on the Stratford laptop. Since the County already has it I will wait to see if they resolve it. Either way I should be good to go for my next day in the office.

My next day will be Friday, October 25th from about 3pm-6pm. I will have my office hours for the remainder of 2019 set and a copy of it available for the public. Though I provide "set" office hours, my availability will extend beyond the hours as necessary.

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25th 2:15pm - 6:45pm 4.50 Hours

Went to Fulton County Real Property to pick up laptop. Picked up mail at post office.

Review database for inventory edits. Found 1,480 edits. An edit is any data item that does not conform to the inventory system. Examples are a 210 property class code with no building listed, a 5 acre vacant parcel with only 2 acres inventoried and so on. All edits cannot be eliminated. The 1,480 is not all that bad. Normally a town with very good inventory would have 200-400 edits. Of course I will focus on reducing our number to under 500.

Spoke with Mary Beth who stopped in to make sure I could access the database. I can but am having difficulty with Microsoft Office. It keeps on requesting I sign up for it when it is already on.

David J. Galarneau, Assessor

10-25-19
Date