

**State of New York  
County of Fulton  
Town of Stratford**

Minutes of the Stratford Regular Board meeting held on Thursday, November 12, 2020 at the municipal building located at 120 Piseco Rd.

**Present:**

Heather VanDenburgh	---	Supervisor
Allan Perkins	---	Councilman
Joan Ploss	---	Councilwoman
Tiffany Rutkowski	---	Councilwoman
Lorraine Rumrill	---	Councilwoman, arrived at 6:37 pm
Lawrence Staring	---	Highway Superintendent
Norman Wright	---	Code Enforcement Officer
Michael Albanese	---	Town Attorney
Diana Massicotte	---	Town Clerk

**Absent:**

Michael Sokira	---	BTI Director
David Galarneau	---	Sole Assessor
Karen Jaquay	---	Dog Control Officer
Moira Marshall	---	Town Historian

**Residents in Attendance:** Allicia Rice, Gary Rumrill, Peter and Mary Szczebak, Sonia Rissmeyer and Melanie Staring.

Supervisor VanDenburgh called the regular meeting to order at 6:33 pm with the Pledge to the Flag.

Supervisor VanDenburgh thanked Deputy Supervisor Rice for filling in for her at the last meeting.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

Letter from the Dolgeville Lodge asking for donations to the annual Christmas Party which will be held on December 7.

Letter from the Adirondack-Appalachian Regional Emergency Medical Services Council which read in part as follows:

We wish to advise you that this Council has received an application from the City of Johnstown Fire Department, seeking to obtain a permanent Certificate of Need to operate their ambulance service, with the service primary operating territory being the City of Johnstown municipal boundaries.

The Regional Council is charged with the responsibility of determining whether there exists public need for the service. Public Need may be defined as “the demonstrated absence, reduced availability or an

inadequate level of care in ambulance or emergency medical service available to a geographical area, which is not readily correctible through the reallocation or improvement of existing resources.”

Follow-up email from Steven Santa Maria saying: I am guessing that you received the letter because there is a slight possibility that the Johnstown Fire Department Ambulance could go to Stratford. I am not certain if that is why, so I am checking with the Adirondack Appalachian Regional EMS Agency to see why you received the letter. When I hear back from them I will update you on any pertinent information they provide.

We continue to work on a plan that would help stabilize the EMS System in Fulton County. Unfortunately that plan doesn't come without a cost. We have just recently met with an attorney that specializes in Emergency Medical Service law to discuss some options and ideas that we think would work. We made some pretty good progress and hopefully will continue to push ahead with some ideas that we think will help.

The call volume in the western part of the County does not make it affordable for a commercial agency to place an ambulance there full time. This is a pretty major stumbling block for us, but, as I said we do have some ideas that we believe would work to improve things out west. Improve, not solve completely.

## **REPORTS:**

**Highway Superintendent** Staring read his report as follows:

Got some ditching done on Seeley Road. Still have more to do, weather dependent. Met with Gorman and Suit-Kote to plan work for next year, short section of Piseco road, Seeley Road and Powerhouse road. Waiting to hear back from Hansen about the problem on West Shore road.

Should finish hauling sand in next week.

The bulldozer has a problem with the fuel system, it will only idle. Spoke with a mechanic about repairs, will be \$2,500 - \$3,500 to fix. I talked with the men about how often the machine gets used and was told other than piling sand it has only been on the road 3 times in the last 15 years. I think we would be better off to rent a machine when needed than fix this one.

The radiator in Truck 9 failed again, the company we bought it from did warrantee it, we just had to pay shipping. The truck was down from 10/14 to 11/5.

There is an overheating issue with Truck 8, that truck went down 11/3. We should have parts for it tomorrow. We also had the front wing cylinder rebuilt.

The water pump failed on the Loader, that was replaced, and it is back in service.

We had a Facility Inspection for the fuel tanks by the DEC. All the faults they found have been addressed; labeling on the kerosene tank, a gauge on the kerosene tank and some cleaning in the spill protection for the diesel tank. Pictures have been sent to DEC.

Weekly calls with FEMA continue, the three Edick Road projects are working their way through the system. Putting information together to submit this year, Piseco Road Bridge, rest of Piseco Road, black top.

Councilwoman Rutkowski had some questions on a couple of vouchers which Highway Superintendent Staring answered. She asked if we were ready for winter. Superintendent Staring said they were working on getting the issues taken care of. Councilwoman Rumrill asked if there was a record of maintenance on all the trucks kept in the trucks. Superintendent Staring said the records were kept up and in the trucks.

**Code Enforcement Officer Wright reports:**

October 6 – November 9  
Eleven Inspections  
Issued one permit – New home  
Issued one Certificate of Compliance  
Two meetings  
Many calls  
School 2-1/2 days, internet

**Assessor's report for October reads as follows:**

October 9 – Received decision on the Buckwalter small claim assessment review case. As I expected, the hearing officer granted the full reduction to \$86,000 due to the “claimed” abandonment of the road by the Town. Apparently, it did not matter that Mr. Buckwalter admitted the Town Highway Crew was keeping the road open but not plowing it. Mr. Buckwalter now enjoys a \$52,500 assessment on a 2016 Colonial home with 1,440 square feet of living space plus the \$33,500 for land. I must note the hearing officer, Mr. Wayne Miller, reduces over 90% of the cases he hears.

Made an address correction and returned a phone call.

Reviewed assessments for two waterfront properties, sent letter to owners of my review. Begun listing building permits for field review. I am having difficulty understanding these permits, as data is missing, incorrect, or illegible.

October 10 – No calls received.

October 23 – Return phone messages and input address changes. Went to County Real Property to pick up tax maps and property transfers. Reviewed the transfers for completeness and exemption changes. Responded to emails received.

October 24 – No calls expected. Will report if messages received.

NOTE: If additional time is worked during this month it will be noted in next month's report.

**Dog Control Officer Jaquay report read as follows:**

October 8 – November 11

I received several calls for lost dogs. Not all were located.

I picked up a stray after 9:00 pm and was unable to locate the owner. I then transported the dog to Brennan Humane Society

I picked up 2 new leashes and one choker collar. I will be needing a couple of more chokers in different sizes.

I looked over the new contract from Brennan and found it to be acceptable.

The rest of the month was quiet.

Motion made by Supervisor VanDenburgh, seconded by Councilwoman Rutkowski to purchase 50 warning door hangars for the DCO.

**ADOPTED** Ayes - 5 VanDenburgh, Ploss, Rutkowski, Rumrill and Perkins  
Nays – 0

**RESOLUTION 31-2020**

**RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE 2021 CONTRACT AGREEMENT WITH JAMES A. BRENNAN MEMORIAL HUMANE SOCIETY**

**RESOLVED** that the Town Board of Stratford accepts the terms of the James A. Brennan Memorial Humane Society Contract Agreement for the fiscal year 2021.

Offered by: Supervisor VanDenburgh, seconded by Councilwoman Rutkowski

**ADOPTED** Ayes - 5 VanDenburgh, Ploss, Rutkowski, Rumrill and Perkins  
Nays – 0

**BTI Director** Michael Sokira no report

**Judge** Rissmeyer submitted a copy of his monthly report – no activity.

**Town Historian** No report.

**Town Clerk Massicotte** reported she received a letter from the County Treasurer’s Office regarding a new tax collecting system. She will look into it.

Clerk Massicotte asked about the left over Christmas presents from last year. The Board suggested contacting the Masonic Lodge and Attorney Albanese suggested contacting Anne Sollar, DSS.

Supervisor VanDenburgh gave a Verizon fiber update. May not make their December 31 deadline.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

2021 Budget adopted on November 5, 2020 and filed on November 9, 2020 with Fulton County.

Quickbooks monthly budget update report given to Board.

Quarterly Sales Tax distribution received (\$94,607.86).

Letter received from CDPHP regarding 2021 Health Insurance Premiums.

**RESOLUTION 32-2020**

**RESOLUTION TO ACCEPTANCE OF FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND FROM DAMAGES PERTAINING TO THE OCTOBER 31, 2019 STORM**

**WHEREAS**, the Stratford Town Board hereby accepts the following check amounts from FEMA pertaining to the damages that have been repaired thus far from the October 31, 2019 storm:

Offered by: Supervisor VanDenburgh, seconded by Councilwoman Rumrill

**ADOPTED**    Ayes - 5        VanDenburgh, Ploss, Rutkowski, Rumrill and Perkins  
                  Nays – 0

**AUDIT OF CLAIMS**

Motion made by Supervisor VanDenburgh, seconded by Councilwoman Ploss to approve the November bills.

**ADOPTED**    Ayes – 5        VanDenburgh, Ploss, Rutkowski, Rumrill and Perkins  
                  Nays – 0

2020 General Fund	Voucher Nos. 121 - 140	\$ 5,419.96
2020 Prepaid Fund	Voucher Nos. 77 - 83	\$58,501.74
2020 Highway Fund	Voucher Nos. 85 - 97	\$11,821.21

**PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Public Speaking opened at 7:09. Podium set up for speakers, each speaker allowed five minutes. Council members can discuss but not required to respond.

Sonia Rissmeyer gave information on Verizon Fiber. Norman Wright also gave information regarding Verizon.

Gary Rumrill spoke about the Avery Road Extension. Mentioned that the dump trucks were not being covered all the time. Councilwoman Rumrill said she also had experienced truck not being covered. Highway Superintendent said he would talk to his men about it.

Peter Szczebak asked about the underground installation around town.

Public speaking closed at 7:20 pm.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Supervisor VanDenburgh said she would have some budget transfers next month.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Councilwoman Rutkowski stated she would like to have a Christmas house lighting contest for Stratford residents to be judged on December 19. Entries must be submitted by December 12. Lights judged December 19. Most creative prizes will be awarded for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>. places.

With no further business, on a motion by Supervisor VanDenburgh,, seconded by Councilwoman Ploss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Massicotte, Town Clerk