

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

Minutes of the Stratford Regular Board meeting held on Thursday, February 11, 2021 at the municipal building located at 120 Piseco Rd.

Present:

Heather VanDenburgh	---	Supervisor
Allan Perkins	---	Councilman
Joan Ploss	---	Councilwoman
Tiffany Rutkowski	---	Councilwoman, arrived at 6:35 p.m.
Lorraine Rumrill	---	Councilwoman
Lawrence Staring	---	Highway Superintendent
Norman Wright	---	Code Enforcement Officer
Michael Sokira	---	BTI Director
Michael Albanese	---	Town Attorney
Lawrence Neely	---	Deputy Town Clerk

Absent:

Karen Jaquay	---	Dog Control Officer
David Galarmeau	---	Sole Assessor
Moirra Marshall	---	Town Historian

Residents in Attendance: None due to COVID.

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

CORRESPONDENCE:

Supervisor VanDenburgh noted the 4th Quarter Sales Tax Distribution Report from the Fulton County Budget Director/ County Auditor's office reflecting a nearly 22% increase in the fourth quarter of 2020 compared to the fourth quarter of 2019. Stratford received \$93,866.46 in 2021 compared to \$76,967.84. She said much of the increase was due to increased collections from on-line sales.

The Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board requested a resolution of agreement between the Town of Stratford and the Review Board to represent the town in matters relating to the Park for the annual fee of \$300.

RESOLUTION+ #35 - 2021

Resolution by Supervisor VanDenburgh to approve the contract seconded by Councilwoman Ploss.

Adopted: AYES 5 VanDenburgh, Perkins, Ploss, Rumrill, Rutkowski
NAYS 0

REPORTS:

Highway Superintendent Staring read his report as follows:

Crews have been busy keeping up with the snow – plowing, sanding and clear banks at intersections. Used 112 tons of salt in January, bringing total used this year so far to 218 tons, leaving 132 tons for the remainder of the season.

Recently there have been issues with vehicles using seasonal portions of some roads. One local tow company has pulled several vehicles from Bliss Road and a couple of nights ago had to retrieve on approximately a mile in on the seasonal part of Edick Road. The signs are in place and visible.

Truck 9 (2014 Freightliner) is down hard with a clutch problem and is at Mohawk Valley Freightliner. Knowing it would be down for an extended period, we dug the old 2002 truck out of the snow and are using it in its place.

The parking brake solenoid failed on the 624J loader, it was replaced and is back in service. The old loader was used until the repair could be made.

Truck 7 (2007 Sterling) had more air system problems, replaced the governor on the air compressor and so far it is OK.

FEMA weekly calls continue. They are also doing virtual site inspections on damages that still need to be repaired. Last week we did the Stony Brook culvert. Yesterday we did the 4 large culverts on Red House, Piseco, Dugway and Kelly roads. Next week will be the one for Windfall Creek and the following week the Hawes Road Bridge.

I would like the board's advice on Windfall Creek, the bridge/culvert and the section of road beyond. There is a chance of getting an alternate project. DHS and FEMA are checking into it. Since there is only a short section of road between the culvert and the DEC gate and only snowmobiles are allowed through the gate by DEC. If we do an alternative project, the town would need to abandon the road, but retain the right-of-way and that short section could still be used by snowmobilers as the temporary repairs made to the culvert is safe for use by snowmobiles.

After a brief discussion, it was the consensus of the board to delay making any decision until the cost of repairs to the Windfall Creek culvert are known and if there is a suitable alternative project.

Code Enforcement Officer Wright reported:

During the month of January he had one inspection, one meeting, issued one certificate of occupancy, attended two classes on Zoom, and handled a few calls.

He also noted he was very happy with his new printer. Supervisor VanDenburgh reported that Allicia Rice had two printers she was not using that she donated to the town and one was given to Wright.

Assessor's report for December reads as follows:

January 8 (2-7 p.m.) – Return phone calls. Prepared and submitted a tax bill correction document to a property owner. Responded to emails and processed exemption renewal applications. No heat for a while but issue was resolved by about 4:30 p.m.

January 9 (8-9:30 a.m. at home only) – No calls received.

January 22 (2-7 p.m.) – Received 3 messages, all from the same person, about a Veteran's Exemption. Found out he applied last summer and the exemption will not show on the January 2021 bill. Processed exemptions and prepared a list of new property owners since 01/01/2020 for the Black Fly Program/

January 23 (8-9:30 a.m. at home only) – No calls received.

BTI Director:

Michael Sokira reported all pesticide reporting to the DEC for 2020 is complete. I have requested the spreadsheet of all 2020 real estate transactions from the Assessor. As soon as I receive it I will mail out information on BTI to all on the list. We have lost one applicator. We are down to four and it is too late to try to train a replacement. I will schedule a meeting with all the applicators before starting the treatment season to determine how to cover all the streams.

Dog Control Officer's report as follows:

She finally got her phone problems resolved. She can receive calls at 315-429-3091. She is preparing for her Ag and Markets inspections. She is positive she will pass. She has been on call all month, but had no calls. Superintendent VanDenburgh requested that the Town Clerk's Office update the Town's website to reflect the Dog Control Officer's phone number.

Town Justice:

Judge Rissmeyer submitted a copy of his monthly report showing receipts of \$200.

Town Historian No report.

Town Clerk: No Report

Town Supervisor:

Supervisor VanDenburgh reported that annual audit of the Clerk and Town Justice books were held on Jan. 16 and Jan. 20, 2021, and made the following recommendations to the Clerk to be filed with the annual audit.

Supervisor VanDenburgh reported she and Highway Superintendent Lawrence Staring participated in a Jurisdictional Review on Jan. 26 to continue to be eligible for FEMA funds.

RESOLUTION# 36-2021

RESOLUTION FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AID/STATE AID FROM DAMAGES PERTAINING TO THE OCTOBER 31, 2019 STORM

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

January 26, 2021 Check #08048697 \$17,056.04
January 27, 2021 Check #08050011 \$726.81

Motion to accept offered by Supervisor VanDenburgh, seconded by Councilman Perkins

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

Supervisor VanDenburgh read a letter from Kelly Wilder tendering her resignation as town bookkeeper effective March 31, 2021. She noted that Wilder has agreed to train Supervisor VanDenburgh to take over some of her responsibilities. There was a discussion as to what services the Supervisor could assume and what professional services would need to be contracted out. The Supervisor said she would explore the board's options and report back.

Supervisor VanDenburgh reported that there were two applicants to fill the two vacancies on Board of Assessment Review, John Ploss and Connie Van Laer.

RESOLUTION# 37-2021

Resolution made by Councilman Perkins, seconded by Councilwoman Rutkowski to appoint John Ploss and Connie Van Laer to the Board of Assessment Review.

ADOPTED Ayes - 4 VanDenburgh, Rutkowski, Rumrill and Perkins
 Nays - 0 Councilwoman Ploss abstained

Lawrence Neely, the third member of the Board of Assessment Review who was in attendance at the meeting in his capacity of Deputy Town Clerk, if he would be willing to chair the BAR. He told the board at this time he has so many commitments for time that he would be unable to chair the BAR.

Motion made by Supervisor VanDenburgh, seconded by Councilwoman Ploss to go into executive session at 7:20 p.m. to discuss employment history of E. Baulch.

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

The Town Board came out of Executive Session and was called to order by Supervisor VanDenburg at 7:38 p.m.

Quickbooks monthly budget update report given to Board.

AUDIT OF CLAIMS

Motion made by Supervisor VanDenburgh, seconded by Councilwoman Ploss, to approve payment of January’s bills.

Jan. 2021 General Fund	Voucher Nos. 7 – 19	\$ 13,928.26
Jan. 2021 Prepaid Fund	Voucher Nos. 4 – 17	\$ 8,237.53
Jan. 2021 Highway Fund	Voucher Nos. 1 - 13	\$ 26,296.77

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

PUBLIC SPEAKING

None due to COVID restrictions

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Supervisor VanDenburg requested the board authorize the purchase of a web camera and microphone so that Town Board meetings could be streamed on the Town’s website so people who were unable to attend the meeting could watch them. She said she should be able to acquire all the needed equipment for around \$100.

Motion by Councilwoman Ploss, seconded Councilwoman Rutkowski to approve the purchase of the Web camera and microphone.

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

With no further business, on a motion by Councilwoman Ploss, seconded by Councilwoman Rutkowski, the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lawrence Neely, Deputy Town Clerk