

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

Minutes of the Stratford Regular Board meeting held on Thursday, April 8, 2021 at the municipal building located at 120 Piseco Rd.

Present:

Heather VanDenburgh	---	Supervisor
Allan Perkins	---	Councilman
Tiffany Rutkowski	---	Councilwoman
Joan Ploss	---	Councilwoman
Lawrence Staring	---	Highway Superintendent
Norman Wright	---	Code Enforcement Officer
Michael Albanese	---	Town Attorney
Lawrence Neely	---	Town Clerk
Michael Sokira	---	BTI Director

Absent:

Lorraine Rumrill	---	Councilwoman.
Karen Jaquay	---	Dog Control Officer
David Galarnau	---	Sole Assessor
Moirra Marshall	---	Town Historian

Residents in Attendance: Five.

Supervisor VanDenburgh called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the Pledge to the Flag. She noted that the meeting was also broadcast on YouTube from a link on the township's home page.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

REPORTS:

Highway Dept.:

Highway Superintendent Staring reported town crews dealt with five weather events requiring sanding and/or plowing. Town received the last load of salt delivered from this year's allotment.

Made repairs to the F550 to get it to pass inspection. Crews continue getting the equipment ready for the spring and summer.

Weekly calls to FEMA continue. He said he finished the paperwork on the bridge project and has been submitted. FEMA has estimated the Windfall Creek culvert repairs at \$73,190.88 and at 75% will reimburse the town \$54,893.16.

He said he has an estimate of nearly \$200,000 for the replacement of the Stony Brook Culvert. He is working with R&B Construction on a plan to repair rather than replace the culvert which will cost substantially less. He is still waiting on the land surveyor for the Vorbees Road project.

The Highway Superintendent said he wants to purchase a hydraulic thumb drive for the excavator which will allow the operator to be much more efficient and productive. He said he has a price quote of \$5,600 from the vendor that sold the town the excavator. He said town employees could install it and with

misc. parts the total cost would be closer to \$6,000. It was the consensus of the board that the purchase would be appropriate, but he would need to follow purchasing policy and obtain at least 2 estimates.

He concluded he has had only one applicant for the mechanic position. Councilwoman Rutkowski said the board is not involved in employment decisions for his department and it was his decision.

Code Enforcement Officer Wright:

During the month of March he attended two meetings, attended six hours of schooling and handled a few calls. He said he expected his workload to increase as the pandemic restrictions are eased.

Assessor's report for February:

March 5 (2-7:45 p.m.) – Encountered computer problems, was finally able to get them. He said he returned one phone call and keypunched several change of address requests into the system. He also processed some exemption applications and renewals. He met with one property owner about exemptions and researched a significant number of addresses used for tax billing that were returned by the Post Office as undeliverable and cannot be forwarded to.

March 6 (8-9:30 a.m.) – (at home only) No calls received.

March 19 – Did not work for health reasons

March 20 (8-9:30 a.m.) – (at home only) No calls received.

March 27 (8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.) - Did exemption processing and document sorting.

The Town Supervisor noted that Assessor David Galarneau is surveying properties within the township and he has encountered people asking who he is and what he is doing. She said she had suggested he get business cards. She said Galarneau said other towns have issued Photo ID badges. She said it might be helpful for him and perhaps also the animal control officer to have official photo IDs. It was the consensus of the board that the Supervisor look into photo IDs.

BTI Director:

He reported updating maps to reflect landowners' decisions about access to creeks. Said he had met with the team to divide the workload up. Water levels were high prior to the last few days of March, but they were able to get started treating the creeks once water levels went down.

Dog Control Officer:

She emailed her report to the supervisor. She reported making 2 inspections and will be issuing several tickets to town court later in the month.

Town Justice:

Judge Rissmeyer submitted a copy of his monthly report showing receipts of \$100.

Town Historian: No report.

Town Clerk:

Clerk reported he appointed Stratford resident Traci Cooper as the new deputy clerk.

Town Supervisor:

RESOLUTION# 16-2021

RESOLUTION FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT 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:

March 10, 2021	Check #08093377	\$17,278.07
March 16, 2021	Check #08101148	\$ 2,635.64
March 15, 2021	Check #08099112	\$ 2,842.67

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

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

The Supervisor noted she has two applicants for the open cleaner position at town hall and would like to schedule an executive session to interview the two candidates. She noted that one of the applicants is Karen Jaquay, the town’s dog control officer. The Supervisor said she has consulted with Town Attorney Michael Albanese and he opined that she could hold both positions. It was the consensus of the board that she poll the members and arrive at a mutually agreeable time and date where a quorum would be present to interview the candidates.

According to the Supervisor, the town’s insurer NYMIR indicated repairs to the gazebo adjacent to the Town Offices and Community Center, that collapsed under the weight of this winter’s snow, are covered. They are requiring the town to get two quotes before proceeding with repairs.

The Supervisor reminded the board that the contract with the Highway Department employees expires soon and contract talks should begin soon. She said she has two quotes for professionals to lead the talks on behalf of the town. Strategic Labor Services, the firm that represented the town during negotiations on the current contract said they would represent the town for an hourly rate of \$90. Town Attorney Michael Albanese has proposed a flat fee of \$3,000 for basic negotiations and charging an hourly rate should the talks go to mediation. It was the consensus of the board to delay any decision until the next Council meeting.

The QuickBooks monthly budget update was given to the Board by the Supervisor.

AUDIT OF CLAIMS

Motion made by Councilwoman Ploss, seconded by Councilman Perkins, to approve payment of April’s bills.

April 2021 General Fund	Voucher Nos. 24 – 29	\$ 2,712.91
April 2021 Prepaid Fund	Voucher Nos. 24 – 30	\$ 3,859.88
April 2021 Highway Fund	Voucher Nos. 20 - 29	\$ 10,440.69

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

PUBLIC SPEAKING:

Heather Scribner, Republican candidate for the office of Fulton County Treasurer, spoke briefly to the group about her background and qualifications for office.

Gary Rumrill praised the work of Highway Superintendent Lawrence Staring on repairs to the Avery Road Bridge and Hadcock Road which eliminated flooding. He also asked if the Town Attorney had made a ruling regarding Town Clerk Lawrence Neely also serving as a member of the Board of Assessment Review. Town Supervisor said the attorney said there is no conflict of interest.

OLD BUSINESS

Councilwoman Rutkowski asked if she could continue this year with the landscaping around the sign in the Town Park on Highway 29A and post generic messages on the signboard. It was the consensus of the board that there would be no objection.

NEW BUSINESS: None

With no further business, on a motion by Supervisor VanDenburgh, seconded by Councilman Perkins, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lawrence Neely, Town Clerk