

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

Minutes of the regular Stratford Town Board meeting held on Thursday, October 14, 2021 at the municipal building located at 120 Piseco Rd.

Present:

Heather VanDenburgh	---	Supervisor
Allan Perkins	---	Councilman
Tiffany Rutkowski	---	Councilwoman
Joan Ploss	---	Councilwoman
Lorraine Rumrill	---	Councilwoman
Lawrence Staring	---	Highway Superintendent
Lawrence Neely	---	Town Clerk
Michael Albanese	---	Town Attorney
Karen Jaquay	---	Dog Control Officer
Moirra Marshall	---	Town Historian
Christopher Tesi	---	Deputy Clerk

Absent:

Michael Sokira	---	BTI Director
David Galarneau	---	Town Assessor
Norman Wright	---	Code Enforcement Officer

Residents in Attendance: Five

Supervisor VanDenburgh called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the Pledge to the Flag. The meeting was broadcast on YouTube and available from a link on town's web page

CORRESPONDENCE: None

REPORTS:

Highway Dept.: Highway Superintendent Staring reported that the department had a busy month, but continue to have staffing problems. Another employee resigned and has one employee still out on medical leave. Two new employees have been hired they are working on getting their CDLs.

He reported that the roadside mowing has been completed; with the help of trucks from Oppenheim, Salisbury and Manheim all of the needed winter sand is in the yard; potholes have been patched; limbs removed from the roads and roadside; and millings were used to reinforce shoulders on Mallett Hill Road.

Also, the new box from Truck 9 will not be delivered until sometime in December; the trucks are being readied for the winter season and he found bearing that will work on the blower in the furnace at the town garage. H also noted that FEMA calls continue and he is still waiting for design plans for Vorhees Road.

With the staffing problems in mind, Staring asked the council for permission to create a pool of temporary hires to draw from in the event there is a snow event and not enough drivers with CDLs. He

proposed paying them \$20 per hour with no benefits. They would work only as drivers and only on an as-needed basis.

Councilwoman Tiffany Rutkowski objected saying that the rate of \$20 per hour is more than what most of the other employees would make and might encourage other existing employee to drop back to part-time to get the higher pay rate. She said the focus should be on hiring and retaining permanent employees. Staring assured her that the part-time pool would not replace full-time employees and would only be used if there not enough CDL drivers to staff all the trucks.

A motion by Councilwoman Lorraine Rumrill, seconded by Supervisor VanDenburgh, to approve the hiring of temporary employees for the Highway Dept. at a rate of \$20 per hour was approved 4-1.

ADOPTED Ayes 4: Rumrill, VanDenburgh, Ploss, Perkins
Nays – 1 Rutkowski

Code Enforcement Officer: He reported conducting 2 inspections, attending 2 meeting, issuing one certificate of occupancy, issued one order of remedy and renewed 2 permits for roofs.

Town Assessor: No report

Dog Control Officer: She investigated one incident of a dog running at-large off his owner's property that may be a potential case of neglect. She called the Fulton County Sheriff's Department who said they were too busy to follow up and referred her to the State Police who had not gotten back to her on the case. She said she will be issuing 2 tickets for failure to license.

BTI Director: No report.

Town Justice: Judge Rissmeyer submitted a copy of his monthly report to the State Comptroller's office showing fines of \$438 turned over the State Comptroller.

Town Historian: She reported she attended the Associate of Public Historian's Conference Sept. 13. On Sept. 25 the Stratford Historical Society held an open house at Town Hall with slides shows of pictures from the past along with displays of other items. The event was well received. On Oct. 2 she and another member of the Historical Society participated in the 1st Fulton County History Fair. It was also well received with over 100 attendees

Town Clerk: Clerk introduced Christopher Tesi who was recently appointed deputy clerk. He said with Tesi's assistance the record room is in much better condition with everything up off the floor and on the shelves. Six storage boxes filled with vouchers and abstracts for regular monthly bills (other than payroll) that were all at least 10 years old had been identified for destruction under rules of the State Archives and will be turned over the town historian for review to make sure items of historical significance or interest are not destroyed.

Town Supervisor:

FINANCIAL REPORT:

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

AUDIT OF CLAIMS:

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

October 2021 General Fund	Voucher Nos. 74-89	\$ 7,260.08
October 2021 Prepaid Fund	Voucher Nos. 84-90	\$ 55,365.55
October 2021 Highway Fund	Voucher Nos. 91-103	\$ 88,803.20

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

PUBLIC SPEAKING: Public speaking was opened at 6:55 p.m. The only speakers were Town Historian and Gary Rumrill who both addressed the topic of the town taking over abandoned cemeteries in the town so they could be maintained. Presently the town's Highway Department is mowing three cemeteries but other maintenance, such as fencing repairs and headstone cleaning, are not being done at any of the cemeteries. Town Attorney Michael Albanese said he had done some research on the matter but needed to do more to be able to advise what might need to be taken including the formation of a cemetery board to actually operate the cemeteries for the town. He said he would continue to review the matter and report back

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Supervisor VanDenburgh reported that she had erred in providing revenue estimates for the coming year. Instead of a large surplus, she said she and the bookkeeper had concluded there would be \$25,000 shortfall that would have to be covered either using funds from the town's savings or reduce expenditures to avoid a tax increase. The consensus was that the budget had been reduced as much as possible and savings should be used to avoid the tax increase.

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

A motion set a public hearing for Thursday, Nov. 11, at 6:30 p.m. as the first item on that night's agenda of the regular November Town Council meeting was proposed by Councilwoman Ploss, seconded by Councilwoman Rumrill

With there being no further business to discuss, a motion by Supervisor VanDenburgh, seconded by Councilwoman Rumrill, to adjourn the meeting was unanimously approved.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Lawrence Neely, Town Clerk