

VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2014

In Attendance: Supervisor Schaffer; Board Members Fitzgerald, Majewski and Messina

Also Attending: Town Attorney David Berger, Human Resource Officer Nancy Olmstead, Comptroller Laura McKane, Highway Superintendent Brock Leonard, Town Clerk Emil Bielecki and eight members of the community.

WORK SESSION - Supervisor Schaffer convened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

6:00 Highway Superintendent Brock Leonard appeared before the Board to discuss the need for the Highway Department to purchase additional road salt. We are in the midst of a very difficult winter with frequent storms. These conditions have resulted in heavy salt use. We are already at 120% of what we anticipated to purchase under the state contract for this year. Brock anticipates that he needs about \$100,000 to purchase the additional salt that is needed to take us through the end of the year.

Comptroller McKane noted that the harsh winter will also likely cause the overtime line to go over budget. It is too early in the year to transfer money from other Highway operating budget lines toward the purchase of additional salt. If the Board authorizes the purchase of the salt, it will need to come out of fund balance.

After a brief discussion about salt conservation measures and the possible use of alternate materials for road de-icing, the Board requested Comptroller McKane to prepare a budget resolution for the Regular Meeting on Wednesday to authorize the transfer of funds for the additional salt purchase.

6:30 Anthony Folk, the owner of Root Trail Development, addressed the Board concerning a proposed Bike Race at Jones Park. He distributed to the Board copies of waivers and insurance documents that would be provided to the Town if the race is approved.

Councilman Majewski wanted more information about the type of vendors who would be invited to participate and expressed a concern about the plan to allow camping with open fires.

Mr. Folk noted that he already contacted the Vestal Emergency Squad and received a positive response about providing some support. As to the vendors, he hopes to attract a few bicycle shops to come and display their wares.

Councilman Majewski and Supervisor Schaffer advised Mr. Folk to contact the Fire and Police Departments to work out some of the concerns about open fires and other safety issues. If there will be cooking on site, Mr. Folk will need to talk to the Broome County Health Department and secure the required permits. Also, he needs to submit a completed Environmental Impact Form.

The Board asked Mr. Folk to provide the requested information back to the Board as it becomes available and the Board will likely address the topic again at the next Work Session.

6:45 Insurance Consultant Doug Bulman addressed the Board concerning the renewal of the Town's Health Insurance contract. He highlighted the following points:

- We currently have a Minimum Premium (fully insured) contract with Excellus and are negotiating to go to a self-insured Administrative Service Contract (ASC).

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- The current plan has some serious issues with reporting, claims management, client service and transparency.
- The main differences in ASC are: lower Affordable Care Act tax liability; removes unnecessary insurance costs; removes monthly claims cap; flexibility in plan design; shifts financial responsibility to client.
- ASC will improve the level of reporting and will produce some savings to the Town.

Mr. Bulman and Human Resource Officer Nancy Olmstead stressed that this changeover will affect the financing of the health insurance plan but **will not affect the benefits**. Mr. Bulman expects that all of the elements to proceed with the changeover to the Administrative Service Contract should be ready for Board approval at the Regular Meeting on March 12th.

COMMITTEES

7.1 PUBLIC WORKS

1. Request from Highway Superintendent Brock Leonard to advertise on March 5, 2014 for a Material Screen / Tracked Conveyor, with bids to be opened March 11, 2014.

Highway Superintendent Brock Leonard noted that this new piece of equipment will save the Town money because it will produce materials that can be reused for various road repair and back-filling purposes.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

2. Request from Mr. & Mrs. Kahn at 224 Reese Ave to lower the sewage bill \$78.08 due to a hose bursting outside the house.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

3. Request from Mr. & Mrs. Siegers at 329 Main Street to lower the sewage bill \$92.72 due to a broken pipe supplying the washing machine.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

4. Request from Mr. Wayne Alt at 317 Rayelene Drive to lower the sewage bill \$24.40 due to a hose bursting outside the house.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

5. Request from Jim Bukowski, Parks Superintendent to accept a donation of trusses from Jared Fiacco.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

7.2 FINANCE

1. **Warrants** – 2014 07, 07A, 07E

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OK - This item will be placed on the Agenda as a Receive and File item at the next Regular Meeting.

7.3 PERSONNEL

1. Discuss possible changes to Sections 805 and 807 of the Employee Handbook

Human Resource Office Nancy Olmstead asked the Board to review a draft of the changes to Section 805 and Section 807 of the Employee Handbook. The reason for the changes is to make some adjustments to the language to be in compliance with the Affordable Care Act and to amend some of the contribution levels for health benefits to be consistent with the various bargaining units. The longer term goal is to raise contribution levels.

After a brief discussion, the Board recommended one additional change: the contribution by the grandfathered part-time elected officials should be increased to 20% in 2016.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

7.4 PLANNING & ZONING

1. Request from BARA (Binghamton Amateur Radio Association Inc.) to have a Phil's Chicken Fundraiser on May 18, 2014 in the library parking lot.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

7.5 PUBLIC SAFETY

1. Request from John Butler, Chief of Police to approve a payment of \$5,548.38 from the Asset Forfeiture Line to cover the repairs to #311, the SWAT truck to Royal Ford Motors in Owego.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

2. Request from Patrick McPherson, Fire Chief to approve the following Fire Police members to attend Fire Police Training and Education Seminar on March 15, 2014 at the NYS Fire Academy in Montour Falls: Donald Leip, Mark Sanford, Eugene Wagner and Harold Weaver.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

7.6 ADMINISTRATION

1. Request from Vestal Town Court to accept a grant for \$5,711.95 from Justice Court Assistance Program for a new fax machine and printer, security equipment, and new furniture for the Judges' offices.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Community Electronic Signs

Supervisor Schaffer stated that this item has been discussed for a long time and it's time to move on it. Town Attorney David Berger indicated that he would draft a local law with the proposed changes to the Sign Ordinance for consideration at the Regular Meeting on March 12th.

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2. Resolution to temporarily exclude trucks and other similar vehicles exceeding a certain designated gross weight from some town roads

Town Attorney Berger stated that he is working with the Highway Superintendent to prepare the resolution for consideration by the Board. In particular, he is waiting for the Highway Superintendent to provide additional information about the roads which will be affected.

3. Appointment of George Gerner to the vacancy on the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and an alternate.

Human Resource Officer Nancy Olmstead stated that she has received two letters of interest for serving on the ZBA, with only one of them providing a resume.

After reviewing the applications, Board engaged in a brief discussion and instructed Ms. Olmstead to prepare a resolution for the next Regular Meeting appointing George Gerner as a member of the ZBA and Eugene Burns as an alternate member on the ZBA.

4. Renewal of Lease for 133 Front Street.

Several Board members indicated that we currently do not have an alternate location to consider for relocating our operations at 133 Front Street. The Board asked Town Attorney Berger to approach the property owner about extending the lease to year-end.

5. Payment to Kenneth Frommer of \$4256.00 for appraisal of Clayton Village Apartments

Supervisor Schaffer stated that errors were made when this property was looked at during the Town's revaluation process resulting in additional work that needed to be done to complete this appraisal. Town Attorney Berger added that the new figure is a 30% discount off the actual hours that Mr. Frommer devoted to completing this appraisal.

OK-This item will be placed on the Agenda for a vote at the next Regular Meeting of the Town Board.

6. Roots Trail Development to organize a bike race on June 15, 2014 at Jones Park

The event organizer was asked to provide additional information as noted on page 1 of these minutes.

7. Request from M Squared to host the "Paws for a Cause" event in September 2014 on the Rail to Trail

Councilwoman Messina stated that she has received additional information about this proposed event from M Squared representative Mark Mushalla. She will distribute that information to the Board for additional review.

NEW BUSINESS

Town Attorney David Berger advised the Board that the Vestal Police Benevolent Association (PBA) has filed an improper practice with PERB regarding a dispute over additional compensation due to a snow storm.

SUPERVISOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **Winter Parking Hours** – December 1st - March 31st. No parking on Town and County streets and highways between the hours of 2:00 AM and 6:00 AM.
- The Town has an ordinance requiring property owners to remove snow and ice from sidewalks adjacent to their properties. Compliance continues to be a problem in some areas of the Town and appearance tickets will be issued for violations.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion of Councilman Majewski, seconded by Councilwoman Messina, the following was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Fitzgerald, Majewski, Messina, Schaffer
Nays 0

Resolved the Board enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the following:

- Labor negotiations with the Operating Engineers and PBA
- Litigation case with UHS
- Review of health insurance claims with Insurance Consultant Doug Bulman

The time was 7:35 PM.

On a motion of Councilwoman Fitzgerald, seconded by Councilman Majewski, the following was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Fitzgerald, Majewski, Messina, Schaffer
Nays 0

Resolved the Board leave the Executive Session and adjourn the Work Session. The time was 8:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Emil Bielecki, Town Clerk