

VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2016

Board Attendance: Supervisor Schaffer; Board Members: Messina, Agneshwar, Majewski, Fitzgerald

Also Attending: Town Attorney David Berger, Comptroller Laura McKane, Human Resource Officer Nancy Olmstead, Town Engineer Vern Myers, Town Clerk Emil Bielecki a 1 person from the general public.

Supervisor Schaffer convened the Work Session at 6:00 PM.

COMMITTEES

7.1 **PUBLIC WORKS** (FITZGERALD/Majewski) – no items were brought for consideration.

7.2 **FINANCE** (AGNESHWAR/Fitzgerald)

1. Warrants: 2016-15, 2016-15E, 2016-16, 2016-16E, 2016-16L

OK – This item will be placed as a ‘Receive and File’ on the Agenda for the next Regular Meeting.

2. Discuss Vestal Fire District Service Award Program (LOSAP) actuarial report.

Comptroller Laura McKane noted that the Annual Report of the Vestal Fire District Service Award Program (LOSAP) was distributed to the Board. She and Emil Bielecki, the investment advisor to LOSAP, participated in a conference call with representatives from Penflex, the plan’s actuarial advisor. The call focused on the changing investment environment and the increasing payouts from the LOSAP funds. Although the LOSAP program has had an excellent record in achieving investment returns above the assumed rate of 6%, the increased payouts from the plan, coupled with a more challenging investment environment has caused Penflex to reduce the assumed rate on investment return used to calculate the annual contribution requirement from 6% to 5 1/2 %. Penflex is making this change in response to the current low interest rate environment and credible advice from investment experts about future earnings. This reduction is necessary in order to align the allocation of LOSAP investments with the earnings that can reasonably be expected in the future. The effect of this change will be an increase in the minimum contribution to LOSAP from approximately \$17,000 to about \$50,000 in fiscal year 2017. It was noted that, for most of the early years of LOSAP, the Town contributed \$100,000 per year. In the last few years, the level of contribution dropped dramatically as a result of good investment performance. We are now entering a new phase where the Town will need to steadily increase its level of annual contributions to maintain the program at a fully funded level.

Councilwoman Agneshwar asked about the current allocation of the funds and what impact it would have on the fund if we went with investments that did not fluctuate in value. Investment advisor Bielecki stated that the fund’s current allocation is about 70% in growth and 30% in income. It is a highly diversified portfolio. If we went 100% to a riskless allocation, the return would be barely above 0%. With that kind of assumed return, the Board would have to plan on making a dramatic increase to the annual LOSAP contributions. There were no other questions from the Board.

7.3 **PERSONNEL** (MESSINA/Majewski) – no items were brought for consideration.

7.4 **PLANNING & ZONING** (MESSINA/Agneshwar)

1. Discuss easement with W. W. Grainger for 2909 Vestal Road.

Town Attorney David Berger informed the Board that the Town has had an easement at this location

VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2016

for nearly 30 years. The easement is due to expire shortly and the Town wishes to continue with the easement. The new owners of this property have offered to continue the same arrangement. After a brief discussion, the consensus of the Board was to approve the extension of the easement and to authorize the Town Supervisor to sign the necessary document.

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

2. Discuss the donation from Jeffery Gregg of the property at 501 Pierce Hill Road (5.49 acres) to become a part of Arnold Park.

Supervisor Schaffer noted that this property owner wishes to donate this land to become a part of Arnold Park. The loss of tax revenue to the Town is minimal.

Town Attorney Berger noted that if the Board accepts this gift, the Town will become responsible for maintaining it. If it is to become park land, there may be additional restrictions. There would be some costs in accepting this land (preparation of legal documents and filing fees). He asked the Board to hold off on making a decision on accepting this gift so that he can contact the property owner to get more details about his intentions. The Board agreed with the advice of the Town Attorney.

7.5 PUBLIC SAFETY (FITZGERALD/Messina)

1. Request from Fire Chief David Harrington to accept the following as new members of the respective Fire Companies:

- Peter Saladis – Company No. 1
- Peter Slanky – Company No. 4
- Carter Wasley – Company No. 4
- Jordan Case – Company No. 3
- Michael Langeland – Company No. 3

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

2. Request from Fire Chief David Harrington to send one piece of Station 3 apparatus and members to Little Meadows, PA for their Grand Opening Ceremony Parade of their new Station. The Parade is on May 1, 2016 at 2:00 PM.

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

3. Request from Fire Chief David Harrington to approve a \$600 payment from the Broome County Fire Chief's Association for the Annual Lease agreements for the Fred Singer Training Site.

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

4. Request from Police Chief John Butler to hire Steven Frost, residing at 316 Birch St., Vestal, as a school guard, effective immediately.

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

7.6 ADMINISTRATION (MAJEWSKI/Messina)

1. Request from Museum Director Ramona Kacyvenski to accept a \$4,308.00 grant from the

VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2016

Chenango Arts Council.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Wash Bay at the Highway Department (in response to the EPA field audit). Town Engineer Vern Myers is working with the Highway Department on a plan to install a vehicle washing unit in the far bay of the Highway garage and is asking a few engineers about pricing.

2. Community Use of Municipal Facilities Policy

Update 03/21/16: Supervisor Schaffer is reviewing the comments from the Board and expects to have a draft policy in the near future. **Update on 04/25/16:** Supervisor Schaffer expects that a draft of new policy should be ready by the end of May.

3. Proposed Gas Card System for the Purchase of Fuel for Town Vehicles

Supervisor Schaffer directed the Town Engineer to prepare a cost benefit analysis of upgrading our system vs. going with an outside fuel vendor. Town Engineer Vern Myers is waiting for an evaluation from Hunt Engineering. He is concerned about maneuvering of large vehicles at gas stations. Also, Mirabito Group will come, if asked, to discuss running satellite stations. **Update on 4/25/16:** Nothing new to report at this time.

4. Discuss Solar Panel Tax Benefits

Supervisor Schaffer and Councilwoman Messina indicated that they share a number of concerns about solar panel farms and favor opting out of providing the tax breaks for such projects. Town Attorney Berger noted that opting out would require the passage of a local law. If we do not opt out, the Town would still have the ability to compel a developer to negotiate a PILOT agreement.

Several Board members referenced an upcoming training session by the Broome County Department of Planning and Economic Development concerning solar projects. They asked that the Board hold off any decision on this issue until additional information can be gathered from this training session.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Town Attorney Berger informed the Board that Verizon Communications has approached the Fire Department about the possibility of renting space on the siren tower at Station 1. They want permission to do some testing of the location and the existing tower. The Fire Department has no information about the existing tower and does not want to incur any liability in allowing the testing.

Town Attorney Berger noted that this inquiry could lead to the potential of improving the existing tower and realizing some leasing revenue. He recommends that the Board authorize Verizon to do the testing with the condition that they sign an indemnification agreement with the Town. The Board agreed and Mr. Berger will draft the motion for the Board's approval at the next Regular Meeting.

2. Supervisor Schaffer stated that the Board needs to think about the terms of a contract between the Town and the newly created School District Public Library. Also, the newly elected Library Board of the School District Public Library has expressed an interest in meeting with the Town Board. Councilwoman Agneshwar added that such a meeting would be a nice gesture and allow the new Library Board to get familiar with the dynamics of the relationship.

VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2016

The Board agreed to invite the Library Board to attend the Work Session on Monday, May 9th at 5:30 PM and instructed the Town Clerk to prepare the appropriate notices of a change of time for the meeting.

5. Discuss Fire Accident Insurance for Volunteer Fire Fighters and the Auxiliary.

Update on 4/25/16: Several Board members are working with the Fire Department, the Comptroller and an agent from The Partners Insurance to work out the details of the proposed coverage.

SUPERVISOR ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **Citizens Police Academy:** March 24th-May 26th, on Thursday nights from 6:30 pm-8:30 pm, in the Town Board room. Email skintner@vestalny.com to sign up.
- Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has an OPEN BURNING BAN policy in place from March 16th to May 14th. Burn Permits will not be issued during this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Agneshwar, Messina, Majewski, Fitzgerald, Schaffer
Nays 0

Resolved the Board enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues at the Vestal Museum.
The time was 6:56 PM.

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

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Agneshwar, Messina, Majewski, Fitzgerald, Schaffer
Nays 0

Resolved the Board leave the Executive Session and **adjourn the Work Session. The time was 7:31 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,
Emil Bielecki, Town Clerk