

## VESTAL TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 2016

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

Also Attending: Town Attorney David Berger, Town Engineer Vern Myers, Human Resource Officer Nancy Olmstead, Deputy Highway Superintendent Craig Hiller, Code Director Mark Dedrick, Town Clerk Emil Bielecki and 4 people from the general public.

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

### **6:00 PM - Code Director Mark Dedrick to discuss staffing.**

Councilwoman Messina stated that the Personnel Committee along with the Code Director and the Human Resource Officer interviewed 3 candidates for the vacant Fire Code Inspector position. One of the candidates had weaker qualifications than the other two. She is recommending that the Board discuss the qualifications of the two stronger candidates in Executive Session and asked Code Director Dedrick to participate in that discussion. The Board and Mr. Dedrick accepted her recommendation.

### **6:10 PM - Deputy Highway Superintendent Craig Hiller to discuss staffing.**

Deputy Highway Superintendent Craig Hiller informed the Board that 2 employees in the Highway Department are leaving shortly. He is notifying the Board that the Highway Department plans to hire 2 laborers on August 29<sup>th</sup> and an additional laborer on September 19<sup>th</sup>. He has reviewed the budget lines with Town Comptroller McKane and has confirmed that there is adequate funding in the labor lines to hire the 3 new employees. All the new employees will be required to obtain CDL licenses as a condition of their employment. In addition, the Highway Department has been short a mechanic position and would like to hire an additional mechanic in February 2017. The request for funding that position will be included in the 2017 Highway Department Budget presented to the Board.

Councilwoman Agneshwar asked about the current staffing level in the Highway Department. Human Resource Officer Olmstead stated that Highway has 30 employees, not counting the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent.

Several Board members asked about the connection between having a CDL license and promotions. Deputy Superintendent Hiller stated that a CDL license does not entitle an employee to an automatic promotion.

## **COMMITTEES**

### **7.1 PUBLIC WORKS (FITZGERALD/Majewski)**

**1.** Request from Water Superintendent Scott Groats to approve advertising and sale of the following department vehicles with Auction International:

- 2000 Ford Explorer (VIN#1FMZU71XXY2C54110)
- 2005 Chevy Silverado 1500 4x4 (VIN#1GCEK14V55Z250087)
- 2007 Dodge Caravan (VIN#4GP25B77B1828569)

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Councilwoman Fitzgerald stated that according to Water Superintendent Groats, these vehicles are nickel and diming us to death with maintenance expenses.

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

2. Request from Business Office Senior Account Clerk Ed Hildebrand to transfer a 2005 Jeep Cherokee (VIN #1J4GR48K45C668739) from the Water Department to the Engineering Department to replace a 2000 Ford Explorer that will be going to auction.

Councilwoman Fitzgerald noted that this realignment of our vehicle fleet is expected to save us money.

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

### 7.2 FINANCE (AGNESHWAR/Fitzgerald)

1. Warrants: 2016-32, 2016-32E, 2016-33, 2016-33E

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

2. Request Comptroller Laura McKane to transfer \$5,000 from Contingency A1990-4322 to the IT software A1680-4499 to upgrade our Microsoft SQL Server for compatibility with the upgraded version of MUNIS.

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

3. Request from Deputy Comptroller Nick Angeline to make budget transfers dated 7/1/16 – 8/18/16 as attached to his memo to the Town Board dated 8/18/16.

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

### 7.3 PERSONNEL (MESSINA/Majewski)

1. Request from Human Resource Officer Nancy Olmstead to discuss the vacancies on the Board of Assessment Review (BAR).

Human Resource Officer Nancy Olmstead stated that Deborah Gruver’s term is expiring on September 30, 2016. She has expressed a desire to be reappointed. The consensus view is that she has done an excellent job on the board. Councilwoman Agneshwar added that she has observed Debbie Gruver in her work on Assessment Review Board and is very satisfied with her. No one on the Board expressed an objection to Ms. Gruver’s reappointment. Human Resource Officer Olmstead stated that she would prepare the language of the motion for her reappointment.

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

Human Resource Officer Olmstead also noted that a recent resignation has created vacancy on the Board of Assessment Review for the term ending September 30, 2017. There are two alternates that have expressed interest in moving up to fill this vacancy. After a brief discussion, the Board asked

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Human Resource Officer Olmstead to provide them with information on all of the applicants who have expressed an interest in this position.

### 2. Discuss flu shots for employees.

Human Resource Officer Nancy Olmstead stated that last year we did not open the 2 day clinic for flu and pneumonia shots to Medicare eligible retirees. As a result, the number of shots administered was down. This year's clinic should probably be reduced down to one day. The costs per shot have increased from both Lourdes and UHS. The members of our health plan can also get their shots at a doctor's office and the plan will pay for it. However, the clinic offers convenience and the shots are administered at a lower cost. If the Board decides to offer the clinic again this year, it will need to select either Lourdes or UHS.

Several Board members asked whether we had information about the strain in flu that the shots will protect against. Ms. Olmstead replied that we did not have that information at this time. There are still additional questions that need to be answered. She has placed calls to both Lourdes and UHS to get some additional information. When she gets the information, it will be shared with the Board with the hope that the Board can make a decision on this issue at the next at the Work Session on September 12<sup>th</sup>.

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

1. Request from Park Outdoor Advertising for a Gateway Sign to be located at 1250 Vestal Parkway East (property is owned by Difrancesco Development Group & Parkway Square). The property is currently zoned Commercial Development (C-D) and has a building containing Tioga State Bank, Gertrude Hawk and a vacant service space. The sign is located on the front of the lot, to the western portion near the boundary with Red Lobster. The proposed sign complies with the requirements of the Code except as follows:

Chapter 5, Article V Division 4, Section 5-127.2

(d) Overall height of the sign is greater than 10 feet above adjacent grade.

(e) The width of the display area is greater than 12 feet.

Councilwoman Messina noted that the location of the proposed sign is approximately .7 mile from the gateway sign that was recently approved by the Board and is on the other side of the Parkway.

Code Officer Dedrick stated that based on the additional information provided by the applicant, the proposed sign does comply with the dimensions and height requirements of the Code.

Councilwoman Agneshwar expressed strong objection to the location of this sign stating that it fails to meet any definition of *gateway*. Moreover, there is no provision for the federal or state authorities to provide us access to post Amber Alerts.

Councilwoman Messina noted that Councilwoman Agneshwar has been an active participant on this Board concerning this issue and her focus should be on making the necessary changes to improve the existing law instead of just criticizing the Board for allowing these signs. Yes, some changes in the language of the law are needed, but the law was passed to allow the placement of up to 4 of these types of signs in the Town with the Board's approval.

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Paul Simonet, a representative from Park Outdoor Advertising, noted that in addition to the Town's requirements, the sign would also have to conform to the State's DOT requirements. He acknowledged that when the Town drafted the law for these signs, he cautioned the Town that the use of the term *gateway* could prove to be problematic. Nonetheless, these smart signs are the wave of the future. The state's definition of a gateway sign is inappropriate in this situation because it applies to static signs. Although he cannot explain the details of the arrangement or the technology, the company is tied into the Amber Alert notification system. Regardless of any changes that the Town is contemplating in the language of the gateway sign law, he feels that this application should be reviewed and approved under the current law.

Supervisor Schaffer stated that he continues to strongly support these types of signs because they will benefit the Town. However, the definition of *gateway* is something that the Board should revisit. He asked the Board to delay taking further action on this application until it engages in additional discussion on how best to proceed in the face of some shortcomings in the language of the existing law.

### 7.5 PUBLIC SAFETY (FITZGERALD/Messina)

### 7.6 ADMINISTRATION (MAJEWSKI/Messina)

1. Request from IT Director Dan Williams for the Supervisor to sign Scope of Services for the Town of Vestal Emergency Communication Site Development Engineering Services.

Supervisor Schaffer noted that the old tower at Andrews Road should be scrapped. There continues to be confusion as to who authorized the use of some of the space on the existing tower. The Town should consider hiring an outside firm to advertise and manage the allocation of space on the new tower.

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

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

**Update on 08/22/16:** Town Engineer Vern Myers stated that the draft Request for Proposal (RFP) is now being reviewed by Town Comptroller McKane and should be ready to present to the Board at the next Work Session.

#### 2. Proposed Changes to the Town of Vestal Code

**Update on 8/8/16:** Code Officer Mark Dedrick has proposed a number of changes to Chapter 24 of the Vestal Code Book. Deputy Town Supervisor Majewski asked the Board to review the proposed changes and submit any comments to Mr. Dedrick. Town Attorney Berger stated that he would review the proposed changes with Code Officer Dedrick prior to drafting a local law to adopt the changes.

**Update on 8/22/16:** Supervisor Schaffer noted that the Board has had adequate time to review the proposed changes. The changes are reasonable and the Board should move to adopt them.

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By consensus, the Board agreed to have the Town Attorney prepare the local law to adopt these changes and to advertise on September 21<sup>st</sup> for a Public Hearing on September 28<sup>th</sup>.

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

Supervisor Schaffer stated that the Code should also be changed to allow for increased height in the construction of some buildings. With improved building materials and enhanced fire protection, there is no reason not to permit higher structures. It's already happening on the Binghamton University campus. Code Officer Mark Dedrick agreed that a change may be warranted but the issue requires more time to analyze.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Councilman Majewski informed the Board that he attended a meeting on the proposed FEMA changes to the flood maps. The changes, if adopted, would significantly increase the number of properties in the area that would be included in the flood zone. This could be very detrimental to this community.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

**ADOPTED** Ayes 5 Agneshwar, Majewski, Fitzgerald, Messina, Schaffer

Nays 0

Resolved the Board enter into Executive Session to discuss the following:

- Vestal Police Supervisors Association (VPSA) labor contract matter.
- Review the qualifications of the applicants interviewed for the Fire Code Inspector position.
- Negotiations on the Library Contract.
- NYSEG Article 7 tax certiorari case.

The time was 7:22 PM.

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

**ADOPTED** Ayes 5 Agneshwar, Majewski, Fitzgerald, Messina, Schaffer

Nays 0

Resolved the Board leave the Executive Session and **adjourn the Work Session. The time was 8:35 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Emil Bielecki, Town Clerk