

VESTAL TOWNBOARD WORK SESSION AGENDA

MONDAY, JANUARY 21, 2019

Board Attendance: Supervisor Schaffer; Board Members: Fletcher, Messina, Fitzgerald

Absent: Majewski

Also Attending: Town Attorney David Berger, Director of Human Resources Nancy Olmstead, Recreation Planner Sue Jastran and Town Clerk Emil Bielecki

Supervisor Schaffer **convened the Work Session at 6:00 PM** and asked to close the meeting so as to have an attorney-client privileged consultation. Recreation Planner Sue Jastran was asked to participate in that consultation. The open Work Session resumed at 6:17 PM.

COMMITTEES

7.1 PUBLIC WORKS (FITZGERALD/Fletcher)

1. Request from Town Engineer Vern Myers to authorize the transfer of a permanent easement to Broome County consisting of a parcel of land approximately 3725 square feet near Juneberry Road Bridge. This transfer is subject to permissive referendum to be published on January 30, 2019.

This easement is needed for the reconstruction of the Juneberry Bridge and is necessary for the safety and well-being of the Town residents.

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

2. Request from Town Engineer Vern Myers to continue the Robert Street Pump Station Project and to discontinue the Vestal EMS Relocation Project under the current Governor's Office of Storm Recovery Program (GOSR).

Supervisor Schaffer stated that even though a new EMS building is needed, the estimated cost (\$4.8 million) has escalated to the point that going ahead with the project is unaffordable at this time. We are not taking this project totally off the table but for now the priority project with the available GOSR funds need to be the Robert Street Pumping Station. This project is much further along and its' completion is important to the Town to reduce the risk of future flooding at Four Corners and along sections of Front Street.

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

3. Request from Town Engineer Vern Myers to authorize the Town Supervisor to sign NYSEG agreement for the conversion of our street lights to LED lights on poles owned by NYSEG (2572 locations) throughout the Town.

Supervisor Schaffer noted that he and the Board have received communication from the Executive Director of the Kopernik Observatory & Science Center expressing concern about the negative impact of the light pollution may have on the night sky viewing. He cited a number of actions that can be taken to reduce the negative impact of the new lighting. Supervisor Schaffer stated that he shares that concern and will be asking Town Engineer Vern Myers to take up the issue with NYSEG. As a Town, we need to move forward with this project but hopefully some adjustments could be made to lessen the impact of the new lighting on the Observatory.

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

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7.2 FINANCE (MESSINA /Majewski)

- 1. Warrants:** 2019- 02, 2019-02A, 2019-2CA, 2019-2EA, 2019-03, 2019-03A

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

2. Request to pay \$50.00 for the 2019 annual membership renewal to the Broome County Association of Towns.

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

3. Request to pay the following individuals for transportation and meals while attending the Association of Towns Meeting in New York City on February 17-20, 2019 as per requesting memo:

- John Schaffer (\$481.76); David Berger (\$481.76); Nancy Olmstead (\$266); Fran Majewski (\$266); Joyce Majewski (\$266); Laura McKane (\$266); Joseph Meagher (481.76).

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

4. Request to pay \$400.00 for 2019 annual membership renewal to the Upstate New York Towns Association.

Supervisor Schaffer noted that unlike the BC Association of Towns, the Upstate Association is more focused on local issues that are impacting the smaller towns.

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

5. Request for Town Supervisor John Schaffer to sign a contract renewal with the Broome County Office of Aging for lease of space for the Vestal Senior Center for the term 1/1/19-12/31/19.

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

7.3 PERSONNEL (MAJEWSKI/Fitzgerald) – no items were brought for consideration.

7.4 PLANNING & ZONING (FLETCHER/Fitzgerald)

1. Request from Vestal High School Health Teacher and Race Director Sue Darpino to hold “The Running of the Bears” annual 5K road race on March 30, 2019 as detailed in her memo to the Town Supervisor dated November 8, 2018.

Town Attorney David Berger noted that the Town’s Indemnification Agreement needs to be signed by the organizer and individual participants must sign waiver forms.

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 (MESSINA/Fletcher)

1. Request from Police Chief John Butler to advertise on February 6, 2019 for new vehicle accessories installation and labor with bids to be opened on February 19, 2019.

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

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2. Request from Police Chief John Butler to sell the following via Auction International:

- 2007 Chevrolet Impala (VIN# 2G1WB58N779158619), 87,076 miles.
- 2014 Ford Interceptor (VIN# 1FM5K8AR1EGC38400), 98,376 miles.

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 new members to the Vestal Fire Department as follows:

- Alexander Eaton as a member of Company No. 1
- Brandon Devine as member of Company No. 4

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

7.6 ADMINISTRATION (FITZGERALD/Messina) – no items were brought for consideration.

NEW BUSINESS

- Supervisor Schaffer stated that he recently participated in a conference of Mayors, Supervisors and other elected officials to discuss the Governor's plan to eliminate AIM funding for many municipalities. This proposal can have very negative consequences for local governments. In Vestal's case, a loss of the AIM funding would mean that taxes would have to increase by about 1.5% to replace this revenue. The financial difficulty is further compounded by the state mandated tax cap. The consensus of the group was to write letters to the Governor from several representing organizations to oppose this proposal.
- Supervisor Schaffer stated that a constituent recommended the Town apply for iGrants. Although it is not clear whether we would be eligible for these grants, the suggestion was passed on to our grant writer.
- Supervisor Schaffer stated that a representative from the Conservation Advisory Committee (CAC) asked whether the Town budgeted in 2019 to start a spraying program against the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. The Town has not budgeted for the spraying but we have set aside some money for forest restoration. We are exploring the possibility of hiring an outside contractor to do the spraying and the Board will likely be asked at a later date to transfer some money to address this issue.
- Supervisor Schaffer informed the Board that the Parks Department is asking for additional staffing that was not approved in the 2019 budget. We are currently evaluating the request in context of the undergoing projects that the department is involved in.
- Supervisor Schaffer noted that the Police Department currently has 4 police officers not on active duty. Moreover, several officers may be retiring this year. The staffing issues are putting pressure on the overtime budget. To help alleviate some of the staffing shortfall, the Police Department would like to hire an officer earlier than anticipated so as to get them into the academy which starts in April. After a brief discussion, the Board approved the pursuit of this strategy.
- Town Attorney Berger stated that he has been approached by a representative from the Vestal Volunteer Emergency Squad to see if there was any interest in exploring the feasibility of EMS employees becoming Town employees. The Emergency Squad would still pay the salaries but the employees would be eligible for Town benefits. Apparently, this model is being used in some areas of the state. Although a lack of specific information hindered the brief discussion that followed, Town Attorney Berger stated that he would reach out to some municipal attorneys to get additional information about this model.

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- The Director of Human Resources Nancy Olmstead informed the Board that there are 2 sections of the Employee Handbook that are in conflict concerning the benefits of exempt employees. This conflict was created when the language for call-in pay was changed several years ago. She is now reviewing the conflict and once she get more details she will present new language to the Board.
- Councilwoman Messina stated that she is concerned by the increasing amount of Town business that is being discussed via email. The discussions often get sidetracked and become very confusing to follow. This method of communication is not conducive to dealing with complex issues that should be addressed by the Board at Work Sessions.

The Work Session was **adjourned at 7:15 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,
Emil Bielecki, Town Clerk