

VESTAL TOWNBOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2019

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

Also Attending: Town Attorney David Berger, Town Engineer Vern Myers, Director of Human Resources Nancy Olmstead, Town Comptroller Laura McKane, Town Clerk Emil Bielecki and 6 people from the general public.

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

COMMITTEES

7.1 PUBLIC WORKS (FITZGERALD/Fletcher)

1. Request authorization for Town Supervisor John Schaffer to sign two Memorandums of Understanding with Broome County for Radio towers, CA20-23 and CA 20-23A (Ingraham Hill Rd. and Underwood Road).

Responding to a question from Councilman Fletcher, Town Attorney Berger stated that we will be using the spaces on the towers for monitoring the Town's water & sewer systems using SCADA.

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

7.2 FINANCE (MESSINA /Majewski)

1. Warrants: 2019- 04, 2019-04A, 2019-04E, 2019-04M, 2019-05, 2019-05A, 2019-05E, 2019-06, 2-19-06E

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

2. Request to pay \$412.50 to Town Attorney David Berger for January 2019 billable hours.

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 12/31/18 as attached to his memo to the Town Board dated 2/7/19.

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)

1. Request to appoint Asif Shaikh as a member of the Board of Assessment Review (BAR) effective February 14, 2019 to serve out the remainder of the late Shep Bennett's term which expires September 30, 2019 and to re-appoint Mr. Shaikh as a member of the Board of Assessments Review for the term October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2024.

The Director of Human Resources Nancy Olmstead stated that Mr. Shaikh has been serving as an alternate member on the BAR for a number of years and will now become a regular member.

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

2. Discussion regarding abolishing the Recreation Commission

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Several Board members noted that the Recreation Planner is recommending that the Recreation Commission be abolished because the structural changes in our recreational programming and staffing has eliminated the need for the Commission. Councilwoman Fitzgerald stated that the Recreation Commission has met only once in the last two years. Human Resource Director Nancy Olmstead noted that one current member of Recreation Commission did state that he was not in favor its abolishment.

After a brief discussion, the Board consensus was to proceed with the abolishment of Recreation Commission. Town Attorney Dave Berger will prepare the resolution.

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

3. Discuss Sections 702 & 703 of the Employee Handbook

The Director of Human Resources Nancy Olmstead provided the Board with recommended changes to Sections 702 & 703 of the Employee Handbook to correct an inconsistency in the existing language. The new language clarifies the circumstance under which exempt employees may be eligible for overtime and call-in pay. This change will affect only a few employees. The Supervisor, with consent from the Board, recommended that the changes be made effective January 1, 2019.

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

Victor Lamoureux from the Conservation Advisory Committee (CAC) discusses hemlock spraying

Victor Lamoureux, a member of the Vestal Conservation Advisory Committee (CAC) addressed the Board on the plan to spray certain areas of Town owned forest land against the hemlock wooly adelgid. He thanked the Board for committing the funding for the spraying program. He noted that for an estimated cost of \$2500, we are hoping to treat 500 trees in the Middendorf, Stair and Jones Parks. We plan to contract with Hillside Gardens to do the work. It is very important to treat as many of the hemlock trees as possible. Large fallen hemlocks in the stream corridors will only exacerbate stream-side flooding. We anticipate doing the spraying in May.

Several questions were raised about the need to get additional quotes for this work but it was uncertain whether it would be required in this case. Supervisor Schaffer advised Mr. Lamoureux to work closely with the Code Department in getting the plan finalized. Town Attorney David Berger stated that the final contract will have to come back to the Board for approval and will need to include a completed SEQR review. Any volunteers working on this project would be required to sign waivers.

Supervisor Schaffer stated that we have overgrowth in some of our parks that needs to be addressed to maintain a healthy forest environment. He asked the CAC to work with the Town to address this issue. He and Councilman Majewski noted that there was a forestry plan that was done several years ago. The plan should be reviewed to determine if it is still relevant to address the current overgrowth in the Town parks.

Anthony Folk discusses Mountain Bike Race at Jones Park

Anthony Folk, the organizer of the Southern Tier Enduro Bicycle Race, presented the Board with a packet of information about the planned race at Jones Park. He has staged this event at Jones Park in the last two years without any problems and is asking approval from the Board to stage the race again this year on July 21st. He noted that upon approval the following actions will be taken: will secure EMS services from the Vestal Volunteer Emergency Squad, will provide full coverage insurance for the

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duration of the event with the Town listed as an additional insured party, will set up the course the day before the race and tear down and clean up the day of the race upon completion; will provide porta-potties on site; will have about 10 volunteers on site to assist with course preparation, racer safety, parking, etc. Last year, we had about 60 participants and he expects some increase in participation this year. He anticipates that the event may turn a profit this year in which case he has some ideas on using that money for improvements to Jones Park. He will present his ideas to the Conservation Advisory Committee at their next meeting.

The consensus of the Board is to proceed with race.

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 (FLETCHER/Fitzgerald)

1. Discuss a memo from Code Enforcement Officer Lincoln Ellis seeking clarification concerning the purchase of vehicles for the Code Department.

Supervisor Schaffer noted during the budget review process, the Board encouraged the Code Department to look at buying used vehicles with the \$30,000 that was allocated, perhaps enabling the Department to procure 2 used vehicles instead of one new one. However, it appears that the Code Department has not been successful in finding used vehicles that meet their requirements. In fact, some were priced higher than the new vehicles. If that is the case, Supervisor Schaffer recommended that the Code Department should be given the go ahead to proceed with the purchase of one new vehicle. The Board agreed.

7.5 PUBLIC SAFETY (MESSINA/Fletcher)

1. Request authorization for Town Supervisor John Schaffer to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Broome County for the Opioid Overdose Prevention Program.

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.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Tabled on 1/23/19 - GOSR funding for Vestal EMS Relocation Project

A motion was made by Councilwoman Messina, seconded by Councilman Fletcher, to authorize the Town Engineer 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).

Town Engineer Vern Myers engaged the Board in a discussion of the cost and benefits of the two projects. The Roberts Street pump station project would cost approx. \$1.4 million. The GOSR funding limit is \$3 million which would leave over \$1.5 million, an amount well short of the funds needed for the Vestal EMS project. If we go with just the pump station, the rest of the GOSR funds would not be used. The pump station project is important but it will impact only a small region. The EMS project will cost over \$4 million and will require a substantial investment of over \$1 million from the Town. The EMS project will however impact the whole Town. If he had a vote on the issue, he would select the EMS project.

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After some discussion about possible ways to reduce the Town's portion of the cost for the EMS relocation project, a consensus was reached by the Board to proceed with the Vestal EMS Relocation Project instead of the Roberts Street Pump Station Project. The Town Engineer was instructed to close the Roberts Street Pump Station Project and to redirect the full amount of the available GOSR funding to the Vestal EMS Relocation Project.

2. Tabled until February 13, 2019 – Agreement with NYSEG for LED Lights

A motion was made by Councilman Messina, seconded by Councilman Fletcher to authorize the Town Supervisor to sign an **agreement with NYSEG for the conversion of our street lights to LED lights** on poles owned by NYSEG (2572 locations) throughout the Town.

Town Engineer Vern Myers engaged the Board in a lengthy discussion about the issues surrounding the LED lighting project and noted that this is a very difficult decision. He has surveyed other communities in the area and found that most have gone with the 4 K lamps (including Town of Union and the City of Binghamton). Several communities have gone with the 3 K lamps preferring the softer yellow lighting. He has reviewed the materials provided by the Director of the Kopernik Observatory and does not dispute the information but questions its relevance to this project. The goal of this project is to light streets rather than achieve comfort levels. He is not certain that either the 3 K or the 4 K lamps will produce more light pollution than the existing lighting because the light from the replacement lamps will be much more focused and will have better shielding. Speaking strictly from a lighting standpoint, he feels that that best solution is to go with the brighter 4 K white lights as the NYSEG contract specifies.

Several Board members cited some concerns that were noted in the material provided by the Director of the Kopernik Observatory, but ultimately the consensus opinion of the Board was to go with the NYSEG contract as originally drafted.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Fletcher, Fitzgerald, Messina, Majewski, Schaffer

Nays 0

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

- Contract with CMA
- Application for the Building & Code Inspector position
- Tax certiorari case with Lowes

The time was 7:27 PM.

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

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Fletcher, Fitzgerald, Messina, Majewski, Schaffer

Nays 0

Resolved the Board leave the Executive Session and **adjourn the meeting. The time was 7:54 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,
Emil Bielecki, Town Clerk