

February 10, 2020

The regular meeting of the Town Board of Vernon was held at 7:00 p.m. on the above date at the Town Office Building. Council members present were Randy Watson, Supervisor; Gene Bennati, Myron Thurston, Steve Adamkowski and John Peters. Also present: County Legislator Keith Schiebel; Tim Murphy, Deputy Highway Superintendent and 4 citizens.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, there was a moment of silence. The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Watson at 7:00 p.m.

Supervisor Watson asked the council members if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes from the January 13, 2020 meeting. There being none, a motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Bennati, seconded by Peters. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

PUBLIC CONCERNS:

Mary LaClair submitted a statement for the record, and a copy is available upon request.

REPORTS:

The following reports were presented: Town Clerk, Codes Enforcement, Supervisor's, Intergovernmental Relations: Adamkowski reported that the Town newsletter articles are almost done and ready to be sent to the printer. Operations: Thurston introduced Tim Murphy as Deputy Highway Superintendent and thanked him for stepping in to fill the good work of Art Freemire upon Freemire's Retirement as of January 31, 2020. Highway Deputy Superintendent also submitted a written report. County Legislator Schiebel reported on the Local Municipals Leaders meeting. Ironically, all the projects in the area have to do with utilities. He also attended the State Association of Counties meeting. One of the workshops he attended was on the use of salt distribution on county roads. He has some information that he will bring to the next meeting to give to Deputy Highway Superintendent Murphy.

There were no reports from Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Assessors, Education and Libraries, Economic Development, SWOCO and Historian.

A motion to accept the above reports was made by Peters, seconded by Thurston. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to pay the bills was made by Bennati, seconded by Peters. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

BUSINESS:

Peters reported on the meeting that the Town Board attended earlier in the day in Albany. Senator Joe Griffo and Assemblyman John Salka organized a meeting with Town Board members, Legislator Schiebel, NYS DOT Commissioner, Department of Health, a representative from the Governor's Office and Barton & Loguidice Engineering Firm to discuss the proposed Vernon Center Water District. Peters read the following statement,

"The Town of Vernon thanks Deputy Miner and Leader Griffo for facilitating this meeting between the town representatives, commissioners and representatives of key state departments. This meeting provided us with an important opportunity to directly discuss and highlight our concerns with the state officials and to develop a potential solution to address the public health water issue. We are looking forward to continuing this dialog with the state and bringing closure to the water quality issue affecting residents of the Vernon Center area."

The Board members felt this meeting was very successful.

Board members wrote a letter to Governor Cuomo requesting him to keep the current VLT revenue sharing formula. Cuomo currently wants all of that money to go to the State, Watson stated.

It was agreed after the Mass Gathering workshop to hold additional meetings with ZBA and Planning Board to finalize the code terminology.

A motion to accept Delta Engineers proposal for professional engineering and land surveying services for Town parking lot/walking trail and put it out for bid ASAP was made by Thurston, seconded by Peters. No Discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

Oneida Library provided the 2020-2021 operating budget.

The Oneida Library's total estimated obligation for debt service for construction of new library increase to be raised by levy is \$238,979.00.

Board members discussed Sanctuary Cities and preventing illegal immigrants from taking refuge in the Town of Vernon. The Boards members do not want to make it so legal immigrants are not welcome in the Town of Vernon.

A motion to approve audit of the Town of Vernon Town Courts that was completed and reviewed by Wendy Coston and the Town Board was made by Bennati, seconded by Peters. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to approve audit of Town of Vernon books done on February 10, 2020 was made by Bennati, seconded by Peters. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to accept retirement letter from Arthur Freemire was made by Peters, seconded by Thurston. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to appoint Timothy Murphy as Interim Acting Highway Superintendent until the Board has had the opportunity to meet with Murphy was made by Peters, seconded by Adamkowski. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to discontinue the Towns current policy of a 10% pay reduction for elected officials first year was made by Bennati, seconded by Adamkowski. Bennati explained that he and Thurston were on the board many years ago when this policy was put into place and the reason for that decision back then was because of the lack of experience one would have coming into the new position. Thurston stated that he contacted The Association of Towns per request by Wendy Coston to inquire the application of this local law adopted in the 1990s. Association of Towns stated that there have been changes since we instituted this policy in 1997. In order to keep this policy the Town must create a Town Law with a Permissive Referendum. Ayes 4. Nays 0. Thurston Abstained. Motion carried.

Board members discussed the quote from Dan's Lawn for monthly landscaping services. They came to an agreement that they would like the quote more detailed including the amount of times each month he will provide services for each; weed care and shrubs. Also, to include landscaping in front and on side of building, the Memorial out front and the landscaping near the pavilion. Adamkowski stated that this will give them a measuring system to see how he performed and if his services met our targets, so he is getting paid for what is agreed upon.

A motion to approve the County of Oneida 2020 Poll Site Agreement was made by Adamkowski, seconded by Peters. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

Sales Representative, John Roden, from Tracey Road Equipment spoke briefly to the Board members about the benefits of leasing equipment for the Highway Garage as this may be beneficial for the Town of Vernon.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Thurston commented on the address given at the beginning of the meeting by Mary LaClair. He responded that concerts in the past, such as K-Rock-a-thon, were a nightmare. That was when they started working on the code book and each event over the years has continued to get better. There is always room for improvement. The Board is working on this at this time. The reason Woodstock did not happen was because of the codes that were previously put in place.

Thurston also spoke that he would like to move forward with a decision regarding the solar panels and what we are going to choose to do with them. Being either to sell them or reuse them and doing whatever is best financially for the Town.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Board members entered into Executive Session at 8:25p.m. and returned at 9:09p.m. calling the meeting to order.

A motion was made to terminate Highway Employee, Paul Burns, with two week severance pay. Mr. Burns will be given notice of termination on February 11, 2020, effective February 17, 2020. However, Mr. Burns is immediately relieved of his duties. Motion made by Adamkowski, seconded by Peters. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn at 9:12 p.m. was made by Thurston, seconded by Peters. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Additions to minutes on file
in Town Clerk's Office.

Jennifer Champney
Town Clerk

This meeting was digitally recorded and is on file in the Town Clerk's office.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Statement for the Record from Mary LaClair