

May 9, 2022

The regular meeting of the Town Board of Vernon was held at the Town Office Building on the above date with the following persons present: Randy Watson, Supervisor; Gene Bennati, Steve Adamkowski, John Peters and Myron Thurston, Council members. Also present: Town Attorney; Vincent Rossi and 12 others.

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 April 11, 2022 meeting. There being none, a motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Peters, seconded by Bennati. No discussion. Ayes 4. Nays 0. Sustained 1. Thurston sustained due to being absent from meeting. Motion carried.

#### PUBLIC CONCERNS:

Vernon Downs gave a brief presentation on the proposed greenhouses they are looking to install on some of their farm lands. This will be a partnership with Netherlands Co. The greenhouses will be used to grow cannabis, and over time possibly an expansion to grow vegetables. This is a \$300 million dollar project possibly adding up to 800 local jobs. At the end of this presentation County Legislator Schiebel led Vernon Downs officials, local officials and representatives from local politicians' offices to the conference room to have further discussions regarding the project.

#### REPORTS:

The following reports were presented: Town Clerk, Codes Enforcement, Supervisors, Highway, Assessors: Chairman Duane Munger submitted an explanation of Level of Assessment in the Town of Vernon. He explained how the housing market has an effect on the value a home is assessed at to keep them in line with the assessed value of a home that was built several years ago. County Legislator; Schiebel submitted a written report and highlighted the adoption of a resolution to partially suspend the county sales tax on gasoline, contracts for mowing and ditching and a funding application for Briggs and Stratton facility. SWOCO: Randy Watson announced the cookout will be held on July 7<sup>th</sup>. Intergovernmental Relations; Steve Adamkowski said they have 3 memorial trees to be planted this week behind the Town Office building.

There were no reports from Zoning/Planning Board, Education and Libraries, Operations, and Economic Development.

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

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

#### BUSINESS:

Attorney Vincent Rossi stated that he will meet with Supervisor Watson and the Town of Vernon Assessors on Tuesday at 11:30am to discuss a Pilot agreement for OYA Solar as they have chosen not to go through Oneida County Industrial Development Agency, as they would have to transfer the titles over to the government and then it is leased back to them. They will need to negotiate how much the town should receive. The state of New York has a method for assessing solar projects which has been challenged in court, so it is unclear on how to go about doing it at this time. Adamkowski asked Rossi if he knew how the school district came up with their figures for a pilot with OYA Solar. He did not and was going to look into that.

Attorney Vincent Rossi has looked over the EDF/AMP decommissioning Agreement and will send over to Supervisor Watson to sign.

Board members discussed the previous decision to opt out of Marijuana Dispensaries in the Town of Vernon. Rossi advised that they can revote and opt in however it would not be an option to opt out once they have opted in. Thurston feels strongly about holding a referendum and letting the community decide to opt in or opt out. Bennati feels the Board members have been elected to make these decisions and that is what they are being paid to do. How does the Town Board decide what they want to hold a referendum for and what they don't want to hold a referendum for? Bennati stated that he feels medical marijuana is needed. Thurston stated that the dispensaries are for recreational use. Medical marijuana is already available. Adamkowski added that he has received no feedback from community members on their decision to opt out of dispensaries. Bennati asked if the state would keep moving forward on this if the rules regarding dispensaries were not all in place. Rossi stated that the state created a marijuana commission who has the power to make the rules and they have not made all the rules yet. He also does not know if you can get a license to grow marijuana if the Town you are looking to grow in has chosen to opt out of dispensaries. The Board members asked if this decision would have any effect on Vernon Downs greenhouses where cannabis will be grown. Rossi asked the representatives of Vernon Downs and they advised that this would have no effect on their plans.

Discussion with Deryk Macrina and MaryKay Junglen on Sherrill Kenwood Free Library tax levy proposed to be added to Vernon Verona Sherrill School District tax bill; Supervisor Watson mentioned that in the flyers the library has put out, it states that the municipalities have cut their funding. He asked Macrina and Junglen if the Town of Vernon had ever cut their funding. They stated that the Town of Vernon had not cut their funding and that they actually increased funding. Macrina stated that up until now they received the majority of their funding from the City of Sherrill even though they are not part of the city. They have been relying on the generosity of their local governments for a portion of their funding. There are currently 35 mid-york libraries that are on school ballots. Macrina said the library has evolved into a library for the entire VVS community regardless of the name being Sherrill Kenwood Library. Peters had asked for a roster to know how many people are utilizing the library each month. MaryKay Junglen will get that information for him. Peters wanted to clarify if the tax money that was collected by the Town of Vernon and given to Sherrill was being received by the library. Macrina stated that they were receiving those funds however, the money from the City of Sherrill, the Town of Vernon and the County were not the only funds they receive. They are looking for a way to maintain and sustain the library going forward. The budget that the library is putting up is \$186,700.00. That would result in \$0.24 per thousand of assessed value. Thurston asked if they had reached out to the Town of Verona in the past regarding funding seeing how they are a community Library who has been receiving funds from Vernon and Sherrill previously. Macrina stated that they had not requested funding from Verona in the past. The vote will be held on June 1, 2022 at the City of Sherrill, Town of Verona and the Village of Vernon. Bennati added that the City of Sherrill does not believe that libraries are still necessary because people have the internet. Adamkowski asked what the current budget is. Macrina stated that it was around \$130,000.00. Adamkowski advised that there was quite a difference between that budget and the new budget of \$186,000.00. He also asked where the libraries board members are from as it states on their flyer that the library board members are from our community. Macrina stated that currently they are all from Sherrill however they had changed their bylaws even though they did not specify before a person had to be from Sherrill. They wanted to make it was very clear that any community member could be part of it. Adamkowski asked if they would consider opening seats for new board members to be voted in. Macrina responded that they are an association library so it does not require their members to be voted in and that they have to have a minimum of 7 board members but do not have a maximum number. Bennati advised they consider a change of name so it does not appear they are for Sherrill and Kenwood only. Watson praised the library as he had brought his kids there when they were young. Macrina added that libraries are no longer just about the books. It is for DVD's, tax forms, copiers, faxing, computers and wi-fi because it is free. Duane Munger asked what they would do if this vote does not pass and Macrina said they would probably put out a capital appeal.

The Town of Vernon informed the Vernon Verona Sherrill School District that we are unable to honor their request to use the Town of Vernon Office Building for polling site on June 1, 2022 for Sherrill Library Vote due to facility already being utilized for Village Court.

A motion to approve Oneida County Intermunicipal Agreement for mowing which increased from \$8,812.00 to \$9,362.75, was made by Bennati, seconded by Thurston. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to approve resolution to adopt 2022 Oneida County Hazard Mitigation Plan was made by Bennati, seconded by Thurston. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to accept Vernon Center Community request of \$1500.00 for the 200-year celebration and transfer \$1000.00 from A1990.4 Contingency to A7550.4 Celebrations was made by Peters, seconded by Thurston. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to approve Youth Lacrosse Organization request of up to \$600 from youth fund for purchasing 2 goals was made by Bennati, seconded by Peters. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

New 2022 Ford pickup truck was delivered to the highway garage.

Town was notified that the WIIA Grant application was denied.

Town office building will have floors stripped on June 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>; new floor will be installed week of June 20<sup>th</sup>. The display cabinet is scheduled to be moved to court room on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

Association of Towns meeting will be held on May 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm at Harts Hill Inn.

NYS Department of Transportation introduced Pave Our Potholes (POP) program. The Town of Vernon should receive approximately \$19,000.

#### GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Bennati asked the Board if they had done a referendum when the Town of Vernon was suing Oneida Nation and spending hundreds of thousands of dollars while bringing it to the Supreme Court. Watson and Thurston both replied that they had not done a referendum at that time.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss Intermunicipal at 8:29p.m. was made by Adamkowski, seconded by Thurston. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

Board members returned from Executive Session at 8:45 p.m.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn at 8:46 p.m. was made by Adamkowski, 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:

None