

October 15, 2024

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: Randy Watson, Supervisor; Gene Bennati, Steve Adamkowski, John Peters and Myron Thurston. Also present: Highway Superintendent Tim Murphy and 23 residents.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, 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 September 9, 2024 meeting. There being none, a motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Bennati, seconded by Thurston. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

PUBLIC CONCERNS:

Jeff Bartkoski, CEO from Mercy Flight, presented an update on Mercy Flight Central. They are a non-profit charitable organization since 1922 and are based in Canandaigua but have 3 bases that they operate from. We always have one helicopter with a pilot, a flight nurse and a flight paramedic ready for a call at each base and can leave within 10 or 15 minutes. Our new helicopters fly at a speed of over 150 mph and have advanced equipment such as ultrasound, ventilators and monitors, and whole blood. These enhancements we contribute to the money we receive from the community. Supervisor Watson presented a check to Mr. Bartkoski from the Town for \$5000 and it was very much appreciated.

Kaylee Sierson spoke on behalf of the Vernon Public Library. She emphasized 3 key factors of the library which include: 1) our outreach has broadened immensely that includes partnering with local cafes to engage in book reading programs, offer one-on-one tutoring space and offering more educational classes, 2) our marketing has shifted gears and 3) our attendance has increased. To emphasize on one area of increased attendance is the use of the library and its resources for home schooled kids, which is on the rise. One of the home school legal requirements of NYS is fire safety. A fire safety educational event that the library partnered with the fire department was on held on October 14, which also opened an opportunity to promote local sales tax dollars in area businesses. She believes the Vernon Public Library is a vital part of our community. In conclusion, the library is not segregating its offerings to only home-based educators, but we are open to all residents. Also, there is a regular Board meeting on October 28 @ 6:00 p.m. and also an Open House will be held on November 2 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. that the public is invited to offer as much transparency as possible. She is honored to serve the community and will continue to do so in any possible way.

Bennati stated that he has had questions asked to him that he could not answer so he asked Kaylee if the building is going to be for the library or the Chamber of Commerce. She responded that it has always been a library and will continue to be a library. Leana Finster mentioned that she has gifted a building to the Chamber of Commerce. Bennati also asked how they came to the amount of \$60,000 that they need. Kaylee responded that they are sending out their budget, hopefully, by the end of the week. It came from the original library Board. Bennati then asked how many Boards has the library had in the past, but Kaylee did not know. Rich Lagoy mentioned that this information is also on the library's website.

Kristina Boylan stated that she has lived here since 2010 and had a 2 year old daughter at the time and the library was a little sketchy then, but things changed for the better around 2013-14. The library became a real warm, welcoming place with people who cared. State libraries were founded in 1818 and in 1834 it was proposed to NYS legislature that municipalities be able to fund their own libraries to provide useful knowledge. So, for almost 200 years New Yorkers have supported libraries through taxes. We realize taxes will increase a little but this is an educational resource that she supports.

Chuck Woodcock said that if the taxes are going up 17 percent, how much would that be on a \$100,000 home. Supervisor Watson responded that the 17 percent is the total "property" tax collected by the Town of Vernon. Adamkowski mentioned that the amount would be \$17 on a \$100,000 home. Mr. Woodcock also said that anyone should be able to afford \$17 and that the signs are very misleading.

Rich Lagoy said that they have called the Assessors and they will not give us that figure, so we got the figure on our own off the tax roll. We posted that and we keep getting emails on how they came up with that figure.

Melanie Catello responded that the Board members had nothing to do with the signs, they did not make the signs and they did not hand them out. Also, the \$60,000 was based on the district, which is not a big deal for 500,000 homes, but on 100,000 homes, it is a big deal.

Kaylee Sierson said that the library Board is not allowed to give out signs or tell people how to vote. We are to stay neutral.

Thurston explained how the \$60,000 is 16.9 percent of the total of general and highway funds and he apologized for the 24 percent he stated at the October 2 forum. He has always been on the Board to serve the community and keep taxes as low as possible and services as good as possible. If this \$60,000 is passed, its permanent and people need to be aware of this.

Bennati mentioned that he started the forum on October 2 by saying that he can't and won't tell people how to vote and he is just presenting the facts. He also said that he was disappointed that no one from the library was at the forum and thought it was a mistake because they could have defended their position.

Kaylee Sierson mentioned that this amount is not forever and could be decreased and she personally could not be at that forum but wrote a letter to be read.

Thurston mentioned that we were told by our attorney that it would be forever.

Adamkowski mentioned that it was a very well written letter and it opens up an opportunity for people to ask questions.

Supervisor Watson reported that the CAC figures on the agreement do not match and asked Kevin Sayles to have Mike Holmes give him a call. Mr. Sayles agreed.

REPORTS:

The following reports were presented: Town Clerk, Planning/Zoning Board of Appeals, Codes Enforcement, Supervisor's Report, Intergovernmental Relations: Adamkowski reported that he is working with the highway guys to get the memorial trees planted and he marked where the gazebo is going if anyone wants to give their opinion. SWOCO: Supervisor Watson reported that they finalized the budget and need to buy a tractor, they mow about 10 acres. Highway Superintendent: Superintendent Murphy reported that they are getting ready for winter and hope their 2 new trucks will be here about the first of the year.

There were no reports from Assessors, Education and Libraries, Economic Development, Operations and County Legislator.

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

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

BUSINESS:

The 2025 Preliminary Budget is complete and on file in the Town Clerk's Office.

A motion to hold a public hearing to approve the 2025 Fire Contracts on November 4, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. was made by Thurston, seconded by Adamkowski. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to hold a public hearing to approve the 2025 Budget on November 4, 2024 at 6:45 p.m. was made by Bennati, seconded by Peters. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to pass a resolution per the Vernon Town Court's request to approve application for a 2024-2025 JCAP Grant of up to \$5000 was made by Peters, seconded by Thurston. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to pass a resolution per the Tax Collector's request to participate in the NYCLASS (New York Cooperative Liquid Assets) Program was tabled to get more information on this by Adamkowski, seconded by Thurston. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to appoint Robert Moher to the Board of Assessment Review for another 5 year term was made by Thurston, seconded by Adamkowski. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to approve the Oneida County Snowplowing Agreement for November 1, 2024-April 20, 2026 was made by Bennati, seconded by Thurston. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to approve painting the pavilion, picnic tables and doors up to \$2000 was made by Thurston, seconded by Adamkowski. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to approve the Codes Department's request to purchase a used copier for \$6486 was made by Peters, seconded by Thurston. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to transfer \$6486 from B1990.4 Contingency to B8010.2 Zoning Equipment was made by Adamkowski, seconded by Peters. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to transfer \$1000 from A1990.4 Contingency to A3010.4 Public Safety for Mercy Flight was made by Thurston, seconded by Peters. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to transfer \$500 from A1990.4 Contingency to A1910.4 Unallocated Insurance to cover increase to Town Insurance was made by Adamkowski, seconded by Peters. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

2023 Annual Audit of Vernon Town Court has been completed by Sarah Marshall, CPA and will be discussed when she returns from being out of town.

AIM check from New York State has been received in the amount of \$32,319.

CHIPS, PAVE NY and EWR checks have been received for a totaling \$192,943.72.

Checks were received from Oneida County for the Oneida Indian Nation Agreement for the first and second quarters totaling \$112,500.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Bennati asked Kaylee Sierson if he could give out her phone number for library questions. She replied to have them direct their questions to the library email and write to her attention.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss Intermunicipal Agreement at 7:52 p.m. was made by Thurston, seconded by Bennati. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn at 8:09 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.

Julie A. McElroy
Acting Secretary

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

COMMUNICATIONS:

None