

June 12, 2023

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: County Legislator, Keith Schiebel; Highway Superintendent, Timothy Murphy and 9 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 May 8, 2023 meeting. There being none, a motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Thurston, seconded by Peters. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

PUBLIC CONCERNS:

Oneida County Deputy Commissioner of Engineering, Nicholas DiGennaro came to give the Board Members an update on Oneida County roads. Councilman Peters thanked DiGennaro for taking the time to come to the meeting. DiGennaro explained the cycle of how the county roads are evaluated/maintained for paving approximately every 20yrs and stone/oiled approximately every 5 years. The local government superintendents and community members contribute to notifying them of problems areas that need to be focused on. Ditches are cleaned on an as needed basis. Current paving projects that are in the Town of Vernon are 1) Williams Street/Beacon light Road 2) Marble Road from Simmons Rd to Arquint Road. On Cooper Street there is a culvert replacement and road reconstruction currently underway and that is a FEMA supported project. Oil/Stone roads include Burns, Churton, Peterboro and Kenwood. Peterboro Road is scheduled to be completely repaved next year. Peters asked what was happening with the crown on Churton Road. DiGennaro explained that the center of the road will be milled down. Peters is extremely concerned as the crown is causing damage to the wings of the Highway Department trucks in the winter months as the angle of the road causes the wing to dig into the shoulder of the road. Thurston noted that Peterboro Road is a hill and he has lived there many years. He does not ever remember the shoulders of the roads taken down or the ditches cleaned. If the county were to at least take the shoulders down to allow water to get away from the roadway to prevent the road from breaking up any further. Bennati asked what is the purpose of putting oil/stone on the roads. DiGennaro said it was considerably less expensive. Schiebel asked DiGennaro to fill the Town Board in on the recent changes at the County. DiGennaro stated that Mark Laramie has retired and Matt Baisley has been appointed as commissioner. Peters also asked if the town of Vernon could get "share the road with farmers" signs. Schiebel stated that that project was through Oneida County Cooperate Extension and he will get the town in touch with the appropriate person. Thurston mentioned that there are already signs in the Town of Vernon on County Roads.

The local ATV club came to ask for an update to their request last month for town approval for ATV access of ½ mile on Wood Rd. Peters told them that the Town Attorney is working on it. Club member advised that last year they had approached the Town of Verona for approval to travel on their roads. The Town of Verona advised them that they could use their roads the same as the snowmobiles do. Last year the County Sherriffs contacted the club due to some issues of ATV's traveling on the roadways. There were currently no laws in NYS regarding the classification of a UTV using the roadways. The club is working with Oneida County Sherriffs to establish legal and safe ways for this. Without a local law the sheriffs had no way to write these tickets. They are working with the Town of Verona to establish certain roadways and speed limits that UTV's are allowed to travel on. They are trying to establish accountability for those traveling on the roadways. Peters stated that the Town Attorney was hesitant to do anything for this right away as he believed he wanted to see how things worked out for the Town of Verona. There is currently a public hearing scheduled for Verona on July 3rd.

Gary Coufal introduced himself as the President of the Vernon Library. He has been the president for 7 years. Vice president Lori Klopfer and Library Director Robyn Coufal were also present. The library is struggling after covid, and then a water pipe break caused further closure. It took approximately a year to reopen to the public. During that time their reserves were

depleted. They are asking for financial support from the Town of Vernon and for the board members to consider bringing the library back into public funding. Supervisor Watson asked if they knew why the funding had stopped. Robyn Coufal said she had previously spoke with Town Clerk Champney who explained that the contract was tabled due to lack of reports and a yearly budget from the library. Peters added that the board would like minutes from their meetings and to know what activities were being provided. Robyn Coufal brought a copy of their 2022 budget and mentioned that they run off an Edward Jones account that was set up long ago. Gary Coufal added that he does not want to ever close the library however without funding they may have no choice but to let the employees go and have to rely on volunteers which is hard to find. Bennati asked who their employees are. The library has 3 employees 1) Robyn Coufal 2) Jessica Yerdon 3) Bridget Kiefer. Bennati explained that previously the Sherrill library supplied the Town with records of attendance. Bennati was looking at the last budget the Vernon Library supplied the town from 2019 and noted that the spending was far over budget. Coufal mentioned that may have been the year they had to repair the roof. Bennati mentioned that he has noticed previously several times that the library is closed. Coufal advised that they did not have a sign and the library may not have been actually closed. She advised the board members that they have their hours listed on their website and also on the mid york website. Bennati also mentioned that in 2018 a contract was sent to the library and not returned and the Town still gave money to the library and that shows the support of the library. He is very concerned about the spending of the library funds from the 2019 library budget. Robyn Coufal advised that they have a board of directors made up of residents from the Town of Vernon, Village of Vernon, Town of Verona and the City of Sherrill. Thurston stated that the Town would need accountability and that would come with an audit to be able to move forward. Peters would like to request an independent audit of the library and monitoring the spending before any further contributions can begin. Lori Klopfer asked for clarification on who was doing the audit. Peters advised that the Town would do their own audit and if anything further was needed they would have to get someone in to do it. Bennati asked if the Trust was on solid ground. The library trust has been used to cover payroll, repairs etc. and they only have about a year left. Coufal explained that they can not apply for grants as they are working with a lawyer to try to obtain a 501c3. Their charter had to be redone as it was lost prior to Coufal starting with the library. The previous board did not file taxes the correct way so this process is being held by NYS Department of Education at this time. Thurston mentioned that the records the town is asking for the library to supply should be the same ones they supply mid-york library system. Coufal submitted a record of tallies from January – June 2023, monthly calendar, 2022 transactions report, 2022 profit & loss report and December 31, 2022 balance sheet.

REPORTS:

The following reports were presented: Town Clerk, Codes Enforcement, Supervisors, County Legislator; Schiebel submitted a written report and highlighted 911 calls to be diverted to nurse navigator program, charging stations, sales tax renewal, mortgage tax distribution to municipalities, lease agreement at county airport and grants for sewer rehabilitation projects.

There were no reports from Assessors, Zoning/Planning Board, Education and Libraries, Operations, SWOCO, Highway, Intergovernmental Relations and Economic Development.

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

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

BUSINESS:

A motion to approve Oneida County 2023 Mowing Agreement was made by Thurston, seconded by Adamkowski. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

A motion to approve sending Michael Bonanza, 4866 State Route 31, request of zoning change to Planning/Zoning Board was made by Thurston, seconded by Bennati. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

Motion to consider Vernon Library's request to consider resuming financial support was tabled.

Board members discussed having negotiations with the Village of Vernon on water rates for the Vernon Center Water District and plan on having an informational session on acquiring easement rights from select property owners two weeks after the rates are decided on.

Town of Huntington Board shared Voter's Identification Resolution urging NYS Legislature and Governor Hochul to draft and enact legislation regarding a voter's identification process.

Oneida County 1st quarter sales tax was received in the amount of \$340,955.09.

Oneida County 1st quarter Compact Agreement was received in the amount of \$31,250.

NYS VLT check was received in the amount of \$231,788.00.

Charter Communications franchise fee check was received in the amount of \$9,848.25.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion to enter into executive session to discuss Personnel at 8:25p.m. was made by Peters, seconded by Bennati. 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