

September 9, 2024

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; Keith Scheibel, County Legislator; Kevin Sayles, City of Sherrill Commissioner. Also present: 12 community members.

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 August 12, 2024, meeting. Thurston asked that the following changes be made to the discussion about the Vernon Public Library's submission of a petition to hold a 414 vote to be placed on November's election ballot.

- "town operates on a "tax" (budget) of \$374,000"
- "This vote would increase the Town tax by 20-25%. (Thurston corrected this as he did the figures afterwards and the increase is actually 16%)"

A motion to accept the minutes as with these changes was made by Thurston, seconded by Peters. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

PUBLIC CONCERNS:

Rose Lockwood had previously spoken to Councilman Bennati and understood that there was a slight delay to the Vernon Center Water District project. Bennati explained that the town had received documents back from NYS Department of Health and they had been asked for some minor changes to be made. Supervisor Watson explained that the Dept. of Health was looking at changes such as additional pictures and shut off valves. The engineers are working on this and should have this completed and returned to the Dept. of Health in the next week or so.

Paulette Scheibel announced that there will be a Town Hall Community Forum held on Wednesday, October 2nd from 7pm – 8:30pm @MyUpstateNYMarketing Venue "The Spot" 5571 State Route 5 (next to Utica-Rome Speedway) to discuss topics such as the Vernon Library Tax Proposition, Vernon Center Water District project, Village of Vernon Street Lighting and County Laws to regulate cannabis shops.

Keith Scheibel spoke as a resident/taxpayer in regard to a motion made by the Town Board at the August 12, 2024, to contribute \$800 to cover bands at the Vernon Center Farmers Market to the VVS Chamber of Commerce. He asked the board to think about that decision and the precedence they may be setting. He wants the board to consider all the taxpayers in the town that are footing the bill for the event, and not limited to the residents of Vernon Center. He suggested that maybe if the Village of Oneida Castle decided to hold an event or the City of Sherrill has a concert series the town could consider donating to them as well. Scheibel suggested that the town have a copy of the bylaws and 501c3 of the organization they are providing funding for. He believed that there was previous discussion of the town providing money for a holiday lighting display the VVS Chamber of Commerce was looking to set up and that this just recently changed to the town funding of the bands. Scheibel mentioned that this should also be considered as other groups such as youth baseball possibly in the future, ask for money for uniforms but then decide to use the money for bats instead. He encourages the board to continue funding entertainment but to remember that it should continue through the community and not just in Vernon Center. Watson corrected Scheibel and advised him that the VVS Chamber of Commerce did not ask for money for the lighting display. They had solely asked for use of the park out behind the Town Offices.

REPORTS:

The following reports were presented:

- Town Clerk -written
- Codes Enforcement – written
- Supervisor -written
- Education and Libraries; Bennati requested that the minutes be accurately recorded as he did not want what he was about to say, be twisted at some point later. He began by

saying, on this board his first obligation is representing all the residents of the Town of Vernon. His second roll is heading the Education and Libraries Committee. He stated that his next comments are simply pointing out facts of what will be on the ballot this fall, as proposition #2. He is not telling anyone how to vote and that it is certainly the prerogative of the voters. If this proposition is passed, the town will be incurring \$60,000 a year towards the Vernon Public Library. This tax will increase a 16% tax increase for every resident in the Town of Vernon. It is his job to present these figures to the residents as he is on the Education and Libraries Committee. He is not opposed to Education or Libraries as he has spent 45 years in that field. Watson explained that if this vote passes the \$60,000 will be added to the taxes forever. This could increase in the future if a need of more funding arises, such as if the building needs a new roof. The 2% tax cap does not come into play with the addition of this funding if this vote passes.

- Intergovernmental Relations: Adamkowski with the agreement of the other board members recommends that the Town of Vernon notify the other municipalities within the Town about the Vernon Public Library vote being on the ballot just so they are aware of it.
- Highway Superintendent Murphy mentioned that they had a very successful fall brush pick up, winter sand and salt is all hauled and put away, working on some trucks, doing some tree work and putting in some culverts. Overall, they are in good shape.
- County Legislator Scheibel submitted a written report and highlighted the support of Veterans services with the Neighborhood Center, paving of commercial development in the airport, gunfire detection technology in Utica, and \$5 million towards Rome for the recovery from the tornado.
- Petition to support former Congressional Congressman, Anthony Brindisi, who is running as a U.S. District Judge.

Scheibel also mentioned that the road paving continues throughout the county. Some of it is weather related however some are contractual issues. He recommends that contracts for next year be looked at if one company is being brought in for milling/grinding and another doing paving and that the gaps between how soon the road is to be completed, to eliminate situations like Peterboro Road to sit for long periods of time incomplete. Scheibel encouraged all to join the Town Hall Community Forum on October 2nd. Details are still in the works, however, he is working on a fundraiser: Pancakes with a Politician on October 20th.

There were no reports from:

- Assessors
- Zoning/Planning Board
- Economic Development
- Operations
- SWOCO

A motion to accept the 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 Bennati, seconded by Adamkowski. No discussion. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion to enter executive session at 7:30 was made by Adamkowski, seconded by Bennati. Motion Carried.

Board members returned from executive session at 7:44.

BUSINESS:

Annual audit of the court is beginning on Tuesday, September 10, 2024.

Supervisor Randy Watson spoke with NYS Comptroller's Regional office who advised money motioned at previous meeting for bands should be paid from accounting code A7989.4 Cultural and Rec, Contractual.

A motion to approve request to amend budget adding expenditure code of A7989.4 Cultural and Rec, Contractual was made by Thurston, seconded by Peters. Ayes 5. Nays 0. No discussion. Motion carried.

A motion to approve request to transfer \$800 from A1990.4 Contingency to A7989.4 Cultural and Rec, Contractual was made by Bennati, seconded by Thurston. Ayes 5. Nays 0. No discussion. Motion carried.

A motion to approve request to purchase a Gazebo in the amount of \$11,500 from Tailor Built Structures for Tree Memorial Park was made by Adamkowski, seconded by Bennati. Ayes 5. Nays 0. The gazebo will be a 12' x 12' square, white vinyl, blue metal roof with floor delivered. The gazebo will be located where the path cuts through. Highway department will put in the path and base. Motion carried.

A motion to approve giving \$5000 to Mercy Flight and the transfer of \$3000 from A1990.4 Contingency to A3010.4 Public Safety was made by Thurston, seconded by Peters. Ayes 5. Nays 0. Supervisor Watson mentioned that they had not given them money for the last 3 years and that Mercy Flight has been called to Vernon four times this year. Motion carried.

A motion to approve Highway Superintendent request to purchase dump trailer from TMS Trailer Marketing Services for \$12,549.00 was made by Thurston, seconded by Peters. Ayes 5. Nays 0. No discussion. Motion carried.

A motion to approve United Healthcare request for use of board room on October 18, 2024; 10:00am – 12:00pm to offer information for community on insurance needs was made by Peters, seconded by Adamkowski. Ayes 5. Nays 0. No discussion. Motion carried.

A motion to approve request to purchase 3 new monitors for security system at \$275 per monitor was made by Peters, seconded by Thurston. Ayes 5. Nays 0. No discussion. Motion carried.

Fire Department Work session scheduled for Wednesday, September 25th, 2024, at 7:00pm.

Budget workshop will be held Thursday, October 3, 2024, at 6:30pm.

Received 2nd Quarter Sales Tax from Oneida County in the amount of \$356,000.19. Total sales tax revenue is up from last year this time by \$36,000.

Received Franchise Fee from Charter Communications of \$9,711.44

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

None

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn at 8:53 p.m. was made by Peters, seconded by Adamkowski. 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