

Town Board Meeting held February 28, 2022 at 1:00 P.M. at the Town Hall in Schroon Lake N.Y.

Present:

Town Supervisor: Meg Wood

Councilpersons: Richard Gero, Ethan Thompson, Lynn Donaldson, Leanna Welch

Highway Superintendent: Dana Shaughnessy

Deputy Town Clerk: Melissa Armstrong

Also Present: Brian Ritching, Chris Fariss

Supervisor Wood called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M. with a salute to the Flag.

Resolution #46 Approval of Minutes

Councilman Gero moved a resolution to approve the January 18, 2022 minutes and the February 14, 2022 minutes, seconded by Councilman Thompson; carried.

Resolution #47 Approve Sale of Sewer Department Truck to Buildings and Grounds Dept.

Councilman Gero moved a resolution to approve the sale of the Sewer Department Truck to the Buildings and Grounds Department in the amount of \$31,500.00, seconded by Councilwoman Welch; carried.

Resolution #48 Approve Transfer of Building and Grounds Truck to Sewer Department

Councilwoman Donaldson moved a resolution to approve the transfer of Building and Grounds Truck to the Sewer Department at no charge, seconded by Councilwoman Welch; carried.

Discussion on Safety Committee Meeting

Supervisor Wood stated she wants to make a date and time and an agenda for the next safety committee meeting. The members include: Rick Gero, Chris Stone, Kevin Lashway, Brian Ritchings, Bill Jenks, Pat Shaughnessy, Rich Hall, and Joe Brannigan. Councilman Gero stated the synopsis includes a mission statement that was handed out to everyone at the next meeting.

Supervisor Wood suggests that we make copies and give to all the department heads and include a date and time for the meeting with an agenda to follow. She recommends that it be done during working hours maybe Tuesday or Friday. Chris Stone suggests that we have the meeting after lunch at 12:30 and possibly in late March. Standard Agenda is as follows-

Review injuries or accidents that occurred in the previous period

Determine causes and whether policies were being adhered to

Discuss ways to try and prevent such injuries and accidents from happening

Discuss ideas and concerns from individual members

Discuss what PPE, signage and equipment or training is needed

Most importantly discuss, formulate, and install policies that shall be understood and followed.

Councilman Gero stated he had asked all the department heads to review with their employees to see if there needed to be any changes or additions. Each department has different policies and wanted input from the employees. Supervisor Wood suggests that we give our departments time to review and decide what to implement in the next meeting. Chris Stone suggests we do it the last Tuesday, March 29th. The town is busy right now with snowstorms and gives them more time to think about everything.

Supervisor Wood stated the next safety committee meeting will be March 29th, at 12:30 pm, weather permitting.

Discussion on Codes Assistant

Supervisor Wood stated that Jon has agreed to have some assistance. Councilman Thompson adds that he has had one application. All the paperwork went smoothly, and Jon just needs to go do the inspection. If they all go as smoothly as this one then there's not much work involved. He suggests that they do a spreadsheet and a data base. This was for a short-term rental. If we have a spreadsheet, we can use it across the board but may take a little bit more time than the 15 minutes he spent. Brian Ritching suggested that we hire someone not just to do the application work but to man the office when Jon is away, to answer phones, and questions people may have while Jon is in the field and out of the office. Supervisor Wood stated Jon mentioned downloading all the data in the County format, so they build the whole database that matches what the county has.

Councilman Thompson stated Jon doesn't necessarily want the help, but he is willing to accept the help. Supervisor Wood stated that we're planning for the future, and we want a smooth transition.

This position is only part time. We have not advertised this position yet. Councilwoman Donaldson created a synopsis about pay and hours and suggests that we hire someone with at least 2 years' experience with computers and data entry; we would pay \$15 an hour. If they have no experience, we will pay minimum wage which is \$13.20 an hour. If we hire someone with no experience, we

would have to train them and we don't want to do that. Chris Stone stated that we would have to establish that position with civil service for the town. I don't know what the title would be, possibly just a clerk, I would have to look into it. Jon's position is a civil service position and would need to score in the top 3 in their field. This position isn't necessarily to take over Jon's position, but a data entry, clerical position. We can train them in more than one area once they get to know the data base. Chris Stone stated that Jon's name is going down on these applications and he is responsible for all the work, so the position is strictly data entry. Supervisor Wood will start by looking into the civil service job. Second thing would be the hourly rate, \$15 an hour with experience seems to be a great start since next year the minimum is going up. Jon said the workspace would not be a problem and if we want to proceed then we can advertise the job description.

Discussion on Short term Rental Packet for Codes Department

Supervisor Wood suggests that we table this until Jon is back. He is away at a continuing education seminar and could not make the meeting. This would be a packet with a cover letter, application, and instructions for a short term rental packet that could easily be accessible on our website.

Discussion on Beach Concession

Councilwoman Welch asks if there is a reason there is only one vendor and not more options? Supervisor Wood replies that we want to make sure we have someone there 7 days a week. It can be difficult weather related and for people to make a profit and know how to schedule their purchasing if they come and go. The idea in the past is if we give someone exclusive access down at the beach than they are the only ones and may be able to make a profit being there 7 days a week. Councilwoman Welch stated that in the past people have been disappointed with the food, that it was very expensive and not very good. Local people have not been impressed, not just at the beach but people stopping on their lunch break. Chris Stone stated that for one, parking would be a disaster if they had 3 or 4 vendors there at one time. Now if you're not giving someone the exclusive, you have to decide who works what days. It's a statistical nightmare. Councilwoman Welch suggests that you have more than one vendor at a time. Say one vendor sells hotdogs and hamburgers and the other vendor sells tacos, to give the community more than one option. Chris Stone stated that there is only one pad for electricity and that would be a logistically nightmare as well. Councilman Thompson adds that we also want to limit competition with town businesses that pay their taxes and are established all year long. These people pay at least a bid of \$1000 and get prime real estate for the

summer. Supervisor Wood states the last two years have been a nightmare with Covid and the Health Department restrictions. Councilman Thompson stated that we also don't get any other bids. Councilman Gero suggested that we get in touch with the Chamber because they have a list of vendors that they use for the car show and other events and maybe we could spike some interests in other vendors. If the Chamber puts the word out there, we could get people interested in coming for the summer. Supervisor Wood stated that we need to focus on variety or consistency. Vendors usually already have their own route that they go to and they take a chance on committing to us for the whole summer, in hopes that the weather cooperates and they can make money. We have talked in the past about having a food truck at the Golf Course as well, but didn't raise an ounce of interest to any vendor. Councilman Gero stated it is hard to find one vendor to commit to one location, 7 days a week, let alone a few different vendors. The vendors are event driven. Supervisor Wood asks if we need to change our specifications. Do we need to charge \$1000? Will we get any bids? We should put an ad out in March. Phil Armstrong asks if we know about how much they use in power per summer that is provided by the town. Chris Stone replies that she's not sure but thinks they are on their own meter and can check on the exact numbers. She states that in the past they never put a number on it and we would get a couple bids and the job went to the highest bidder but the past few years, they haven't gotten any bids. She also suggests that there be a minimum, \$1000 seems to be a little high. They do have to provide insurance and a certificate from the health department, so they do have some costs involved. Back in the day it would bid out about \$2000, town concession was a hot commodity but since has died down. Covid has slowed things down tremendously and if we get back to some normalcy it may be beneficial again. Councilman Gero thinks that they raised it from \$750 to \$1000. Councilman Thompson asks if there is anything in the contract that they must be there 7 days a week because if we are giving them the exclusive location, what if they only want to be there during the busy days and we only have a vendor in town a couple days a week? Supervisor Wood stated I think we should include a minimum number of days and make sure they have the exclusive spot. Electricity is a price of doing business, same with keeping the ice rink open or the Golf Course running. It's a nice entity for our tourist town.

Discussion on Highway Employees Wage Scale and Benefits

Supervisor Wood explained that this morning they discussed training for CDL's. The county may be asking if Boces will have a program at the Lowes location in Ticonderoga for CDL training that we could send people without a CDL for training. The discussion of highway

employee's wage scale and benefits is a huge concern because we are short-handed with employees that carry a CDL, the wage scale that we're talking about is in the manual. Chris Stone discusses the wage scale. The wage statement is set up in categories, civil service, requirements, education, she suggests not changing the wage statement structure. If we're just discussing CDL's then she would just change the pay of the CDL because if you move a heavy equipment operator down to category 6, now you're putting them with building inspectors, automotive mechanic, and other jobs that require a 4-year degree, licensing, or years of training. These jobs are graded on experience, education, continuing education, job requirements, etc. this is the most important thing about the wage scale. On the right-hand side, you have the pay scale. This is the bare minimum. You can't pay anyone below that number, but you can pay anyone above that number, depending on experience and what they're bringing to the table. That is just a minimum. We don't have to follow minimum wage, but it's beneficial to have your lowest category to be minimum wage. Stone stated that next year, she believes the minimum wage will be going to \$15 an hour, a \$1.80 pay increase. With that being said, at budget time this year, if we were going to stick to minimum wage, every category is going to go up \$1.80. But this is just the wage statement. Whatever you decide to do, has to be fair, you can't pick and choose who you're going to give a raise. You can't pick two guys in the same category and only give one of them a raise. Her opinion is that if you change the lowest grade pay wage, then you need to give everyone a pay increase. You don't want to change the structure of the categories. We can't train for the CDL's now, they're no longer letting us do that and fill those positions. We're in competition with everyone, CDL's are short-handed everywhere. We need to do something to entice people to want to work with us. Supervisor Wood stated that everyone is increasing the CDL pay, everyone is losing their employees to private sectors that pay more. Councilman Thompson questions that if we increase the pay for our CDL drivers, why do we need to increase the pay for everyone that works for the town? Just because we're having a difficult time with CDL operators, we shouldn't increase the pay across the board. Different incentives were discussed. Changing the health care and benefit packages were discussed. We could possibly change an employee's benefit and health care packages and negotiate a higher price. We can no longer offer CDL training as part of the hiring process. We can't pay someone to go through their training elsewhere and guarantee they accept a job in our town. Supervisor Wood states that we need to come to an agreement to higher the pay wage for CDL drivers. Councilman Gero stated that it would be better to do it during budget season, but we are in such need of CDL drivers that something needs to

be done now. If there is a way to just increase the pay of the Highway department now and not increase the pay across the board until budget season, or until the minimum wage goes up. Right now we're going up against supply and demand. The supply of the CDL right now is extremely low and the demand is extremely high. Just like when we hired the Sewer Department, we paid what we had to, to fill the position. We didn't have to increase everyone, just that one position. Chris Stone agrees, and stated if we're not fair, we could have people resigning tomorrow. Chris Stone stated that if we give a pay raise to HEO's and CDL then we don't have to give them another raise in the first of the year. If they get a raise now, they don't get a raise later. We're addressing the main concern at hand, which is CDL. This is a board resolution. Now if they go over budget, they will have to do a budget amendment. Councilwoman Welch questioned if we had base pay start at \$21 an hour, should they be getting paid more than the current CDL workers? They determined that instead of advertising a base pay, they decide pay based on their experience. Councilman Thompson addresses the concern for a worst-case scenario; that what if raising \$1.80 still doesn't bring in any applications. What if they need to raise it \$4.00? Would we have to give everyone a \$4 raise? Chris Stone stated that the board will find that to fill any positions in the future, it's going to cost a lot more. Councilman Gero suggests that the Highway department employees need to know that they will not be getting another raise come budget time, and the people that are not getting a raise now need to be reassured that they will be getting a raise at a later date. The resolution ahead will need to state who get's the raise and when it will be in effect. This resolution will include the 5 current CDL holders at the town highway garage will receive a raise of \$1.80, effective _____ through December 31st, 2022. The 2023 CDL hourly rate will be determined at budget time. 2023 employee wages will also be determined at budget time. Councilman Gero stated we have a number in mind, we have a plan in mind, why don't we come back to this at our first meeting in March and we can get the language right and come to an agreement with a resolution then. Councilwoman Welch and Donaldson, Supervisor Wood, and Councilman Thompson all agree. Supervisor Wood assures the highway department that we're getting things moving. We know that something needs to be done and we have addressed the situation.

Councilman Gero moved to adjourn at 4:05 P.M., seconded by Councilwoman Welch; carried.

I, Melissa Armstrong, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct transcript from the minutes now on file in my office and of the whole such original minutes.

Dated: March 10, 2022 _____ Deputy Town Clerk

