

**TOWN OF CANTON REGULAR
BOARD MEETING BY ZOOM**

6:00 PM

July 8, 2020

Minutes

Present: Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley, Deputy Supervisor Bob Washo,
Council members James Smith, Tim Danehy and Karin Blackburn

Also in Attendance: Town Clerk/Tax Collector Lisa Hammond, Economic Development
Director Leigh Rodriguez, Assessor Cindy Brand, Angela Gray of Gray and Gray, Recreation
Director Jim Putman, Code Enforcement Officer Jeff Murray, Historian Linda Casserly, Justice
Michael Morgan, Adam Atkinson, Tyler Ashley, County Legislator Joe Lightfoot and Zoom
Moderator Anna Sorensen

Absent: Attorney Eric Gustafson and Highway Superintendent Terry Billings

A. Call Meeting to Order: Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley called the zoom meeting to order at 6:02
p.m. Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley went over the rules of using zoom and noted that Anna
Sorensen is the moderator for the Town meeting.

B. Public Comment: none

C. County Legislature Representative(s) Updates: Joe Lightfoot was present via zoom.

Lightfoot gave an unofficial update on the Bass Masters Tournament slated to be held in
Waddington later this month, not knowing for absolute sure if the tournament will be
held due to the COVID19 virus. Discussion was held on testing for the virus and
quarantine time of the participants and families coming to the area.

Discussion was held on sales tax monies not being down as much as the County thought
it could be. Originally the County thought it could be up to 2 million. Lightfoot stated in
the last quarter sales tax showed an increase.

The County is looking for new leadership for the Social Services Directors position with
3 applicants to currently consider.

Council member Tim Danehy asked Lightfoot if there was any help at the County level in
assisting with the Broadband issue in Canton. A brief discussion was held
on providers being taxed.

D. Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting 6/10/2020

Motion to approve minutes made by Council member Tim Danehy, seconded by Council member Karin Blackburn. All in favor. Motion carries.

Council member Bob Washo abstained from voting as he was absent from the meeting.

E. Supervisor Report:

Angel Gray of Gray and Gray read over the monthly report of the Supervisors Office, which was sent to the Town Council prior to the meeting. Questions and answers were received, and fund balances were discussed. Gray stated that there is a surplus in all funds year to date and after hearing from County Legislator Joe Lightfoot, Gray feels the Town could possibly only see a 10% decrease in sales tax. Supervisor Ashley added that the spending freeze will remain in effect for another month.

F. Correspondence:

Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley noted correspondences

A letter was received from Dan Dominie on Flying of Special interest Group Flags. No discussion held

A request was received from SLC North Country Events asking for a donation and or sponsorship for their Bass Masters event: A brief discussion was held, and it was decided not to donate. Council member Tim Danehy noted that this request has been made in the past and no donation was sent so therefore this is a no change item.

G. Audit Committee:

A: \$29,124.14
B: \$3,094.30
SL: \$278.75
TA: \$15,751.15
DA: \$9,147.44
DB: \$4,891.67
SF: \$67,917.16

Motion made by Council member Jim Smith to approve expenditures, seconded by Council member Bob Washo, all voted in favor. Motion carries.

H. Acceptance of Department Reports:

Justice Court: Mike Morgan stated that court will start back up in August. Signage has been ordered. Letters with new directions for defendants, attorneys and anyone appearing in court have been sent out. New guidelines are being implemented. A brief discussion was held on cleaning of the court room. The Justices and the building committee have previously met with the Justice staff to discuss cleaning efforts.

Economic Developer Leigh Rodriguez stated that she and staff are back in the office. Rodriguez went over items in her report. Dairy Queen is under new construction. Rodriguez added that a couple business in the area have been lost due to COVID but is hoping to gain a couple new ones.

Recreation Director Jim Putman stated that sand is being added at Taylor Park, due to the low water levels with the lack of rain. Putman also added that he is getting ready for the NYMIR inspection to happen, noting that all suggestions from the last inspection have been taken care of.

Code Enforcement Officer Jeff Murray stated that construction has been very active. Murray added that he continues to go to job sites with building applications and that seems to be working out well. Murray feels that at the same time it keeps the traffic in the Municipal Building down. Zoning Board of Appeals is holding their second meeting of the year.

Clerk Lisa Hammond stated that things are going well in her office and conference has officially been canceled. Revenues are picking back up, with marriage licenses booming. The public is being respectful on wearing masks and maintaining social distance.

Assessor Cindy Brand stated that she and Lena Kanitz from St. Lawrence County have been out doing data collecting to update inventory two and half days a week.

Brand will be attending two online classes next week for 12 credits. There are 3948 parcels in the Town of Canton with 3620 being taxable.

Supervisor May Ann Ashley added that a press release was sent out to let residents know that the data collecting process was going on in the Town of Canton. Brand and Kanitz are using marked vehicles for this purpose.

Council member Tim Danehy wants to see exempt properties updated also.

Brand stated she recently did SUNY Canton and will do St. Lawrence University next and continue moving forward.

Historian Linda Casserly stated that she has is looking into creating some type of welcoming committee for new residents of Canton.

Motion made by Council member Bob Washo to accept department reports as presented, seconded by Council member Karin Blackburn, all voted in favor. Motion carries.

I. Committee Reports:

IT Committee member Karin Blackburn noted that the IT and communications committee met and held discussion on department head reports and wanted give everyone a heads up on the matter. A list of questions will be going out to all Department Heads that will spark more information for Town Board members.

Town Board members want to streamline them and make them more efficient.

Council member Bob Washo added that they are also working on making board meeting more virtual.

ED Committee member Tim Danehy noted that the committee held a phone conference with Chamber of Commerce member Carol Spadaccini to kick off conversations about what direction the Chamber and the Town board relationship will go in. More meetings to follow to allow Spadaccini time to collect information requested.

Highway Committee member Bob Washo reported that the CHIPS monies have been applied for in the amount of \$144,000.00. Highway Superintendent Terry Billings is keeping track of paving expenses to apply again in the fall.

J. Old Business: none

1. Resolution-Encouraging Landowners to Use Marginal Lands prior to sale or when signing Lease for Large Scale Solar Arrays.

Council member Bob Washo noted that construction has started on the Smart Path through Canton and St. Lawrence County. Washo wants to follow the Counties lead and have landowners work with Soil and Water to protect land, especially agricultural lands. Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley read resolution aloud

Council member Jim Smith made a motion to approve resolution, seconded by Council member Bob Washo. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

See attached resolution

Council member Bob Washo noted that in the resolution it states that Canton and St. Lawrence County have over 40,000 acres of deemed prime land.

2. DANC GIS Services Proposal:

Council member Bob Washo noted that several municipalities are working with DANC right now to digitalize infrastructure and assets inventory. Washo wants to create inventory documents that can be updated in the future.

DANC will maintain these records at a cost of \$825.00 to \$875.00 a year after the initial cost of \$8,000.00. Council member Jim Smith added that Canton is behind in doing this, noting that most all Towns and Villages are ahead of Canton. Smith is in full support of spending the money and seeing a full return on the investment.

Council member Tim Danehy is hoping to see this somehow tie in with the current poor broadband service in the Canton area. Washo stated that he will check into this for Danehy. After discussion it was agreed that the proposed data collection to be done by DANC will move forward pending Town Attorney Eric Gustafson final

approval. Assessor Cindy Brand stated that she has access to this through the County and offered to let the board members look at it for educational purposes. Washo wants to see data collection, such as culverts, street signs, bridges, and roadways on paper and not just in people's heads.

Council member Bob Washo made a motion to approve DANC proposal, pending sign off by Attorney, seconded by Council member Karin Blackburn. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

3. NYDOT Shared Service Agreement:

This matter was approved and then rescinded for discussion purposes at previous meeting. Council member Bob Washo stated that Highway Superintendent Terry Billings is not in favor of signing an agreement with the State. Council member Tim Danehy would like Billings to put something in writing of why he is not in favor.

Council member Jim Smith stated it would be in the best interest of the Town to partner with any larger municipality. Smith added "that in today's world these types of things should be in place and the days of handshakes are gone". In ending Smith stated that the committee is recommending to sign the agreement.

Council member Bob Washo made a motion to sign a two-year agreement with the State, seconded by Council member Jim Smith. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

K. New Business:

1. Support Black Lives Matter:

Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley presented a resolution and read it aloud.

Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Council member Bob Washo. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

See attached resolution

2. Excellus Proposed Health Insurance 2021 Premium Rates

Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley stated that there is a 6% proposed increase on premium rate, but subject to change.

3. Approve Highway Summer Projects:

Council member Bob Washo made a motion to pave 8600 feet of outer Judson Street Rd from St Hwy 310 just shy of the Ames Rd, seconded by Council member Jim Smith. All voted in favor. Motion carries

L. Public Comment: None

7:34 PM Council member Tim Danehy made a motion to go into Executive Session: Upon a majority vote upon a motion that identifies the subject to be considered, the Council may conduct an executive session to discuss any of the issues identified as proper by Public Officers Law 105(1), seconded by Council member Karin Blackburn. All in favor. Motion carries.

9:08 PM Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley made a motion to come out of Executive Session, seconded by Council member Tim Danehy. All in favor. Motion carries.

9:09 PM Council member Bob Washo made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Council member Tim Danehy. All in favor. Motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lisa A. Hammond". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "L".

Lisa A. Hammond - Town Clerk

RESOLUTION 13

Town of Canton

July 8, 2020

**ENCOURAGING TOWN OF CANTON LAND OWNERS TO USE MARGINAL LANDS AND TO
UTILIZE THE ADVICE OF THE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT PRIOR TO THE SALE OF
LANDS OR WHEN SIGNING LEASES FOR LARGE-SCALE SOLAR ARRAYS**

WHEREAS, the market value of agricultural products grown in St. Lawrence County was \$191 million in 2017 and agriculture in Canton has a significant impact on the local economy and way of life, and

WHEREAS, the success of the farming industry in the Town relies on the availability of productive soils to grow food and products, and

WHEREAS, the preservation of prime soils where our food is produced is becoming increasingly important in a fast-changing global economy. also, whereas, local food production is the fastest growing sector of agriculture and importance on preserving tillable land close to where consumers reside should be a top land use priority

WHEREAS, the presence of prime, and prime drained soils, limited to nineteen percent (19%) of all land in St. Lawrence County and Canton Soils include:10,645 Prime if Drained:17,932 Farmland of Statewide importance:11,757 Total:40,334 acres, and

WHEREAS, the large-scale solar arrays typically required five to seven acres of cleared, flat and dry land for every megawatt of power they generate, and

WHEREAS, the County Planning Board has reviewed fourteen (14) solar projects over the past decade that have or will displace 609 acres of farmlands, and

WHEREAS, the rural character of Canton, affordable real estate prices, the presence of high voltage transmission lines and the energy policies of the State will continue to attract the siting large-scale solar arrays on farmlands, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Canton encourages landowners to use their marginal lands and to utilize the advice of the Soil & Water Conservation District prior to the sale of lands or when signing leases for large-scale solar arrays, and to preserve productive farmland for future agricultural use, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that to allow for continued agricultural activity, solar developers are encouraged to design arrays so that sheep grazing and/or apiaries can occur at solar lease sites,

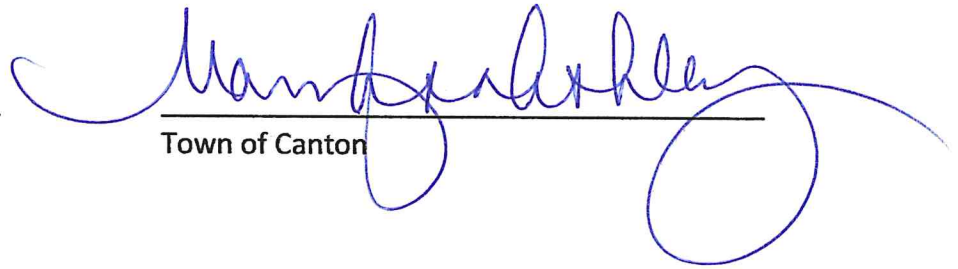
and funding agencies, the St. Lawrence County Planning Board and municipal planning boards should recommend such design, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that solar developers, funding agencies and local governments are encouraged to arrange community solar agreements so that local residents and businesses can take advantage of lower electricity bills, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that large-scale solar arrays that are established to sell energy to the grid shall be subject to a Payment in Lieu of Taxes during the fifteen (15) years exemption that is available for solar energy systems and shall provide a community benefit as contemplated in the Town of Canton solar law.

7/8/2020

Date



Town of Canton

RESOLUTION 14

Town of Canton

July 8, 2020

In Support of Black Lives Matter

Whereas, the Declaration of Independence defined the United States of America as a democracy based on the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and government by the consent of the people; and the 14th Amendment instilled equality of the races in the U.S. Constitution; and

Whereas, from slavery to Jim Crow laws to the modern criminal justice system, Black people, including Black transgender people, in this country, have been brutalized, dehumanized and murdered for centuries; and

Whereas, in the 21st Century, Black people in America continue to live in fear of losing their lives at the hands of law enforcement or members of white supremacist groups; and

Whereas, on May 27, 2020 the killing of a Black 46-year-old father of two, Mr. George Floyd, by a police officer has sparked protests in the Village of Canton, our neighboring towns and villages, and across the nation; and

Whereas, these protests remind us once again that for centuries our nation's social institutions, including education, healthcare, business, government, and criminal justice, have systematically and disproportionately discriminated against Black people; and

Whereas, our nation's laws afford everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender identity, the right to equal protection and equal justice under the law; and

Whereas, we recognize that People of Color who live, study, work, and recreate in Canton experience incidents of racism on an individual and systemic level; and

Whereas, the people of Canton wish to welcome and include people of all races, ethnicities and gender identities, to create a community where everyone can thrive; and

Now therefore be it resolved, that the Town of Canton Town Board condemns all acts of racism and discrimination against People of Color and affirms that Black lives do matter; and

Be it further resolved, that the Town of Canton Town Board recognizes that it is the responsibility of all elected and appointed officials, municipal staff, and law enforcement personnel, to commit to making the Town of Canton a welcoming, inclusive, and safe community in which people of all races, ethnicities and gender identities can thrive.

7/8/2020

Date


Town of Canton