

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

6:00 PM

November 12, 2020

Minutes

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

Also, in Attendance: Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector and Zoom Moderator Heidi Smith, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Lisa Hammond, Supervisor Confidential Secretary/Bookkeeper Susan Huntley, Attorney Eric Gustafson, Assessor Cindy Brand, Adam Atkinson and Ellis Giacomelli, Canton Chamber of Commerce Director Tammy Mackin, Judge Michael Morgan, Carol Pynchon, Toby Irvén, Highway Superintendent Calvin Rose, Keith Felix (SLU), Toky R (SLU), Rachelle Foster

Absent: Code Enforcement Officer Jeffrey Murray, Historian Linda Casserly, Economic Development Director Leigh Rodriguez, John Gray of Gray and Gray

A. Call Meeting to Order

Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM. Supervisor Ashley stated there are a few new items to add to the agenda. Under approval of minutes: 10/5/2020 special meeting minutes. Under old business: Ethics Board Appointments. Under new business: Consider Highway Contract MOU, Approve Leave of Absence and Advanced Approval to return \$107.96 for the State for JCAP as an over payment.

B. Public Comment

No public comment

C. Canton Chamber of Commerce

Canton Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Tammy Mackin gave a description of when she started working for the Canton Chamber of Commerce which was in 2019 during the Dairy Princess Parade. Mackin stated that when she first took on this position, she felt it was out of her wheelhouse, so she did some investing on what a Chamber of Commerce and specifics on the Canton Chamber of Commerce duties are. What Mackin discovered is that a Chamber of Commerce is a form of business or network local organization of businesses, whose goal is to further the interest of local existing businesses. Business owners in towns and cities form these local societies to advocate on behalf of the business community. The specifics of the Canton Chamber which is organized for the purpose of advancing the economic industrial, professional, cultural and civic welfare of the Village and Town of Canton to encourage the growth of the existing industries and businesses, while giving all proper assistance to any new firms or

individuals seeking to locate in the Village or Town of Canton. To support all those activities believed to be beneficial to the community and the area to oppose those which might be detrimental and in general to promote the welfare of all area citizens. After doing all this research Tammy believed she was a good candidate for the position as she herself is a small business owner. After all who understand the struggles and challenges of business more than a business owner themselves.

After taking on this part time position Tammy soon learned that the unwritten expectations and performances of the Canton Chamber of Commerce was much more. Upon learning that the Town and Village were considering to no longer financially support the Chamber based on several factors. Along with the belief that the services of the economic development were more productive and beneficial to our business owners and community.

Tammy was asked by the board of directors to speak to the Town and Village. Although there are some similarities between the Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce there are also very distinctive difference. The Chamber advocates for businesses, it publicizes members existing businesses and events. The Economic Development helps develop and support economic growth by providing necessary resources and assisting to the taxpayers. The chamber is not a marketing or economic development arm for the Town or Village. The Economic Development Office has two full time employees granting them 80 hours a week vs the Canton Chamber which is a part time position of only 20 hours a week. The Chamber is a vital advocate and acting as a starting position for many of our members and businesses that are unsure where to go or just do not have the time and resources.

During the pandemic, the chamber often got phone calls and emails from members looking for guidance and assistance for someone to help provide them with resources. Some example: Fobare's needed signs, website information they could ascertain the New York State rules and guidelines, and they were also in need of hand sanitizer. Nature Store House, Community Bank, Celtic Knot, Save a Lot was in need of signs, Garden Pro requesting grant information. These are just a few of the companies that the Canton Chamber of Commerce has been working with. Tammy personally went to multiple businesses to deliver hand sanitizer.

Tammy stated that at an incredibly low membership it disappoints her that a small portion of the tax dollars will no longer be designated towards advocating for the Town's existing businesses, especially in a time when most businesses are struggling.

Council member Tim Danehy thanked Tammy for her time, and this is new information. Danehy asked Tammy to tell the board and public how the chamber adapted and pivoted during the pandemic and what the plans are for the future, given that it doesn't look like anything is going to be changing anytime soon due to COVID.

Tammy responded that the office is closed, Tammy's personal phone number is listed on the website so that she can be reached. Tammy gets anywhere between 2-10 phone calls a

day looking for guidance, same with emails. All communication is being done through, phone, emails & zoom meetings. Delivering hand sanitizer. Try to continue to have events while following the COVID guidelines. Working in collaboration with the holiday of lights committee to substitute for Santa come to the park and having the kids sit up on his lap. There is a drop box at the office for people to leave things for the chamber. The Town and Village Clerks Office have allowed people to drop things off and be picked up. Things are still being posted in the kiosk, Facebook and on the website. That is most of the adapting that the Chamber has done at this point. There is no date in mind for the office to open.

Council member Karin Blackburn asked if the Chamber is actively reaching out businesses to offer support that are not reaching out to the Chamber.

Tammy responded that several emails were sent out to all members, Tammy physically walked to businesses to hand out hand sanitizer, and posters. Talked with several business owners informing them that they could get a hold of the Chamber if they needed more hand sanitizer, posters or guidance as well as posting on the Facebook page. Links were given to businesses, so they knew where to go to receive NYS guidelines for information. Beyond the emails, Facebook posts and the letter being sent out earlier in the year around the beginning of the pandemic letting businesses know that even if membership dues were not paid it would still stay active. It also included Tammy's personal phone number so the businesses could get a hold of her with any questions or in need of any assistance.

Supervisor Ashley asked where the Chamber is at with the regional study with the County Chamber and if the Chamber is participating in that study and is there a time frame for this study to be done.

Tammy responded that the Chamber is partaking in the study, there is a designated committee, but Tammy is not on that committee. Currently Tammy believes they are still participating in the study. Tammy is not aware of any time frame.

Council member Bob Washo asked what the yearly budget for chamber is and what of that the chamber might have in reserves.

Tammy responded that she does not have that information in front of her at this time.

Council member Danehy encourages Tammy to send the new information that was given in tonight's meeting to both the Town and Village boards so they can continue to evaluate the budget contribution towards the Chamber.

Tammy reported that this is a 20 hour a week position and that she exceeds the 20 hours every week. Tammy has kept documentation of these hours. Council member Danehy stated it would be very helpful to see this documentation throughout this past year. Tammy noted that the Chamber hired movers and have been moved out of the Municipal Building for about two weeks.

Supervisor Ashley added that it would be interesting to see the annual budget, if there is any reserved funding, and to include that information would be very helpful as well.

Supervisor Ashley thanked Tammy for her presentation and stated the Town will continue to deliberate and then get back to her.

D. County Legislature Representative(s) Update(s)

None

E. Approval of Minutes

Special Meeting	10/2/2020
Special Meeting	10/5/2020
Regular Meeting	10/8/2020
Special Meeting-Budget	10/19/2020
Special Meeting-Budget Public Hearing	10/29/2020

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

F. Supervisor Report

Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley read over the monthly report which was sent to the Town Council prior to the meeting. Supervisor Ashley stated that after last meeting about verbiage of 'fund balance' the words, that is off the bottom of the report and now it is showing 'balance'.

G. Correspondence

Carol Spadaccini President of the Chamber of Commerce sent the Supervisor a letter to express the thoughts from the Chamber Board regarding the current year's funding.

See attached letter

H. Audit Committee

Approval of Expenditures

A: \$60,819.43
B: \$16,884.28
SL: \$316.32
TA: \$17,561.61
DA: \$40,241.68
DB: \$38,596.72
SF: N/A

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

I. Acceptance of Department Reports

Assessor Cindy Brand reported that a new data collector was hired at the County. Cindy will be taking a class for the pilot administration program.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Lisa Hammond reported that the Clerk's Office has closed out school taxes and collected a total of \$8,479,231.63, which is 92.64% collected. The Clerk's Office continues to be busy with hunting and marriage license. A lot of foot traffic is still coming into the office, but people are good with following the COVID guidelines.

Justice Michael Morgan reported that court has had a few new changes with scheduling evictions. The Governor has now allowed the court to suspend the license of people who do not show up for court if they have a vehicle traffic ticket. Now there are repercussions for people who do not show up. Morgan stated the courts numbers are starting to pick up a little bit.

Supervisor Ashley asked if the people showing up to court are good about wearing their masks and social distancing. Morgan replied, it has been working out well and having Mary at the desk when they first come in has been working very well.

Highway Superintendent Calvin Rose reported that Highway has received new computers. All the trucks are ready for winter. Highway is cutting trees with assistance from the Village allowing the Town to use a Bucket Truck and an operator.

Council member Jim Smith added that it is good news to see the Town and Village working together.

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

J. Committee Reports

Council member Bob Washo reported on the Solar Committee. The committee met with Eric to discuss host community benefit agreements & research is being done on that. There is a discussion on a 25-acre community solar project on the Meade Road. There is a meeting tonight at the County Planning Board. The committee is also going over the battery storage law.

Council member Bob Washo reported the Highway Committee met with National Grid and individually met with property owners on Miner Street as part of the grant to talk about the pole placement and all of the easements assigned are forwarded to National Grid. Scheduling a workorder to start moving those poles and removing some trees,

hoping to start that before January 1st.

Council member Bob Washo reported on the zoning committee. There has been preliminary conversations with Monica with different ways to launch the Town's approach on how to tackle rewriting the comprehensive plan.

Council member Karin Blackburn reported that the Recreation Committee has been meeting regularly as a committee and with the rink staff. The safety plan and check in process, sanitizing has been working well and running smoothly. The ice time has been increased for the skaters and after looking at the building capacity and piloting, there can be one spectator or parent in with their child while they are on the ice. The committee sent out a public call for volunteers to put together a task force to have those important conversations about reimagining the Recreation Department. Council member Tim Danehy added that there have been many responses to the call. The committee wants to rethink the whole structure of the recreation department as a Town and Village. This can be found on the Town/Village website.

Council member Bob Washo asked for clarification - the task force that is being put together, is the committee looking for volunteers or has the committee identified key stakeholders and are you making sure they are part of the process. Danehy responded, at the moment it is open to volunteers but there is a list of stakeholders in mind. Right now, the committee is doing very well with people reaching out to the committee.

Council member Washo asked if Recreation was considering going to phase 2 of the reopening of rec or how is that entering conversation. Danehy responded that the committee is going to keep a close eye on everything and see where things lead. The committee is closely tied to the school and any decision they make to go to remote learning then the committee will decide on what to do with rec. The committee is monitoring it very closely and getting frequent reports.

Council member Tim Danehy reported the Economic Development Committee has been quiet. There is follow up on grants. A reminder that there is still money that the Town has modified for potential COVID relief to businesses that is still available at a 0% rate.

There have been no applications for this request currently.

Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley stated she wants to remind the public that the Town does not have two full time positions in the Economic Development Office. Jeni Reed is part time and offers support to our Code Enforcement Office and Planning and Zoning Boards. Economic Director Leigh Rodriguez is full time.

Council member Karin Blackburn reported Communications Committee has bought an owl head camera in hopes that some day we can go back to inhouse meetings but still have access for the community member to be present by zoom. Once the camera arrives, the communications committee will mask up and meet in the basement to get everything hooked up, access the technology, and see how it works. The committee is still considering purchasing a large screen and anything else to make this process happen.

K. Old Business

1. Consider Revised Draft Town Credit Policy

Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley reported that the original Town Credit Card Policy has been revised. The credit card will be under the purview of the Supervisor at all times for special purposes or for items in need at the Supervisor's discretion.

See attached Policy.

Motion to pass revised draft town credit card policy made by council member Karin Blackburn, seconded by Bob Washo. All in favor. Motion carries.

2. Approve RS 2417-A Standard Work Day and Reporting Resolution for Elected and Appointed Officials

See attached resolution.

Motion to pass RS 2417-A Standard Work Day and Reporting Resolution for Elected and Appointed Officials made by council member Tim Danehy, seconded by Bob Washo. All in motion. Motion carries.

3. Board audits of Clerk's and Supervisor's Office

Council member Karin Blackburn reported that the Town Clerk's Office is in good working order and the filing systems are effectively in place.

Council member Tim Danehy stated that these are internal reviews. Danehy does not like that these are labeled as audits. These are relatively quick reviews of the financial procedures. It is a useful exercise to review the processes in place for the various offices.

Council member Jim Smith noted that the Supervisors Office still needs to be done. Council member Bob Washo stated that they are trying to get that scheduled with all the moving parts.

Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley added that the word Audit is the State Comptrollers language.

4. Ethics Board Appointment – Kimber Petrie and Barbara Heller

Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley stated there are two new people for appointment to the Ethics Board, Kimber Petrie and Barbara Heller

Motion to appoint Kimber Petrie and Barbara Heller to the Ethics Board made by Bob Washo. Seconded by council member Karin Blackburn. All in favor. Motion carries.

L. New Business

1. Passage of 2021 Town Budget

Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley read the Resolution to adopt the 2021 Town Budget for the fiscal year January 2021 to December 2021.

Motion to pass 2021 Town Budget made by Council member Jim Smith, seconded by Bob Washo. All in favor. Motion carries.

2. Consider rescinding Local Law Tax Override

Supervisor Ashley reported that the Town did pass a local law to Override the Tax Levy, established in General Municipal Law. With the advisement from Legal Counsel that if the Town was not going to use the Law then it should be rescinded.

Motion to rescind Local Law Tax Override made by Council member Bob Washo, seconded by Tim Danehy. All in favor. Motion carries.

3. Consider Change in Health Insurance Coverage Waiting Period

Supervisor Ashley reported that with current agreement there is a 90-day window for any new employee before they can receive the Health Insurance Benefits. Supervisor Ashley believes that it is the best interest of the Town and recruiting of new employees to change it from 90 days to zero days. Upon hire that benefit will be available to the employee.

Supervisor Ashley read the resolution.

See attached resolution.

Council member Jim Smith added that he will support the resolution but wishes he would have had the opportunity to negotiate it rather than doing it this way.

Motion to change the Health Insurance Coverage Waiting Period made by Bob Washo, seconded by Karin Blackburn. All in favor. Motion carries.

4. 2021 Health Insurance Contributions

After talking with legal counsel there is not much to report on as there needs to be more discussion.

Tabled

5. Amend Current Non-Contract Article VI

Tabled

6. Approve authorization to sign Grant Contract C10006666-Miner Street Road/Island Park Project. Enter into MOU with Village of Canton

Attorney Eric Gustafson reported that the contract 96 plus pages long, including four pages of instructions along with attachments. The contract is one-sided in favor of the State. Gustafson recommended that if the Town wants to participate in the grant program, the Town will need to accept the agreement and he does not see anything wrong with that. Gustafson advised Supervisor Ashley the most important thing is to review the specifics regarding the budget and regarding the scope of work and work processes that need to be done. Economic Development Leah Rodriguez was comfortable with the wording. Gustafson recommended that if the Board wants to move forward that it is perfectly acceptable.

Council member Bob Washo asked if the contract was shared to the Board Members. Washo believes there should be an MOU with the Village before signing any contract. The 90 something pages were not shared with the board. Supervisor Ashley noted that the contract “mirrors” the application. Ashley will send it to the board to look over.

Tabled

7. State Legislation (S8617B/A10832) Public Employer Emergency Plan

Supervisor Ashley reported there needs to be a written emergency plan due to COVID. This is from the Governor. Supervisor Ashley is working on this and will send it to the Board.

8. NYMIR Inspection Recommendations

Supervisor Ashley reported there was three recommendations from the Town’s Insurance Company. Supervisor Ashley would like the highway committee to look at two of those recommendations. First recommendation is about the Highway Defects Law the insurance company feels there needs to be more language in the law. They made some suggestions. Second recommendation is to move the inspection sticker down off the hoist so it can be seen. Third recommendation is for parks and playgrounds, they feel the municipality should install surface material at the playground.

Supervisor Ashley asked if the Highway Committee and Eric could review the Highway law and get back to the board.

9. NYS AOT Delegate Designation for 2021 Annual Business Meeting

Supervisor Ashley reported that everything will be done online but someone needs to represent the Town.

Council member Jim Smith made a motion that the supervisor be delegate for the Town of Canton, seconded by Bob Washo. All in favor. Motion carries.

10. Consider Highway Contract MOU

Council member Bob Washo stated that he would have liked to see this discussed more but with hiring going on in the Town it could have a huge impact as far as the talent pool, Washo supports the MOU.

Council member Bob Washo made a motion to accept the Highway Contract MOU, seconded by council member Karin Blackburn. All in favor. Motion carries.

11. Approve Leave of Absence

Council member Jim Smith made a motion to approve Leave of Absence for the Deputy Town Clerk seconded by Karin Blackburn. All in favor. Motion carries.

12. JCAP Grant Reimbursement

Supervisor Ashley reported that the Town needs to send a check of \$107.96 back to the state from the JCAP grant.

Justice Michael Morgan reported that the money was approved for building projects in the municipal offices but due to COVID that did not happen. They were able to reallocate that money through OCA to the Office of Court Administration for COVID related purposes. The courts did that up to \$107.96 and that money needs to return to the State.

Motion to return JCAP Grant money made by council member Jim Smith, seconded by council member Karin Blackburn. All in favor. Motion carries.

M. Public Comment

Toby Irven of Canton made a request for a late breaking issue in regard to funding for a proposal to do an inventory on high speed access for the county. Irven's understanding due to an article in North Country This Week is that the St. Lawrence County Legislature would work in conjunction with DANC and an inventory would be done for the entire county. Irven asks that the Town through

the official resolution process support these efforts to get the inventory through DANC as it seems like a very logical choice.

Council member Bob Washo agrees with Toby and would support a resolution. Washo encouraged the public to go to County meetings. Council member agrees that this is a necessity, and the Town should support it.

Council member Bob Washo stated he would be happy to work with Toby Irven to work on a Resolution for this matter.

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)

7:30 PM Council member Karin Blackburn made a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of (F), seconded by Council member Bob Washo. All voted in favor. Motion carries.

9:05 PM Council member Karin Blackburn made a motion to come out of Executive Session, seconded by Council member Tim Danehy. All in favor. Motion carries.

9:08 PM Council member Jim Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Council member Bob Karin Blackburn. All in favor. Motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heidi L Smith, Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector