

Town of Canton
September 9, 2021
6:00pm
Town Board Meeting
Minutes
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Present

Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley, Council Members Bob Washo, James Smith, Martha Foley Smith, and David Nelson

Also in Attendance

Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector Jeni Reed, Assessor Cindy Brand, Highway Superintendent Calvin Rose, Historian Linda Casserly, Recreation Director Meghan Richardson, Town Attorney Eric Gustafson, Director of Economic Development Leigh Rodriguez, Angela Gray, CPA

Members of the Public: Paul Mitchell, Ellis Giacomelli, Ann Heidenreich, Lyne Soulia, Toby Irven, Heidi Smith, Kathleen Stein

● **Call to Order**

- Mary Ann Ashley opened the public meeting at 6:03 pm. Supervisor Ashley requested a moment of silence for:
 - The families impacted by COVID, the loss of loved ones, and those currently sick or hospitalized.
 - The recognition of the 20th anniversary of 9/11.
- Supervisor Ashley noted the addition of two items to the agenda under “New Business”:
 - VFW Request
 - Planning Board Chair Appointment

● **Public Comment**

- Email submitted by Dave Witherhead and Laurie Poor to citizens of Canton
 - Residents of County Route 27 supporting the request of citizen Dan Dominie from a previous meeting to make the stretch of County Route 27 safer; however they recommend making the road a no passing zone instead of lowering the speed limit.
 - They also recommend more frequent random law enforcement checks in the area during times of high volume (beginning and end of work day).
 - Acknowledged that some people will not follow the rules regardless, but this may help.

● **County Legislative Representative Updates**

- None

● **Approval of Minutes**

- Regular Board Meeting 8/19/2021
- Motion to approve minutes made by Bob Washo, 2nd by Martha Foley Smith. All in favor. Motion carried.

● **Supervisor’s Report**

- Angela Gray read over the highlights of the August 2021 monthly report which was sent to the Town Council prior to the monthly meeting.

- Bob Washo indicated that a truck is still on backorder which has been budgeted for in the DA fund; Ms. Gray stated that an encumbrance may need to be made if the truck is not available by year end.
- Bob Washo went on record stating he feels it would be appropriate to discuss the DB fund budget amendments sometime in the near future regarding how those have affected the numbers and spending down the money; he also supports the idea of utilizing separate checking accounts for the DA and DB funds.
- James Smith also commented to clarify the difference between the DA and DB funds.

- **Correspondence**

- Request from the VFW (David Pearson, Commander, District 9) dated 8/5/2021. Due to COVID, last year's funding wasn't fully available; requesting funding support for this year's activities of the VFW for \$1,970.80. This topic is on the agenda for further review later in the meeting.
 - Motion to make good on the payment made by Bob Washo, 2nd by James Smith. All in favor. Motion carried.

- **Audit Committee**

- Approval of Expenditures
 - A Fund: \$26,717.03
 - B Fund: \$570.68
 - DA Fund: \$5,612.11
 - DB Fund: \$10,223.89
 - SF Fund: \$20,450.00
 - SL Fund: \$266.02
 - TA Fund: \$18,053.21

Motion to approve the expenditures made by James Smith, 2nd by Martha Foley Smith.

Discussion: James Smith question to Calvin Rose regarding a Town Highway bill and the purchase of four SCVs for the roadside mower, required due to an update. All in favor. Motion carried.

- **Acceptance of Department Reports**

- Jeni Reed, Deputy Town Clerk
 - Lots of hunting and fishing licenses processed last month - \$6,000 in sales.
 - Preparing for retention in code and court records – court has its own set of retention schedules which are complex – hope to complete or make a good dent in retention plan prior to end of year.
 - Workplace Violence Training has been completed by all staff and board members.
- Calvin Rose, Highway Superintendent
 - Still hauling sand to catch up.
 - Starting to get trucks ready for winter.
 - James Smith asked about a VIN number for the truck on order, which has been received, and delivery is expected any time (and definitely prior to the end of year). We should receive an invoice soon which will prevent needing to encumber the funds on next year's budget.
 - Bob Washo asked about the CHIPS, PAVE-NY and EWR reimbursement and if all funds have been exhausted, which Calvin Rose confirmed they have and are expecting payment on the 15th of September.
 - Ann Ryan worked with the Highway Department to plant flowers by the Canoe Launch sign near St. Lawrence University.

- Linda Casserly, Historian
 - Bob Washo asked about the name for the County Government District for the National Register – this is still in the works. The architect from Syracuse was here and was very favorable of getting the district or just the Sheriff's House on the National Register, which can't go in until May of 2022. It is the hope to designate three buildings: The Court, the Elections/DA Building, and the Sheriff's House (which is connected to the jail).
 - Thanks to Calvin Rose for the assistance with the Pomeroy marker for the Municipal Building, along with Marty Miller and another village employee. Linda would also like to add a stand with historic pictures from when the original Town Hall was thriving, and when it burned. Would also like to put images in the kiosk out front, which is a question for the building committee.
 - Working on a Pomeroy marker for Pyrities at this time. We can order up to 5 historical markers per year free of charge. Application will have to be in by September 13, 2021.
 - NY State Historian's Conference starts Monday and Linda will be attending virtually.
 - Linda shared thanks to her paid intern, Rachael, for her initiative and work on projects such as a record of deaths in St. Lawrence County. Renice is not currently coming into the office due to COVID issues, but she is missed.
- Meghan Richardson, Recreation Director
 - Summer revenues – total was \$6,135.00.
 - Rock and mineral show was fantastic and had record attendance.
 - Ice rates and schedule are now posted on the website.
 - Taylor park is now closed and dock will be pulled next week.
 - Volunteer groups have been working on recreation projects:
 - Minor hockey has done some work on the pavilion.
 - Local fraternities have reached out to do some work.
 - Rubber flooring for the pavilion lobby is currently in flux but she continues to work on getting an order in where supply is available.
 - First scheduled ice day is Saturday, October 16.
 - Progress is being made on the outdoor rink/sport court area – volunteers are working to establish a plan and get the work done.
 - Bob Washo asked about an adaptive kayaking event that will be hosted at Taylor Park; Meghan confirmed that a lifeguard will be on site during this time.
 - Dave Nelson noted that Meghan has done a lot of work in the few weeks she has been in her position and he wanted to call attention to how well she is doing.
 - Noted that the elevator in the pavilion is in the works to getting up and running for the season.
 - Martha Foley Smith noted the amazing progress Meghan has made as well.
- Leigh Rodriguez, Director of Economic Development
 - Primary focus is on the Downtown Revitalization Initiative due September 15, which is a \$20 million award competition, and are working with C&S consultants to complete that.
 - CDBG-CARES application August 27th deadline has been extended indefinitely and she is working to complete that. Intended to do assistance for Canton Day Care plus a Small Business Grant fund, but ended up including Canton Day Care under the Small Business portion of this and are only applying for one item under the CDBG-CARES umbrella. Planning to apply for \$500,000 for Small Business Assistance.
 - Two Tree Grants are in progress.
 - Also working on putting together a Housing Task Force with some people picked to participate over the next six months to write a housing strategy that will be based on the Housing Analysis done as part of the Brownfield Opportunity Area study.

- Martha Foley Smith noted there is a survey on the website for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative, and Leigh followed up that there is a link in her report. Her office is looking for letters of support as well as input from the community on potential projects.
- Survey available for the CDBG-CARES act as well.
- Cindy Brand, Assessor
 - Phone has been ringing due to the School Tax Bills; please note that STAR Credits are still being issued but are not listed the same way on the bills as last year. Checks have not yet been cut but will be by September 30.
 - St Lawrence County Foreclosure Auction will be online this year and runs this Saturday through September 21.

Motion to accept department reports made by Martha Foley Smith, 2nd by Bob Washo. All in favor.
Motion carried.

● Committee Reports

- Solar Committee, Bob Washo
 - Committee met 9/9/21 with Planning Board, Barton & Loguidice, and Bill Buchan which was a productive meeting.
 - The Town currently has three significant projects – two 5MW community solar projects and the 240MW Rich Road solar project. These are difficult to keep handle on, but will be addressed later in the meeting.
- Economic Development Committee, Martha Foley Smith
 - Been sitting in with the DRI team. The boundary of the DRI application will include the pavilion and Bend in the River park, as well as Atlantic Testing. This could be significant for future planning.
- Recreation Committee, Martha Foley Smith
 - Wonderful to see Meghan take charge, and transformational for the pavilion; already making plans for next summer.
 - Citizen's advisory group had first meeting with Meghan this week. Will be working on setting up their structure and working with Meghan on projects.
 - Can't overstate the job that Meghan walked into and lots of good momentum.
- Sustainability Committee, Dave Nelson
 - Lot of good things happening.
 - Article went out that committee is looking for additional members.
- Negotiations Committee, James Smith
 - Ready to go; biggest factor is scheduling but now that paving is over things may be easier to schedule and initial meeting is scheduled.

● Old Business

- Charter Communications Agreement
 - Will need to review all documents and take action in October.
 - Proposed 10 year agreement for services from Time Warner.
 - Eric Gustafson indicated that any details of discussion will be more appropriate for executive session.
- Consider Route 27 Speed Reduction Request
 - Received last month from Dan Dominie and is now up for discussion.
 - Process: If board supports the request, it is sent to the County, then the State, the State does a study, and then makes a determination.
 - Complete Streets Task Force also sent a letter of support.

Motion made to move forward with the speed reduction request by Jim Smith, 2nd by Bob Washo. Discussion: James Smith asked if Eric Gustafson will have to weigh in on the discussion? Suggestion of Dave Witherhead would be a good backup option if the speed reduction request is not approved; Town does not have a good track record of getting these approved by the State. Potential to discuss with the County what next steps should be if speed reduction is not approved, including adding a solid double line all the way to the current speed limit sign and if that is a possibility. Bob Washo added it is a multipronged approach to addressing the situation, and requesting additional enforcement and police presence would likely help as well. All in favor. Motion carried.

Later in the meeting, Mary Ann Ashley indicated this needs to be done by resolution; the resolution was read. James Smith rescinded his motion to move forward, and offered a new motion to approve the resolution as written and read, 2nd by Martha Foley Smith. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Next steps will be to process paperwork and submit to the County.
- James Smith requested that Mary Ann Ashley also submit a letter to Don Chambers at the County regarding putting in a double solid line in this location, and including Mr. Witherhead's letter as an attachment.
- American Rescue Plan Act Funds
 - Item tabled to October meeting.
- Set Public Hearing to consider overriding 2022 Budget Tax Cap
 - Mary Ann Ashley indicated this is in her view a good idea, which was done last year; Eric Gustafson would work to revise the current local law and write a legal notice, but a public hearing is required.
 - Bob Washo recommended setting the public hearing for the October meeting (10/14/21) at 5:45pm.
 - James Smith asked about timeline concerns between discussions and when the approved budget is complete; Mary Ann Ashley will investigate this. Eric Gustafson indicated that it must be duly passed and filed with the State prior to adoption of the 2022 budget, and the October date will give plenty of time. Budget must be adopted by November 19, 2021.

● New Business

- Acknowledge Planning Board Chair Resignation
 - Letter received August 24th from Michael Morgan resigning from the Planning Board effective immediately.
 - Mary Ann Ashley spoke on behalf of the board in sincere appreciation for his service.
 - James Smith offered a thanks to Michael Morgan regarding the solar law.
 - Bob Washo offered appreciation for the work involved with the Planning Board and chairmanship, and wishes him the best.
- Sustainability Committee – Single Use Plastics
 - Kathleen Stein, League of Women Voters & Ann Heidenreich, Sustainability Committee
 - Initiative regarding single use plastics – went to committee for discussion and review, and now is in front of the board for discussion.
 - Kathleen Stein – letter of recommendation was sent by the Sustainability Committee to the board. The problem is huge, and single use plastics are unsustainable. Focus on plastic straws and stirrers is a part of the problem and not an insignificant thing; also a way to raise public awareness and deal with a global issue in a small, local way. Idea is to make plastic straws available by request only (as there are some people with disabilities who do benefit from their use), and banning plastic stirrers outright. Bring attention and

public education. This is not an intent to get rid of plastic entirely, but to work toward a circular economy of plastics where sustainable plastics stay within the economy and out of the environment. She encourages the Board to pass the proposed ordinance.

- Ann Heidenreich – Sustainability Committee feels it is an issue that needs to be brought before the public. Also a question of intergenerational justice – our convenience harms future generations. Great campaign that the Sustainability Committee could support. Hopes the Board agrees to move forward.
- Bob Washo – unsure if the village is taking any action yet; are there any plans for the Sustainability Committee to do press releases or public education at this time while an ordinance is being deliberated?
 - Ann indicated that the committee will coordinate actions with whatever direction the Village and Town Board decide to take. They plan to be at the Village meeting next week as well, and plan to put out something fairly soon.
- James Smith – on a local level this would be very difficult to police if the Board passes a law or ordinance; recommends that the focus be at the state level trying to get legislation to move forward. Also noted the issue of non-returnable bottles/containers for milk, iced-tea, juice, etc. and how those items end up on the side of the road. Education starting in schools with kids would help moving this forward as they are very good with things they are taught and encouraging parents to follow guidelines.
- Mary Ann Ashley – was there discussion at the Sustainability Committee regarding enforcement of a local law?
 - Ann indicated that this has not been discussed.
 - Mary Ann Ashley stated that she would support the education piece, but is unsure about passing an ordinance that would be difficult to enforce.
 - Eric Gustafson – not aware of any local municipalities that have this type of ordinance. Kathleen indicated that there are some municipalities in the South of the state that have this type of ordinance. Ann offered for the sustainability committee to look into enforcement of similar ordinances in small communities.
- Bob Washo – if something is pursued it should be done in concert with the Village due to higher economic concentration.
- Dave Nelson – indicated that this is time to get the conversation started but we are not ready to move on any action tonight.
- Martha Foley Smith – would like to have the committee bring back information on the question of enforcement.
- Ann – The committee will work on addressing the questions
- Mary Ann Ashley – next joint meeting with Village is October 27, and she would be willing to put this on the agenda for further discussion. Will also see what the result is from the Village meeting and regroup after that.
- Eric – would be happy to receive copies of any further information before the next meeting so he can weigh in on the topic.
- Mary Ann Ashley thanked Ann and Kathleen for attending and bringing the information forward to the Board.
- Authorize Town Supervisor to set up Solar Escrow Account for TJA Energy
 - Resolution has been provided to the Board for review; must be done by resolution to be able to use the funds provided.

Motion made by Bob Washo to accept the resolution as written, 2nd by James Smith. All in favor. Motion carried. Bob Washo shared that this will be a non-interest-bearing account that is utilized to contain the escrow payment from the solar project developers from which

the Town can draw funds to pay consulting and other costs associated with review of the proposed project, preventing the tax payer from covering these costs.

- Approve Additional Payment – Canton Fire Engine #7
 - Mary Ann stated there is an agreement in place in writing from a few years ago at \$6,000 per year, but there is money available in the contingency line of the SF fund. Motion made by Mary Ann Ashley to transfer \$16,700 from the contingency SF fund to the SF Canton Fire Engine #7 to make this payment, 2nd by Martha Foley Smith. This will allow for one final payment of \$11,300 on this expense for next year. All in favor. Motion carried.
- JCAP Grant Resolution
 - This grant is applied for by court clerk Armstrong every year and needs to be approved by resolution. Resolution was read in part by Mary Ann Ashley. These grants have been very successful in bringing in thousands of dollars for upgrades and the efforts are appreciated.

Motion made by James Smith to approve the resolution as written, 2nd by Dave Nelson. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Constitution Week Proclamation
 - This is in response to the annual request by the Daughters of the American Revolution to pass this proclamation. (See attached)
 - Mary Ann Ashley read the proclamation, proclaiming September 17-23 as Constitution Week.
 - This will be processed and forwarded as appropriate.
- Appointment of Planning Board Chairperson
 - Debra Backus has indicated interest in serving in this capacity.
 - Believed to be a Supervisor's appointment, but Mary Ann Ashley preferred to make it a full board appointment to show full support.

Motion made by Mary Ann Ashley to appoint Debra Backus as Town Planning Board Chair, 2nd by Dave Nelson. All in favor. Motion carried.

● Public Comment

- Lyne Soulia, Citizen of Canton
 - Resident of Canton and of County Route 27; full support of the idea to reduce speed in that area.
 - Ms. Soulia voiced concern regarding the Michel's trucks driving the road as well as cattle trucks and feed trucks - many large vehicles that don't appear to be paying attention to the speed limit.
 - The speed monitors have been put in place twice by the local sheriff, but this does not record any information and thus does not appear to be an effective deterrent.
 - Concern over the walkway entrance to the Remington trail drawing pedestrians and children, joggers and students.
 - Should be clear markings on the sides of the road indicating a shared roadway.
 - Although this will likely not deter all speeding traffic or prevent all illegal passing, it is important that the Town make a conscious effort to address the situation.
- Mary Ann Ashley, Town Supervisor
 - Ellis Giacomelli has been covering the Town of Canton for the Watertown Daily Times, and has moved to a new position at the paper.
 - Wanted to offer public thanks to Ms. Giacomelli and Paul Mitchell for covering the Town for the news.

A. Executive Session

Upon majority vote upon a motion that identifies the subject to be considered, the Council will conduct an executive session to discuss any of the issues identified as proper by Public Officers Law 105 (1) (E) collective negotiations pursuant to Article 14 of the Civil Service Law 1 and (F) matters pertaining to employment history of a particular person.

1. Motion to go into Executive Session at 7:34 pm made by Mary Ann Ashley, 2nd by Martha Foley Smith. All in favor. Motion carried.
2. Motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:29 pm made by Jim Smith, 2nd by Bob Wash. All in favor. Motion carried.
3. Motion to adjourn at 8:30 pm made by Dave Nelson, 2nd by Jim Smith. All in favor. Motion carried.

TOWN OF CANTON

PROCLAMATION

Whereas: *The Constitution of the United States of America, the guardian of our liberties, embodies the principles of limited government in a Republic dedicated to rule by law; and*

Whereas: *September 17, 2021, marks the two hundred thirty fourth anniversary of the framing of the Constitution of the United States of America by the Constitutional Convention; and*

Whereas: *It is fitting and proper to accord official recognition to this magnificent document and its memorable anniversary, and to the patriotic celebrations which will commemorate it; and*

Whereas: *Public Law 915 guarantees the issuing of a proclamation each year by the President of the United States of America designating September 17 through 23 as Constitution Week;*

Now, Therefore *I, Mary Ann Ashley, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Supervisor of the Town of Canton do hereby proclaim the week of September 17 through 23 as*

Constitution Week

And ask our citizens to reaffirm the ideals the Framers of the Constitution had in 1787 by vigilantly protecting the freedoms guaranteed to us through this guardian of our liberties,

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Town of Canton to be affixed this 9th day of September of the year two thousand twenty one.

Signed _____

Town of Canton Supervisor

Date _____