

TOWN OF CANTON BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday July 12th 2017
4:30 pm
Minutes

Present: Supervisor David T. Button, Council members Paul Backus, James Smith, Bob Washo and Phil LaMarche

Also in Attendance: Attorney Charles Nash, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Lisa Hammond, Recreation Director Caitlin Boreyko, Economic Developer Leigh Rodriguez, Historian Linda Casserly, Assessor Steve Teele, Highway Superintendant Terry Billings, Village Trustee Dwight Stevenson, Sue Mende, Jim Gibson, Klaus Proem, Toby Irvn and members of the Township of Canton

Absent: Code Officer Russell Lawrence

4:30 PM Supervisor Button opened the Town Board Meeting

A moment of silence was held in memory of the three St. Lawrence County men that were killed in a recent car accident on Interstate 81.

Many members of the public attended the board meeting to share concerns about Book Keeper Denice Buttons retirement. Supervisor Button moved the meeting to the Court room to allow for the overflow.

Supervisor Button started off the session by stating that he had contacted Hoffman, Eells and Gray to do an audit of his office and that can be done in about two weeks. Supervisor Button also gave the public, a history of past practices in the Supervisors Office as far as family members working together and how the salaries were divided up. Supervisor Button stated that the subject was brought up in late 2014 and then in March 2015 of Denice Button retiring. Section 29 of the General Municipal Law allows the Supervisor to hire whom he wishes. Supervisor Button confessed that mistakes have been made and he decision should have put it on the record.

Members of the public expressed their concerns of letting the Town Supervisor pick the Towns CPA and stated that they would like to see a auditor from out of the area. The public also indicated that they would also like to see the State Comptroller audit the Towns books. Supervisor Button stated that he has no personal history with Hoffman, Eells and Gray. Councilman Paul Backus encourage the public to review the minute books to read the history of family members working in the Supervisors Office. Claudia McDonald stated that the board should vote on whom to hire as an independent auditor. Attorney Charles Nash stated when working on the budget going forward all salaries should be listed and approved at the organizational meeting. Attorney Nash stated to correct this issue of advertised salary of the Supervisor for 2017 would be to have a local law establishing the new salary advertising it by public hearing so the public has the opportunity to comment. If the board passes the local law it is still subject to permissive referendum. Supervisor Button stated that he has an individual that is interested in becoming his bookkeeper and that he is very confident that it will be a great fit for the

Town, adding that one board member already knows the name of such person and the matter will be discussed later in executive session.

Motion was made to have Town Attorney Charles Nash draft a letter to the State Comptroller requesting a full audit of the Town of Canton and Employee Policies.

Motion: Bob Washo

Seconded: Phil LaMarche

Vote: unanimous

Roll call

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|--------------------------|-----|
| Councilman Bob Washo | Yes |
| Councilman Phil LaMarche | Yes |
| Councilman Jim Smith | Yes |
| Councilman Paul Backus | Yes |
| Supervisor David Button | Yes |

– all in favor

It was decided that all Town members will sign the letter that goes out to the Comptroller.

Councilman Phil LaMarche stated that he wants to restore the public trust and that by having an audit that will do that. Councilman Bob Washo, Paul Backus and Jim Smith agreed with LaMarche. Backus added that he would like to see a CPA come in before election time.

Toby Irven expressed his concerns about internal control and asked that that area be looked at.

An unidentified Howe Blvd resident requested that all audit results be placed on the Town's website.

Mary Ann Ashley asked that moving forward would the Town Supervisor do a better on the agenda. Ashley stated that the Town Board was discussing matters that were not on the agenda and that the agenda was posted only hours before the meeting. The board was thanked for the work they do by a member of the public and also thanked for its willingness to be open for transparency. Linda Fay also commented that she fully believes that everything will be perfect in the upcoming audit. Fay stated that the Buttons have done a good job over the years.

Supervisor Button added that when he was elected to office there was no employee policy and he shared the Village of Canton's policy with a Town committee and a policy was created from that. Button stated that the Town needs to review and update policies. Historian Linda Casserly asked that when reviewing and working on a new employee policy would the board take a look at the retirees receiving insurance buy backs. Retired Judge David Nelson stated that he trusts David and Denice and that he feels no need for an audit, but added that it is a question of perception and there are other reasons for an audit to be conducted.

Attorney Nash stated he will draft a Local Law, advertise in the newspaper a Public Hearing sometime in August. Nash stated that if the Local Law passes it will be subject to permissive referendum.

1. **Approval of minutes of Previous Meeting(s):** The minutes of May 10, 2017 June 14th and Special Joint Meeting of July 19th, 2017 regular board meeting were approved:

Motion to approve minutes for May 10th, 2017

Motion: Jim Smith Seconded: Bob Washo Vote: unanimous

Motion to approve minutes of June 14th, 2017 Special meeting were approved

Motion: Jim Smith Seconded: Bob Washo Vote: unanimous

Motion to approve minutes of June 19th, 2017 Joint/Special meeting

Motion: Bob Washo Seconded: Phil LaMarche Vote: unanimous

These minutes approved with the understanding that the resolution that was adopted was not the correct method to manage the situation of the Supervisors Salary.

Councilman Paul Backus abstained from voting on June 14th and June 19th, as he has not read the minutes, due to being on vacation.

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2. **Audit Committee:** The following bills for Abstract #7-2017 were approved for payment:

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|-----------------------------|--------------|
| General "A" | \$3,554.31 |
| Town Outside "B" | \$1,330.81 |
| Special Lighting "SL" | \$264.44 |
| Joint Activity "SM" | \$1,904.92 |
| Highway "DA" | \$4,517.52 |
| Highway "DB" | \$126,198.62 |

Committee approval

3. **Director of Economic Development/Community Director:** Leigh Rodriquez's written report was submitted and approved:

Motion: Phil Washo Seconded: Paul Backus Vote: unanimous

4. **Assessor:** Steve Teele's written report was submitted and approved:

Motion: Bob Washo Seconded: Paul Backus Vote: unanimous

Steve Teele was present and stated that he will be attending a seminar on solar in Ithaca next week.

5. Historian: Linda Casserly's written report was submitted and approved:

Motion: Jim Smith Seconded: Bob Washo Vote: unanimous

6. Code Enforcement Officer: Russell Lawrence's written report was submitted and approved:

Motion: Jim Smith Seconded: Phil LaMarche Vote: unanimous

7. Recreation Director: Caitlin Boreyko's written report was submitted and approved:

Motion: Jim Smith Seconded: Bob Washo Vote: unanimous

8. Highway Superintendent: Terry Billing's written report was submitted and approved:

Motion: Bob Washo Seconded: Phil LaMarche Vote: unanimous

Highway Superintendant Billing's gave Clerk Hammond a letter from Debbie Thacker of 688 Judson Street Road regarding the condition of the road to be put on file.

9. Town Supervisor: David Button's written report was submitted and approved:

Motion: Paul Backus Seconded: Jim Smith Vote: unanimous

Supervisor Button was asked to check on the Legislative totals on his budget sheet and report back to the board members.

10. Town Clerk: Lisa Hammond's written report was submitted and approved:

Motion: Phil LaMarche Seconded: Bob Washo Vote: unanimous

11. Tax Collector: None

12. Legislators: None

13. Justice Court: Justice Court written reports were submitted and approved:

Judge Rosemary Philips \$15,181.50 Judge Christopher Curley \$5,980.00

Motion: Paul Backus Seconded: Bob Washo Vote: unanimous

14. Committee Reports: Jim Smith reported that three RFP's have been received for the comprehensive plan. Smith added that there will be two presentations on the 18th and 19th of July 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

15. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Draft Local Law to Adjust Salaries:

Discussion was held on advertising in the local newspapers to draft a local law to adjust the Town Supervisor's salary to \$40,333.00. After discussion it was decided to schedule a public hearing on August 9th, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. on this Local Law

Motion: Paul Backus Seconded: Jim Smith Vote: unanimous

- b. Review Job Descriptions & Offer of Assistance:

Supervisor Button stated that he has only received four of the six job descriptions requested from the employees back on June 21st, 2017. Supervisor Button stated that he had communication with Ben Budelmann about offering the Town assistance in updating job descriptions for the staff. Supervisor Button will ask Budelmann for a brief synopsis of what he would propose to do along with a time frame for completion. Motion to hire Budelmann at \$350.00 a month plus expenses not to exceed \$2,000.00.

Motion: Bob Washo Seconded: Phil LaMarche Vote: unanimous

- c. Discussion of water supply to Hamlets:

Discussion was held on hiring an engineer to guide the Town of Canton in helping the hamlets get water to fire trucks. Councilman Bob Washo stated that he wants to see the Village of Rensselaer Falls included. Motion was made to allow Supervisor Button to prepare the RFP to get a quote from an engineer for a estimate of what it will cost. All board members were in agreement that the three fire departments should come together with the Town of Canton and have input to see if this project is something they are interested in and can contribute monies toward it.

Motion: Paul Backus Seconded: Jim Smith Vote: unanimous

- d. Chamber of Commerce Commitment:

Discussion was held on the specifics of the Chamber and the support they are requesting from the Town of funds to help operate the Canton Chamber. Supervisor Button will get back to the Chamber for more clarity and come back to the Town Board next month.

e. Audit of utility accounts:

Supervisor Button stated that he has been approached by a company that wants to help the Town of Canton reclaim monies from our cable companies and utilities. After discussion was held it was decided that Supervisor Button will check on their references and report back to the board members at the August regular board meeting.

f. Resolution in Support of a Center for Truth:

Supervisor Button read the Resolution in Support of a Center for Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation. Motion to pass resolution was made.

Motion: Bob Washo Seconded: Phil LaMarche Vote: unanimous

See attached resolution

g. Executive Session – Personnel Supervisor

h. Any other business that may come before the board:

Discussion was held on allowing Attorney Nash to draft a letter requesting the New York State Comptroller to come to Canton and audit the Town's books. Nash will prepare a draft and leave such copy in the Town Clerk's office for review and signatures.

Motion: Paul Backus Seconded: Jim Smith Vote: unanimous

Discussion was held on putting an RFP out to get quotes on doing a local audit of the Supervisors Office in the years 2015 through 2017
Motion was made to direct the Town Supervisor to put together a RFP requesting a quote to do an audit of the Supervisors office.

Motion: Paul Backus Seconded: Bob Washo Vote: unanimous

8:25 p.m. went into executive session

Motion: Jim Smith Seconded: Phil LaMarche vote: unanimous

8:45 p.m. came out of executive session

Motion: Jim Smith Seconded: Phil LaMarche Vote: unanimous

8:46 p.m. meeting adjourned

Motion: Jim Smith Seconded: Paul Backus Vote: unanimous