

Town of Austerlitz  
Regular Town Board Meeting  
December 21, 2023

Present: Robert Lagonia, Town Supervisor, Christopher Schober, G. Vogler Jere Wrightsman, Maureen Wilson (arrived at 7:02 pm), Town Board Members, Susan Haag, Town Clerk

Highway Superintendent Peter Fitzpatrick absent due to illness.

Regular meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes**

A motion to accept the November 16, 2023 Meeting minutes was made by C. Schober and second by J. Wrightsman

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober : yes

M. Wilson: absent

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 4:1.

Town Board Member Wilson arrived at 7:02 p.m.

**Auditing of Accounts and Claims**

A motion to authorize payment of the December General Fund, #450-479 in the amount of \$147056.81 and Highway Fund, #215-243 in the amount of \$79785.24 was made by M. Wilson and seconded by J. Wrightsman.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober : yes

M. Wilson: yes

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 5:0.

**Reports**

**Supervisor's Report**

Supervisor Lagonia thanked outgoing Town Board Members Maureen Wilson and Jere Wrightsman for their years of service to the Town, noting it takes a lot of guts, determination and time to be a Town Board Member. Over their tenure much was accomplished because it was a great board to work with.

Town Board Member Wrightsman reflected on the work done for the Town Centennial and broadband.

Monthly Cash Disbursement Report for the Month of November 2023 submitted. There is roughly \$2.1 million in the bank. Supervisor Lagonia noted that the financials are looking really good, over budget in reference for revenue. Accountant for the Town, Bryon Sherman, will give the Town a report as to where we are headed. Accountant Sherman audited the Town Clerk and Tax Collector books for 2022 and 2023. He will be auditing the Court records as well.

Supervisor Lagonia noted that Zoning Board of Appeals Member Gerald Seligman resigned. Supervisor Lagonia interviewed Betsy Hess and feels she will be the right fit for the Zoning Board of Appeals. This appointment will be made at the organizational meeting in January.

The updated Comprehensive Plan is in draft form and out for review by the Town Board, Planning Board, etc. After this review, it will be distributed to the public. Supervisor Lagonia noted that this was an amazing job and was pleased with the outcome.

On a County level, Supervisor Lagonia noted that he has met with the new District Attorney who he believes will do a good job even though there will be some staffing challenges when he starts in January. New judges will be starting at the County as well.

#### Highway Report:

And Christmas is here already. Time is flying by.

We have had our first small snows of the year with minimal issues. Haven't had much cold yet leaving the ground pretty soft.

An extremely large amount of rain for this time of year. Especially this last rain storm, an amazing amount of rain in a day. We have some cleanup work ahead of us from it. However, it has shown the worth of the new leaf blower already and the worth of the tree cutting we recently had done. We had many trees and debris down and ditches overflowing with water. There is damage and some overflows, but most are from the sheer volume of water or older partly crushed or damaged pipes. Much fewer leaf backups. Also, the sections we cut had noticeably less debris and tree damage in the road, both very noticeable improvements!

We have been working on some of our housekeeping projects like fall yard cleanup and organization, as well as, some yearly cleaning and organizing in the shop.

We have also started on some of our more involved maintenance and repair items, including fixing worn moldboards and adding disconnect switches to some of our equipment that didn't already have them.

We constructed a new headwall on Pratt Hill that was desperately needed, as well as, fixing a few other erosion issues and damaged culverts.

We will continue on our winter maintenance projects and begin brush mowing/trimming soon.

Hope everyone has a Happy Healthy Holiday Season, enjoy!!

End of Report

Supervisor Lagonia noted that the last storm created quite a mess with roads being washed out. There would have been more damage if the Town had not trimmed trees and taken out dead ones earlier in the year. The Town needs to continue this practice. Supervisor Lagonia thanked Highway Superintendent Fitzpatrick and the Highway Crew for their hard work.

Town Clerk Report for the month of November, 2023 submitted.

Planning Board Report for the month of November, 2023 submitted.

No Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee Report.

Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Report for the month of November, 2023 was submitted.

Justice Cassuto Justice Court Report for the month of November, 2023 submitted.

Justice Grubin Justice Court Report for the month of November, 2023 submitted.

Dog Control Report for the month of November, 2023 submitted.

Climate Smart Report for the month of December 2023 submitted.

Town Board Member Wrightsman noted parts of the report. Member Wilson mentioned the work done with Cornell noting that she did reach out to the Austerlitz Fire Company in reference to being a shelter for people when storms hit. No one from the Fire Company has gotten back to her. Supervisor Lagonia advised that the Austerlitz Fire Company is open for sheltering.

A motion was made to accept the monthly reports by J. Wrightsman and seconded by G. Vogler.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober : yes

M. Wilson: yes

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 5:0.

### **Correspondence**

None

### **Unfinished Business**

#### **BAR Member**

The Town Board will continue to look for someone to fill this position.

#### **Town Website/Civic Plus Agreement**

This was sent in error so there is nothing the Town needs to do. Residents have to sign up again to receive emails.

### **New Business**

#### **Columbia County Climate Smart Community Task Force-Town Representative**

A motion to have Lisa Bouchard-Hoe represent the Town of Austerlitz on the Columbia County Climate Smart Community Task Force was made by J. Wrightsman and seconded by C. Schober.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober : yes

M. Wilson: yes

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 5:0.

#### **2024 Columbia County MIS Agreement**

A motion to authorize Supervisor Lagonia to sign the 2024 MIS Agreement with Columbia County was made by G. Vogler and seconded by M. Wilson.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober : yes

M. Wilson: yes

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 5:0.

#### **2024 AOT Annual Meeting Voting Delegate**

A motion for Susan Haag to be the Town of Austerlitz' voting delegate at the Association of Towns Annual Business Meeting held on February 21, 2024 was made by G. Vogler and seconded by M. Wilson.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober : yes

M. Wilson: yes

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 5:0.

A motion for Ken Kaplan to be the Town of Austerlitz' alternate voting delegate at the Association of Towns Annual Business Meeting held on February 21, 2024 was made by G. Vogler and seconded by M. Wilson.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober : yes

M. Wilson: yes

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 5:0.

#### **2024 Columbia Greene Humane Society Animal Shelter Contract**

A motion to authorize Supervisor Lagonia to sign the 2024 Columbia Greene Humane Society Animal Shelter Contract was made by J. Wrightsman and seconded by C. Schober.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes  
C. Schober : yes  
M. Wilson: yes  
J. Wrightsman: yes  
Motion carried 5:0.

### **Speed Reduction Request: Harlemville Road**

The Columbia County Highway Department has received a request for a lowered speed limit on Harlemville Road from the Taconic State Parkway east to the Town of Ghent line. This road runs through 3 townships; Ghent, Austerlitz and Hillsdale. The Columbia County Highway Department is asking that Austerlitz and Hillsdale also submit a request for a lowered speed limit to expedite the original request the Town of Ghent submitted.

The Town Board noted that no speed was actually mentioned.

A motion to authorize the submission of a lowered speed limit on the Town of Austerlitz portion of Harlemville Road to Columbia County and New York State was made by M. Wilson and seconded by G. Vogler.

R. Lagonia: yes  
G. Vogler: yes  
C. Schober : yes  
M. Wilson: yes  
J. Wrightsman: yes  
Motion carried 5:0.

### **2024 Organizational Meeting Date**

No final date set.

### **Reappointment of Town Assessor**

A motion to reappoint Pamela Cook as the Town of Austerlitz Sole Assessor with a term beginning October 1, 2023 and ending September 30, 2028 was made by C. Schober and seconded by J. Wrightsman.

R. Lagonia: yes  
G. Vogler: yes  
C. Schober : yes  
M. Wilson: yes  
J. Wrightsman: yes  
Motion carried 5:0.

### **Public Comment**

None

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by G. Vogler and seconded by M. Wilson.

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R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober : yes

M. Wilson: yes

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 5:0. Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan Haag, Town Clerk