

Town of Austerlitz
Regular Town Board Meeting
August 17, 2023

Present: Robert Lagonia, Town Supervisor, Greg Vogler, Christopher Schober, Jere Wrightsman, Maureen Wilson, Town Board Members, Peter Fitzpatrick, Highway Superintendent, Susan Haag, Town Clerk

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 July 20, 2023 Meeting minutes was made by J. Wrightsman and second by C. Schober.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober : yes

M. Wilson: abstain

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 4:1.

Auditing of Accounts and Claims

A motion to authorize payment of the August General Fund, #324-355 in the amount of \$21249.66 and Highway Fund, #132-150 in the amount of \$46995.16 was made by C. Schober and seconded by M. Wilson.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober : yes

M. Wilson: yes

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 5:0.

Reports

Supervisor's Report

Monthly Cash Disbursement Report for the Month of June 2023 submitted. There is roughly \$2.678 million in the bank and the financials are not showing any odd ball stuff. Supervisor Lagonia has put \$1.2 million in CDs with TD Bank, staggered due dates and the amount backed by the FDIC.

There have been numerous meetings at the County concerning the tick problem. Tick diseases are rising and there is also a rabies issue due to bats.

The new Public Safety building on 11 Warren Street in Hudson was voted on. One end of the new building will house the Board of Elections which is good giving them much-needed space. This space will include a storage area and training facilities, as well as, a voting area for election days.

The Town's new website is up and running and the Town is adding a page for Seniors. The Office of the Aging will work with J Lotus for material to include.

Mid-Hudson Cablevision is getting ready to start their part in the Broadband update. This is the last leg of the project since Consolidated Communications completed about 95% of the Town. Mid-Hudson Cablevision will hopefully be done by October.

Supervisor Lagonia met with NYMIR who came out to tour all of the Town owned buildings for insurance coverage. There were a couple of areas that Highway Superintendent Fitzpatrick had to address with the Highway Garage and it was noted that P. Fitzpatrick needed to keep a log or record of complaints by the public.

Highway Report:

Highway Superintendent Fitzpatrick submitted the following report:

The Summer is running away!! Fairs have started!!

Seems like we have spent most of the summer cleaning up after heavy rains!! Nothing major but the heavy rains take their toll on our hills and trees. Requiring Spot grading and fixing various places as well as cleaning and opening plugged ditches and culverts.

Mowing has continued and gone well, looks good.

The Beavers have slowed down but not given up!

The new speed sign has been programmed and brackets made, it will be making appearances around town! We still need to complete the mobile base for it, looking like that's a winter project at this point.

Sand and Salt continue to arrive and get stacked in the barn.

We have added material to and reshaped the lower dirt portion of Dugway as well as a section of TenBroeck.

We removed a large number of trouble trees, mostly dead ash, and limbs from a portion of Fog Hill Road. This project went very smoothly, efficiently, and safely using a contractor with the appropriate equipment. Quite happy with the outcome!

Dugway project is starting, signs are being laid out and road will be closing any day now!

The Banners and Flags have been taken down. Any new Banner ideas?

The trim bands on the bottom of the park pavilion posts are in need of some attention! And the pavilion could use a coat of stain.

Been looking into options for The John Deere 595 excavator that we auctioned and had failure of payment. Thinking we should try again!

We will be doing some blacktop patching and replacing a few culverts in the coming weeks.

End of Report

Highway Superintendent Fitzpatrick noted that Sylvan Timber came in and cut down ash trees on Fog Hill Road. The project went smoothly and was a good investment for the money. The wood was chipped and the remaining debris was hauled away. The Town needs to do a comprehensive study on this to see if more trees should be taken care of. Maybe a week at a time here and there. There are definitely a lot more ash trees that need to be taken down.

Even though the Town has seen a good amount of rain, the roads are still in pretty good shape.

The Dugway Road bridge repair project should be starting this coming week so signage for the detour will be going up soon. Town Board Member Wilson suggested putting a notice on the website concerning this detour so the residents are alerted. The bridge will be closed for roughly a month.

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

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

No Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee Report for the month of July, 2023 submitted. Supervisor Lagonia noted that he, Town Board Member Vogler and Attorney for the Town, Joseph Catalano, are working on some Zoning Code updates which will be presented to the Town Board for consideration.

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

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

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

No Dog Control Report for the month of July, 2023 submitted.

Climate Smart Report for the month of August, 2023 submitted. There is new member on the committee.

A motion was made to accept the monthly reports by G. Vogler, seconded by M. Wilson.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober : yes

M. Wilson: yes

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 5:0.

Correspondence

Columbia County Department of Health: Children's Camp Inspection Summary Report. No health hazards or violations found.

Teamsters Local 294: Request for negotiations for current collective bargaining agreement. The Town Board will discuss in executive session.

Charter Communications: Channel change.

Unfinished Business

New Website

The new website is launched with a new host, but at the same web address. Town Board Member Vogler asked that everyone check out the new site.

Updated 2023 Highway Form 284

The Town Board and Highway Superintendent Fitzpatrick discussed whether there needed to be an update to the 2023 Highway Form 284 and there does not need to be any updates at this time.

State Route 203 Signage

Town Board Member Maureen Wilson updated the Town Board concerning the progress of new signage and slower speeds on State Route 203 in the Town of Austerlitz. As the Town Board was aware, there was a meeting with the NYSDOT in May to reduce the speed from 55 mph to 45 mph on a portion of State Route 203 which was denied. Member Wilson noted that the signage is not good on the portion of State Route 203 from Fox Hill Camp Grounds to the end at State Route 22. The State asked for a report of what signage M. Wilson felt was warranted, which M. Wilson provided to the State and the State has not responded back. Member Wilson does not believe that it should take the State this long to respond to her report and is looking for the Town Board to be supportive of this effort. Member Wilson asked that the public and the Town Board look at the road signage around Columbia County and compare it to what is currently on this portion of State Route 203. Supervisor Lagonia noted that the State does have to be involved in any speed reduction. The Comprehensive Plan survey included a number of comments about road safety. Supervisor Lagonia will ask his contacts about this.

New Business

2024 Annual Budget

Supervisor Lagonia and Member Vogler are working on the 2024 budget which will be completed much earlier than is required. The Town Board needs to have a discussion on what to do with the Spencertown and Austerlitz Town Parks. Spencertown currently has a 'ball field' that does not seem to be used and other residents are asking for something different in its place. The Town Board would like the community to discuss what they would like to see at these two areas. The Town Board can schedule a time before the start of a Town Board meeting for these discussions to take place.

Public Comment

Chet Davis added to what Town Board Member Wilson noted concerning the response from the NYSDOT on State Route 203. C. Davis is not happy that the State has yet to respond. In other areas of the County, there is road signage that could be duplicated on State Route 203. C. Davis and Member Wilson have identified 3 intersections on State Route 203 that they believe are dangerous areas: Reed Road and Route 203, Big Woods Road and Route 203 and Stonewall Road and Route 203. Member Wilson feels these areas need more road signage. This additional information, in the form of a report, was sent to the State in June. M. Wilson will reach out again to the State for follow-up. Town Board Member Jere Wrightsman questioned if putting mirrors somewhere at these intersections will help. Highway Superintendent Fitzpatrick advised that it depends on the location. The one placed at the end of Reed Road does not seem to work well. Supervisor Lagonia will contact his county representatives if the State does not respond.

Frand Todara questioned the project on the Dugway Road bridge. What the project entailed, and the time frame were explained to F. Todara. An option for detoured traffic is Fire Hill Road although it was discussed that this is a seasonal road. Superintendent Fitzpatrick did put down some material on Fire Hill Road understanding that during the project, this road would see additional traffic.

Lee Ann Daly noted that if the Town decided what they would like to do with the park areas, she can help to market. The Town Board is not interested in marketing the area, just looking to make sure that the areas are usable for the Town residents. The tennis courts are used quite a bit and pickle ball courts will be put in this fall. Basketball courts were also set up at one time inside the tennis courts. The issue on use really lies with the field areas and this needs a community discussion.

Summer Recreation Director Deb Oleynek advised the Town Board that there were 47 campers this year. The campers made a thank you mobile for the Town Board. The Town Board thanks Recreation Director Oleynek for another great season.

Executive Session

A motion to enter executive session to discuss Teamster contract negotiations 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 Executive Session entered into at 7:38 p.m.

A motion to exit Executive Session was made by J. Wrightsman and seconded by M. Wilson.

R. Lagonia: yes

G. Vogler: yes

C. Schober : yes

M. Wilson: yes

J. Wrightsman: yes

Motion carried 5:0 Executive Session was exited at 8:05 p.m.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn 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 Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Haag,
Town Clerk