

**Danby Town Board
Minutes of Budget and Regular Meeting
October 14, 2013
Draft**

Present:

Supervisor: Ric Dietrich
Councilpersons: Leslie Connors, Kathy Halton

Excused:

Councilpersons: Dan Klein, Dylan Race

Others Present:

Town Clerk Pamela Goddard
Bookkeeper Laura Shawley
Justice Theresa Klinger
Highway Sup't Carl Seamon
Code Officer Susan Beeners
Public Eric Banford, Robert Roe, Joe Freedman, Ronda Roaring

The Danby Town Board budget meeting was opened at 6:10pm

Budget Review

Justice Klinger helped clarify requests in the proposed 2014 Court budget. The Court requests an increase in the equipment line, which would be used for computer upgrades including internet access at the Justice bench. These funds have been added into a grant request. Information about Court grants will be announced in the Spring of 2014. New computers will be needed, whether or not the grant is awarded. The budget increase was balanced by an increased in expected revenue from mortgage tax payments. (Mortgage tax revenue is consistently higher than the conservative estimate included in the annual budget.)

Shawley explained a few changes in the Oct. 14 preliminary budget. \$3,000 promised for broadband poles in the Town of Caroline has been added into the budget. The line items for the Community Council budget/Youth Programs now reflect actual figures from the Community Council and County Youth Services office.

Shawley outlined the revised assessment rates. For every \$100,000 in assessment, the tax bill will decrease \$0.40; \$100,000 in assessment with Fire District will decrease \$2.50; \$100,000 in assessment with Water and Fire Districts will increase \$16.50. Shawley explained that the difference between general tax rate and fire district rate is due to fact that some exemption rates for properties do not pertain to fire district assessments.

Bookkeeper Shawley answered several questions from the Board. There was a question as to whether an outside audit was planned for 2014. Funds have been included for an audit, should a new Supervisor be in office in 2014. It was suggested that funds be put aside each year towards funding an outside audit, at a cost of approximately \$12–20,000, every four or five years. Funds for an eventual outside audit have accumulated from prior budgets.

There was further discussion of the use of reserve accounts for specified purposes, particularly in regard to Town Hall improvements. Reserve accounts will be added to, as possible, during the end of year fiscal review.

There was a discussion about employee benefits, particularly medical insurance. This line item was able to stay the same between 2013 and 2014. There was a question as to whether costs are stabilizing now that the Town is part of the Health Insurance Consortium. Shawley noted that the rate of

cost increase has slowed due to Consortium membership. In addition, more municipal members are being added. This should contribute to more stable costs in the future.

Connors requested that a small amount of money (\$500) be put in the budget for cemetery restoration. There was a brief discussion about possible reserve accounts for cemetery care and towards an eventual need to replace the highway salt shed cover.

The Danby Town Board budget meeting was closed at 7:00pm

The Danby Town Board regular meeting was opened at 7:03pm

Privilege of the Floor

Sue Beeners reported on behalf of Frank Proto. He was unable to attend this meeting as he was otherwise engaged in a meeting related to assessments on agricultural land and in fire districts. Fire Districts can reduce assessments on active agricultural land, if they choose to do so. Beeners reported that this had been considered had been considered in Danby ten years ago or more. It was decided at that time not to make a change in the assessment. This topic has been under discussion at the Planning Board. Proto may report on this at the next meeting.

Roe spoke in favor of reduced assessment for part-time farm operations. Currently, agricultural exemptions are only available if a farm meets a certain financial threshold.

Warrants - Abstract #10 of 2013:

GENERAL FUND

#430-471 for a total of \$17,636.77

Moved by Halton, Second by Connors. The motion passed.

In Favor: Connors, Halton, Dietrich

HIGHWAY FUND

#154-167 for a total \$245,105.71

Moved by Connors, Second by Dietrich. The motion passed.

In Favor: Connors, Halton, Dietrich

WEST DANBY WATER DISTRICT FUND

#047-051 for a total \$1,604.59

Moved by Halton, Second by Connors. The motion passed.

In Favor: Connors, Halton, Dietrich

Approve Minutes

RESOLUTION NO. 93 OF 2013 - APPROVE MINUTES

Resolved, that the Town Board of the Town of Danby approves the minutes of September 9 and 16, 2013.

Moved by Connors, Second by Dietrich. The motion passed.

In Favor: Connors, Halton, Dietrich

West Danby Water District Utility Payment Software

Clerk Goddard presented a request and report on behalf of Tod Sukontarak. The Water District has chosen BAS software for its Utility billing at a total cost of \$2,740, to be paid in two equal installments of \$1,370; the first payment within 30 days of the agreement being signed and the second following installation and training. The Water District had compared BAS and Williamson Law systems.

In an Email to the Town Board, Sukontarak reported that, "Since selecting Blair Supply and Badger Meters as the supplier for the replacement of our water meters, the Water District has been busy with the business of moving the project forward. The new meters should be arriving from Badger within a month and we will then begin installing them.

"We selected BAS Utility Software to provide our billing software. That purchase proposal has been sent through Matt to the Community Development Block Grant folks to be included in the project. We looked at a few other companies to provide this software and found that in the long run BAS was going to be the least expensive and had the best reputation for support and product quality. We needed to make a billing software decision soon as we are hoping to schedule the trainings between the new meters and billing software synchronous or close to it.

"We are also planning to purchase a new laptop and printer dedicated to water district data.

"In addition to communications with meter and software companies, the commissioners and operators met twice with each Aquastore, and ASI salespeople. The first meeting with each company was organized by T.G. Miller to have them give us information about our tank site location and minimum road access necessities to start construction. From their input we wrote up a list of necessary road improvements to begin construction this year. Carl has almost completed the road improvement work.

"Our second meeting with Aquastore and ASI was to give each of them an opportunity to tell us why we should choose their product and to answer questions about their products.

"Dave Herrick is currently writing up the bid specifications for tank construction proposals.

"So far, we are on schedule to have construction begin in 2013. Weather and construction company schedules might keep us from being able to do it this year but we are keeping up with our responsibilities."

RESOLUTION NO. 94 OF 2013 - AUTHORIZATION TO SIGN CONTRACT, WEST DANBY WATER DISTRICT

Resolved, that the Town Board of Town of Danby authorizes Water Commissioner Tod Sukontarak to sign an agreement with BAS for Utility Billing Software in the amount of \$2,740.00 as stated in the contract agreement.

Moved by Dietrich, Second by Halton. The motion passed.

In Favor: Connors, Halton, Dietrich

Town Justice Audit Verification

Shawley explained the purpose of a resolution requested by the New York State Unified Court System. This is a requirement from the State Comptroller's Office and the NYS Unified Court Office.

RESOLUTION NO. 95 OF 2013 - ACKNOWLEDGING REVIEW OF COURT FINANCIAL RECORDS

Whereas, the State of New York requires that the Court financial records be reviewed by the Board of Directors on an annual basis, be it

Resolved, that the Town Board of Town of Danby has reviewed the Danby Town Court financial records for the year ending December 31, 2012 according to the requirements of the State and all seems to be in order. Procedures have been followed according to the Checklist for Review of Justice Court Records provided by the Office of the State Comptroller's office.

Moved by Dietrich, Second by Halton. The motion passed.

In Favor: Connors, Halton, Dietrich

Board of Zoning Appeals Vacancy Interviews

Two persons, David Hall and Russell Klinger, have expressed interest in being considered to fill a vacancy on the Board of Zoning Appeals. Clerk Goddard was instructed to set up interviews with both candidates for the next TB meeting.

Board of Zoning Appeals Chair

Discussion of need to appoint a standing Chair of the BZA. Clerk Goddard informed the Board that Al Becker has acted as Chair *pro tempore* for recent BZA hearings during September. It was recommended that he be considered as standing Chair. Connors will canvas the current BZA members for a recommendation. The TB will take up this matter at the next meeting.

Beeners informed the Board that there is an applicant who will need a hearing before the BZA before the end of the year. She urged the Board to make these appointments at the next meeting, so that the BZA will have full membership and a chair.

Town Hall Building Maintenance/Window Treatments

Halton reported on a meeting with Code Assistant Matt Cooper and a plan for dealing with the existing drapes. The current drapes will be re-installed with new hardware, so that they can be opened and closed. The window valences will not be put back. There was a discussion about how and when the drapes would be treated to be flame retardant. Beeners expressed concern about how long it might take for these to meet the fire code requirements. Halton will contact theater departments at Cornell, Ithaca College, and the State Theater to learn how they manage this.

An estimate for replacing the drapes with new, flame-retardant fabric is in the range of \$400 each drape. There was a discussion about alternate suppliers of flame-retardant fabric who might make drapes this size.

There was a discussion regarding a recommendation to create a reserve fund with the purpose of replacing the drapes in several years.

Highway Department Update

Shawley and Seamon presented preliminary information on spending related to road work. Additional information, with detailed expenditure numbers, will be presented at the next TB meeting.

Halton asked for a brief update about training and manuals related to the Delta Road Use Law. The Highway Department informed the Board that this is, "a work in progress."

The Highway Department will have a meeting with ACT BioEnergy regarding the biomass boiler sometime in the next month, once the system is set to start up. There will be follow up meetings to regulate the system for maximum performance this winter. Once the system is working correctly, there will be a full energy audit for the highway barns.

West Danby Water District Report

There was an update from Carl Seamon on preparations for tank replacement. A road is being constructed up to the new water tank at little expense to the town. Bid packages have been sent out for the new tank and bids should be arriving soon.

Town Clerk's Report

\$2,509.26 was disbursed to the Town Supervisor for the month of September. This was received, in part, for two marriage licenses, 17 days of sporting license sales, 5 building permits, and 59 dog license renewals. A Records Management report was distributed showing the destruction of records which no longer needed to be retained.

Animal Control Report

Dietrich gave a short report of a meeting with the Tompkins County Animal Control consortium related to future dog enumerations. The participating municipalities are drafting a plan for consistent enumeration for each Town with annual financial contributions from each municipality in order to spread costs more evenly. Each Town's payment to Tompkins County Animal Control is based on the dog population for that municipality.

Code Office Report

Code Officer Beeners reported that there are several new building permits in process. There was a short discussion about new construction at the White Hawk development. A grant was received for three new houses, contingent on assurance that White Hawk Lane will not be in danger of flooding.

Other Short Reports and Correspondence

An Ithaca College Journalism professor invited all Town Board members to attend a presentation on Open Government and Freedom of Information requests with Robert Freeman, to be held at the Roy H. Park Auditorium at Ithaca College, 7-8:30pm on Thursday October 24.

Correspondence was received from the County Assessment Office regarding a judgement regarding excessive assessment on a property on Hill Road; it results in a change in to assessment value for 2013. This communication was passed on to bookkeeper Shawley for review and any needed action.

Correspondence was received from the NYS DOT regarding a request for a lowered speed limit, school zone signs, and a painted crosswalk between the Waldorf School study gardens across Nelson Road from the school. The NYS DOT advised the Waldorf School that a request for a speed limit study would need to be sent from the Town, as this is a Town road. Installing school signage and a painted crosswalk would also be the responsibility of the Town. This correspondence was passed on to Highway Superintendent Seamon for review and possible action.

Dietrich reported that residents in West Danby are interested in lowered speed limits on side roads, particularly Station and Valley View Road. He has encouraged residents to gather a petition. Beeners reported that accident reports are available for accident severity on all of the Town roads. Route 34/96 is in the top ten for accident rates. She will make this information available to the Board.

Beeners reported that West Danby/Spencer Road has been a problem in that it has two names. Correcting this problem has been complicated. The emergency response system will now have both names on those addresses. This should help fix the delivery and emergency response problems.

Adjournment

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:03 pm.

Pamela Goddard, Town Clerk