

TOWN OF HIGHLAND
REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 14, 2023 – 7:02 pm
ELDRED TOWN

PRESENT SUPERVISOR JEFF HAAS
 COUNCILMAN FRED BOSCH
 COUCILWOMAN KAITLIN HAAS
 COUNCILMAN CHRIS TAMBINI

Also present, Attorney to Town Michael Davidoff
 Town Clerk Susan Hoffman

Supervisor calls meeting to order

Flag Salute

Moment of Silence

Roll Call

MOTION BY Councilman Tambini to approve the January 2023 Town Clerk Minutes, seconded by Councilwoman Haas, discussion motion carried all ayes.

MOTION BY Councilman Bosch to approve the January 2023 Financials, seconded by Councilman Tambini, discussion motion carried all ayes.

CORRESPONDENCE

Yulan Fire Department
Highland Lake Fide Department
Highland Ambulance Service (Tony Laruffa gave report)

HIGHWAY

Highway Deputy Superintendent reports it's been a nice winter our salt sheds are looking nice and we've been working on some maintenance on some of the trucks. we've had some nice weather we took some of the plow clippers off a couple of trucks and we started some of our springtime work. we'll continue that if the weather holds out. If not, we'll put the stuff back on. But then also I'm working on some bids for the pickup truck and I should have them before our workshop. Supervisor Haas asks are you going to be doing any brush cutting on any roads? Yes

SUPERVISOR REPORT

Supervisor Haas reports I've just got one that's going to come right glaring out here in front of me that the dove is missing from across the street. I have removed it. The artist wants to re-touch it. So, she's going to have it for approximately two weeks which I will reinstall it when it comes back. But the dove is not missing. It's missing on purpose. It's just not stolen. But the artist is going to do that of course gratis for us. But anyway, that's where the dove is. So that's what we're moving there. The board has been very, very busy with personnel committee with interviews as well as some other projects we've got going on here in the town hall, as well as the emergency services building next door. So those committee reports will be coming up later and I won't steal anybody's thunder there. All right. That is the supervisors report. Is there any public comment on items on the agenda items related to the agenda only?

PUBLIC COMMENTS

All right, moving along to committee reports

PLANNING AND SENIORS

Councilman Bosch reports everything is running smoothly.

YOUTH AND PARK DEVELOPMENT

Councilwoman Haas/Councilman Tambini So we're working with the county to finalize the voucher payments for the last year's \$10,000 that was awarded to the youth committee. I spoke to Kristen today to get those sorted and that they have not yet released the RFP or the application for this year's programming, it usually comes out around now. So, we'll work with them and we'll probably do something similarly to what we did last year. Ask for \$15,000. We continue to work with them. Emails are going back and forth. They're starting to get the program together the summer program. They've asked to use the town hall on March 25 from 10 to 12. They want to have more information. I believe that that's a Saturday for sure. Yes. They are looking to expand the summer youth program through the entirety of the summer so it'll be 10 weeks? which would be great. We're going to the county with that. Yes, they're not asking for a substantial increase in funding because we only subsidize Town of Highland residents, but they open it to anyone in the district. So that does offset some of the costs of operating the program. Okay, and there's more money's available. Yes, we still have about \$5,000 from the TC energy, TC and counties \$10,000. We're going look at the strength of the program and then also see how they're looking to expand the after-school program. I mean, if they go from, you know, if they go from four weeks to eight weeks, right, it's probably not going to double but it's going to be a substantial increase.

CODE

Councilman Bosch/Councilman Tambini reports while there's nothing new on our code, there was a, I believe a misunderstanding from the planning board. They didn't have a meeting in December. So, they didn't actually send us their comments before we approved our latest change for marijuana. I believe we did everything legal and we can make changes to that local law. Michael has a little bit more than they did in their minutes. Discuss the cannabis law. Yeah, I know. It's been sent around to all of the board members. So that in essence was their report. So, we're going to take up a resolution tonight to adopt the local law because they did make comments in the minutes and that can be considered to be the report.

PUBLIC SAFETY

We continue to see very good service from the sheriff's department and we're now entering into the second month of the MOU to provide the same coverage

that was provided under the Constabulary. So, since the number of hours, it is a dedicated sheriff's deputy. And then we have the court officers covering the court hours. So, we have not lost or changed any of the law enforcement in the town.

Just one of the things that was very important to us when we were establishing that contract was that it wasn't just a rotating shift of you know, rotating people coming down here whoever was available. We wanted to have some consistency and we found that the way they have it scheduled, typically the SRL from school Friday evenings, local resident, that's also, all day Saturday, developing relationships within the town stopping at local businesses being available when they're not working to create some of those relationships. So, it's been very positive.

GRANTS

Supervisor Haas reports the ongoing report with the grant applications is following up with our town engineer for the finalization of the highway, salt shed grant as well as the cleaning up the highway maintenance facility grant. The survey has to be done yet. He explained to me what they were doing and he was going to come back to me.

I think he was probably waiting for everything to get cleaned up in the yard. With you know, North Gate being in there or North line being there and stuff and I got to basically render it onto a topo map and then once that's done that will forward to the grant folks at Daphne and then hopefully move our stuff along.

INSURANCE

Supervisor Haas reports all our insurances have been paid. There is one snafu with the LOSAP program for the firefighters the LOSAP people have changed their software program, and they are three months into a backlog right now of the Town of Highland in their LOSAP program is the next one up you said yes.

BUILDINGS

Councilman Bosch reports in our building next door, which was the fire truck, Constable building, now it's the fire truck and Tim who is putting two coats of paint on the walls and the ceiling. So, everything looks nice and white. And on Thursday and Friday the ambulance plans to move all their shelves and everything down here to the right pf the constable portion of next door. And in our code office, or the code office was built in sections, the original part was closer to the proctor road and then a portion of the kitchen was taken away and made part of the code office. And the part the original part has an excellent quality carpet. But probably the cheapest possible carpet was installed on the part that was taken from the kitchen and that has carpet has become a tripping hazard. Even with putting a throw rug where people walk. It's still a tripping hazard. So, we've decided that we have to change the carpet and the same carpet throughout the entire room. And we've had two installers down to go over prices. The first one is someone that installs the Home-Depot carpet and the way they work. We would pay for the carpet and then they would pick it up, bring it down and install. We got a price for that for the bringing it down and installing it is only \$40 Less from the other company Empire Today to not only furnish the carpet, but to install it. So, we have a color picked out which is basically as closest we could to the existing carpet is called a Oatstraw and Empire today would come here on a Saturday after we've moved all of the file cabinets, the counter and anything that touches the floor into the main room here for the weekend. And then we'll come on a Saturday and install the carpet and then we would move all of the files, our counter etc. back in place and be ready to open again on Monday morning. They Empire Today wouldn't be available this week. I mean but absolutely tough to get everything coordinated along with the moving of the ambulance corps this week. So, the date that we've picked would be to have the carpet installed on the following Saturday, February 25th. So, the only problem with Empire Today they don't work the way we normally do with normal contractors. We normally get a bill and on Tuesday morning, we go through all

the bills and approve them. And then on the morning of the town board meeting, and then the next day the checks are written and mailed out. They only do work if they are assigned a check for 25% up front and then we have a check ready for 75% to be given to the installers on the date of installation. I would like to make a resolution to approve Empire today to install the carpet with padding on Saturday the 25th of February and we would be authorized to write a check for 25% which would be \$250 to be mailed to Empire today to their address and another check for 75% which would be \$750 to be caught ready to hand them when they finished work on Saturday, the 25th.

Okay, the discussion on the motion. All in favor? Aye. All against passed.

BEAUTIFICATION/RENAISSANCE

Councilwoman Haas reports we did get word from Kate Hartford. I sent her the updated certificate of liability insurance for the key portion of the project which showed the adequate coverage that was there just updated the date. So, she was forwarding it to Albany for the signatures so we will finally have the permit in place for this is going on almost a year for that portion of the project. If the weather continues to hold, we can start some of the work that we were going to do in the spring because of the Robert you guys be available down there to haul some stone down to Eagle watch one and stuff like that. Yeah, as long as you're not plowing snow and salt and stuff like that, right? But if it stays like this might be something we can get taken care of. Conservation one we would I think the stone that got leaked specked out was to be delivered to the to the sites right so we might have them do drop the stone at Eagle Observation One. Eagle observation two we just need to have someone measure that building so we can take it to get the replacement building.

We have our quarterly report is due to Renaissance on March 1. We will have to make some modifications to our initial budget for the key project because we had unanticipated expenses when we wrote the grant for survey engineering site plan.

PERSONAL

Councilwoman Haas/Councilman Tambini Chris and I spent all day Saturday together, which is thrilling. We've conducted two dates and completed we don't have any other interested parties that I'm aware of. For interviews for highway superintendent and six interviews for the vacant town board position.

WEBSITE

Supervisor Haas report from Laurie about the computer programs that we have coming forward. And BJ you feel informed enough to talk on this administer.gov program, if you would please. All right.

BJ Gettles reports originally when the program the building department software was set up it was under BAS business automated solutions. They sold to Edmond gov out of New Jersey during the transfer somehow or another they did not transfer all of the modules that we need to operate the building department. We have the complaint module we had the permit module, but the critical module is the inspection module. This module keeps a tracking record for us. It's got checklists on it tracks by port 1203 that I need to report every year tracks the short-term rentals tracks your multifamily hazardous commercial public assembly all sorts of different things that's required. In that we found out we no longer have access to that module. I said why not? You know, it was part of the original package. Of course, in my digging today I came up with the folder that was about two inches thick from 2008 where you had purchased it in between times admin God sent you guys a quote to get this module added on and then a yearly fee. I gave the package to Lori she's currently in the process of communicating with admin got to see why it was missed. So according to Lori, she would prefer that you went ahead with the resolution. But she is going to be pursuing more tomorrow and the next day to get this module back up and running that we originally had. So that even

though you're passing this if you've decided to pass the resolution tonight, the price tag on it may change to go down.

ENERGY/ENVIRONMENT

Councilwoman Haas/Councilman Tambini reports NYSEG has a new president and CEO Trish Nielsen she comes to from within the organization 30 years formerly in their office of emergency ? so their responsiveness to storm outages is significant situations, so they hosted a meeting at the Sullivan County Business Association meeting room at the end of January. It had all of our delivery division was represented as well as their community liaison who replaced Melanie Hutton. So, they talked a little bit about an overview of 10,000 foot but you know where they are, where they're going. Some of the challenges that they face but the one of the things they focused on for a good portion of the program was the Town of Highland and the Town of Highlands electrical grid because, as we noticed, as we experienced Jeff and I previously met with the former president of NYSEG about their storm responsiveness, daily outages and just the ineffective operation of our grid. We've had a couple of in person meetings with NYSEG so they completed at the end of January a substantial the first in over 10 years rushing there right of ways for the electrical lines. They own a certain setback from the center of the road to the outside of the right away from the electrical lines. They told me how many trees they fell. They're almost done with 5-year cycle. They've cut over 1000 trees down or trimmed 1000 trees in the area. They have set it that is this is in the Yulan circuit alone, they have set 363 new poles that they are setting roadside. One of the big issues is we had the worst performing grid and the worst performing circuit in the State of New York. So, they moved a lot of their poles that were set back into the you know you'll see because of the way the circuit was constructed they had set them back into the woods or in more aesthetically pleasing locations they brought them roadside which makes them further away from the trees and better to repair if there's an issue. They also broke the Beaverbrook substation circuit was one loop, so if there was a fault anywhere in the town the circuit to isolate that area for an outage, the whole system would go down and that was happening daily in the Town of Highland. They added new lines, they upgraded five and a half miles to three phase. They converted 2.9 miles of a line to three phase. They installed a number of scattered enclosures and a number of switches and those again will be broken into three circuits so that there's the likelihood of a town wide outage for something that happens in Minisink Ford or Highland Lake is limited. There was the Yulan 204 2-year resiliency plan. It's actually four loops, not three. And they also talked a lot about the AMI system. So, there's going be their new advanced monitor advanced meter informational system. So, it basically will still be in the same place as your current meter but that meter has the ability to communicate with the grid and communicate with NYSEG so they can better isolate what the reasons are and causation for outage timeline that it'll be out. It'll send exact information, you won't get estimated bills. They won't have to send someone out to read your meter, it'll automatically transmit that information. So, they will be coming down to different townhall meetings to explain the conversion to the AMI system. It will be statewide, there will be a fee if you choose to maintain your original meter. There will be a monthly fee to continue with that meter. So, they're trying to push everybody into that and they're feeling that after it'll isolate outages to where now they have to send a crew down to look at them. It'll give them about a 10 minute informational lag for when they'll know exactly what's causing the outages. So, it was very a big portion of their conversation. It was really nice to hear that they had taken the concerns that Jeff and I shared both in our testimony to the Public Services Commission but also in our one-to-one meetings with the NYSEG leadership. And instead of doing what they did in some parts of Northern New York where they consult generators in the town so that the power outages would be covered by generator power, they actually upgraded the grid service. I learned a lot about electricity that I never thought I would have to know and they will make the PowerPoint available to us and they will be in person for those meetings on the AMI meters. You'll get a mailing from them, then they'll set up an in-person meeting, but it

will not stop the 863 outages that are due to trees outside of the right of way which they can't stop.

Supervisor Haas states in response to some questions that were brought forward at the last meeting as well as during the course of last month, your NYSEG bill is markedly higher. When the town board and myself addressed that with NYSEG, supply charges have gone up more than 100% on some bills. So going up 100% I mean the supply end of the charge is normally in the \$20 to \$100 range. So, when that doubles to \$40 to \$200 you see a spike in your bill. You'll notice on your bill that the delivery charges haven't changed but the supply charges have. So, when we did contact the representatives from NYSEG it's costing them more to buy their power this year. And they anticipate that the power will come down after the demand wanes a little bit. I said you know we're all moving towards more electric and more electric service, charging our vehicles, electric heat, heat pumps and air conditioning and things like that rather than solid fuel burning devices, oil burners and gas furnaces and is NYSEG going to be able to compete and also deliver the electricity that we need? And the response was we're working on it which is a little scary. But they're working on it. So, we only have one company that services us here, and they're government regulated. When they have these hearings, when NYSEG has these hearings locally, and they will be local, make sure you come out if you don't like your electric bill or voice your opinion to them directly. As well, as you know ask them about the service they provide and will they be able to continue to provide those services they have in the past? When we went to the Public Service Commission after the 2018 storm in the wintertime and the 2018 shear winds that blew through the area. We testified in front of the PSC twice and we were very pointed. We're very forward and we offer solutions to the problem and they listen to us. If we can just make enough noise, they'll listen to us again I'm sure. Just when they come down with these public hearings, turnout for that one all right.

Councilwoman Haas states you can also submit written comments. One of the other town supervisors that was there had a question about the likelihood of them being able to continue to support all these different with the move to electric when people's rates were increasing substantially. They would like to keep what they call the energy buffet knowing that you don't have to isolate people into getting one type of energy so they can utilize all different sources.

911 HEROES PARK

No report.

The Town Attorney is going to need an Executive Session. To go into Executive Session for personnel issues as well as possible litigation and discussion with the attorney we will come back out to finish the program and do the resolutions that we have on our agenda. But first I'll need a motion to go into executive session with a second. Okay, all in favor. All right. All against that's passed.

Motion by: Councilman Bosch, seconded by Councilman Tambini, discussion carried all ayes.

Motion to come out of Executive Session:

Motion by: Councilman Fred Bosch, seconded by Councilman Tambini, discussion carried all ayes.

Fire call at 7:55 pm and Supervisor Haas leaves the meeting.

RESOLUTIONS

Town Attorney Michael Davidoff reads as follows: Retail dispensaries Whereas the Town Board of the Town of Highland I reviewed the rules regulations to be certain the same are consistent with old

Commonwealth practices, as well as best practices to protect the health, safety and welfare of the town residents and Whereas the Town Board has held a public hearing on Tuesday, January 3 to adopt local law number one of 2023 is set forth herein, whereas the town board conducted a SEQR review on January 3 2023, and adopted negative declaration of the local law on January 3 2023. And whereas the Town Board of the Town of Highland refer the pros local law to the planning board on December 7 2022, and whereas the Town of Highland Planning Board had discussed the proposed local law was regularly scheduled at a meeting on January 25, 2023 is set forth in the minutes of January 25 2020 through the meeting which minutes have been reviewed by the Town of Highland Town Board in which minutes are accepted as the Town of Highland planning board's report. Now therefore, it is resolved by the Town Board as follows 1: will where four paragraphs are incorporated herein by reference so set forth and full hearing to the town hereby adopts local number one of 2023 is set for the schedule eight next year. 2: to be enacted by this resolution which amends and updates the Town of Highland zoning code regarding adult cannabis use to regulate the establishment of any cannabis retail dispensary within the Town of Highland 3: The Town Clerk directs all steps necessary to process and file said local law for this resolution to take effect immediately. The question of adoption was duly put to a vote. I just want to clarify something okay. The authority to have a retail establishment for cannabis was passed by the town over a year and a half ago. All this does is create the zoning necessary for the establishment of the any such establishment and our consultant established based upon the town code the requirements like especially as permitted or where in the town that such establishments can be that's all this does is have the zoning requirements without it. Somebody could theoretically open it up anywhere. So, you need these regulations to regulate where such an establishment could be opened up. And by the way, they're not going to be opened up they have to receive the license first from the state. So, there's a whole lot to do before they could do it. But the town should have some rules. Some zoning requirements that are established where the residents can do that's all this does.

Deputy Supervisor Kaitlin Haas

Thank you. I'll entertain a motion.

Motion by Councilman Chris Tambini, seconded by Councilman Fred Bosch, discussion, roll call carried all ayes.

Motion by Councilwoman Haas to authorize the installation of the inspection module from Edmund Gov. for the NY-IPS Periodic Inspections not to exceed in the amount of \$2400.00 for a 1-year investment, seconded by Councilman Bosch, discussion carried all ayes.

Motion by Councilwoman Haas to pay Highway Abstract # 1-2023 claims # 1 to # 13 in the amount of \$76,795.09, seconded by Councilman Tambini, discussion carried all ayes.

Motion by Councilwoman Haas to pay General Abstract #2-2023 claims #13 to #48 in the amount of 25,121.82, seconded by Councilman Fred Bosch, discussion carried all ayes.

Motion by Councilwoman Haas to pay Eldred Street Lights # 1-2023 claim # 1 in the amount of \$149.59, seconded by Councilman Tambini, discussion carried all ayes.

Motion by Councilwoman Haas to approve budgetary transfer to be made to the 2022 General Budget in the amount of \$17,433.87, seconded by Councilman Bosch, discussion carried all ayes.

Motion by Councilwoman Haas to approve budgetary transfer to be made to the 2022 Highway Budget in the amount of \$7,660.27, seconded by Councilman Tambini, discussion carried all ayes.

Is there any public comment that needs to come before the board?

Laurie Stewart asks? I wanted to ask I'm unclear what the resolution about the cannabis law is?
Michael Davidoff responds – it is to adopt with the local law without the local zoning and the changes

Unknown 9:09

the discussion they didn't ask for changes they just had discussion at the meeting the board. Just discuss it they put the various discussions in the minutes. Consider that the report. So, that's all if they want something in the future, then they can petition the board and the board can make any changes. But when it's done that by much you could resolve was that the zoning that he put in was the minimum amount that the consultants could put in and still have locations where such an establishment that's the only thing whether or not it's just a question of zoning, where it can be unique. What you need to do is watch, there's not that much included in there.

Laurie Stewart - Now I was under the impression that Jeff Spitz was really asking for some kind of change that would limit the amounts of dispensaries that could be put into the town. He made it a point to say well I want to see more. Michael Davidoff – The board decided to adopt. Councilwoman Haas – it's also limited by region. So, the first round of licenses will be 12 for the entire region. And then we further limited by the amount of property that were in the town. So, we get through with the licensure is passed by the state in at least the first round for by region. Laurie Stewart – I'm just following up on what Jeff said that it's just part of the law and we're now understanding that that does happen and that the Town Board they have maintained their idea of state and everything else was not implemented.

Councilman Tambini -We kept it as tight as we possibly could without being overly restrictive.

Councilman Bosch - It would be more reasonable to put a dispensary in Monticello than in Eldred because of the volume of people that would be stopping to buy the product.

Any other public comment? Seeing none, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Councilman Tambini to adjourn the Town Board Meeting, seconded by Councilman Bosch, discussion carried all ayes.

Respectfully submitted
Susan Hoffman, Town Clerk
February 14, 2023