

REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING
December 12, 2023
ELDRED TOWN HALL

PRESENT SUPERVISOR HAAS
 COUNCILWOMAN HAAS
 COUNCILMAN BOSCH

ALSO, PRESENT Attorney to the town, Michael Davidoff, Esq.
 Town Clerk, Susan Hoffman

Supervisor calls meeting to order – 7:00 pm
Flag Salute
Moment of silence for Monica Kopf and Frank Goetz
Roll Call – Councilman Tambini not present

MOTION BY Councilman Bosch to approve the Town Clerk's November 2023 Minutes, seconded by Councilwoman Haas, discussion, motion carried all ayes.

MOTION BY Councilwoman Haas to approve the November 2023 Financials, seconded by Councilman Bosch discussion, motion carried all ayes.

CORRESPONDENCE

I have a correspondence dated today to Supervisor Haas from Councilman Chris Tambini, due to personal and business obligations, I will no longer be able to serve as councilman for the Town of Highland. My resignation. is effective immediately.

Yulan Fire Department
Highland Lake Fire Department
Highland Ambulance Service

HIGHWAY

No report from Deputy Rob Robertson

SUPERVISOR

Fred Bosch and I went up to the highway department today, to thank the highway department for the job the that they did on the stormwater protection plan project that we had needed to complete the town highway shop and salt shed capital improvements. It looks very good. Not quite finished yet because they ran into poor weather and it'll be finished off in the spring with some more sealing and a little bit more dirt to be added. It goes without saying that I thoroughly enjoyed this job and I'm going to miss it.

PUBLIC COMMENT

When it gets down to the proposed resolution for concerning account verification, we'll go into a little bit of what it means by the records are reasonably accurate. What happens when supervisors change, we have the accounting department go through our books and it's called a company agreed upon procedure. We've had some discrepancies over the years and they're just going to look at everything, make sure everything is okay. The audit process that we have works very well for the bills but there isn't an auditing process for the payroll as the bookkeeper just takes care of that herself. So that would be the only place that really needs an audit and a look at. We've hired our consultants, our accountants, I should say, that we've used for the

last 20 years to do that for us again. And what they do is they basically look at laws, look at the controller's reports moving forward to make sure that we're doing everything within the letter of the law. And that's how we deal with change. The town board can request an audit at any time. But it's a wise idea to do it when you're changing town supervisors.

John Pizzolato: straying slightly off the agenda I would like to thank you for your years of service. I'm a little concerned with some of these appointments. As we're moving into the reorganization for January 2, I've already had a conversation to set regarding the town historian position considering we're working with a lot of historical markers and other projects that were initiated by Debra Conway who's been amongst the town historian because the institutional knowledge for all those historical placards. I will be reassigning somebody as of January. And I'm concerned that every other view or his name committees like the Sullivan County Fire Advisory Board, the town historian, it's not it's insignificant because it's something we would obviously do to work with the Humane Society of Port Jervis. But I'm wondering why you're waiting until the final month of December to jump the gun of reorg and assign people in December when those things should have been done in January. Supervisor Haas: what we had is Timothy Oset was working through his work environment to make sure he had clearance to be able to do this through the park service. This process actually started in July for town historian and it finally came to fruition in early November and we just missed it on last month's agenda or would have been done last month, as far as the fire Advisory Board member that is always appointed in December because they need it for the roster January first. So that's always done in December, and you can look back at past minutes of years past and you'll notice that the fire Advisory Board member is always appointed in December, reappointed again in the reorganization meeting. It should be on the list for the reorganizational meeting also. Yes. And the way the fire Advisory Board Member works is it's a trade- off between both fire departments normally Yulan fire department will do it for a couple of years and then Highland Lake Fire Department will put forward a nominee and Highland Lake Fire Department will send a fire Advisory Board member to the county to participate in the meetings. This would be Dave Preston's second year. After this it would probably revert back to the Highland Lake fire department and they would put forward a nominee and the board would probably nominate that person.

COMMUNIUTY PLANNING/SENIORS

Councilman Bosch: the seniors had a nice meeting and a successful annual Christmas party dinner and they have suspended all meetings at the senior center until March so that the seniors aren't coming out in a storm or having to return during the storm.

YOUTH & PARK DEVELOPMENT

Councilwoman Haas: We submitted all the documentation for the summer youth program for the county. They have not yet released the RFP for the 2024 program. We anticipate it will be the same or a similar process as it has been in years past.

CODE

no report

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

No report

GRANTS

I'm pleased to announce that as a result of the town highway department completing the Swift plan. We had submitted paperwork to the State DEC for our final payment. I made about eight phone calls to

different representatives in the DEC finally got the guy that I needed in the water department that puts the checks forward so someone further up the line can sign them and he's going to push that request forward. Hopefully we'll have our check by the end of the year. And that check will total \$112,015 So that was very soon, very shortly needed money to complete that whole grant and that whole grant will be totally finished.

INSURANCE

Our insurance bills are in the money has been allocated of course in the town's budget. Most of our bills are reflecting about a 10 or 11% increase, which the Board found money for in the budget to try to hold the line on the budget.

BUILDINGS

Councilman Bosch the well pump at the highway shop had to be replaced. We now have two small water heaters that have to be replaced. One is causing problems not leaking and the other one is leaking and both of them need to be replaced shortly.

BEAUTIFICATION/RENAISSANCE

Councilwoman Haas: Doreen Hanson and Karol Sundholm did do the flower boxes and Tim put the wreaths up and he also supplied us with a Christmas tree. Really great. Yeah, he supplied us with that and decorated it and did a great job.

PERSONNEL

No report

WEBSITE

No report

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

no report

911 HEROES PARK

Commander Carmeci there will be a service here on the 16th Saturday. wreaths across America held by Boy Scout troop 102. We will not be attending as the VFW because we have a Christmas gathering. George Haas, the commander assured me that they will have an armed guard, they'll have taps and do everything they need to do to make this a successful event for the first time here in the Town of Highland. I want to thank you Jeff for your eight years of service to the community and all the support you gave our veterans here in the Town of Highland and Sullivan County. You worked with me as Commander of the Post as well as County Commander of the VFW Sullivan County. I thank you for that.

NEW BUSINESS

We had a workshop last week that was attended by Fred and myself. There are two Councilmen not present and one council vacant the seat is vacant. Now we've had another Councilman resign tonight, and I do not feel comfortable moving forward to the end of the year with two Councilman and the supervisor. If one Councilman or the supervisor should get sick, or something worse happen and not be able to make a meeting this town would almost cease to function. Moving forward, I think we need to appoint a council position tonight. Someone to fill the council position until the next election.

Town Attorney Michael Davidoff states you have a perfect right as soon as the resignation was submitted to the clerk automatically creates a vacancy, which can be filled by this point.

John Pizzolato: As the election was very decisive for new leadership, I would ask that you would wait until the new year to fulfill those positions. There's three people on the council now including yourself, and there's two incumbents coming in. We have four total that will be present in the new year when the new cycle takes place. But I feel like the voters made their decision for what direction they wanted the town to

go in and it doesn't include last minute appointments by anybody. It doesn't feel like it's a very like inclusive of the town's wishes and the wellbeing of the town and the will of the voters. So, I would ask that you would wait till the New Year or assume the position yourself until the new year so we can appoint somebody as the new board that was duly elected in record numbers. You've been operating without five since ... Jeff states we've been operating what was been operating without five but we're down to three right now. Right? In the absence of one of the council seats right now this town board could not function. John asks Mr. Davidoff is there like a requirement to have five or four at all times as law? But there's nothing that is problematic because, it is problematic because the voters voted against this regime. I mean, it's no different it's a movement. Mel Carney: the current supervisor has the right to appoint the attorney just said and I think that's what they should do. John: the current attorney the attorney who works for the town board and there's a new incumbent town board that's coming in right and when it does
There's a new board coming in. So, there's three new town board members. So now we're going to cut in volumes of up to like the positions from the top 58% for the supervisor 57% for the...

Councilwoman Haas makes a motion to move forward with that appointment, seconded by Councilman Bosch. All in favor, aye. All against and that's unanimous. You didn't have a name yet. Okay. At this time. Do we have a candidate that you would like to move forward? Councilwoman Haas: I'd like to make a motion to appoint Jim Akt as the Councilman replacement. Councilman Bosch seconds the motion. Supervisor Haas: the motion was made and seconded to appoint Jim Akt as Councilman to fulfill the term of Chris Tambini until the next election would be a roll call vote. Jim Akt do you accept? Jim Akt accepts and states the he has more than 12 years under his belt, more than a lot of these guys around here. I'm willing to help out anytime I helped out in both towns. Committee wise, community service anything you guys need help with I'm more than happy.

Town Clerk takes roll call: Councilwoman Haas, yes. Supervisor Haas, yes, Councilman Bosch, yes. Town Clerk than swears Councilman Jim Akt into the Town of Highland Town Board.
Thank you, Jim please take your seat on the board.

Supervisor Haas is there any other new business coming before the board? Moving forward we will move on to proposed resolutions.

RESOLUTIONS

Motion by Councilman Bosch to approve Cooper Arias, LLP, the Town of Highland's Accountants of verifying that the payroll payments for calendar years 2022 and 2023 were reasonably accurate, seconded by Councilwoman Haas, discussed, carried all ayes.

Motion by Councilwoman Haas to approve the payment rates for the 2023-2024 contract for snow and ice control with the Sullivan County Division of Public Works, seconded by Councilman Bosch, discussed, carried all ayes.

Motion by Councilman Bosch to approve Town of Highland Justice Court Audit on December 7, 2023 by Councilman Bosch and Councilman Tambini, seconded by Supervisor Haas, discussed, carried all ayes.

Motion by Councilwoman Haas to approve Sullivan County Solid Waste License User Permit for 2024, seconded by Councilman Bosch, discussion, carried all ayes.

Motion by Councilman Bosch to approve Dave Preston to the Sullivan County Fire Advisory Board, seconded by Councilwoman Haas, discussion, carried all ayes.

Motion by Supervisor Haas to approve Timothy Oset as Town Historian for the Town of Highland, seconded by Councilwoman Haas, discussion, carried all ayes.

Motion by Councilwoman Haas to approve the Town of Highland entering into an agreement with The Humane Society of Port Jervis/Deer Park, discussion, carried all ayes.

Motion by Supervisor Haas to approve the Re-Organizational Meeting for 2024 to January 2, 2024, at 7:00 pm, seconded by Councilman Bosch, discussion, carried all ayes.

Motion by Councilman Bosch to approve budgetary transfer to be made to the 2023 General Budget in the amount of \$9,600.68, seconded by Councilwoman Haas, discussion, carried all ayes.

Motion by Councilwoman Haas to Pay Highway Abstract # 12-2023 claims #s 116 to # 129 in the amount of \$12,070.70, seconded by Councilman Bosch, discussion, carried all ayes.

Motion by Councilwoman Haas to pay General Abstract # 12-2023 Claims #s 326 to # 361 in the amount of \$21,218.68, seconded by Councilman Bosch, discussion, carried all ayes.

Motion by Councilwoman Haas to pay Eldred Street Lights # 12-2023 claim # 12 in the amount of \$147.75, seconded by Councilman Bosch, discussion, carried all ayes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Michael Davidoff Esq. states: I just want to take this opportunity to thank the Town of Highland for allowing me to have been the attorney for the town, I think it's close to 20 years. I've served under the Supervisors Alan Schadt, Supervisor Steve Barnes, Supervisor Tina Palechek, and Supervisor Andy Boyer. Jeff it's been a real pleasure in not only have I enjoyed being under the supervisors, but the town clerk's, the council people and all the employees of the town. I've served a lot of municipalities and a lot of in capacity as an attorney, but I can tell you this, that there has been no service that I've enjoyed the more or have had the pleasure of dealing with people who are more dedicated to the position that they hold than having served the Town of Highland and the people who have held the various positions. Everyone who I've served under and all of the employees all the council people have dedicated themselves to the position. I've never seen counsel people in any other town work as hard as the council people work in this town and that's not to say that the supervisors don't work hard. And all the employees I probably have attended more town board meetings then anybody in this town? Because I've been the attorney for that long period. And I've seen the interest of the people in the town. And I am very thankful to everyone who has been a part of the government of this town. This town is very, very fortunate and very lucky to have the people that they have servicing this town. It's a unique municipality where the people when they come to serve the town, they don't have any agendas other than doing the best for the town, with every other municipality, in the county in the state and in the countryside that would act the way the people in this town act we would have a much better country. And I just want to thank everybody in the Town of Highland for making me feel that I'm part of the town. Thank you! The Town of Highland would like to thank you Michael.

I'll entertain a motion to adjourn. Motion by Councilwoman Haas to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Bosch, carried all ayes, meeting adjourned at 7:36