

Town Highland  
Regular Town Board Meeting  
February 15, 2024  
Eldred Town Hall

Present                    Supervisor John Pizzolato  
                                 Councilman Tom Migliorino  
                                 Councilperson Laura Burrell  
                                 Councilman James Akt  
                                 Councilwoman Kaitlin Haas

Also, present            Attorney to the Town, Stive Mogul  
                                 Town Clerk Susan Hoffman

Supervisor calls meeting to order  
Flag Salute  
Moment of silence for Ron Thiele

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Received and read Health Office Linda Anderson yearly report.  
Received and read letter from the UDC in reference to the Rive Clean UP.  
Received and read letter from Town Historian Debra Conway in reference to open government and transparency within Town Board.  
Received and read letter from Highland Ambulance in reference to Workman's Compensation.  
Received and read Yulan Fire Dept monthly report.  
Received and read letter from the Attorney to the Town Steve Mogel in reference to the Planning Board and the Chairman  
Received and read from the UDC in reference to the Silver Feather Project.  
Supervisor Pizzolato reads letter from the Yulan Fire Dept regarding alcohol policies at the YFD.

**SUPERVISOR REPORT**

Supervisor Pizzolato states Councilperson Burrell, Councilman Migliorino and himself went to school at the Association of Towns. We had the opportunity to meet with LaBerge. We discussed a Grant that the Town applied for, it is a twelve-million-dollar grant with a 20 percent match that would be one million dollars. I have concerns about spending this amount of money. We already spent twelve thousand dollars, so now we wait and see what becomes of it and we can work with the Laberge to help us kind of repurpose the grant, if we do get I we can look at a target area or scale back the project. We wouldn't want to eat up out coffers, but now we now must wait and see.

Supervisor Pizzolato states we met with Heather Jacksy and Carol Roig who will be spearheading the Comprehensive Plan Update. We will be opening up the meetings to the public. The first symposium is for short term housing and lack of rentals.

Laura and I went to the Highway Department got a presentation on a new lift system. We heard back from the comptroller's office and lift would be included in the ARPA Funds. We took a trip to Mamakating to see how they broadcast their meeting with Zoom.

We met with the BOSCES Superintendent about the Gable Grant that works with an educational component.

I went to a FEMA workshop for Emergency Services. I took a class on the NYCLASS which is our investment Account. I met with Mike Suma in my research to a constable program or fire district, so we have been meeting with different law enforcement officials, first we met with the Sheriff and the Undersheriff to talk about the constable program, the pitfalls of it, how the Sheriff Department has moved in to replace it.

Laberge contacted me about some things and they said we might want to investigate sewer districts on our commercial districts which would be identified as Eldred and Barryville. It is something we will investigate and definitely not commit to.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Councilwoman Burrell asks as we talked about symposiums and town halls, I need some clarification on how that is different from Town Board meetings in terms of quorum of the board allowed to be present.

Supervisor Pizzolato answers at the last town hall because it was personnel or because we actually just determined that would have more than two people lead a meeting with Deputy Supervisor. As we move along, we will not have more than two board members at a meeting.

Attorney to the Town Steve Mogel states in my experience, public comments vary among boards. Boards choose to respond to public comments. I think that's a more friendly approach. If answers are easily given, that's something that certainly is appropriate. There are many municipalities where public comment within the public comment period is just that the public comment there's no response from the board. I'm not going to instruct obviously it is your legal responsibility to conduct the meeting. I won't recommend that any member of the board not getting a give or take with any member of the public regardless of the comment that's being made and that's just for the simple fact that you at the meeting must continue to pace the business that needs to be conducted. People may make comments in public. If its simple answers, that's fine.

### **HIGHWAY**

Supervisor Pizzalotto states Laura and I are meeting with the Highway Union representative about the Union Contract, the Highway Dept has requested a few things, and we would like to extend the contract to a five-year contract so we are not negotiating every three years.

Highway Superintendent Joe Barnes gave a report on the new lift, we a got a quote for a dumpster for the Highway Shop which is \$150.00 per month, picked up weekly.

**Motion by** Councilman Akt to approve the cost of the dumpster for \$150.00 for the Highway Shop seconded by Councilman Migliorino, motion carried.

Supervisor Pizzolato states we are going to use the ARPA Funds to put toward the generator.

## **HISTORIAN**

The Town Historian Debra Conway gives report on presentation by Michael Warden for his book about a lynching that took place in Port Jervis. I told him he would have an hour to speak; he was still going strong in an hour and half. There were a lot of interest and people thanking me for the opportunity to have a difficult conversation. Refreshments were provided by the Marion Oneil Culture Club.

## **BUILDINGS**

Councilman Migliorino states our Town Hall started to leak, we had a roofer come out and take a look at the roof, he made a small repair, cost was minimal at \$275.00. The original roof that was installed was installed improperly. The way they installed the shingles was not the way to install them on the roof. So, let's see if we can get a couple years out of it. The Town Hall Emergency Building, the bathroom hot water maker was replaced by Tim Schadt our town maintenance repair man. Barryville Firehouse garage door opener needed repair Tim Schadt and Keith Blaut repaired that, I would like to thank Kieth for that. At the Court House Sentry Alarm reinstalled a smoke detector in the closet, and they checked out the system. At the Senior Center we had the paper town dispense batteries replaced and paper holder as well paper towel holder and new doorknobs were replaced. I closed the Eagle Observation Area as the ramp is in immediate repair, next month we are going to have to get estimates of repair, it is a hazard and a liability for our Town.

Supervisor states the repair is part of the River Access Grants so that is something we are having to decide which direction we are going to go in if we are going buy prefab metal or eliminate it altogether.

## **WEB AND TECHNOLOGY**

Councilwoman Burrell states we met at the Town of Mamakating to review how they are recording and posting meeting videos. It does take a little bit of setup and trial and error. One of my goals is to be able to share with the community in a larger way. The cost is \$255.00 as an estimate to get us up and running. We did a refresh training on the website; we have increased logins with Patti and Terry.

Councilwoman Burrell states in terms of expense and space, we don't have the resource capability to the videos embedded in our website. It will be a link on our website and that will take you to the video.

Supervisor Pizzaloto ask do have would like a motion to approve the expenditure so approximately \$255.00 to enable the purchase of webcams and to start recording and broadcasting our meetings to the public.

Councilwoman Haas states motion for discussion, I would like to have a written outline of what we're going to be expending and what line it is being taking from, I don't think to the exact dollar amount I prudent to do not exceed a certain amount of money, so that's if additional costs are incurred.

Supervisor Pizzalotto states I anticipated this was going to be a lot more money so I also asked about this for use of ARPA Funds, and it was one of the things we can use our ARPA Funds for. We have \$168,000 in there right now.

**Motion by** Councilwoman Burrell to approve the purchasing of set equipment of broadcast and record our meeting not to exceed \$500.00 and taken from ARPA Funds seconded by Councilwoman Haas, all in favor so moved.

## **UDC**

Christine Martin gives report on the establishment of the UDC. The UDC is having some budget concerns, when the UDC was started it was stated that the operational funds would be funded by Federal, NY State and Pennsylvania. The Federal has honored its commitment but State has not. The Council is seeking ways to encourage NYS and Pennsylvania to honor their commitments. Christine speaks about the Litter Clean Up in April. NPS will be installing new signs, there are two new river access, one in Long Eddy and one in Highland and final under the category project review with the Council conducted 14 project review to 2023. All recommendations but one were concurred upon by the NPS. The special use permit application by Northgate Resorts to develop the Kittatinny Canoes into Camp Fimfo Resorts has been paused at this time pending the environmental impact review.

## **Emergency Management**

Councilman Migliorino states the LOSAP plan is a pension for the Fire Dept, there has been an issue, It seems the YFD in their bylaws had put together terms for receiving these benefits, you had to have five years of service and training to receive these benefits once you reach 65 years old. Right now, they're trying to work it out internally so that people who in the past deserve benefits can get them. The problem is that each year you are supposed to put the number of points that each person gives to the FD and the Town that each person gets for doing service, going to a fire is so many points, going to a drill is so many points. It is being worked out now, if it doesn't get it corrected, they are going to fine the Town.

## **Scenic Byway**

Gerard Finn states he attended his first meeting, we went through typical year stuff, tax returns etc. The only other issues that were discussed was the project that was discussed earlier and the status of that and also the status of the contract with the program, the program manager decision was put off for another month.

## **Grants**

Supervisor Pizzolato states Laura and I are very busy casting a very wide net in the grants department. The Gable Grant from the Lowes Foundation. It is an infrastructure grant for one million.

Councilman Burrell states she is working on a grant with Sullivan 180 for beautification. We met with the Friends of the Upper Delaware River they are organized around the watershed area. There are two areas that need some help, one is the Halfway Brook Mountain that is collapsing. Also, the House that burned on Washington Lake like it is what they would consider a shovel ready project meaning, we're going to address within the next 18 months utilizing water quality improvement project funding to replace the culvert that is rotting away.

Supervisor Pizzolato states just to the public to know we have \$54,124.00 of our silver Feather award that was awarded in 2021 for the river access project. We will be picking up with the Eagle Observation Kate project, the Highland green space and the Eagle Observation. I have a call to Senator Gillibrand about a safety grant for the potential of a side walk from the school to four corners.

Supervisor Pizzolato introduces Dr. Ruin of Camp Koinonia who gives a report on the partnership with the Town in reference to the Youth Program.

Supervisor Pizzalotto states I have reached out to the comptroller office and we can use ARPA funds to fund last year balance of \$7,000.00, and \$10,000.00 for 2024 and \$10,000.00 for 2025.

**Motion by** Councilman Akt to approve payment of \$7000.00 to Koinonia for the balance due for 2023 seconded by Councilwoman Burrell, motion carried all ayes.

### **Community/Seniors**

Pete Carmeci states we have been closed since December. We did have a Christmas gathering. The board decided to close down January and February, we will resume the meetings back in March.

### **Code**

Supervisor Pizzolato states we have a proposal from Martin McKechnie to establish a floating commercial district for a potential hardware store. The proposal is for a minimum 10 acre floating commercial district. This proposal includes proposed storage units. We are not giving approval just yet we are just saying the project can move onto the Planning Board. I love the idea of a hardware store my only fear is that Rt 55 looks like Rt 17 with the storage units and the presence of the floating commercial district and if we let developers with a floating district, sky's the limit. I mean people could propose a floating commercial district along the river. I think we should table this as we do some research.

Supervisor Pizzolato states upon being elected I received a welcome letter from Fusco and I would like to continue this year. I have signed the contract and it is notarized but we need the Board to vote on it.

Attorney to the Town Steve Mogul the Board needs to discuss and approve the Supervisor to sign the contract.

Councilwoman Haas states that at the January meeting I expressed my concerns about signing the contract with Fusco.

Councilman Akt states there are two projects that keep going on and on without permits. I have some people that want to build and they understand through the grapevine that there are no permits on certain establishments. What do we want to tell the people?

Supervisor Pizzolato states aside from these two projects they are code enforcement services, our building inspectors and our engineer. I don't feel prepared to vote against tonight and take Fusco from the services at hand.

Councilwoman Burrell states I feel we should have a good look at the contracts, make the amendments we want and submit it to them and retain our services because there is a Planning Board next week. These ongoing services are needed. I have had a great experience with Keystone, I don't necessarily see why we need the services as an engineer in the contract.

Councilwoman Haas states the contract is dated January 1, 2024 which I would not be comfortable proceeding. My understanding from counsel is that they are in acting in the position of code enforcement, we have to pay them but we don't have to enter into a contract with them.

Councilman Akt states the Town next store has one engineer and one code enforcement officer.

Supervisor Pizzolato stated why don't we meet internally, go over the contract, people can pass their notes through and we can potentially have at a workshop session. Tom and Laura are the Code committee, so that would be your final determination to present and go back and forth with your ideas and concepts.

### **Social Services**

Supervisor Pizzalotto states he would like to add Cathy Daboul to the Social Services Committee, Cathy is a retired nurse and she has donated her services to the committee.

Margie Granese and Linda Anderson are putting together a new list of the elderly who might need help if the power goes out.

### **Insurance**

Supervisor Pizzolato Councilman Akt and Councilwoman Haas for a time to meet with our Insurance Representative

### **Personnel**

Supervisor Pizzolato stated we need a motion to approve to pay Steve Mogul the same retainer as the same as Michael Davidoff.

**Motion by** Councilman Migliorino to pay Steve Mogul the same as we paid Michael Davidoff, seconded by Councilwoman Burrell, motion carried.

Supervisor Pizzolato states we spoke to Sue extensively about her needs in her office, we've examined what the current expenditures are so we'd like to make a new position in the code office that could essentially pick up some more hours in the clerk's office as well. I think that if we discussed moving one of the deputy clerks over full-time to the clerk's office for shared workload then we would be hiring somebody new to work in with the current clerk in the building department office. They think that would be part time, was determined for 15 hours a week at \$18.00 per hour. Which would come in \$14,040 .00. It comes in what we spent last year. We would be giving the clerks more hours and a new position in the code.

Alice Foster states do you think I should have been told that. Apparently, I will not be working in the Code Office.

Supervisor Pizzolato states we are not utilizing the money in the clerk's office and wanted to put you in the clerk's office with more hours. We can meet with the personnel committee to discuss this.

### **Energy Smart Committee**

Paula Campbell stated we had a meeting of then Energy Committee and they feel we should start with a energy audit of all the building.

### **Marion Oneil Culture Club**

Supervisor Pizzolato stated they have been meeting to have the St Patrick Day parade come back. We are meeting with the insurance representative to discuss the parade liability. It is up to each individual to have insurance on their vehicle.

## **911 Heroes Park**

Pete Carmece stated the Boy Scouts Across America and place wreaths at the Heroes Park and the Cemeteries.

## **Comprehensive Plan**

Supervisor Pizzolato states the first meeting will be April 20 for short term rentals and housing shortage.

## **Public Comment**

Pete Carmece I would appreciate to get Andy Boyar and Arnold Gruel back on 911 Committee.

Gerard Finn, thank you for the Abstracts and speaks about visiting the codes that coordinate with the budget. Is there a requirement about job posting.

Highway Superintendent Joe Barnes asked if the Board have to vote on the lift for the Highway Shop.

Supervisor Pizzolato states I have waited until we get more quotes.

Deputy Highway Rob Robertson states we are getting the lift from state bid contract so we don't need more.

Councilman Akt asks are we going to get the quotes for the generator?

Supervisor Pizzolato states yes and we will wait till March to get total ARPA funds and commit to that.

**Motion by** Councilman Migliorino to approve the budgetary transfer to be made to the 2023 general budget in the amount of \$4,147.33 as amended, seconded by Councilwoman Burrell, motion carried.

**Motion by** Councilman Akt to pay the Highway Abstract # 1-2024 in the amount of \$224,240.44 for claims # 1 to 15, seconded by Councilman Migliorino, motion carried.

Supervisor asks for a motion to pay General Abstract # 1 claims # 1 To 42 the amount of \$30,734.63. Councilwoman Haas motion for discussion, Councilwoman Haas states Jim and I did not sign the abstract because I have a question on the Fusco voucher, can we get some clarification on that we received a bill last month we approved the December voucher and this has two months on it I would like to verify what this is before we pay it twice.

**Motion by** Councilman Migliorino to approve General Abstract # 1-2024 in the amount of \$ 19,067.67 claims #1 to 42 excluding claim #15 for Fusco in the amount of \$ #11,660.56, seconded by Councilman Akt discussion, motion carried.

**Motion by** Councilman Akt to pay Eldred St Lights claims # 1-2024 in the amount of \$155.61, seconded by Councilman Migliorino discussion, motion carried.

**Motion by** Councilwoman Burrell to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Migliorino discussion motion carried all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Hoffman Town Highland Town Clerk  
February 15, 2024