

**Town Board Meeting Minutes
Town of Morristown
February 8, 2022**

Present: Supervisor, Frank Putman; Deputy Supervisor, Chris Coffin; Councilman Shawn Macaulay; Councilman Gary Turner; Councilman Dave VanArnam; Dean Hoffman, Highway Superintendent; Gregg Mallette, Code Enforcement Officer; Jill Sullivan, Town Clerk.

Guests Present: Teamsters Union Representatives; Town Highway employees; Jay Moore, Fire Chief; Joe Lightfoot, County Legislator.

Called to Order: The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Putman at 7:06 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance Led by Shawn Macauley and said by all.

Approval of Minutes of January 11, 2022 Organizational Meeting and Regular Town Board Meeting: A motion was made by Councilman Macaulay to approve the January 11, 2022 Organizational Meeting and Regular Town Board meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Coffin.

Vote: Gary Turner – Aye, Shawn Macaulay – Aye, Chris Coffin – Aye. Frank Putman – abstention.

Correspondence:

- 1) A copy of the Morristown Recreation Committee meeting minutes for the January 12, 2022 were distributed.
- 2) A copy of a letter from New York State DOT denying the request to reduce the speed zone on NY-37 was distributed.

Public Comment: There were no public comments.

Old Business:

1. **Supervisors Update:** Supervisor Putman reported that the REDI Grant Project will begin when the weather breaks. We will contact them when the plants are on-line.
2. **Financial Report:** Councilman Coffin informed the board that the expenditures in the Water District have exceeded revenues for the past several years: at the end of 2021 the water district showed a fund balance of just over \$60,000 but that included accounts receivable. The cash on hand was actually about \$46,000. A payment of \$36,500 was made to New York State the first of the year leaving the account with close to \$9,500. The January billing has been processed and mailed, so money should start coming in. Councilman Coffin received a question from Judy Wright asking if she can bill a 10% late fee on unpaid balances. The 10% fee was taken from the Village Law for sewer but unknown for water. Judy's proposal raised a question

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about Town Water/Sewer local laws, if and when they were adopted or, did they get looked over by our Attorney?

There was discussion about what can be done when someone doesn't pay their water bill. No direction has ever been given. Dean Hoffman stated that there is approximately \$12,000 in unpaid water bills that need to be addressed.

It was stated that there is a residential law that water cannot be shut off.

Councilman Coffin suggested writing down all our questions and then contact Andy Sliver for direction and find out what our options are.

- 3. Surplus Property:** We are waiting on a response from Andy Silver on the process to sell.

Kevin Crosby and Brian Peck have interest in the property behind their residences. Frank Putman stated a letter can be sent to them letting them know that if they pay for the surveying and all other expenses accrued to transfer the property over to them, the town would accept that. Councilman Coffin stated we should ask our assessor the value of the property and ask half of the value as sale price.

New Business

- 1. Water Rates:** Councilman Coffin stated that DANC did a study on the water and sewer rates and made recommendations. Their proposal increases revenue but does not include funds to set aside for a reserve. Also, it does not recognize the income from lease agreements with Verizon and Ridgeview. However, the leases generate about \$17,000 per year. There was discussion about the residential water rates as well. Councilman Coffin asked everyone to review a document which was provided with possible changes in the water rates and be ready to adopt new rates at the March meeting. When we do adopt the recommendations, a letter should be included in the billing and maybe a press release and a time for public comments.
- 2. Resolution No. 3-22 for St. Lawrence County Hold Harmless:** This resolution reads the same as in the past. Town of Morristown will indemnify and hold harmless St. Lawrence County liable while they are providing services in our Town. A Certificate of Liability Insurance will also be sent to the County with the resolution.

MOTION

Councilman VanArnam made a motion to approve the Resolution No. 3-22 for St. Lawrence County Hold Harmless. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Vote: Gary Turner – Aye, David VanArnam – Aye, Shawn Macaulay – Aye, Chris Coffin – Aye, Frank Putman - Aye.

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- 3. Agreement between Town of Morristown and Barton & Loguidice:** At the January 2022 meeting the Board approved the proposal from Barton & Loguidice for the Water Improvement Project. The written agreement has been received and it needs to be executed in order for them to begin the work.

MOTION

Councilman Macaulay made a motion to authorize Supervisor, Putman to execute the agreement between the Town of Morristown and Barton & Loguidice. Councilman VanArnam seconded the motion.

Vote: Gary Turner – Aye, David VanArnam – Aye, Shawn Macaulay – Aye, Chris Coffin – Aye, Frank Putman - Aye.

Other Business:

Fire Department Report – Jay Moore reported that the total number of calls for 2021 was 713 approximately 350 Ambulance and 70% were handled by our paid EMT.

The ice rink is up and running. Thank you to our Town Highway for the assistance. The library has skates and they recently applied for a grant for skates. It is open until 10 pm and it does get used a lot.

The fire department water payment of \$2,000 and something has been submitted. Jay states they would like to do the same and pay at the end of the season.

There will be a 4th of July celebration which will include the parade so they would like permission to close Main and Chapman streets.

Also, the Morristown FD is hosting the 2022 NNY Fireman’s Annual Convention which will be held Thursday, August 25th – Saturday, August 27th, 2022. They will need permission to close Main and Chapman for the parade and Morris, High, and Chapman for the Firemen Challenges. Thursday will kick off with a golf tournament and other activities for the non-golfers, Friday there will be meetings, church memorial, an education seminar, fireman challenges and bands. Saturday is the parade and closing ceremony. There will also be fireworks. Any contribution would be great.

Jay has been attending District and County meetings regarding the shortage in the EMS service which is a national problem and not just in our county. Matt Denner and Johnathan from Emergency Services have proposed starting up a County EMS service. The proposal did not go well at first, but they are still working on it, and are doing a great job trying to make it to happen. There are 52 ambulance services throughout St. Lawrence County and only about half answer calls because of the shortage. Fortunately, our status is working very well with having our paid EMT.

Frank Putman thanked the Rescue Squad for their services they provided to him.

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County Report – Legislator, Joe Lightfoot reported that there are American Rescue Plan funds in the amount of 20 million which the towns will benefit so be thinking about some ideas for that money to be used for. The County Highway barn in Russell is up and running while the one in Lisbon had a set back with some wind/storm damage. The Potsdam facility is now owned by the county. Bids for the building construction have come in for over 2.5 million dollars, and that’s for the building and salt barn.

The County’s tax collection for Ogdensburg is working out well.

The county received a report for all the allegations of the DSS issues.

After re-advertising, there have been 6 people interviewed for the Commissioners of Department of Social Services position.

Don Chambers has been reappointed as County Highway Superintendent.

Sales tax is higher that anticipated and will be worked into the Towns and Villages funding. The City of Ogdensburg and St. Lawrence County have an agreement for re-payment of tax dollars.

Department Reports:

Highway Department: Dean Hoffman reported that things are going good with the winter season. Trucks are running well and busy sanding and salting. The salt usage has doubled from last year. There have been a few water/sewer freeze ups. The highway employees stepped in to help. There were two steamers going at once to get the job done.

Dean proposed to purchase a hammer for the excavator for approximately \$15,000. He will get a definite price and have it available for the next meeting.

There was discussion about it being paid for out of Capital Funds and charged to all departments for the town.

MOTION

Supervisor Putman made a motion to authorize Highway Superintendent, Dean Hoffman to order and purchase a hammer for the excavator. Councilman Macaulay seconded the motion. Vote: Gary Turner – Aye, David VanArnam – Aye, Shawn Macaulay – Aye, Chris Coffin – Aye, Frank Putman - Aye.

There are problems with the Wastewater Plant computer. Premier came to look at it and found lots wrong with it. They are going to price out to rebuilt and to update the program since it needs updates.

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Code Enforcement: Gregg Mallette presented a written report. Gregg met with Andy Silver and would like to proceed with the violations and get things cleaned up and move forward from here. Building permits have slowed down. We have had a couple of complaints. Gregg has started performing fire inspections.

Executive Session: At 8:03 pm Councilman Coffin made a motion to go into Executive Session for negotiation of the Teamsters Contract. Councilman Macaulay seconded the motion.
Vote: Gary Turner – Aye, David VanArnam – Aye, Shawn Macaulay – Aye, Chris Coffin – Aye, Frank Putman - Aye.

Executive Session ended at 8:47 pm with no action taken.

Teamsters Contract: The Teamsters will send the Town of Morristown a revised contract and action will be taken at the March Town Board meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned upon motion at 8:49 pm.