

## Town of Venice Board Meeting January 12, 2023

The regular scheduled board meeting was called to order on January 12, 2023, at 7:00 pm by Town Supervisor, Stefan McGonagle. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call found the following present: Supervisor Stefan McGonagle; Councilors Brian Sheils, Edward Denton, Cynthia Whitten and Terri Denman; Highway Superintendent Stephen Fedrizzi and Town Clerk Andrew Simkin.

**Guests in Attendance:** Colleen Rejman, Corey Shellhammer, Isaac Phillips, Petros Kwan, Curtis Thompson

### **Resolution 1-2023 ~ Approval of Minutes December 8, 2022:**

The Clerk read the minutes, copies of which had also been distributed to the board. Two corrections were noted. Motion made by Councilor Denton and seconded by Councilor Denman to approve the minutes from December 8, 2022, as corrected. Voted: All in favor.

### **Report(s) of Town Officials:**

Clerk/Collector's report: Clerk circulated a written report showing the following services performed during the month of December: 10 dog licenses, registrations for three deaths at homes in Town of Venice, 8 death certificates issued, two no-fee notarizations, and two accessible parking permits. The total fee revenue for December 2022 was \$151: \$135 paid to Supervisor for general fund, and \$16.00 to the NYS Ag & Markets Dept.

Clerk reported the following activities since the December board meeting:

Posted and published public notice of tax collection hours. Official collection hours will be the regular clerk hours, plus 8-5 on February 10 and March 31. Those dates are tax payment deadlines, both of which fall on Fridays.

The tax roll has been loaded into the WLB software system. The total number of tax payments collected so far is 37, for a total of \$64,664.85, deposited today.

Attended webinar on "Tools in your Toolbox" for town clerks, sponsored by NYSTCA, Dec. 12.

Clerk worked on the new/used fireproof letter size file cabinet, got the drawer bearings lubricated, installed racks for hanging files and procured letter-size files. Some files have been moved into it. Still need to figure out locking capability.

Participated in initial meeting with NYS audit team, Jan. 11.

Administered oath of office for Deputy Town Clerk Barbara Stevens. She joins Deputy Clerks Megan Konyk and Kim Franklin. The maximum number of Deputy Clerks that the Clerk can appoint is three.

Significant correspondence received since December board meeting:

Letters from NYS Ag and Markets dated Dec. 13 reporting satisfactory re-inspections of Dog Control facility

Letter from Genoa Fire District to inform of reelection of Fire Commissioner Douglas Radcliffe

Proposed 2023 contracts for renewal of software services for Payroll (\$753), Accounting (\$1,639) and Tax Collection (\$546).

Invitation to Supervisor McGonagle to Cayuga County Assoc. of Town Supervisors meeting Thursday, Jan. 19 6:00PM. Guest speaker Maureen Riester, CEDA.

Letter from Office of Court Administration requesting that Town Board forward resolution confirming that court has submitted records for audit by the board and that the records for 2022 have been duly examined, and that the fines therein collected have been turned over to the proper officials of the Town as required by law.

Proposed agreement for legal services for 2023 with Blair Law Firm, PLLC

Repeat invitation from Association of Towns to 2023 annual meeting and training school, Feb. 19-22, NYC.

Letter from NYS Office of Real Property Services requesting member listing for Board of Assessment Review for 2023. Current members: Amy Elser (term end 9/30/2022), Thomas Roach (term end 9/30/2025) and Kenton Patchen (term end 9/30/2026).

Code Officer's Report: copied to board members shows no building permits issued for December, 2022. Code officer provided summary of permit activity for 2022, with a total of 19 building permits issued, with fees collected for Town totaling \$3,581.00.

Justice's report: November report shows receipt numbers 3828-3839 issued for court fees and fines totaling \$1,723, which sum has been paid over to the Town of Venice. December report shows receipt numbers 3840-3851 issued for court fees and fines totaling \$1,325, which sum has also been paid over to the Town of Venice.

Assessor's Report: Assessor Heather Garner submitted a written report following up on her report at the December board meeting, with further information concerning partial property tax exemptions for veterans, low-income senior citizens, and low-income persons with disabilities. She reported that letters had been mailed to property owners holding such exemptions with forms to apply for annual renewal of the exemptions.

Highway Superintendent: Superintendent Fedrizzi reported that one of the Highway Dept. trucks had been repaired with a new clutch. Following receipt of the recent Safe Workplace award in the amount of \$1,847, he used \$847 as authorized by the board to recognize the highway crew's safety efforts by providing a catered lunch and gift certificates of \$200 at Ag-Trac for the crew. He is working on recruiting to fill a position that is expected to open in the Spring. The annual 284 agreement, which spells out the road work planned to be completed for the year, is nearing completion.

Supervisor's Report: Supervisor McGonagle reported that he had received an update from the Liberty Wind company representatives on their wind energy project. The company has not yet entered a bid with NYSERDA for provision of renewable energy to the power grid. The company now has sufficient land under lease for its intended windmill sites.

Supervisor met with the three-person team from the NYS Office of the Comptroller, who are conducting a routine audit of the town's operations. The audit is considered a "process audit," and will be conducted

over several weeks. The last previous audit of the Town of Venice was conducted in 1996. This will be a beneficial opportunity to update many of the Town's policies, procedures, and practices, especially in light of recent turnover in the Town's Supervisor, Finance Director, and Clerk positions. The audit team will prepare a draft report and recommendations, which will go to Albany for review. The Town will have an opportunity to provide responses before the final report is issued.

Supervisor further reported that the agreement with the Town's three Fire Districts and with Cayuga County on procedures for payment of worker's compensation insurance for volunteer firefighters has been signed by all parties. The upgrade to the Town offices telephone system is still pending. He is working with Finance Director Stevens and with Williamson Law Books to complete the 2022 year-end re-balancing of accounts.

Supervisor invited input from the guests present. Isaac Phillips, of the ConnectGen solar energy company, introduced himself and noted that he is taking over direction of the company's local project after wrapping up a four-year similar project at a site in the Town of Ripley, NY. He said that the company would be scheduling public information sessions, and that site surveys would be starting up again in April and run through the end of the summer. The data gathered will be compiled and submitted to the NYS Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES), which is in charge of the permit process, by the end of the year. He mentioned that intervenor funding and construction monitoring are aspects of the permitting process in which the Town would be involved. Two other areas of Town involvement, separate from the permitting process, are road use agreements and host community agreements. He offered to return for another briefing in the Spring. He reported that the company now has 1,741 acres of land under long-term lease, with approximately 500 more in negotiation, with an ultimate goal of 3,000 acres, split between the Towns of Venice and Genoa.

There was some discussion regarding the road use agreement, and how it would apply to seasonal roads, and the possibility of a bond arrangement to cover any road damage costs.

Supervisor thanked the ConnectGen representatives and moved on to other topics.

#### **Resolution 2-2023 ~ Renewal of contract with Town Attorney**

Motion made by Councilor Sheils and seconded by Councilor Denton to authorize Supervisor to sign contract with Blair Law Firm for 2023 legal services. Voted: All in favor.

#### **Resolution 3-2023 Renewal of contracts with Williamson Law Books**

Motion made by Councilor Denton and seconded by Councilor Sheils to authorize Supervisor to sign contracts with Williamson Law Books company for 2023 software services for Payroll (\$753), Accounting (\$1,639) and Tax Collection (\$546). Voted: All in favor

#### **Resolution 4-2023 ~ Approving Audit of Town Justice Accounts for 2022**

Resolution introduced by Councilor Denton and seconded by Councilor Denman to approve the annual audit of the Town Justice reports, consisting of the aggregated monthly audits performed at each board meeting. Voted: All in favor

Supervisor next brought up the Organizational Resolution for 2023. After discussion and some minor adjustments, the resolution was proposed.

#### **Resolution 5-2023 ~ Organization**

Motion made by Supervisor McGonagle and seconded by Councilors Denton and Whitten to make the

following appointments and authorizations for 2023. Voted: All in favor

1) Positions:

- a. Supervisor: Stefan McGonagle
- b. Deputy Supervisor: Brian Sheils
- c. Town Clerk/Collector: Andrew Simkin
- d. Deputy Clerk/Collector: Megan Konyk / Barb Stevens / Kim Franklin
- e. Highway Superintendent: Stephen Fedrizzi
- f. Deputy Highway Superintendent: David Earl
- g. Registrar: Andrew Simkin
- h. Code Officer: Patrick Doyle
- i. Historian: Phyllis Stanton
- j. Attorney: Thomas Blair
- k. Official Newspaper: The Citizen
- l. Official Depositories: Cayuga Lake National Bank, First National Bank of Groton

2) Salaries Per Budget:

a. Elected Officials

- i. Supervisor: \$6,500 pd quarterly (W2)
- ii. Deputy Supervisor: \$500 pd quarterly (W2)
- iii. Councilor: 4 @ \$1,400 pd quarterly (W2)
- iv. Clerk: \$9,300 pd quarterly (W2)
- v. Collector/Registrar: \$2,000 pd quarterly (W2)
- vi. Justice: \$7,500 pd every 2 weeks (W2)
- vii. Highway Superintendent: \$67,000 pd every two weeks (W2)

b. Appointed Officials

- i. Assessor: \$14,650 pd every 2 weeks (W2)
- ii. Code Officer: \$6,800 pd every 2 weeks (W2)
- iii. Finance Director: \$6,000 pd quarterly (W2)
- iv. Court Clerk: \$6,100 pd every 2 weeks (W2)
- v. Assistants/Deputies (Clerk, Collector, etc.): \$17.00 Per hour pd on the following abstract cycle (1099)
- vi. Tax Grievance Board paid annually (1099)
  - 1. Lead: \$200 per year
  - 2. 2 Others: \$175 per year

c. Highway Employees

- i. Full Time: \$23.25 per hour plus overtime pd every two weeks (W2)
- ii. Part Time: \$20.00 per hour pd every two weeks (w2)

3) Other

- a. Mileage \$0.65.5 per mile (2023 IRS rate). Not authorized for home to office travel.
- b. Jurors: \$10 per day
- c. SCIA: \$29,227 paid once per year in January
- d. Scat Van: \$500 paid once per year in January
- e. Finger Lakes Dog Protection: \$1,800 paid once per year in January 2023

Supervisor asked Councilor Sheils to report on discussions concerning the proposed pipeline project for

bringing biogas from two dairy farms to a gas processing facility in the Town of Venice. Councilor Sheils reported that the NY Public Service Commission is reviewing this proposal, and that the company is required to provide a letter of credit to guarantee availability of funds for the eventual decommissioning of the project at the end of its useful life. The pipeline would go from the Town of Ledyard into the Town of Venice. The Towns could hold letters of credit, or a third party could fill this role. Town Attorney Blair has advised that the Towns hold the letters. There was discussion concerning details of the arrangement.

**Resolution 6-2023 ~ To seek additional information on decommissioning plan**

Motion made by Councilor Whitten and seconded by Councilor Denton to gather additional information for the board's consideration regarding financial and logistical aspects of the decommissioning plan for the biogas project. Voted: All in favor.

**Resolution 7-2023 ~ Audit of Claims**

Motion made by Councilor Denman and seconded by Councilor Whitten to accept General vouchers 1-21, in the amount of \$10,270.52, Highway vouchers 1-14 in the amount of \$10,089.18, and Poplar Ridge Lighting District voucher 1 in the amount of \$15.62. In discussion of one of the vouchers, Councilor Denton voiced opposition to one expense item. Voted: 4 votes in favor, 1 vote opposed.

Supervisor McGonagle moved to adjourn and hold the next regular board meeting February 9, 2023, at 7:00 pm at 2479 State Route 34 in Venice Center. The motion was seconded by Councilor Denton. Voted: All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew T. Simkin, Town Clerk