

## Town of Venice Board Meeting July 13, 2023

The regular scheduled board meeting was called to order on July 13, 2023, at 7:08 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, Cynthia Whitten, Terri Denman and Ed Denton; and Town Clerk Andrew Simkin. Highway Superintendent Stephen Fedrizzi participated in a portion of the meeting via conference phone.

**Guests in Attendance:** Caleb Slater, Richard Signor, and Colleen Rejman

### **Resolution 51-2023 ~ Approval of Minutes from June 8, 2023**

The draft minutes had been distributed electronically to the board and posted publicly on the Town website earlier. Clerk noted that a correction had been made after the initial draft, in the number of acres of land control reported by the Liberty Wind renewable energy company in its update provided at the June 8 meeting. Printed copies of the corrected minutes were distributed to the board and made available for guests in attendance. Motion made by Councilor Denman and seconded by Councilor Denton to dispense with the reading and approve the minutes from June 8, 2023. Voted: All in favor.

Supervisor McGonagle opened the meeting for input from the guests in attendance. Guest Caleb Slater introduced himself and stated that he is running as a candidate for the NYS Senate in District 48. He expressed concern about NYS policies promoting switching from fossil fuels to electric energy, and inquired about electrification matters affecting the Town of Venice. Supervisor McGonagle briefed Mr. Slater on renewable energy projects under development in the Town of Venice. Guest Colleen Rejman referred to the intersection of Poplar Ridge and Indian Field roads, where the Town had installed a new sign for southbound traffic warning of a stop sign ahead, after a recent accident involving a southbound vehicle that failed to stop at the stop sign. She reported that she had nearly had a collision there with a northbound vehicle that failed to stop. Supervisor indicated that he would share this information with the Highway Superintendent.

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

Clerk/Collector's report: Clerk circulated a written report showing the following services performed during the month of June:

Clerk held public office hours 4-7PM Tuesdays and 9-noon Wednesdays and Thursdays.

7 dog licenses issued

1 handicapped parking permit

One no-fee notarial service

One hunting license

Total fee revenue collected: \$99.00, of which \$78.56 paid to Supervisor for general fund, \$9.44 paid to NYS DEC, and \$11.00 paid to NYS Ag and Markets.

Other activity since June board meeting:

Phone service: New VOIP phone service went live July 6. Upfront equipment cost \$740. Annual service charges to cost \$2,270, compared to \$4,480 spent in 2022 on phone service. Many new capabilities, including conference phone, remote access to messages, call forwarding to cell phones, caller ID, etc.

Alarm system impact: New radio-based communications link will be required due to incompatibility with digital phone service. Setup will cost around \$400 including installation, plus an extra \$10 per month in monitoring charges. Board concurred that this needs to be done.

Dog Control: Clerk followed up with Suzie Tracy regarding potential services to begin Jan. 1. She sent a proposed contract for dog control services and another for shelter services. Following discussion, board decided to defer action until next meeting.

Historical records in vault: Clerk used Supervisor's angle grinder to open a locked cabinet in the vault, and found the historical records that historian Phyllis Stanton was looking for, to prepare for celebration of 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

New hardware: Xorca installed new clerk computer, much faster than the old one. All records and programs successfully transferred.

NYMIR insurance representative John Hansen visited with clerk on 6/14. He asked a few questions about procedures, including whether TOV performs audits of clerk operations. Clerk subsequently learned that at least one neighboring town performs annual audits of clerk office. Clerk recommends putting an audit protocol into effect.

#### **Resolution 52-2023 ~ Audit of Clerk/Tax Collector Operations**

Motion by Counselor Whitten and seconded by Counselor Denton to add audit of clerk/tax collector operations to the services to be performed by Consultant Richard Blafield. Voted: All in favor.

#### **Correspondence:**

Letter from Staples indicating they are ending their credit card program with Citibank, and TOV's credit account will be closed on 7/31. Clerk will destroy the card. It has not been used at all during the past two years, as TOV has a separate Staples Advantage account for online ordering, settled via invoices and payment by check.

Email from Eastern Shore insurance with annual bill and insurance policies. Bill is with today's vouchers.

Email from Juliana Heffern, Liberty Wind. She provided followup information from a question at June board meeting about weights of wind turbine components. She also clarified that the company has around 4,500 acres of "land control", not the "4-500" that clerk had noted in the draft minutes from the June board meeting. The minutes have been revised accordingly.

Code Officer's Report: copied to board members shows one building permit issued for June 2023. Code officer performed routine inspections and held office hours on Monday mornings and by appointment.

Justice's report: N/A

Assessor's Report: N/A

Highway Superintendent: Superintendent Fedrizzi provided a written report in advance of the meeting. He reported that he is working on identifying appropriate funding for the planned fuel system upgrade. He is making plans to offer a rest/hydration stop at the highway garage for riders in the Auburn YMCA's upcoming 7-day bicycle tour, as was done last year. He has found a used stainless steel truck box to replace the inoperable box on one of the Town's trucks. Cost will be \$7,500 plus shipping.

**Resolution 53-2023 ~ Approval of Purchase of used truck box:**

Motion made by Supervisor McGonagle and seconded by Counselor Denton to authorize purchase of a used truck box as recommended by Highway Superintendent. Voted: All in favor.

Supervisor McGonagle brought up the renewal of the Town's contract with the County to perform snowplowing on County roads in the Town of Venice. Highway Superintendent Fedrizzi joined the meeting by conference phone, explaining that this is a renewal of the same contract as last year, which had turned out well. The reimbursement formula reduces the Town's risks in the event of a harsh winter, and provides a guaranteed minimum to defray expenses in case of a mild winter.

**Resolution 54-2023 ~ Authorization to sign snowplowing contract:**

Motion made by Counselor Denman and seconded by Counselor Denton to authorize Supervisor to sign proposed renewal of snowplowing contract. Voted: All in favor.

**Supervisor's Report**

Supervisor McGonagle reported that work on the financial records is advancing well. Finance Director Barb Stevens, working with the Williamson Law books company, has finished the cleanup and reconciliation of 2021 financial data through November 2021, and expects to have December 2021 done by July 18. She will then work with consultant Richard Blafield to get the 2021 AUD report filed with the state.

Supervisor reported that the Auditors from the NYS OSC office had provided their draft report for TOV comments. As expected, the report focuses on deficiencies in the Town's financial process flows for 2020 and 2021. The document shows that there have been improvements since then, and that no actual financial improprieties were found. Overall it appears to be an accurate and fair relection of the bookkeeping and supervisory challenges the town has experienced since 2020. The report is in draft form and is not publicly shareable until the final report comes back from Albany. The Town has until August 14 to submit its response to the draft report. Clerk will help in drafting the response. A formal Corrective Action Plan then will need to be submitted within 90 days after the issuance of the final report.

Supervisor then raised the topic of planning for the celebration, on August 19, of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Town of Venice. There was an extensive discussion. It was agreed that the event would be at the Town office and highway facilities, from 10:00am to 4:00pm. Highway Superintendent Fedrizzi will take the lead role in planning the event, with assistance from Counselor Denton.

Vouchers and supporting documents for town expenses were audited by the board, and corrections were noted in two vouchers.

**Resolution 55-2023 ~ Audit of Claims**

Motion made by Councilor Whitten and seconded by Councilor Denton to accept General vouchers 107-

123, in the amount of \$21,471.34, and Highway vouchers 93-106, in the amount of \$97,809.83. Voted: All in favor.

**Resolution 56-2023 ~ Review of bank statements.**

Motion made by Councilor Whitten and seconded by Councilor Denton to accept the bank statements as reviewed. Voted: All in favor.

Councilor Whitten moved to adjourn and hold the next regular board meeting August 10, 2023, at 7:00 pm at 2479 State Route 34 in Venice Center. The motion was seconded by Councilor Denton. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew T. Simkin, Town Clerk