

Town of St. Armand
Special Board Meeting
Wednesday, February 28, 2018
6:30 PM

These Meeting Minutes were approved on March 13, 2018.

A Special Board Meeting of the Town of St. Armand was held on the above date at the Town Hall, Bloomingdale, NY.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Town Supervisor Dean Montroy, Deputy Supervisor Jennifer Fuller, Councilperson Donald Amell, Councilperson D. Joseph Bates, Councilperson Samuel Grimone

A quorum of the Board was in attendance.

TOWN EMPLOYEES PRESENT:

Water Superintendent Jeffrey Cotter, Town Clerk Barbara Darrah, Town Historian Davina Winemiller

GUESTS: Diane Burman, Thomas Burman, Diane Chase, Tyler Chase, Dean Everitt, William Latham, Jeffrey Tedford and Charles Whitson, Jr.

Notice was posted regarding the date and time of this meeting.

Supervisor Montroy called the Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Charles Whitson, Jr. led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Supervisor Montroy announced the main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Town's current Water and Sewer Regulations and policies and hear questions and concerns from the public regarding the same.

Supervisor Montroy stated the New York State Comptroller's Office audit completed in May of 2017 identified certain Water and Sewer incidents that were not handled according to the Water and Sewer Regulations pamphlet and in some cases were not in written policy during the audit period covering 2015 through 2016. The incidents were discussed as follows:

1) Allowing credit for Sewer usage when a resident has filled their pool during the summer months. Customers were given credit, however, there were no written procedures as to how the credit would be given. The Town Clerk stated a Resolution for an addendum to the previous versions of the Water and Sewer Regulations was passed after the audit in 2017. Water Superintendent Jeffrey Cotter asked if the town was going to allow pool fills through the hydrants. The Board agreed that both the Resolution regarding pool filling and the use of hydrants not being allowed for filling pools should be included in the next update of the Water and Sewer Regulations.

2) Allowing credit for running water in cold weather. Supervisor Montroy stated the auditors noted there was no written approved procedure for the deep freeze of the 2014-2015 winter, where the frost was seven feet deep. Discussion evolved regarding a specific frost depth being included. It was argued that some water lines are shallow and that the area of concern is where it freezes under the road. Water Superintendent Jeffrey Cotter stated the frost runs deeper in the road than in the ground most of the time, due to snow cover on the grounds, but roads being cleared of snow. In January 2018, the frost was 2 – 3 feet deep on our cold days.

Discussion ensued how residents would need to seek prior approval before being allowed a credit adjustment. The Board agreed there would need to be more discussion as to what criteria is used for these types of adjustments.

3) Flat Rate verses Metered resident accounts. Supervisor Montroy suggested that ideally the Town's Water and Sewer system customers should be metered, and eliminate Flat Rate billing. Supervisor Montroy expressed concern over abuse with water usage if a household is on Flat Rate, due to the incorrect amount of people being reported in the household resulting in under billing, and the possibility of water being wasted because of inconsiderate use. Discussion ensued from the audience as to how the Town might accomplish every household acquiring meters or having meters installed, due to the cost of approximately \$700 per meter. Town Historian Davina Winemiller suggested charging a small portion of the total amount on each bill and when the \$700 was "banked", the town would install the meter. There was question as to the length of time that avenue would take and if it was legal to do so. Councilpersons D. Joseph Bates and Samuel Grimone suggested there might be a social service agency that might be able to assist residents in affording new meters. Supervisor Grimone asked the Town Clerk if she would contact Essex County Social Services within the next few days. Supervisor Montroy also stated he would get in touch with United Way in Plattsburgh to see if an avenue existed there.

Councilperson Donald Amell suggested that if we charged the maximum number of people (as an example 5) to flat rated customers, the rate would be high enough to hopefully give them incentive to purchase their meter. Guest Diane Burman stated many people in Bloomingdale are struggling with finances and asked if perhaps the town could fundraise for the purchase of meters, reasoning that a bulk price might be cheaper than purchasing one at a time. Diane Burman also mentioned that meters were mandated in Saranac Lake and suggested that Supervisor Montroy speak with the Water Superintendent or Town Supervisor to see if the Town supplied them and how it was paid for. Town Historian Davina

Winemiller stated she spoke with Mike Mascaranus, Essex County Planning, about grants for low income households for this purpose and he reported to her that it would take a long time, and a lot of work, but it could be done. Supervisor Montroy asked the Board if they wanted to continue this discussion at the next Board meeting or set another Work Session date. The Board agreed more time was needed to think about all discussions and continue at the next Board Meeting in March.

4) Bill Adjustments: Supervisor Montroy spoke of a grievance process, where customers would come before the Board to grieve their individual reasoning for credit adjustments on their water and sewer bills. A previous form was developed by the Water and Sewer Clerk citing the reasoning for an adjustment and signature lines for the Boards' Approval. This form would be used at the proposed grievance process. The Board agreed reasoning and allowance for these types of adjustments would also need to be part of the Water and Sewer Regulations and policies.

OTHER WATER AND SEWER ITEMS

Water Superintendent Jeffrey Cotter reported he recently met with the Mountain View Trailer Court manager and now knows where the main water valve shutoffs are located for both Trailer Parks. He advised the manager that he needs to be notified any time the water is turned off, due to water sample testing that needs to be done once the water is turned back on. If he is not notified, anyone turning the water off and on other than should be fined. Both the Town Clerk and Councilperson D. Joseph Bates pointed out this violation was already stated in the Water and Sewer Regulations.

Supervisor Montroy brought up the fact that several other towns charge one half of the Water and Sewer Debts if a vacant lot has the service going by the property for tapping into at a later date. This practice results in the cost of the water and sewer debts going down for all customers. Supervisor Montroy stated he would get more information from the Town Assessor on which towns were doing so, adding he believes it is the law. The Board decided they would table this issue for the next Board Meeting.

Water Superintendent Jeffrey Cotter asked if it would be possible to set a time frame for installing wet taps during the winter months and having these time lines stated in the Water and Sewer Regulations. He suggested a time line of no wet taps installed from November 1st through March 31st, due to freezing temperatures and the potential of rupturing water lines. Wet taps would be installed from April 1st through October 31st. The Board decided to table this issue for the next Board Meeting.

TOWN LIABILITY

Supervisor Montroy reported on the recent meeting with Ayres Insurance and recent requests for use of Town property. Specifically, the request from resident Diane Chase to conduct the third annual Easter Egg Hunt at the Ball Field, tentatively scheduled for April 7th. Diane looked into acquiring private insurance coverage for this event, but it was out of reach. She explained the event is made up of volunteers. They have used the shed in previous years for the return of the plastic eggs which they reuse each year to keep costs down and they receive used stuffed animals and other trinkets from the community residents for prizes. The insurance would be under the name of Adirondack Family Time/Adirondack Outdoors, LLC and event insurance is \$100 - \$200. Councilperson Samuel Grimone told Diane he would be willing to contribute to the cost of insurance. It was agreed that Diane Chase would complete the "Indemnification Agreement" and Recreational And Volunteers Activities Release Form. The Board approved use of the Ball Field and shed for the 2018 Easter Egg Hunt.

Supervisor Montroy reviewed the discussion he had with the Town Attorney regarding holding events on Town property. He stated the Town's Rugby Law Suit cost \$60,000 in representation fees, and that cost was prior to going to discovery, which it did not. Insurance paid the costs, but this is the reason we should be checking into what events we should be allowing, whether at the ball park, skating rink, or Town Hall. IE: Baby shower, Over 55 Club, etc. The attorney had submitted various forms regarding events and advised the following: 1) No one uses the facilities, 2) Person holding event have an event rider policy, 3) Have person or persons sign Hold Harmless agreement 4) Town already has a policy to cover events. Deputy Supervisor Jennifer Fuller said she would look into the difference between regular policy and the umbrella insurance policy. Councilperson Donald Amell asked if the Bloomingdale Boosers carry their own insurance.

The Board asked Supervisor Montroy if he could ask Rob Reyell to present the insurance coverage and event risks at the next board meeting in March. Supervisor Montroy stated he would call Rob Reyell and ask him.

WASTEWATER WEEKEND COVERAGE

The required weekend coverage for the Wastewater Treatment Plant has been determined to be staffed by Craig Catalano and Jane Mandeville. Both are certified in Wastewater Treatment operations. AES is scheduled to come in on March 2, 2018, for the purpose of training these individuals on the specifics of the equipment. The hourly salary was discussed and the hourly rate of \$20.00 was originally proposed. Councilperson Donald Amell then asked what the hourly wage was for the current back-up person for the Wastewater Treatment Plant. A review of the 2018 Town Budget showed the current hourly wage for the on-call back up person is \$18.00 per hour. Another question was where was this money going to come from as it wasn't budgeted for at the time of the 2018 Budget work sessions. The Board agreed to table the discussion until the next meeting in order to finalize the details of the hourly rate for the weekend coverage.

Another point made was extra keys will be needed for the Fire Department, Highway Superintendent Douglas Snickles, Craig Catalano and Jane Mandeville for access to the buildings.

QUESTIONS

Supervisor Dean Montroy asked those present if there were any questions or concerns. There were none.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Councilperson D. Joseph Bates made the Motion to Adjourn the Work Session Meeting. The Motion to Adjourn was seconded by Deputy Supervisor Jennifer Fuller. The Work Session Meeting adjourned at 8:36 pm.

I, Barbara J. Darrah, Town Clerk for the Town of St. Armand, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct transcript of the Special Board Meeting minutes held on the above-referenced date.

Dated: February 28, 2018

Barbara J. Darrah
St. Armand Town Clerk