

**TOWN OF CANAJOHARIE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

July 11, 2013

The Town Council met for a regular monthly meeting at 7:30 PM at the Town office building, 12 Mitchell Street.

Present: Supervisor Herbert Allen, Councilpersons William Armitstead, Judith Burgess, John Toomey, Jr., and Rodney Young; Bookkeeper Amy Kretser; Highway Deputy Superintendent John Klock; Assessor Charlene Ruskowski; Village of Ames Mayor Martin Wilcox, Ames Fire Chief Alan Dean, and Ames Trustee Michael McMahon.

The meeting was opened by the Supervisor at 7:30 with the pledge of allegiance.

Supervisor Allen brought the Council's attention to the evening's agenda, and asked the council to approve two additions, a discussion of the bridge washed out on Happy Hollow Road, and an executive session to discuss assessment litigation.

Councilman Armitstead made a motion to accept the **agenda** with the above amendments. Councilman Toomey seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Councilman Toomey made a motion to accept the June meeting **minutes**. Councilwoman Burgess seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

FIRE CONTRACTS

The Council recognized Ames Fire Chief Alan Dean, who then addressed the meeting.

Mr. Dean informed the Council that after 2 years without an increase in the Ames fire contract money, he is proposing a 5% increase for the 2014 contract year. He said that there have been no purchases for 3 years, and what equipment they have has been over half paid for by member fundraising and grants.

Mr. Dean added, as an example, that right now the department needs \$3,000 worth of state-mandated turn-out equipment (\$300 each for 10 firefighters). He said they are doing the best they can with what is provided, but money is very tight. He suggested the Town look into paying the fire companies through a tax bill line item, based on assessed value of property.

Amy Kretser informed Mr. Dean that when the fire district was created in 1932, it was mandated that the funds would be raised by sales tax, not property tax. She added that the sales tax goes to the Highway Department as well, so it is a balancing act.

Mr. Dean ended with asking for a 2 year contract with a 5% raise in funds for each year, to make up for the 2 years without an increase. He also left the council members with a list of calls the department answered in the Town in 2012, 2011, and 2009.

Mayor Wilcox added his support for the Fire Department, saying that it will have no choice but to go out of business if the funds are not there. He inquired about the timing of the budget decisions, and Supervisor Allen informed him that the budget sessions will begin in September, and a final budget will be finalized in November.

Councilman Armitstead suggested that a committee should be appointed to meet with the Fire

Departments to negotiate the contract.

Mr. Dean, Mr. Wilcox and Mr. McMahon then took their leave of the meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Supervisor Allen made a motion to enter executive session to discuss assessment litigation over the gas station owned by Countryside Management. Councilman Toomey seconded the motion, and all were in favor; executive session began at 7:58 PM.

On a motion by Councilman Young, seconded by Superintendent Allen, the council exited executive session at 8:25.

Councilman Young then made a motion to have the attorney representing the Town in the Countryside vs. Town of Canajoharie litigation, Daniel Vincelette, go forward with his recommended action on the case. Councilwoman Burgess seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the attorney will be contacted.

LEGISLATURE

Court grant approval

Court Clerk Peggy Allen has asked the Council's permission to pursue a grant through the Unified Court System. She will be requesting help with rebuilding the steps into the downstairs entrance.

Councilman Young made the motion to allow the court clerk to pursue a grant through the Unified Court System.

Councilman Toomey seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

DSS temporary worker

Supervisor Allen informed the Council that the woman currently working 10 hours per week in the Town office building has been doing a good job with cleaning, taking over for Lois Manzi who is leaving. He suggested that if her arrangement through the Department of Social Services (Work Experience Program) ends, the Town should hire her for the cleaning work.

Auditor

Mr. Allen asked the Council to consider having Craig Speers, who performed an audit of Town finances in 2012, come back to do another audit and also to answer questions regarding the fire contract funding (sales tax vs. fire tax).

Councilman Toomey made the motion to invite Craig Speers back to do an audit and attend a meeting for information. Councilwoman Burgess seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

HIGHWAY

John Klock reported on Highway activity for the month.

There is a bridge over a culvert to a private residence on Happy Hollow Road that has sustained damage from flooding and is in danger of collapsing. If it comes down it could damage the head walls leading up to the bridge, so the Council discussed whether or not to get involved with the repair, even though it is a private structure.

Supervisor Allen and Deputy Superintendent Klock will be meeting with an engineer to assess

the situation.

Mr. Allen mentioned that another problem area is on Canyon Road, where a large section washed out. There are Jersey barriers in place there.

Mr. Klock reported that a truck was repaired, and that Steel Sales did a good job on it.

Auction results: The dump truck body sold for \$1550, and the road sweeper for \$240.

PLANNING/ZONING

Amy Kretser reported on the month's Planning Board meeting. There was a lot of discussion of the proposed dog kennels, which will go to Public Hearing in August.

BILLS

The clerk submitted the following bill vouchers for payment approval:

General vouchers #124 through #140, totaling \$15,208.59;

Highway vouchers #135 through #163, totaling \$26,191.96

After adjusting # 132, for Spohn's Disposal, to reflect the lower contract amount which started in June, the General voucher was \$15,181.59.

On a motion by Councilman Young, seconded by Councilman Toomey, the bills were unanimously approved for payment with the one adjustment.

ADJOURN

Councilman Armitstead made a motion to adjourn. Supervisor Allen seconded the motion, and all being in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 8:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Smith

Town Clerk