

NEW LISBON TOWN BOARD---JULY 11, 2023---7:30 PM REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING---TOWN HALL, GARRATTSVILLE

Present: Supervisor Edward Lentz, Councilwoman Nancy Martin-Mathewson, Councilman Bill Whitaker, Councilwoman Flo Loomis, Councilman Brian Ryther, Hwy. Supt. Donald Smith, Town Clerk Charlene Wells, Assessor Pamela Dyn-Gohde, Residents: Mert Hull, Brian Holt, James Neilson, Dauna Osborne, Bismarck & Angela Iniguez, Joseph Gregory, Bruce Page, 2 others

Supervisor Edward Lentz opened the regular monthly meeting at 7:30 PM. A motion was made by Councilwoman Flo Loomis, seconded by Councilwoman Nancy Martin-Mathewson and carried 5 ayes/ 0 Nays to accept the minutes for the June 13, 2023 regular meeting as drafted.

Hwy. Supt. Donald Smith advised that the equipment is okay and they have been honing and ditching. The new grader has been ordered. Supervisor Lentz is submitting an application to USDA for possible grant funds/low-cost loan options for the new grader. Paving stone is getting trucked in. Supt. Smith has only received one application for the vacant hwy. position. Half of the new hwy. garage floor was poured, block work is being done and hopefully they will get the second half of the floor poured this week, weather permitting. Since the landowner will no longer allow the town to access the beaver dam on Card Road, Supt. Donald Smith advised that the DEC requires a General Permit to raise the road and they want a 36" culvert with a turbidity curtain during installation. Councilwoman Flo Loomis questioned what the total cost of this project would be. Supt. Smith advised that he hasn't got all his figures together yet. Councilwoman Loomis felt that the landowner should be advised of what the cost will be of them not allowing us to access the beaver dam to keep it under control. Supervisor Edward Lentz noted that he does intend on talking with the landowners. Councilwoman Nancy Martin-Mathewson noted that 2023 repair costs to date are \$13,871.00, comparable to 2021 and less than last years at \$27,313.00. Councilman Bill Whitaker thanked the Hwy. crew for extending the turnaround on Backus Road from the Morris Central School bus drivers.

County Rep. Meg Kennedy was absent but sent us notice that the 2023 Microenterprise Funding is available for qualified small businesses. The applications are due in on July 31, 2023 and more information may be obtained on Otsegonow.com. She also noted that all delinquent property owners have the chance to get their taxes paid up at 1% interest per month while the County waits to hear from the State about the moratorium on foreclosure auctions.

Mert Hull of the Garrattsville Fire Company gave their second quarter report. They had 10 calls for a total of 141.5 person hours with an average of 7 members per call. They also put in 117 person hours in training during the second quarter. The Board asked Mr. Hull to share their thanks with the Fire Company for their service to the Town.

Lenny Melillo and Amy Dill keep the corner lot with the flag pole mowed for the Town. They have asked if the stump could be removed where the pine tree was cut down last year. After discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Bill Whitaker, seconded by Councilwoman Nancy Martin-Mathewson and carried 5 Ayes/ 0 Nays to authorize up to \$500.00 to have the tree stump removed on the corner flag pole lot. The Highway crew have reset the Garratt monument on a stone bed. Supervisor Edward Lentz has asked Gary Norman to help us properly clean up the stone.

In May 2023, Otsego Now sent a letter to Town Supervisors, Village and City Mayors and School Superintendents suggesting that with the increase in solar and wind projects, we consider opting out of NYS Real Property Tax Law Section 487 which allows a 15 year tax exemption for increases in assessed values due to renewable energy projects. If we opted out, we would retain the ability to get taxes on the new assessment for the energy project or get increased taxes through a payment-in-lieu of tax agreement. The Town would have to adopt a local law to opt out of RPTL Section 487. Morris did a law in 2018 opting out and Edmeston and Laurens are holding public hearings to opt out. County Rep. Meg Kennedy advised that the County is encouraging everyone to opt out. Supervisor Edward Lentz noted that he would like to do some more research on the issue and the Board will consider further next month.

We received official notice from the NYS DEC that the Town's Volunteer Stewardship Agreement for the Texas Schoolhouse State Forest has been terminated. The Butternut Valley Alliance will now be the steward for Texas Schoolhouse State Forest, Wagner Farms and General Jacob Morris State Forest. One application has been received for Land Use Enforcement Officer. Supervisor Lentz noted he is hoping for some more applications before reviewing. Our Town Attorney Michelle Kennedy has not sent any

comments on our proposed Garbage & Junk Law. Supervisor Lentz advised that he may ask Attorney Will Green to review it for us.

In July 2022, the Town Board approved a site plan for Bismarck Iniquez for a garage/body shop at 299 Stahl Road, with the conditions that a copy of his NYS license and Otsego County Certificate of Commercial Compliance be submitted to the Town Clerk. As site plan approvals are generally good for one year, a letter was sent to him in June 2023 about the failure to submit the required documents. After a brief discussion, since the owner has submitted a copy of the NYS license application that was submitted 6/27/23 and an application is being filed with the Otsego County Code Enforcement office to get the occupancy of the barn changed to commercial, a motion was made by Councilman Brian Ryther, seconded by Councilman Bill Whitaker and carried 5 Ayes/ 0 Nays to grant a four month extension of the site plan approval for Bismarck Iniquez for a garage/body shop at 299 Stahl Road. If the required documents are not received, the Town Board will review again at the November meeting.

Supervisor Edward Lentz completed a six month review of accounts and found most are in good shape. We are making better interest on our funds, sales tax is up about 6% over last year, but mortgage tax is down. He anticipates a \$550,000.00 to \$600,000.00 fund balance which we will start to use to keep taxes down as we start to pay for the new highway garage. The hwy. committee met with a John Deere Representative about financing for a new grader. They would take four payments of \$98,000.00 which is at 7.5 % interest. Supervisor Lentz noted he got rates from our banks of 5.3% and 5.8% for five year loans. The grader was ordered with financing with John Deere to get the purchase price locked in. We will decide on payment options after hearing if USDA can offer us anything.

The Board reviewed the bills prior to the meeting. A motion was made by Councilwoman Nancy Martin-Mathewson, seconded by Councilman Brian Ryther and carried 5 Ayes/ 0 Nays to approve paying General Fund bills #131 through #146 for a total of \$192,447.27 and Highway Fund bills #62 through #71 for a total of \$20,635.42. (Checks for the bills for the new highway garage will be held until USDA's approval is received). Supervisor Lentz paid General Fund bills #128 through #130 for a total of \$279.77 with prior Board approval.

Assessor Pamela Dyn-Gohde didn't know of any town that has a town law for exemptions of solar farms from taxes. It was questioned if our town law #1 of 2013 providing for a business investment credit would apply to solar farms. It may not apply since most solar farms are on leased land, but that would be a separate issue from the opting out of RPTL Section 487.

With no further comments and no further business, a motion was made by Councilman Bill Whitaker, seconded by Councilman Brian Ryther and carried 5 Ayes/0 Nays to adjourn at 8:37 PM.

Charlene R. Wells, New Lisbon Town Clerk