

NEW LISBON TOWN BOARD---SEPTEMBER 12, 2023—7:30 PM REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING—TOWN HALL, GARRATTSVILLE

Present: Supervisor Edward Lentz, Councilwoman Nancy Martin-Mathewson, Councilman Bill Whitaker, Councilman Brian Ryther, Hwy. Supt. Donald Smith, Town Clerk Charlene Wells, Assessor Pamela Dyn-Gohde, Co. Rep. Meg Kennedy, residents Laura Curtis, Dauna Osborne, Theresa Burdick, Joseph Gregory, Bruce Page, Brian Holt, Jeff Lukeman, Joshua Lukeman Absent: Councilwoman Flo Loomis

Supervisor Edward Lentz opened the regular monthly meeting at 7:30 PM. A motion was made by Councilwoman Nancy Martin-Mathewson, seconded by Councilman Brian Ryther, and carried 4 Ayes/ 0 Nays to approve the minutes for the August 8, 2023 regular meeting and September 5, 2023 special meeting as drafted.

Hwy. Supt. Donald Smith advised that the tractor had issues and he is waiting for it to be looked at. They did paving on Gardnertown Road today. He has to buy tires for the 2018 which will be about \$4,000.00. The new Ford F350 was delivered. He will be getting the 2017 pickup ready for auction. He believes its value is about \$25,000.00, so he hopes to get at least \$20,000.00. He will sell the salter separately. He is going to keep the plow as it will fit the other Ford. He has not contacted an engineer yet to do a study of Turnbull Bridge. He has an idea for a way to hook up the power washer in the new garage, so he will ask the contractor for an estimate of what it would cost to make that change. He hasn't filed for a permit for the beaver area on Card Road yet. The DEC was upset about an area on Card Road that had fill put in a wetland, but that wasn't the town that did it. Councilwoman Nancy Martin-Mathewson reported that our repair cost to date is \$14,760.00. The 2009 averages \$3.84 per mile, while the newer trucks are averaging \$1.12 to \$1.25 per mile. The newer equipment saves a lot on expenses.

Theresa Burdick spoke on behalf of the Morris Recreation Group. They enjoyed using the park for baseball & softball and put in about \$600.00 to update the area. She asked the Board to consider budgeting about \$1000.00 in the budget to be used for further updates to the park area. They would like to get soccer nets, it needs new basketball hoops, they have asked for the Morris softball backstop since that is being moved for the new bus garage, and she suggested that a hand rail to help people walk up the hill would be nice. She noted that many people use the park so it would be nice to get things updated.

County Rep. Meg Kennedy noted that residents can comment on the draft County Strategic Plan on a survey link under the Planning Department on the Otsego County website. The Otsego County Soil & Water Conservation District will be holding a Sediment/Erosion Class in October for highway crews and contractors. The County Administrator will be the Budget Officer this year. The early outlook is they will be under the tax cap. The EMS system is almost breaking even, so that will not cause a big tax increase. Salaries have to be increased to get and keep employees, as turnover is high. County Rep. Kennedy further noted that at an IGA meeting it was noted that they should fill the vacant County Historian position. She noted that the Town of Hartwick also needs a local law enforcement officer, so maybe we could look into a shared service with them.

Supervisor Edward Lentz noted that he has already seen things about the Country's 250th birthday celebration in 2026, so we should be thinking if we want to do anything as part of the celebration. Our equalization rate is at 81%. There are only 8 towns equal to or higher than us in the County, so we are not sitting too bad. We have received two documents from USDA to complete in regards to the tentative grant and loan for the new grader. A motion was made by Councilman Brian Ryther, seconded by Councilwoman Nancy Martin-Mathewson and carried 4 Ayes/ 0 Nays to authorize the Supervisor to complete and sign the USDA grant agreement and loan resolution for the possible grant/loan for the new grader. Supervisor Lentz noted he had asked Attorney Michelle Kennedy to get the bond resolution paperwork ready.

Supervisor Edward Lentz noted that town finances are in good shape. He is striving to keep the 2024 budget at a 3% increase as he had projected during the new hwy. garage public meetings. All towns are having trouble keeping HMEO positions filled. The County and private sector are paying higher than the towns are and the County offers family plan insurance. We are currently at \$21.00 per hour. He is looking at cost options with various raises from \$22.00 to \$25.00 per hour. Councilwoman Nancy Martin-Mathewson commented that we need to be competitive to keep and get new employees as we have some near retirement. Councilman Brian Ryther added that we may have to go to \$24.00 per hour to be competitive with the County. The County offers every other weekend off during the winter, where our

crew is on call all winter. The Fire Department is asking for another two-year contract at a 5% increase. Supervisor Lentz noted that he would like to spread out the increase over the two years.

To cover the bill for the new pickup, a motion was made by Councilman Bill Whitaker, seconded by Councilwoman Nancy Martin-Mathewson and carried 4 Ayes/ 0 Nays to transfer \$75,000.00 from DA 5112.2-Capital Improvements (CHIPS) to DA 5130.2-Machinery Equipment. The Board reviewed the bills prior to the meeting. A motion was made by Councilman Brian Ryther, seconded by Councilman Bill Whitaker and carried 4 Ayes/ 0 Nays to approve paying General Fund bills #173 through #186 for a total of \$241,193.09 and Highway Fund bills #80 through #87 for a total of \$102,464.40. Supervisor Lentz paid General Fund bills #168 through #172 for a total of \$463.17 with prior Board approval. Bills for the new highway garage will be held until we receive USDA approval.

Supervisor Edward Lentz asked the Board to start thinking of priorities for 2024. Assessor Pamela Dyn-Gohde advised that the town of Westford has put in \$2,000.00 for a deputy assessor and they would like to split the training costs with us. Supervisor Lentz noted that he also put \$2,000.00 in the 2024 Tentative budget for a deputy assessor. With no further comments or business, a motion was made by Councilwoman Nancy Martin-Mathewson, seconded by Councilman Bill Whitaker and carried 4 Ayes/ 0 Nays to adjourn at 8:32 PM.

Charlene R. Wells, New Lisbon Town Clerk