

**September 27, 2023**

**STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY COUNTY**

**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

Town Supervisor Palow led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order at 7:01PM with the following role call attendance: Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane were present.

**DISCUSS/APPROVE MEETING MINUTES**

Supervisor Palow made a motion seconded by Councilmember Vae to approve the meeting minutes from August 9, 2023, Supervisor Palow & Councilmembers Clayton Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Supervisor Palow wanted to remind everyone about Oktoberfest on October 7, 2023 at the Town Park from 1-7PM with dinner being served 4-6PM. The Town is also participating with Albany County and Mohawk Humane Society on a Rabies Clinic which will be held at the Highway Garage 1811 Helderberg Trail from 10AM-1PM and you can pre-register online.

Councilmember Clayton wanted to share that there are free covid tests available online [www.covid.gov/tests](http://www.covid.gov/tests) , If anyone who does not have internet access would like to order some the Town Clerk will help to enter in new information to get the tests mailed to residents' households.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Peggy Christman wanted to discuss the recent grant monies awarded to the Town of Westerlo for Broadband connectivity in the amount of 1.75 million dollars bringing 103 homes online and she was questioning if any grants had been written for the Town of Berne.

Sharon Nevins had questions regarding funds available for 2023 from the American Rescue plan and wanted to make sure the Town explored the options.

Mr. Sean McGraw from the Woodstock Lake Campground Board of Directors was in to speak of concerns about Building and Zoning permits being issued without Woodstock Lake's consent. The Campground has their own set of Zoning Ordinances which he shared with the Board. He was hopeful to work with the Town and be in communication he also wanted to nominate himself for the upcoming Zoning Committee.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**LIBRARY-** Director Kathy Stempel wanted to share some library calculations based on the number of items in circulation, the library has 22,142 items in circulation which would equate to \$376,414.00 in value. The library currently has 498 active library card holders. She wanted to discuss the option of more security cameras for the library as well as taking a water test to see if the water on the new well is consumable.

**Planning Board-** Chairman Joe Martin spoke of a subdivision application on Woodstock Road that was denied 4-1 based on the Conservation Board's findings against it due to the quantity of wetlands.

**Zoning Board of Appeals-** Chairman Thomas Spargo said the next meeting would be held on November 3, 2023 for an outstanding issue on Helderberg Lake due to the height of a fence and a deck. There is also a new variance application for a setback on Thompson's Lake Road.

**Parks and Recreation Board-** Chair Mary Claire Ansbro told the Board due to the still wet and cold conditions the seal coating for the Pavilion will be put off until next spring. The Christmas tree at the Town Park put in last year was replaced this week because the original tree did not take root and was dying.

**OLD BUISNESS**

**Discuss/Approve Planning Board Alternant Steven Khoury**

Councilmember Vane made a motion seconded by Councilmember Thiem to appoint Steven Khoury to the Planning Board as an alternate Supervisor Palow, Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye,

**Update on Animal Control Officer Position**

Per NYS positions now must include the Wage Rate in an advertisement for job positions. Supervisor Palow made a motion seconded by Councilmember Doolin to authorize Town De Oliveira to add the wage rate of \$19.57 per hour and \$24.72 differential rate, Supervisor Palow, Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

**Discuss/Approve Switzkill Farm Update**

Councilmember Clayton stated that the negotiations with Albany County are still in progress and there have been lots of moving pieces to sort out. The Town Board is hopeful that a Memoranda of Understanding will be drawn up soon. Switzkill Farm will remain a Town entity regardless even if Albany County becomes a partner. The plan is to help get the property back up to code so it can be used to its full potential.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Discuss Establishing a Zoning Committee**

Councilmember Clayton discussed the need to re-zone the Town due to some areas and items that need to be addressed. Nan Stolzenburg will guide us through the process. Councilmember Clayton made a motion seconded by Councilmember Vane to establish a Zoning Committee of 5 members with 2 alternate members, Supervisor Palow, Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem voting aye.

**Discuss Quote for Credit Card Processing Capabilities for Property Taxes**

As previously discussed, the ability for residents to pay with credit/debit cards for property taxes online through the BAS Tax Portal with Edmunds Gov Tech proposed a one-time implementation fee of \$700. To have the program up and running for the 2024 Tax Season the quote needs to be signed. Supervisor Palow made a motion seconded by Councilmember Clayton to sign the quote and approve the implementation process as well as the \$700 fee, Supervisor Palow, Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

**Discuss and Authorize Edward Hampton as Part Time Diesel Mechanic**

After discussion Supervisor Palow made a motion seconded by Councilmember Vane to approve the hire of Edward Hampton up to 18 hours weekly at \$25 an hour through to the end of 2023, Supervisor Palow, Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

**Discuss Adoption of Hazard Mitigation Plan through Albany County**

Councilmember Clayton spoke on the opportunity to participate in a Hazard Mitigation Plan through Albany County. The Program helps to provide emergency planning and funding. Councilmember Clayton made a motion seconded by Supervisor Palow to establish the Community Center as a meeting place and points of contact to include the Town Supervisor, Deputy Supervisor and Town Clerk- Supervisor Palow, Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

**Motion to Return Funds to Resident for Cancelled Event at Town Park**

Funds were deposited for a Town Park reservation however the event was cancelled, Supervisor Palow made a motion seconded by Councilmember Vane to return \$75 to a resident from the deposit made for the Town Park, Supervisor Palow, Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

**Discuss/Approve Invoice for Greg's Towing Truck #2**

Work was recently completed for Town of Berne Truck #2 by Greg's Towing and Auto Shop, Supervisor Palow made a motion seconded by Councilmember Doolin to approve the payment to Greg's Towing in an amount not to exceed \$1259.86, Supervisor Palow, Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

**Discuss/Approve Payroll Frequencies to Monthly**

With the new accounting software update one change necessary to make the required changes to convert includes no longer having semi-annual or quarterly payroll frequencies. Supervisor Palow made a motion seconded by Councilmember Thiem to convert all semi-annual or quarterly payrolls to a monthly basis, Supervisor Palow, Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

**Discuss Training for Town Historian in 2023**

During the Organizational Meeting many town employees and board members were preauthorized to attend training, however the Historian was not. Supervisor Palow made a motion seconded by Councilmember Clayton to approve the payment of \$230 for Sandra Kisselback, Town Historian, to attend the Historian Conference and Training, Supervisor Palow, Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

**Discuss/Approve Payment to Steel Sales for Culverts**

Supervisor Palow discussed the invoices for Steel Sales which is the culvert company the Town uses. Residents can purchase culverts through the Town under State Contract and the money is deposited into the highway fund. Supervisor Palow made a motion seconded by Councilmember Clayton to approve the payments to Steel Sales in the amounts of \$2509.60 and \$1693.20, Supervisor Palow, Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

**Discuss Public Comment Section of Agenda**

Councilmember Thiem made a motion seconded by Councilmember Vane to remove the clause on the agenda limiting public comment to agenda topics. After discussion the Board agreed to do a trial run for 3 months as well as moving the public comment section to the end of the meeting after Town Business, this will allow residents to speak on any topics, Supervisor Palow, Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

## **DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Supervisor Palow made a motion to accept the Supervisor's Financial Reports from September 2023 seconded by Councilmember Doolin including:

- Packet A – Abstracts
- Packet B- Budget to Actual Reports Supervisors' reports for revenue per fund, Supervisor's reports for expenditures per fund and budget transfers report if required.
- Packet C – Bank Reconciliations and bank statements for September
- Packet D - Cash balance report and Balance sheet Report

Motion carried with the following roll call vote: Supervisor Palow and Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

Supervisor Palow made a motion to accept the Town Clerk's Financial Report from September 2023 seconded by Councilmember Vane, motion carried with the following roll call vote: Supervisor Palow and Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

Supervisor Palow made a motion to accept the Building and Zoning's Financial Report from September 2023 seconded by Councilmember Thiem, motion carried with the following roll call vote: Supervisor Palow and Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

## **AUTHORIZING BUDGET TRANSFERS FOR SEPTEMBER**

After discussion, Supervisor Palow made a motion seconded by Councilmember Clayton that the budget transfers for September be authorized. Motion carried with the following vote: Supervisor Palow and Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

## **APPROVING ABSTRACTS AND PAYMENT OF MONTHLY BILLS**

After discussion, Supervisor Palow made a motion seconded by Councilmember Doolin to approve the following abstracts and payment bills:

- Abstract #33 2023 \$44,072.60 (Vouchers 852-874) Prepaid Utilities
- Abstract #34 2023 \$40,541.44 (Vouchers 875-953) Regular Abstract
- Abstract #34 2023 \$35,570.91 (Vouchers 954-961) Regular Abstract

**Total Abstracts: \$120,184.95**

Motion carried with the following vote: Supervisor Palow and Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

**September 27, 2023**

**GENERAL FUND, HIGHWAY FUND, SEWER, UTILITIES WITHHOLDINGS FOR 2023**

Supervisor Palow made a motion seconded by Councilmember Doolin to authorize payment of bills -motion carried with the following roll call vote: Supervisor Palow and Councilmembers Clayton Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye.

**MOTION TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Councilmember Clayton made a motion seconded by Councilmember Thiem to enter into Executive Session at 7:59PM to discuss contractual agreements and insurance. No action was taken in executive session and the meeting reconvened at 8:28PM.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Town Supervisor Palow made the motion seconded by Councilmember Doolin to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried with the following roll call vote: Supervisor Palow and Councilmembers Clayton, Doolin, Thiem and Vane all voting aye. The meeting adjourned at **8:29PM**.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kristin De Oliveira, Town Clerk