

TOWN OF WHITEHALL
7 PM REGULAR MEETING
57 SKENESBOROUGH DRIVE
AUGUST 17, 2016

PRESENT: George Armstrong – Supervisor

John Rozell- Councilperson

Stephanie Safka- Councilperson

Farrell Prefontaine – Councilperson

ABSENT: David Hollister

OTHERS PRESENT: Deputy Town Clerk, Elaine Jones; Town Highway Superintendent, Louis D. Pratt II; Heritage Director, Carol Greenough; Whitehall Times Reporter, Dan King; Town Attorney, Erika Sellar-Ryan; Compliance Officer, Vernon Scribner; David Waters; Orson Kingsley; Joe Pinkowski; Frank Faryniarz; Bruce Wescott. Sign in sheet will be filed with the minutes.

Supervisor opened the regular meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a prayer.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: David Waters was the first to have questions about the Solar panels issues. Washington County has not yet voted. The Town, Village and School will be deciding whether to tax or PILOT (Payment In Lieu of Taxes). Some towns are opting out.

As of now Whitehall is the only town with solar panel fields. Mr. Waters said bring solar in as long as it doesn't affect taxes. Ag exemptions will be eliminated from the land used for panels. Attorney Sellar-Ryan said "In the grand scheme of things, the likelihood of this increasing other people's taxes is not a reality."

When you say the neighbors taxes are going up, you are ignoring a lot of things.

You are assuming that there will be no economic growth in the other 16 towns in Washington County. That is not the trend and so in reality if Kingsbury gets a Walmart or 5 new homes that will throw that all off anyway so in actuality when you look at all of this, the likelihood of those solar projects increasing everyone else's tax burden is really unlikely. Fort Miller in Easton is doing the bridge this year and their portion will go up. We can't say that Whitehall is the only town with economic growth in Washington County. Dave Waters stated that Erika's answer was the best one he has ever had and now he understands it. Erika stated that when the Town receives the letter of intent from the solar company they have 60 days to respond to them that they want a PILOT. When the solar company comes in to talk to the Board and asks about zoning regulations, etc. that is when the PILOT will be public info and these companies that are spending a lot of money will know upfront that the Town will want a PILOT.

Councilperson Safka wants the company to know up front from day one that the Town will be asking for a PILOT. Erika stated that should be initiated by the Planning Board.

Mr. Scribner wanted to know if this would require a public hearing and Erika stated that it would not. It is a negotiated process and it is up to the Board on who they want to do the negotiating. Roger Wickes is negotiating for the County. The Board stated that the assessor is leaning toward assessing on income stream for the solar projects. Supervisor feels we will end up getting more taxes than if the property stayed as it was.

Mr. Faryniarz doesn't want money taken out of his pocket to subsidize their project.

Stephanie reminded us that a couple of individuals in the Town are making people upset before all the information is out. These people are saying things that aren't true.

Being different, George said that our goal is what's best for all citizens of the Town of Whitehall...a work in

progress. Erika added "You're first in the County – leading the way." Farrell told of letter from County saying we'd all be in the same boat.

MOTION to accept the prior minutes of July 20, 2016 made by Councilperson

Safka and seconded by Councilperson John Rozell.

ADOPTED **Ayes 4 Armstrong, Rozell, Safka, Prefontaine**

Nays 0

Heritage Report written and oral report by Carol Greenough

Recreation Report written and verbal report by Bruce Wescott.

Motion to use the Rec. Center for Homecoming and bonfire on Sept. 26-30th made by Councilperson Prefontaine and seconded by Councilperson Rozell.

ADOPTED **Ayes 4 Armstrong, Rozell, Safka, Prefontaine**

Nays 0

Dog Control Report No report

Compliance Officer Report- oral report by Vernon Scribner

Someone in the trailer park is having issues with the owner of the trailer park. He is trying to get a trailer moved in and the owner is stalling.

Town Clerk Report No report due to Julie being out injured.

Assessor Report No report

Town Supervisor Report by George Armstrong-

-Monthly DMV service was well attended this morning.

-Rev. Paul Sheppard made sign honoring football championship. He is going to meet with the school to decide where to put it. Louie suggested at beginning of Buckley Road and George suggested at entrance to school driveway. Safka

Reminded us that State Rt.4 is Lady Bird Johnson Highway and signs are limited, so be careful. Has to be 25' from center line of state highway.

The Big Foot calling contest wanted alcohol, but the contract from the State says

No alcohol and Supervisor told them no alcohol if they want to use the park.

Jim Austin has been working on the caboose roof and plans to paint it.

Farrell has been working on the Highway Crew contract.

Attorney Sellar-Ryan and Budget Officer Joel Carpenter recommend an override on the tax cap (\$6700 on a million-dollar budget.) Health Insurance is going up 10%. We'll need a law. She will bring to next meeting and needs 3/5 signatures.

Since we expanded Rec programs, the Rec has cost more money. Lowe's has been renovating at their expense. Everyone are encouraged to go see what they did.

Town Budget Officer Report No report

George has worksheets for 2017 budget process.

Planning Board Report -written report by Gregg Chappell

Submitted Regulation of the Bonding Process Pursuant to Site Plan Review. Written copy is in minutes.

Town Highway Report Verbal Report by Louis Pratt.

He has handed in his highway reports for the Board to review.

He and crew are putting shoulders on newly paved roads.

A truck worth \$10,000 needs a seal costing \$2350.

Agreement to Spend Town Highway Funds. Written copy in minutes.

Signed by Councilpersons Armstrong, Prefontaine, Rozell, and Safka, and Superintendent Pratt.

1997 lawnmower has need of big repairs and there is no trade in value. A new machine would cost \$7776. Louie has two quotes on mowers that will be filed with the minutes.

Right now we are using the same mower to mow the park, rec area, cemeteries and garage. Does the Board wish to purchase another mower? Where will the money come from? General Funds or Fund Balance.

MOTION to replace old mower with new Exmark for \$7,776 from John Stokowski and have a check drawn up as soon as mower is delivered and pay out of Fund Balance.

Motion by Prefontaine, second by Safka.

ADOPTED AYES 3 Prefontaine, Armstrong, Safka

NAYS 1 Rozell

All written reports will be filed with the minutes

MOTION to approve monthly reports made by Councilperson Prefontaine and
Seconded by SAFKA.

ADOPTED AYES 4 Prefontaine, Armstrong, Safka, Rozell
 NAYS 0

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION as a farm hand will be living there, the Board will allow Orson Kingsley to continue with his trailer permit after moving existing trailer to a new spot on his property. The Board failed to get the name of the farm hand.

Moved by Rozell, seconded by Prefontaine.

ADOPTED 4 AYES Safka, Rozell, Prefontaine, Armstrong.
 0 NAYS

RESOLUTION # 40 COMPLETE STREETS

Supervisor read the resolution to the Board.

Motion by Prefontaine, seconded by Safka.

ADOPTED AYES 4 Prefontaine, Armstrong, Safka, Rozell
 NAYS 0

Resolution will be filed with the minutes and in Resolution Book.

Motion to amend 284 Agreement at \$173,862.73 made by Rozell, seconded by Prefontaine.

ADOPTED AYES 4 Prefontaine, Armstrong, Safka, Rozell
 NAYS 0

Copy to be filed with the minutes.

Motion to accept MVP meeting at Town Hall for Seniors on 10/24/16 & 11/14/16 made by Rozell, seconded by Prefontaine.

ADOPTED AYES 4 Prefontaine, Armstrong, Safka, Rozell
 NAYS 0

Motion to approve use of park on 10/22/16 for wedding made by Safka, seconded by Prefontaine.

ADOPTED AYES 4 Prefontaine, Armstrong, Safka, Rozell
 NAYS 0

Monthly Vouchers General Fund 16-8-1/15 \$4,099.00

Highway Fund 16-8-1/9 \$94,434.86

Motion to approve monthly vouchers made by Prefontaine and Safka.

ADOPTED AYES 4 Prefontaine, Armstrong, Safka, Rozell
 NAYS 0

Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss ongoing litigation made by Prefontaine and second by Safka.

ADOPTED AYES 4 Prefontaine, Armstrong, Safka, Rozell
 NAYS 0

Motion to come out of Executive Session and return to regular session and close meeting made by Prefontaine and seconded by Safka.

ADOPTED AYES 4 Prefontaine, Armstrong, Safka, Rozell
 NAYS 0

Meeting Adjourned

Elaine Jones, Deputy Town Clerk