

TOWN OF WHITEHALL
REGULAR MEETING 7 PM
57 SKENESBOROUGH DRIVE

February 21, 2018

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Rozell – Supervisor
Christopher Dudley Sr.-Councilperson
Stephanie Safka – Councilperson
Timothy Kingsley-Councilperson
David Hollister-Councilperson

OTHERS PRESENT: Representative Rick Chase from Champlain Hudson Power Express; Town Clerk, Julie Millett; Deputy Town Clerk, Patti Gordon; Highway Superintendent, Louie D. Pratt II, Town Attorney, Erika Sellar-Ryan; Whitehall Times Reporter, Matt Saari; Heritage Director, Carol Greenough, John Millett Jr., Town Assessor, Bruce Caza, Brian Caza, Brian Brooks, Bryan Brooks, George Armstrong, Joe Pinkowski, and David Waters.

Supervisor opened up the meeting at 7:00 PM with Pledge to the Flag.
Moment of silence for the victims in Florida after the mass shooting at school.
George Armstrong offered a prayer.

Presentation was made by Rick Chase on the Champlain Hudson Power Express on transmission line coming down through Whitehall. As it crosses the Canadian border it will be underwater for most of Lake Champlain, exit Lake Champlain in the Town of Putnam, make its way over to Route 22 through Dresden, under South Bay into Whitehall down Bellamy Street where it will jump on the Canadian Pacific Railroad right of way to the southern part of the town where we are going to propose a route change where it will exit the CP Rail and go down old Route 4 to the southern end and then jump back on the Canadian Pacific right of way all the way down to Rotterdam, eventually going under the Hudson River to Rockland County, etc....

The project will provide significant benefits environmental and economical benefits to New York State. It will decrease electricity rates throughout New York State. A large part of savings will be downstate, but wholesale electricity rates are expected to decrease throughout the state. This project is 100% privately financed.

In the first year estimated taxes to the Town; \$165,000; school \$370,000; County \$235,000; Village \$260,000.

Over the forty years that could mean 56 million within the Whitehall boundary. They are trying to negotiate a PILOT deal through the Washington County IDA. Payments will start when the project goes on the grid. Bruce Caza stated that he will probably assess at the taxable status date of March 1st according to how much of the project is complete.

The project will probably start later in 2019. We are hopeful this will go through, but no guarantees.

Written report will be filed with the minutes. Rick has spoken to Andre Hagadorn a number of times and he seems to be good with the idea with a temporary construction easement in order to go from the railroad to old route 4 where we need to tunnel under the railroad. We need a small piece of property to set up equipment to make this happen.

He would also like a resolution from the board in support of the project with a moderate modification of the approved route.

The board will table this until next month and have a resolution at that time.

Brian Brooks handed out a letter tonight about a proposal of a fire district.

Letter will be filed with the minutes.

Bruce Caza stated that the Board of Commissioners budget can be up to 1% of the total assessed value. Brian stated they have met with an attorney and that was not true. Bruce stated that if you have a 189 million budget the fire company would have \$189,000.

Board has received the 2017 Financial Report from the fire company and commented on what a nice job Brian did on it.

Fire Company has some issues with the lease agreement that Erika drew up. They would like to use the lease agreement that the fire company drew up in 2013. Erika asked them to send her their changes and she will look them over. Councilperson Safka would like a copy of what Erika drew up and the fire company and add to that one.

Motion to approve prior minutes of January 2, 2018 & January 17, 2018 by Councilperson Hollister and seconded by Councilperson Safka.

ADOPTED **Ayes 5 Rozell, Safka, Kingsley, Hollister, Dudley**
Nays 0

Request from Councilperson Kingsley to receive his own copy of the minutes in the future.

Heritage Report- verbal report Carol Greenough

2017 annual report for the Historical Society handed out to all board members.

Rec. Report-no report by Julie Eagan

Dog Control Report- written report by Nancy Quell

Annual inspection report by Ag. & Markets on kennel handed out to all board members. Many issues with the kennel. She has 30 days to rectify before another inspection. Councilperson Safka will call her. Erika stated that if she doesn't pass the Town will need to find someone else. She would recommend getting RFP's from other DCO. One item cited is still no 2018 contract between the Town and Nancy Quell. Erika will email the Board a copy of the contract, but the issue is that Nancy wants to be considered as a LLC. Councilperson Safka stated when she looked into it before there was not a lot of options out there.

Board might look into other options.

Compliance Officer Report- nothing to report by Vernon Scribner

Town Clerk Report -written report by Julie Millett

-Informational letter from Valley View Golf Course to renew their beer license.

-Email from Assoc. of Towns asking about costs associated with Governor's Executive order regarding pre-payment of 2018 town and county taxes. Senator Phillips is considering legislation to compensate towns for costs. Town clerk would like to submit wages paid for December 2017 for Deputy Town Clerk helping getting taxes out and processing before the end of the year for \$309.00

Motion by Councilperson Safka and seconded by Councilperson Hollister to send a bill of \$309.00 to try to get reimbursed for Deputy Town Clerk's wages for December.

ADOPTED **Ayes 5 Rozell, Safka, Kingsley, Hollister, Dudley**
Nays 0

-Monthly & Annual Town Clerk Report also will be submitted with the minutes.

-Tax Collector Report- money for 2018 budget has been satisfied and will be collecting for the county until April 2, 2018 when all taxes will be returned to the county.

Town Assessor Report- verbal report by Bruce Caza

-Update on the PILOTS for new solar farms on Buckley & Cemetery Lane. Bruce has spoken with Dave Bagley from solar company and will be having a meeting on Monday with Supervisor, Erika Sellar-Ryan, school attorney and county to discuss numbers. Bruce came up with 5.1 million assessments for each of the three projects. Bruce gave them the 100% exemption with a base of around \$20,000. He told Dave Bagley that the Supervisor wants \$14,000. Dave Bagley has called Bruce back and has agreed to the \$14,000. This would be on all three projects. There will be a meeting Monday with Dave Bagley by phone, town attorney, school, county, Bruce and Supervisor. If the tax bill comes out to \$21,000, the PILOT will be \$13,000. The only way this would change is if there would be a reassessment project. Supervisor would like to negotiate where the school and town would split the PILOT 50-50 after the county gets their share. Supervisor feels we should get a higher % because we have paid our attorney fees.

-Agreement with Nature Conservancy. Bruce stated that Erika said it is not a PILOT and not enforceable. Erika recommends to maybe reach out to them, but do not come out and ask for the money.

-Assessor claims that there are two parcels that no longer fall under the wholly exempt class; Presbyterian Church and the Grange building. He will write them a letter to both to see if they can do something before Grievance Day in May.

-Part-time clerk position for the assessor. Back in June the assessor offered the Board to work at \$24,000 instead of \$34,000. It is non-competitive and create the position and take the \$10,000 to train that person as long as it takes. Person would need to be certified and take the appropriate classes. Bruce would fund the project. Councilperson Safka is concerned that after this person is trained for two years, they will leave and not take the position.

Motion made by Councilperson Hollister to create a temporary part-time assessor clerk position funded by the Town Assessor and seconded by Councilperson Safka.

Position will be posted in the Whitehall Times and the deadline will be March 15, 2018. Any questions will be directed to the assessor on the position.

ADOPTED **Ayes 5 Rozell, Safka, Kingsley, Hollister, Dudley**

Nays 0

Town Supervisor Report – written report by John Rozell
Mention of Cold War Exemption. The Town does not offer it right now.

Planning Board Report- written report by Gregg Chappell
Question on the decommissioning bond wording. They would like Erika to look over the wording.

Councilperson Kingsley had a question on the cell towers on Dick Hyatt Lane. T-Mobile is adding two antennas on and town clerk forwarded info to Gregg Chappell at the Planning Board. County stated they didn't need to do a county permit for it. Assessor is concerned that he doesn't know when these things happen if there is no paperwork.

Budget Officer Report & Transfers – written report by Joel Carpenter
Resolution # 32 Budget Transfers

Motion to pass budget transfers made by Councilperson Hollister and seconded by Councilperson Safka.

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Rozell, Safka, Kingsley, Hollister, Dudley
Nays 0

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

Highway Report- verbal report by Louis Pratt

Highway reports have been presented. New truck should be coming by the end of March.

Received two written quotes on plow and components:

Woodward Equipment	\$2,573.00
Dejana Truck & Utility Equipment	\$3,070.00

Motion by Councilperson Hollister to go with Woodward and seconded by Councilperson Kingsley.

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Rozell, Safka, Kingsley, Hollister, Dudley
Nays 0

Louie mentioned that a person came to the garage complaining of the Town giving sand away and taking business away from him because this person is a contractor. As far as Louie is concerned town residents should be able to get sand in the winter months if they shovel it on. Board agreed with Louie and to continue past practice.

Motion to approve all reports made by Councilperson Hollister and seconded by Councilperson Safka.

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Rozell, Safka, Kingsley, Hollister, Dudley
Nays 0

All Written reports will be filed with the minutes.

Informational letter from Judge Putorti on submitting his financials to the Town. No action needed because the Town has a certified public accountant that audits the justices books every year.

-NYS Compensation Plan has sent a letter to offer Roth (post tax) contributions. They would like a response as to whether the Town will offer this. Supervisor Rozell has checked no, we are not going to offer the Roth Contributions provision for our employees at this time.

-Paid Family Leave Act letter from Hartford stating that your employees covered under The Hartford's New York State Statutory Disability Insurance policy are now also covered by the

New York State mandated Paid Family Leave rider effective January 1, 2018 and will be eligible for benefits according to the terms of the rider. Supervisor has written a letter to all town employees that the Town of Whitehall is "not opting" in to enroll in the NY State Paid Family Leave Program. According to Washington County, the municipalities are exempt because we are considered a private entity. Erika recommended calling Jaeger & Flynn on the rider on disability.

Motion to approve Janice Person as the part-time cleaner at the Whitehall Municipal Center at \$10.40/hr. made by Councilperson Hollister and seconded by Councilperson Safka.

ADOPTED **Ayes 5 Rozell, Safka, Kingsley, Hollister, Dudley**
 Nays 0

ABSTRACT # 2 of 2018	General Fund V#18-2-1/31	\$ 167,425.50
	Highway FundV#18-2-1/ 10	\$ 57,184.82
	B Fund V#18-2-1	\$ 5,555.00

Motion made to approve the monthly vouchers by Councilperson Hollister and seconded by Councilperson Safka.

ADOPTED **Ayes 5 Rozell, Safka, Kingsley, Hollister, Dudley**
 Nays 0

Discussion on PILOTS again by Board.

Motion by Councilperson Kingsley to have a breakdown of the % on the PILOTS after the County gets their standard %. What is left will go 60% Town and 40% School and seconded by Councilperson Dudley.

ADOPTED **Ayes 5 Rozell, Safka, Kingsley, Hollister, Dudley**
 Nays 0

Motion to adjourn meeting at 9:30 PM made by Councilperson Safka and seconded by Councilperson Hollister.

ADOPTED **Ayes 5 Rozell, Safka, Kingsley, Hollister, Dudley**
 Nays 0

Adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Millett
Julie Millett
Town Clerk