



TOWN OF HILLSDALE
Town Board Meeting – March 12, 2024
Draft

The regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Hillsdale, Columbia County in the State of New York was held at the Town Hall, 2609 State Route 23, Hillsdale, NY 12529 on March 12, 2024, at 7:00 pm. Board members present:

PRESENT: Supervisor Mike Dvorchak
Councilmember Jamie Carano Nordenstrom
Councilmember Irwin Feld
Councilmember Joanna Virello
ABSENT: Councilmember Tom Carty

ALSO PRESENT: Robina Ward Town Clerk
Emily Stalker Deputy Town Clerk
Deputy Supervisor Steve Tiger
Richard Briggs Highway Superintendent
Joe Hanselman Jr. Town Tax Collector

OTHERS PRESENT: Steve Bluestone, Damon Clift, Kathryn Levin, Meg Wormley, and other members of the public.

TRADITIONAL VIDEOCONFERENCING NOTICE:

Notice of said meeting was posted on the Town Website. The public is invited to participate at the town hall or the videoconference meeting location at 2609 State Route 23, Hillsdale, NY 12529.

Supervisor Dvorchak called the meeting to order at 7:00pm with the Pledge of allegiance.

STATEMENT ON RECORDING OF TOWN MEETINGS

Supervisor Dvorchak stated that Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom had alerted the town that it was not in compliance and that we should be posting video of our meetings on the town website. There was a problem with a town credit card, and we were unable to update our Zoom account. The town received a credit card today and we will be updating our account to get more storage.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Deputy Supervisor Steve Tiger talked about item number 10 on the agenda, Maple Street. He stated that it was a complex issue and had been going on for years. Deputy Tiger urged the town to include the people most affected, those who live on Maple Street and Coldwater Street from the beginning to the end of the project. Highway Superintendent and Fire Chief Richard Briggs asked that the town include the Fire Company in the conversation.

TOWN BOARD MEETING
MARCH 12, 2024, PAGE 2

Michael Nicosia from Hillsdale stated that he was here in September 2023 to go on the agenda to discuss the mowing schedule for Roe Jan Park. He said that the town had not done a proper assessment of conservation issues, the mowing is destroying bird nests in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The last time Mr. Nicosia had heard from the Town Attorney was that the town was going to change the schedule to allow time for the birds to nest. Marianne Sole from Ancram stated that the birds that they were looking at were the "Bobolinks", they nest from the beginning of May to end of June. Ms. Sole and Mr. McCosio will be looking for the nests using the protocol of the US Official Wildlife services, nests that are found are photographed, GPS coordinates are taken. If a farmer decides to mow the field, he will be in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and fined. The DEC gives out a date which usually is at the end of July.

Damon Clift brought two large bags of cans, bottles, and garbage that he collected in two afternoons within a mile of his house on West End Road and Craryville Road. He asked the town to post no littering signs, especially in the section between Rodman Road and Craryville Road. He is a farmer and can only clean up twice a year.

Supervisor Dvorchak stated that there was a cleanup day on April 20 for Route 23.

REPORT OF TOWN OFFICIALS

SUPERVISOR

COUNTY REPORT

Supervisor Dvorchak reported that he had attended his first Public Works Committee meeting, he asked the other Supervisors if they knew of any Sewer Operators. He contacted the Germantown Supervisor and will report more in the Sewer District Report.

The County is in discussions with a firm called Granicus, an Airbnb compliance firm.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Supervisor Dvorchak asked for any questions. He stated that there were some budget modifications to propose to the board.

The Supervisor contractual account is over budget because of the Albany and New York City training, proposed to take \$200.00 out of the Supervisor Equipment Budget to add to the Supervisor Contractual account.

The Assessor Equipment is out of line because of the need for a new computer, proposed that we add an add \$2,000.00 from the General Account Contingency fund.

The Highway Budget, adding interest to the debt principal.

The Sewer account, \$21,500.00 for March through the end of the year for the Sewer Operator, the \$2,150.00 per month fee is below what the town was paying. Next month we will be updating the social security number as we will not be paying social security for the operators. That will also add funds to the Sewer District.

Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom asked if the sewer personnel was a budget modification. It was stated that the Sewer Operators are not employees they are now contractors hence the change to the social security. Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom asked about the town computers and the Assessors computer, it was stated that the Assessor did not have the cost of the computer in her contingency fund.

RESOLUTION 25-2024

On a motion of Councilmember Feld, seconded by Councilmember Virello.

The following resolution was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Dvorchak, Virello, Feld, Carano
 Nays 0
 Absent 1 Carty

Resolved that the Town Board approves the budget amendments.

GENERAL FUND

1. Budget Amendment: \$200 taken from A12202 Supervisor Equipment and added to A12204 Supervisor Contractual to cover the costs for attendance at Assoc. of Towns Seminars
2. Budget Amendment A13552 Assessor Equipment: Increased by \$2000 from Contingency Fund for new computer for Assessor.

SEWER FUND:

G81204 Sewer Contractual added \$25,000 for Sewer Operator (H20) taken from G81201 Personal Service line.

HIGHWAY FUND:

\$1,921.61 added to DA97206 Debt Principal take from DA97207 Debt Interest.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Superintendent Briggs reported that he had emailed his report. They have completed the first round of black top pothole patching. They are hauling materials needed for Spring work.

Clean up day has been set for May 11 at the Highway Garage with the same rules as last year, no tires, no TV's, computer screens. The Highway employees will be there to assist but not to unload the vehicles.

The auction brought in \$10,000.00 for the 5520 Mower truck and \$3,700.00 for the 99 International Plow Truck

Supervisor Briggs suggested that the town should post weight limits on the West End Bridge. There is massive construction on West End Road, and he has seen 6-8 cement trucks crossing the bridge. He asked the prior Supervisor to work on a weight limit. Supervisor Briggs suggests that the board talk to the attorney and county and make this an emergency situation before we shut it down. With County Route 11 closed we are getting traffic from the Philmont side. Supervisor Briggs suggested contacting the Engineering Department at the County.

Councilmember Feld asked when the DOT did their evaluation of the bridge did, they establish a weight limit? Superintendent Briggs stated that it was a town issue involving the town engineers.

TOWN CLERK REPORT

Town Clerk Ward reported that they have had three marriage licenses with another coming in tomorrow, 4 total for the month. There was a wedding on Friday which Supervisor Dvorchak officiated.

Also, with Deputy Clerk Stalker and Supervisor Dvorchak we were working on moving boxes to the Sheriff Station storage. We really need more storage so anyone with any ideas please be in contact.

The Town Clerks office is not applying for the Records Management Grant this year, we will apply for it next year.

We will be moving downstairs, scheduled to move on or by May 3 for mold remediation, clean up and change the carpet for new flooring. We will be storing a lot of items upstairs inside the building and we will have an office unit out in the parking lot for two desks, a Town Clerk desk, and a Court Clerk desk. Most of the staff will have to work remotely. We will update everyone.

We will be updating our Zoom services, the current account is not big enough to accommodate all the recordings we need to do and with the addition of all the committees, the cost will be \$411.68, currently it is \$159.0, we will be getting a lot more band width and be able to keep the recordings. Sewer billing, we billed \$26,000.00 for the first quarter and have received about half, we received the relevy for 2023.

FIRE DISTRICT REPORT

Fire Company President reported that they have had 20 calls to date including 2 in March. The Palm Sunday Brunch is back on, with a limited selection for breakfast, due to the lack of volunteers.

ROE JAN PARK EVENT REQUEST

Mr. Bluestone introduced representatives from the Columbia County Tourist Board and Chamber of Commerce, who are helping Mr. Bluestone with the potential event. Beth Gordon is also part of the group, not in attendance.

Councilmember Virello asked about the process. Mr. Bluestone stated they were asking for a vote from the board. Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom asked if the board normally votes on this. Supervisor Dvorchak responded that the board normally does not but as the event would be a fundraiser for the park Mr. Bluestone is asking to waive the one-thousand-dollar park fee. There was discussion about attendance, other similar events in the county, and a possible annual event in Hillsdale. The event is scheduled for August 3, 2024. Councilmember Virello stated that Grillsdale was an annual event sponsored by the town. She asked what the ticket price and the cap for this event was. Mr. Bluestone stated that it would be thirty dollars a head and it was a tasting event, people could make purchases that would be available as they leave. The food trucks and musicians would all be Columbia County based. There was further discussion about expenses and a donation.

Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom noted that there was some information missing from the event permit form documentation. Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom questioned the authority of the board to waive the rental fee. The discussion included reference to the fact the Town of Hillsdale cannot raise funds and that donations would be made to the HECDC. Supervisor Dvorchak stated that the topic should be reviewed by the Town Attorney who is on vacation, and that there would be another Special Meeting prior to the regular meeting.

Mr. Bluestone responded that there would not be any caterers, there would be food trucks, and until there is a set date they cannot engage food trucks. He stated that he could change the application and pay the thousand-dollar fee, if there was extra money left over the town may get it or not.

Supervisor Dvorchak asked Mr. Bluestone to resubmit the application and would discuss the situation with the attorney prior to any further action.

MAPLE STREET INTERSECTION

Supervisor Dvorchak stated that this was part of the Comprehensive Plan which was approved in 2010.

The town received letters from Matt White and the Deckers, owners of the Log Cabin. Supervisor Dvorchak suggested that the town has a discussion with the DOT and then take the next steps.

Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom questioned the intersection not being included in the Hamlet Park plan carried out by Chazen. Supervisor Dvorchak made the motion that he would contact the DOT and include Mr. and Mrs. Decker and Steve Tiger for a site visit. Town Clerk Ward stated that the DOT had conducted a site visit some time ago because at that time the Town was considering making the road one way, the land is owned by the town to halfway with other owners, Cobble Pond, or the Gulf station.

RESOLUTION 26-2024

On a motion by Councilmember Virello and seconded by Councilmember Feld

The following resolution was

ADOPTED	Ayes 4	Dvorchak, Virello, Feld, Carano
	Nays 0	
	Absent 1	Carty

Resolved that the Town Board approves the Town Supervisor to contact the DOT in reference to Maple Street.

SEWER DISTRICT REPORT

Supervisor Dvorchak stated that the Town had hired H2O and approved the contract last Friday.

H2O started work immediately. It will take 3-6 months to flush the system out and get it cleaned.

He suggested that the other town board members take a tour of the plant. There are many things that do not work and need replacement. Supervisor Dvorchak has asked H2O to make a list of everything that needs attention including labor costs and then the town will pursue a SAM grant through Did Barrett's office. It is a rolling grant of approximately one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Supervisor Dvorchak reported that he just heard back from the company who installed the gutters, they will be placing white boards behind the gutters.

Mold Remediation will cause some disruption, with offices out in the parking lot, the date is May 3.

West Entrance replacement sign, Councilmember Feld reported that the towns insurance company had misread the bid documents and paid a single amount. The estimates have increased two hundred dollars since the first estimate was received. The sign is ordered, and the metal fabricator needs the sign prior to starting work on the metal frame. The sign will be ready by the end of March.

ROE JAN PARK REPORT

In reference to Park Maintenance:

Councilmember Virello reported that she had started to form a maintenance plan and is working with the State. She is meeting with the head of the Taconic State Park and must show estimates for work on three buildings in the park. The Salt Shed barn needs a new garage door, there are two quotes, and one is under five thousand dollars for a hand operated aluminum door. The jams around the door need to be replaced. The Hilltop Barn has two quotes for staining and repainting, the backside of the barn is rotten. Need to install board and batten, power wash, sand restrain and still within the budget with the funds from the HECDL.

Superintendent Briggs suggested that the door be modified as it does not need to be fifteen feet high as it was originally built for tractors. Councilmember Virello stated that she did not think they could change the barn as the State owns it.

The third is the Kiosk, the repairs will be done by Victor. Councilmember Virello met with a person who would like to donate materials for another Kiosk at the other end of the park. Councilmember Virello stated that the park needs money, what we have will cover the repairs.

A question from the audience referred to the rental fees received by the park. All money received for rentals is deposited into the Park Account. Councilmember Virello stated that the town cannot make a profit from the park, there needs to be a fundraising arm that is not associated with the members of the Town Board.

Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom questioned Victor and the prevailing wage. The response was that Victor is a part time employee and the issue of prevailing wage does not apply to the town.

In reference to the Fee Schedule:

Councilmember Virello stated that the park cannot give away free community events and suggested a minimal fee of one hundred and twenty-five dollars. There is one request received from the Roe Jan Library for a concert but going forward Councilmember Virello made a motion to charge one hundred and twenty-five dollars, seconded by Councilmember Feld.

Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom stated that there were some questions about the fee structure as there was some documentation on site with old fees. The documentation is on both the Website and at the site at the Kiosk. There is an adopted fee schedule in our Organizational Chart which is ambiguous. There was further discussion in reference to fees, there needs to be further clarification. There is a need for revision and clarification and how to create revenue sources.

Supervisor Dvorchak proposed to reinstate the fee of one hundred and twenty-five dollars for an event and to work on creating a more substantial fee schedule with more clarity for next year.

The motion is to reinstate the fee of one hundred and twenty-five dollars.

Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom stated that she suggested that the Town Board adopt the entire fee schedule. Further discussion in reference to future fee schedules for 2025.

RESOLUTION 27-2024

On a motion by Councilmember Virello and seconded by Councilmember Feld

The following resolution was

ADOPTED	Ayes 3	Dvorchak, Virello, Feld
	Nays 1	Carano
	Absent 1	Carty

Resolved that the Town Board approves the reinstatement of the fee of \$125.00 for specific events in the Hilltop Barn in the Roe Jan Park.

In reference to signage

Councilmember Virello stated that the signs are going to the printer, state park brown with a tan type that state the rules of the park and they have the State Park logo, OPRHP, and the town logo. Park rules and Dog Park rules, 2 signs at each entrance. The signs state that the town is not responsible for any incidents created by dogs.

RJ Park Citizen Advisory Committee

Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom stated that the committee had created a draft mission statement to be read into the record:

"The Roeliff Jansen Park Citizen Advisory Committee is established to advise the Town Board on matters regarding Roeliff Jansen Park, a valuable recreational, agricultural and ecological resource of the region. The Committee identifies, researches, plans and executes projects related to promotion of the use of the Park."

On a motion by Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom and seconded by Supervisor Dvorchak to approve the RJP CAC mission statement, for discussion.

Councilmember Virello stated that the first paragraph is great, the second is confusing as the committee does not execute plans and maintenance in the park. Approval comes from the Town Board. The Town of Hillsdale is the contractual authority for the park. There was further discussion on the original RJ Park

Steering Committee and fundraising. Councilmember Virello stated that she wanted to amend the mission statement. There is no steering committee chair. Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom requested that Councilmember Virello send the edits directly so that Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom can forward them to the committee.

The motion was tabled for the next Town Board meeting.

Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom stated based on Councilmember Virello's list, provided to the committee two months ago the committee identified a priority volunteer project which is the kiosk which was sent to the board for the volunteer committee to execute the project. Supervisor Dvorchak said that as we have a Park lead and a Park Maintenance person, they should field that request.

Councilmember Virello stated that we had to delineate what is maintenance in the park, what the town does. There was further discussion about the project list and the volunteer committee. A priority is the volleyball court to get ready for the youth program.

Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom stated that there were two dates, April 20, a Saturday, same date as the Routes 22 and 23 clean up, on Route 22 just in front of the park for a volunteer day. May 4 is Love my Park Day another opportunity for a volunteer day.

Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom asked if the Arms of the Sea Childrens Theater would happen this year, Supervisor Dvorchak stated that we cannot use town funds for events outside the town, Councilmember Virello stated that we cannot use money from the HECDC for programs. There was discussion on a separate group for fundraising.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Supervisor Dvorchak stated that there was a letter from the CAC which will be discussed in the April meeting.

HAMLET COMMITTEE

Supervisor Dvorchak stated that the flea market is Memorial Day Saturday, and it is technically rental of town property, \$40 for a large space with parking and \$25.00 for a smaller space. The checks can be written to the town. It is a town of Hillsdale event organized by the Hamlet Committee.

Councilmember Carano Nordenstrom stated that the flyer should say that it is a town event, there was discussion about what is meant by sponsorship. The email address is not a town email address and maybe add the town seal to the flyer. Mr. Stooksberry, attending via Zoom, stated that the email address is so that the organizers can communicate with the vendors. General discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kathryn Levin stated that the event on Monday was well attended, about 25-30 people. Ms. Levin spoke to the librarian about getting a meter so people could use it in their homes to see what levels there are. She had not researched it but the cost was between \$400 and \$500 for a meter. Supervisor Dvorchak stated that the town cannot give to a non-profit. Ms. Levine will look into grants. Ms. Levine made a report about Pittsfield and a 4G tower, currently the mayor of the town is being sued. Ms. Levine suggested the town review their bylaws.

Richard Briggs, Highway superintendent, stated that he had comments about Cullen Park, there are residents that walk dogs and do not pick up after them, he suggested that the town put up signs.

The second point was that there was a bench in memory of a past resident and a Rose of Sharon Bush that have disappeared. The town will investigate it.

TOWN BOARD MEETING
MARCH 12, 2024, PAGE 8

MOTION TO MOVE IN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion of Supervisor Dvorchak, seconded by Councilmember Feld the following resolution was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Dvorchak, Virello, Feld, Carano,
 Nays 0
 Absent Carty

Resolved that the Town Board move into Executive Session at 8.36 pm to discuss Citizen Advisory Committee and Personnel Appointments. Town Clerk Ward was asked to attend.

MOTION TO MOVE OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion of Councilmember Feld, seconded by Supervisor Dvorchak the following resolution was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Dvorchak, Virello, Feld, Carano,
 Nays 0
 Absent Carty

Resolved that the Town Board move out of Executive Session at 8.41 pm.

RESOLUTION 28-2024

On a motion by Supervisor Dvorchak and seconded by Councilmember Feld

The following resolution was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Dvorchak, Virello, Feld, Carano
 Nays 0
 Absent 1 Carty

Resolved that the Town Board approves the following appointments:

HAMLET COMMITTEE

Shannon Bell (Chair)

Alfred Tessier

Dan Levy

Alex Bloomstein

BICYCLE TASK FORCE

Robert Dembo

Francisco Camacho

Michael Knopf

Alex Bloomstein

ROE JAN PARK STEERING COMMITTEE

John Farrell

Jane Capellaro

PLANNING BOARD

Dan Latinsky for a 7-year term ending in December 2030

There was discussion on the appointment of Danielle Camacho as Planning Board Secretary assisted by Emily Stalker the Deputy Town Clerk. The Planning Board budget will need to be updated to include a second person; the Planning Board will need to get back to the Town Board with how this appointment will work.

TOWN BOARD MEETING
MARCH 12, 2024, PAGE 9

A motion suggested by Supervisor Dvorchak to ask the Planning Board to tell the Town Board how many hours each position would need.
There was no vote taken.

With no further business before the Town Board on a morion of Councilmember Feld, seconded by Councilmember Carano the meeting was adjourned at 8:58pm, carried unanimously.

Robina Ward, Town Clerk

