



**TOWN OF HILLSDALE**  
Public Hearing on Emergency Response Plan  
December 12, 2023

A Public Hearing of the Hillsdale Town Board was held on December 12, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the Hillsdale Town Hall and via Zoom with the following members present:

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Supervisor	Chris Kersten
	Councilmember	Joanna Virello
	Councilmember	Robina Ward
	Councilmember	Tom Carty

Councilmember Steve Tiger was not present

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Elizabeth Sheer, Town Clerk, Matt Cabral, Town Attorney, Mike Dvorchak, Meg Wormley, Rene Gibson, Ellen Levy, Mark Levy, Kevin Hindes, Irwin Feld, Joyce LaPenn, Dan Levy, Kathryn Levin, Stu Sumner, Eric Weiss, Rob Bradway, Kirsten Stoczek and other members of the public.

Present via Zoom were: Jamie Carano, Barbara Olsen Pascale, Shirley Bresler, and other members of the public

Supervisor Kersten noted that the Emergency Response Plan as written describes a situation that is of limited duration, and that was written according to state law.

He then asked for public comments.

A number of citizens, including Stu Sumner, Kathryn Levin, Eric Weiss and others expressed objections to the fact that the plan, as proposed, describes what would happen when a police situation is invoked. They wondered under what circumstances people would be commanded to leave their homes. They expressed concern that the Supervisor would be the person both declaring the emergency and defining the solution. They felt that the decision should not be in the hands of one person and that individual rights might be infringed. They offered that while it was fine to have a preparedness plan, check and balances needed to be in place.

Irwin Feld noted that during emergencies such as 9/11, it would have been helpful to have a person in authority offer a plan of how to proceed, in order to be prepared.

The Public Hearing ended at 6:59 without a motion for adjournment.



## TOWN OF HILLSDALE

Town Board Meeting

November 14, 2023

A regular meeting of the Hillsdale Town Board was held on December 12, 2023 at 7:00 pm in the Hillsdale Town Hall and via Zoom with the following members present

**PRESENT:** Supervisor Chris Kersten  
Councilmember Joanna Virello  
Councilmember Robina Ward  
Councilmember Tom Carty  
Councilmember Steve Tiger was absent

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Elizabeth Sheer, Town Clerk, Matt Cabral, Town Attorney, Mike Dvorchak, Meg Wormley, Irwin Feld, Dan Levy, Patti Rohrlich, Beth Gordon, Joyce LaPenn, Ellen Levy, Mark Levy, Mary Lou Kersten, Rene Gibson, George Schmitt, Kevin Hindes, and other members of the public

Present via Zoom were: Jamie Carano, Shirley Bresler, Martin Bresler, Janis Smythe, and other members of the public

The meeting began at 7:02 PM with Supervisor Kersten leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Comment:** There were none.

### **Resolution #60. Approval of the minutes of the Town Board of November 14, 2023**

On a motion by Tom Carty, seconded by Robina Ward, the Board voted to accept the minutes of October November 14, 2023

#### **Adopted Vote**

**Aye: 4      Nay: 0**

#### **Resolved to accept the Minutes of the November 14, 2023 Town Board Meeting**

Prior to the Supervisor's report, George Schmitt gave an outline on the issue at the Twisted Sister Coffee Shop. He gave a brief history of the sewer district, a description of the problem, and possible solutions. His recommendation is to mitigate the location by surrounding it with concrete and a one micron filter in addition to the one already in place. The DEC would accept this. The Board elected to table this until January.

Supervisor Kersten asked the Board whether it would like to take up the issue of the Emergency Response Plan or defer it.

Attorney Cabral suggested that some of the language be revised in respect to the comments of the public. His suggestion is to remove the language that indicates a “police situation”. The reference to language regarding individual rights is not consistent with what the Town is trying to accomplish.

The issue of the declaration to be made by the supervisor is due to the urgency of the situation. The time frame is very limited. The Town Board is empowered to override the supervisor. However, in the case of a snow storm, such as the one last year, it is not possible to convene the Board. Attorney Cabral added that what the plan is attempting to do is establish a procedure around the already existing law.

Robina pointed out that what is missing is a list of volunteers.

Attorney Cabral suggested an evacuation checklist, although citizens could elect to remain in their homes.

A motion was made by Robina Ward, and seconded by Tom Carty to adopt the amended Emergency Response Plan

**Adopted Vote**

**Aye: 4      Nay: 0**

**The Board moved to adopt the amended Emergency Response Plan**

**Supervisor’s Report**

Supervisor Kersten thanked the citizens of Hillsdale for the honor of serving them. In addition, he thanked the Board, Attorney Cabral, Town Clerk Sheer, the Highway department, and the people who work at Town Hall.

The town is in a strong fiscal position. Town Hall renovations are underway, and the sewer is out of default.

However, issues remain – there are several open positions with personnel needed to fill them.

Supervisor Kersten ended by wishing success to Mike Dvorchak, the newly elected supervisor, and the incoming Town Board.

**Highway Report** – This was delivered by Robina Ward.

There was a request for a new pick-up truck. The insurance from the wreck of the old one will fully cover the cost.

**Motion to purchase a new pick-up truck**

A motion was made by Robina Ward, and seconded by Joanna Virello to approve the purchase of a new pick-up truck, with the cost 100% covered by insurance

**Adopted Vote**

**Aye: 4      Nay: 0**

**The Board moved to approve the purchase of a truck**

**Town Clerk’s report**

There were two marriages and one birth in the last month.

In Dog news, there were two lost dogs reported, both of whom were reunited with their owners.

**Fire District Report** – Joe Hanselman, Jr. was not present

**Tax Collector's Report** – Joe Hanselman, Jr. was not present

**Infrastructure** - Supervisor Kersten said that Town Hall repairs are on-going. Columns have been put back on the portico. Gutters will be installed the next day. Robina Ward, as incoming Town Clerk will coordinate the moving of equipment and furniture in the addressing of the interior work of the Town Hall renovation.

**PARK** – Joanna Virello said that the Porta-Potty is staying over the winter. New signs will be ordered in the new year to be installed in the spring.

## **COMMITTEES**

Tom Carty read a note from Barbara Olsen Pascale, Planning Board Chair, who said that the Planning Board would have a candidate for secretary by the Organizational Meeting. The Planning Board also requested a membership for the town in the Planning Federation, so that the members of the Board could take courses online.

Planning Board member Bud Gardner is leaving after 25 years of service. The Board will be advertising for a new member.

### **Motion to approve dues for membership in the Planning Federation**

A motion was made by Robina Ward, seconded by Tom Carty to approve \$295 in membership dues for the Planning Federation.

### **Adopted Vote**

**Aye: 4      Nay: 0**

**The Board moved to approve the expenditure for dues for membership in the Planning Federation**

### **Continuing Business**

**Streetscape Project** – Supervisor Kersten requested approval to appoint CPL to write provide grant writing through a TAP grant, the cost of which would be \$5000.

### **Motion to approve funds for grant writing for the Streetscape Project**

A motion was made by Robina Ward, and seconded by Tom Carty to authorize \$5000 for grant writing on the Streetscape Project

### **Adopted Vote**

**Aye: 4      Nay: 0**

**The Board moved to approve the funds to appoint CPL to write grants for the Streetscape Project**

Supervisor Kersten added that this grant would provide a 20% match for a \$920,000 project; the Town would be obligated for \$184,000.

**Motion to authorize a 20% match for the Streetscape Project**

A motion was made by Robina Ward, and seconded by Joanna Virello to authorize a 20% match to the funds requested in the Streetscape grant

**Adopted Vote**

**Aye: 4      Nay: 0**

**The Board moved to authorize the funds for a 20% match**

**West End Bridge** -- The Town is encouraged to re-apply for a grant for this project. Hopefully, there will be less stiff competition from other, more populated bridges, as there was this year. The grant writer has agreed to re-submit a grant which would be due in January.

**Motion to approve funds for grant writing for the West End Bridge**

A motion was made by Robina Ward, and seconded by Tom Carty to approve \$1750 in grant writing fees to re-submit a grant for the West End Bridge

**Adopted Vote**

**Aye: 4      Nay: 0**

**The Board moved to approve the funds to appoint Victor Cornelius to write grants for the West End Bridge**

Supervisor Kersten added that this grant would provide a 5% match for a \$1.5 million; the Town would be obligated for \$75,000.

**Motion to approve funds for grant writing for a 5% match to the \$1.5 million grant for the West End Bridge**

A motion was made by Robina Ward, and seconded by Tom Carty to approve the 5% match on the grant for the West End Bridge

**Adopted Vote**

**Aye: 4      Nay: 0**

**The Board moved to authorize the funds for a 5% match**

Robert Patterson, the Town CPA, submitted several proposed budget amendments.

**Motion to approve budget amendments**

A motion was made by Tom Carty, seconded by Robina Ward to adopt all budget amendments.

**Adopted Vote**

**Aye: 4      Nay: 0**

**The Board moved to adopt all budget amendments**

Supervisor Kersten requested that the Board re-appoint Robert Patterson as the Town Bookkeeper for 2024 at a cost of \$2000 per month. In addition, he

requested funds for Mr. Patterson to conduct audits of the Town Clerk, the Tax Collector and The Justice Court.

**Motion to re-appoint Bob Patterson as Bookkeeper, and conduct various audits**

A motion was made by Robina Ward, and seconded by Joanna Virello to re-appoint Robert Patterson as Bookkeeper and authorize various audits

**Adopted Vote**

**Aye: 4      Nay: 0**

**The Board moved to re-appoint Robert Patterson and authorize audits**

The Town Board agreed to have a cement slab poured in a gap in the front entrance of Town Hall at a cost of \$8000. Supervisor Kersten asked for a motion to formalize this approval.

**Motion to formally approve the expenditure of \$8000 to pour a concrete slab**

A motion was made by Joanna Virello, and seconded by Tom Carty to approve funds to pour a concrete slab

**Adopted Vote**

**Aye: 4      Nay: 0**

**The Board moved approve the expenditure of \$8000 to pour a concrete slab**

**Public Comments**

Beth Gordon, who represented many people in the town, offered thanks, appreciation and respect to Supervisor Kersten for his leadership and integrity. She said that he has shown a high level of standards in concern and welfare for the community This was seconded by many in the audience.

In-coming Supervisor Mike Dvorchak thanked Supervisor Kersten for all of his help, and also thanked out-going Town Board members Robina Ward and Steve Tiger.

A citizen asked about the West End Bridge, and whether it was safe. Supervisor Kersten responded that it is fine, but it should be repaired. If the Department of Transportation finds it unsafe, it will be closed.

**Motion to adjourn**

A motion was made by Chris Kersten and seconded by Joanna Virello, to adjourn the Town Board meeting

**Aye: 4      Nay: 0**

**The Board adjourned at 7:43 PM**

**Resolution #61– Abstract dated November 6, 2023 . The Board has approved the abstracts of the following:**

General	\$14,839.00
Highway	\$23,294.50
Sewer	\$50.57
Parks	\$475.48
Lighting	\$0.0
Capital Fund	\$0.0

**Resolution #62 – Abstract dated November 20, 2023. The Board has approved the abstracts of the following:**

General	\$49,983
Highway	\$46,212.61
Sewer	\$425.00
Parks	\$62.40
Lighting	\$0.0
Capital Fund	\$0

**The next town Board meeting will take place at 7 PM on January 9, 2024**