



TOWN OF HILLSDALE
TOWN BOARD MEETING
October 10, 2023

A regular meeting of the Hillsdale Town Board was held on October 10, 2023 at 7:00 pm in the Hillsdale Town Hall and via Zoom with the following members present:

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Elizabeth Sheer, Town Clerk, Matt Cabral, Town Attorney, Mike Dvorchak, Jamie Carano, Russ Immageiron, Kathryn Levin, Laura Johnson, and other members of the public.

Present via Zoom were: Jonathan diRocco, Miguel Cabrera, Stu Sumner, Eric Press, Kristin Dalton, Beth Gordon, Kelly Sweet, Irwin Feld, Steve Bluestone, Barbara Olsen Pascale, Ilich Ramirez and other members of the public

The meeting began with Supervisor Kersten asking for a moment of silence to mourn the thousands of dead, injured and missing after attacks in Israel, with the hope of a return to peace. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Jonathan di Rocco discussed bid recommendations for the Town Hall Renovations and Roof Repairs.

For Town Hall: There were five bids. The lowest was MCT AT Services at 198,297.75 as a base bid including a 5% allowance. All references were called, and were positive.

For the Roof: There were five bids with the lowest being Empire Core Group LLC at \$76,218.50. All references were positive, and therefore, this bid is recommended.

Mr Di Rocco suggested that if the Town Board approved the bids, a notice of award and contract would be completed. There will be about two weeks to send them back. Once he receives a notice to proceed, there will be a pre-construction meeting to get a schedule, discuss the time frame, and then work will begin.

Motion: Approval of MCT AT Services to be awarded the contract for Town Hall renovation.

On a motion by Tom Carty, seconded by Steve Tiger, the Board voted to approve the bid from MCT AT Services to award them the contract for the Town Hall renovation.

Adopted Vote

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board accepts the bid for the Town Hall Renovation from MCT ATService and awards them the contract.

Motion: Approval of Empire Core Group LLC to be awarded the contract for Town Hall Roof renovation.

On a motion by Robina Ward, seconded by Steve Tiger, the Board voted to approve the bid from Empire LLC to award the contract for the Town Hall roof renovation

Adopted Vote

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board accepts the bid for the Town Hall Renovation from Empire LLC Service and awards them the contract.

Resolution #53. Approval of the minutes of the Town Board of September 12, 2023

On a motion by Steve Tiger, seconded by Tom Carty, the Board voted to accept the minutes of September 12, 2023

Adopted Vote

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

Resolved to accept the Minutes of the September 12, 2023 Town Board Meeting

Public Comment: There were comments by Stu Sumner, Eric Press, Kristin Dalton and Kathryn Levin regarding the proposed Emergency Response Plan. They expressed concern that in the event of emergency the constitution could be suspended, military called, and people could be forced from their homes unwillingly. They asked the about the criteria used to determine an emergency, what criteria needed to be met before rules and regulations would be suspended, and the military called. They said that they agreed with the notion of the Board unanimously voting to declare an emergency. Ms. Dalton said that she worked for a team of civil rights attorneys who looked at the proposed plan and who had similar questions.

Kathryn Levin suggested that a committee be formed to investigate the plan. Perhaps this committee could come up with a plan that made sense for the community, and was not issued by the state.

Supervisor's Report

Supervisor Kersten first noted the untimely passing of Mike Scheller, and offered condolences to his wife, Robin. He thanked Cliff Albright and Victor Amendola, who are stepping up to make sure that the sewer runs smoothly. In September 11,700 gallons were used per day owing to the extreme rainfall.

The Budget for 2024 is proceeding. Suggestions to raise property taxes do not seem to be justified, and could be a hardship for people who are already having a hard time making ends meet, and he will not support an increase.

West End Bridge – Field tests are going on.

At the County level, a resolution will be introduced to recommend no change in the qualifications for judges in towns and villages, rather than requiring them to possess a law degree.

Highway Report – Superintendent Richard Briggs asked for a vote on the proposal for a fueling system. The tank has started seeping, and needs to be replaced.

Motion to obtain emergency approval to replace the DPW Fuel Tank

A motion was made by Robina Ward, and seconded by Joanna Virello to award funds for a DPW Fuel Tank

Adopted Vote

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board moved to grant emergency approval for a new fuel tank

Superintendent Briggs added that the slab for the tank had already been built.

The Tri Brook Bridge is close to completion.

The Highway department has been cutting dead trees, and clearing leaves from culverts and roads. He requests that people refrain from blowing leaves from their properties onto the street.

The sidewalk project has been started, and gravel is washing down people's driveways.

The new loader has arrived.

Town Clerk's report

There was one birth, one death, and one marriage in the past month.

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

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

Human Resources – Steve Tiger said there was an issue that will be discussed in executive session

Infrastructure – Robina Ward said the Emergency Response Plan was sent to David Harrison at the County for review.

All towns are urged to create an Emergency Plan, based on a 2013 law. The supervisor may declare an emergency for a specific reason, in writing, and sent to the county by the Town Clerk. It is in place for 30 days, and can be rescinded at any time. Any suspension of law can last for 5 days.

A volunteer emergency group should be created, because a big question is: if the phones don't work, how does the town communicate with citizens?

Supervisor Kersten said that emergencies include flooding, fire, ice and snow storms and power outages. The Supervisor's calling of an emergency allows the town to take advantage of county and state resources, and mandated by federal and state guidelines. The purpose of the plan is to keep the citizenry safe.

Richard Briggs, in his capacity as Fire Chief, has requested emergencies be called in the past because of dire need getting resources. In a big snowstorm, the highway department cannot get to residents and clear the roads.

Supervisor Kersten added that the Town wants to create an option for safety. At the present time, he added, the Board is not in a position to adopt this plan.

Councilmember Ward asked that the Board give the OK for newly elected members to attend a training in February in New York City given by the Association of Towns.

Motion to approve funds for training for newly elected Board members

A motion was made by Steve Tiger, and seconded by Joanna Virello to approve funds for newly elected Board members to get training from the Association of Towns

Adopted Vote

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board moved to approve funds for training for newly elected Board members

PARK – Joanna Virello said that there was nothing really new to report. The new park rules have been posted on the website. A list of maintenance requirements is being made

COMMITTEES

HECDC – The mural on the side of Hillsdale supermarket will be unveiled on October 28, 2023 at 2 PM. The Halloween Hayride will be on October 28 at 5 PM.

Log Home update – nothing to report

Chargeback agreement – The Rescue Squad seeks funding for 2024 of \$140,051.

Motion to approve funds Rescue Squad Chargeback

A motion was made by Robina Ward, and seconded by Joanna Virello to approve \$140,051 in chargeback fees for the Rescue Squad

Adopted Vote

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board moved to approve \$140,051 in chargeback fees to the Rescue Squad

Supervisor Kersten said that there was a memo from Patrice Perry, Director of the Columbia County Planning Department. There is one seat vacant in our region, which includes Copake and Ancram. The current representative has agreed to serve another 3 year term from December 31, 2023 – December 31, 2026

Motion to approve the service of the representative of the Planning Board

A motion was made by Tom Carty, and seconded by Joanna Virello to approve the re-appointment of the representative to the county Planning Board

Adopted Vote

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board moved to approve the re-appointment of the representative to the County Planning Board for a 3 year term

Public Comments

Kathryn Levin requested a committee to investigate 5G wireless. She said that the Town has an opportunity to bring experts to speak to the town about this issue, and how to get wireless safely and efficiently to the citizens of the Town.

Motion to move into Executive Session

A motion was made by Steve Tiger, and seconded by Joanna Virello, to move the Board into Executive Session

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board Agreed to move into Executive Session at 7:50 PM.

Motion to move out of Executive Session

A motion was made by Steve Tiger, and seconded by Joanna Virello, to move the Board out of Executive Session

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board Agreed to move out of Executive Session at 8:20 PM.

Motion to move into Regular Session

A motion was made by Steve Tiger, and seconded by Joanna Virello, to move the Board back into Regular Session

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board Agreed to move into Regular Session at 8:21 PM

Motion to adjourn

A motion was made by Steve Tiger, and seconded by Tom Carty, to adjourn the Town Board meeting

Aye: 5 Nay: 0

The Board Agreed to adjourn at 8:23 PM

Resolution #54 – Abstract dated September 5, 2023 . The Board has approved the abstracts of the following:

General	\$8,139.01
Highway	\$148,098.99
Sewer	\$337.90
Parks	\$242.45
Lighting	\$
Capital Fund	\$0.0

Resolution #55 – Abstract dated September 20, 2023. The Board has approved the abstracts of the following:

General	\$16,960.46
Highway	\$48,775.23
Sewer	\$6,458.32
Parks	\$517.59
Lighting	\$0.0
Capital Fund	\$10,694.67

The next town Board meeting will take place at 7 PM on November 14, 2023.