

WHITE CREEK TOWN BOARD MINUTES  
OCTOBER 10, 2023

The White Creek Town Board held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at the Major John Wilson Sprague Building, 28 Mountain View Drive, Cambridge, New York. Supervisor Griffith called the meeting to order at 7pm. All rose for the pledge to the flag, followed by a short prayer. Supervisor Griffith noted that he had received some complaints about the meetings being opened with a prayer. He stated that it has been a tradition for quite some time (2006) that the meetings began with a prayer and he believes that it will continue as both candidates for Supervisor are people of faith. Supervisor Griffith noted that the issue has been challenged at the Federal and State Supreme Courts and it was determined as long as the prayer does not refer to a specific religion or denomination it is within the law.

**Roll Call**

Roll call was taken by the Town Clerk with a full board in attendance. Town Board Members; Gregory Austin, Tammy Taber, Lance Wang, Gregory Woodcock and Supervisor James Griffith. Also present at the meeting was Budget Officer Laura Manning, Highway Superintendent Chris Rieben, Town Assessor Darryl Caputo, Town Attorney Alan Wrigley and Planning Board Chairwoman Carey Murphy.

**Resolution 46-2023 – Approval of September 12, 2023 Town Board Minutes**

Lance Wang made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2023 meeting as presented. Gregory Austin seconded the motion and all voted in favor of approval.

**Resolution 47-2023 – Lawn Care Bid**

Town Clerk Lisa Austin-Cuddihy opened the two bids that had been submitted for a new three (3) year lawn care contract. The first bid was from Niles Lawnmowing, owners Donna and Ernie Niles submitted a bid of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) per year for three (3) years to be paid in three installments per year. The second bid was submitted by Wirmusky Property Management, owner Richard Wirmusky submitted a bid of eleven thousand dollars (\$11,000.00) for 2024, eleven thousand five hundred dollars (\$11,500.00) for 2025 and twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000.00) for 2026. After a brief discussion, Lance Wang

made the motion to accept the bid from Niles Lawnmowing. Gregory Austin seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

### **Resolution 48-2023 - 2024 Preliminary Budget**

Budget Officer Laura Manning submitted the Preliminary Budget for 2024 to the Board. The total amount of the budget is \$1,080,780.00 which is a 1.69 % increase from the 2023 budget. Gregory Austin made the motion to accept the Preliminary Budget as presented and schedule the Public Hearing for the Final Budget Approval for Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 7pm. Lance Wang seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

### **Resolution 49-2023 – Notice to Bidders for Propane and Diesel Fuel**

Lance Wang made the motion to advertise bids for diesel fuel and propane for the Town Hall and Highway Garage for 2024. Tammy Taber seconded the motion and all others voted in favor. The bids will be opened at the November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Old Business**

Supervisor Griffith stated that Al Nolette will begin working on all audit reports that are due. Gregory Austin suggested creating a schedule in order to submit the reports on time in the future. The Board decided that they would work on formulating a schedule to stick to in order to improve reporting in a timely manner.

### **Town Resident's Comments**

Resident Perry Young criticized how the parking lot was paved and wonders how long it will hold up. He also suggested to Highway Superintendent Chris Rieben that many signs need to be replaced and hoped that with the remaining funds this will get done. Chris stated that new road signs and posts have to be put up along Route 22 due to the NYSDOT removing the street signs from their posts. Mr. Young stated that the single lane bridge (culvert) on River Road is extremely dangerous and something needs to be done about it. Superintendent Rieben stated that this is a County DPW decision and he will reach out and speak to the Superintendent about it. Mr. Young also inquired about the Building Committee for the Town Office and where they are with the repairs they had planned to do this year. Gregory Woodcock stated that the building had been power washed this summer and needs some work on the exterior done prior to painting the building. **Resolution 50-2023:** After checking with Budget Officer Laura Manning,

Supervisor Griffith proposed to use five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) of ARPA funds for the repairs and painting of the building. Tammy Taber seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The committee will have to put together a cost estimate for the repairs and seek three bids for the work to be completed. There was concern that due to fall and winter weather conditions, it may not be possible to complete this project before next year. Mr. Young concluded by recommending the Town purchase a better flag pole than the previous one, Supervisor Griffith stated that the location of the flag pole will be moved and a new pole with light will be purchased.

Renee McEvilly stated that she thought the meeting minutes were too vague and some information was left out that would be beneficial to residents that read the minutes on the website page. She asked if Assessor Darryl Caputo was certified to do the job. Supervisor Griffith stated that Darryl has completed a number of courses throughout the year as are required by NYS Real Property. Supervisor Griffith reminded everyone that there are no qualifications to run for elected positions and pointed out that the town's people have been opposed to a sole appointed assessor for quite some time. Renee McEvilly also expressed her concern about the audits not being submitted in a timely manner not just for this year but for several years. She wonders why Supervisor Griffith would not have been aware that these reports were due. Supervisor Griffith stated that he takes full responsibility and should have been communicating more with the Budget Officer to make sure the reports were being completed. Generally the Supervisor just relies on all the employees to be doing their jobs without being reminded to do so. Supervisor Griffith also stated that he felt Ms. McEvilly was trying to imply that there has been mismanagement of funds which is absolutely not the case here. Ms. McEvilly responded that was not her intent to imply that. She is just concerned because this does not seem to be a normal issue for other towns in the County and that it should not happen in White Creek.

Mr. LaFlamme asked Highway Superintendent Chris Rieben if the Center Road bridge by the Rod and Gun Club would be completed by before winter. He also asked if Chris had the authority to shut it down if the repairs were not complete. Chris responded that this is a project being done by the County DPW and it would be that Superintendent that would make the call.

Renee McEvilly announced that the 4-H is holding a trunk or treat at CCS on Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> from 5-7pm and all are welcome. Gregory Austin announced that the Harvest Parade will be held in White Creek on Saturday,

October 21<sup>st</sup> at 11am followed by activities and hayrides at Jermain Hall, all are invited to attend the event as well.

### **Assessor's Report**

Assessor Darryl Caputo announced that he will be holding an informational meeting on Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm at the American Legion Post. Darryl requested an executive session with the Board in regards to the fraudulent exemption applications that were discussed at the September meeting. Supervisor Griffith stated that the Board would go into executive session at the completion of the meeting, but no information would be disclosed or action taken until after the election as it has been contentious enough already. Ron McEvelly asked Supervisor Griffith if the town had a board of ethics, which Supervisor Griffith responded no, but stated that the Board members all take an oath which includes being ethical in their service to the town. Perry Young asked if applications and information such as a D2-14 for a veteran's exemption were kept on file in the office. Assessor Caputo stated that yes they were on file. Ron McEvelly responded to that comment by asking if Darryl had not shredded those documents as well, Assessor Caputo responded but was quickly cut off by Supervisor Griffith who called to end the discussion immediately.

### **Town Clerk's Report**

Town Clerk Lisa Austin-Cuddihy submitted a report for the month of September in the amount of \$6,336.00 with the town's portion being \$692.57.

### **Budget Officer's Report**

Budget Officer Laura Manning submitted the monthly operation statement to the Board. Laura stated that the budget is in line for this time of year.

### **Highway Superintendent's Report**

Highway Superintendent Chris Rieben submitted the monthly report of activities to the Board. They have done some work for the Town of Arlington on Black Hole Hollow Road. They continue to get the trucks ready for the winter season. Most of the grading is finished and the mowing is done for the season. Chris will be traveling to Maine to inspect a 4,000 gallon tank to hold brine that is for sale for \$500.00.

**Justice Court Report**

Town Justice Scott Lucey submitted the court report for the month of September in the amount of \$1,991.00.

**Audit Report – Resolution 51-2023 Approval of Vouchers**

After examination and signed approval of all vouchers submitted to the Board, Councilman Gregory Woodcock made the motion to approval all vouchers submitted in the amount of \$20,073.50 (General fund:\$5,843.30 and highway fund:\$14,230.26). Gregory Austin seconded the motion and all others voted in favor of approval.

**Resolution 52-2023 – Adjourn regular portion of meeting and commence to Executive Session at 8:03pm.**

Motion by Gregory Austin, seconded by Tammy Taber. The Board came out of Executive session at 8:53pm, no action was taken.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lisa Austin-Cuddihy  
White Creek Town Clerk