

**WHITE CREEK TOWN BOARD MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 14, 2023**

The White Creek Town Board held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at the Major John Wilson Sprague Building, 28 Mountain View Drive, Cambridge. Supervisor James Griffith called the meeting to order at 7pm, all rose for the pledge to the flag followed by a short prayer. Roll call was taken by the Clerk. Supervisor James Griffith and Town Board Members Gregory Austin, Tammy Taber, Lance Wang and Gregory Woodcock were all present. Also present was Budget Officer Laura Manning, Highway Superintendent Chris Rieben, Assessor Darryl Caputo and Planning Board Chair Carey Murphy.

**Public Hearings for 2024 Town Budget  
Resolution 53-2023 – Fire Contracts**

Supervisor Griffith opened the Public Hearing at 7:01pm for comments or questions. Karen LaFlamme questioned the five (5) percent increase to all the fire companies' budgets, stating that last year was a three (3) percent increase. She also asked if the White Creek Fire increase included the monies they were given for equipment purchases. Supervisor Griffith stated that the equipment was purchased with ARPA funds in 2023. Following the question and comment period, Supervisor Griffith closed the hearing at 7:03 pm. Lance Wang made a motion to approve the Fire Contracts for 2024 as presented in the 2024 Budget. Motion was seconded by Gregory Austin and all other members of the Board voted in favor of approval.

**Resolution 54-2023 – Approval of 2024 Town of White Creek Budget**

Supervisor Griffith opened the Public Hearing for the 2024 Town Budget at 7:04pm for comments or questions. Perry Young had questions in regards to the Highway Department's budget. He asked if there was any wiggle room for what we have in the budget right now. Highway Superintendent Chris Rieben stated there can be no changes in order to have a functioning department for 2024. Perry Young stated that in his opinion the stockpiling of material should go down and Chris should not keep building it up. Karen LaFlamme asked why the salary of the Assessor had decreased from what was originally put in the budget. Supervisor Griffith stated that the salary was reduced because that salary had been increased over the years due to the 30 years of service Ronna Meerwarth had served as the Assessor. A newly elected Assessor just starting out would not

receive the same salary as the previous Assessor whose salary reflected her amount of time on the job. Mr. LaFlamme stated that the same is true for the salary for Chris Rieben (Highway Superintendent); the salary would be reduced if a new superintendent came on the job with no experience. Karen LaFlamme questioned four (4) changes to the budget since the initial budget workshop she had attended and asked what those changes were. Budget Officer Laura Manning stated that the adjustments were due to changes in the projected sales tax revenue which also results in changes to capital projects and highway DB and the last being the reduction of the Assessor's salary. There being no further questions or comments, Supervisor Griffith closed the Public Hearing at 7:14 pm. Lance Wang made a motion to approve the 2024 Budget as presented. Gregory Woodcock seconded the motion and all members of the Board voted in favor of approval.

#### **Resolution 55-2023 – Approval of October 10, 2023 Town Board Minutes**

Gregory Woodcock made a motion to approve the minutes of the October Town Board Meeting. Tammy Taber seconded the motion and all others voted in favor of approval.

#### **Bid Opening for 2024 Propane and Diesel Fuel Bids**

Town Clerk Lisa Austin-Cuddihy opened the one (1) bid received for propane from G.A. Bove Fuels in Mechanicville, New York. The bid for propane for the two facilities (Town Hall and Highway Garage) was priced at a fixed twenty-five cents (25) over Selkirk rack price.

The bid received for the on road diesel fuel was also from G.A. Bove Fuels of Mechanicville, New York. The on road diesel fuel was priced at a fixed twenty-five (25) cents over the average price on the JOC.

After reviewing both the bids, a motion was made by Lance Wang to table both the bids to the December Town Board Meeting in order to seek more bids for both propane and diesel fuel. The notice to bidders will be advertised again and the bids will be due by December 12, 2023 at 2pm.

#### **Town Residents Comments**

Perry Young commented on the new roads signs to be placed on new posts. He also inquired as to what was the status of building improvements on the Town

Hall. Councilman Woodcock replied that he and Lance had worked on a notice for bidders for the work and posted it at the Ace Hardware and a couple other places. Mr. Young questioned why it was not posted in The Eagle newspaper as a Legal Notice? Supervisor Griffith instructed that the notice be placed in newspaper as a Notice to Bidders. Mr. Young stated that the Town Hall is “our house” and it should be spruced up a bit. Mr. Young also asked about the new flag pole, Supervisor Griffith told Mr. Young the placement of a new pole is in the works. Town Resident Ron McEvilly expressed his congratulations to all the newly elected candidates. He stated that both he and his wife love the town and will continue to show their support.

Mr. LaFlamme asked about the plans for a new voting location for the 2024 elections. Supervisor Griffith stated that the County Board of Elections is looking at two alternative locations at this time.

### **Planning Board**

Planning Board Chairwoman Carey Murphy reported that the Planning Board will be holding a Public Hearing at the December meeting for a proposed Minor Subdivision on Lincoln Hill Road. They also classified another project as a Minor Subdivision located on Bodenstab Lane.

### **Resolution 56-2023 – Appointment of Heath Murphy to Planning Board**

After receiving a letter of intent from Heath Murphy to fill an open seat on the Planning Board, the Board voted to appoint Heath Murphy to a seven (7) year term effective immediately. The motion to appoint was made by Lance Wang, seconded by Gregory Austin and all others voted in favor.

### **Assessor’s Report**

Assessor Darryl Caputo submitted a monthly report to the Board. Darryl reported that the State of New York has authorized an increase in the maximum income level for the Enhanced STAR and Low Income Disability exemptions. Darryl stated that he will be making a recommendation to the Board at the December meeting on the proposed increase and if it would prove suitable for the town’s taxpayers. He will be preparing an impact analysis on how this will affect those that are not eligible for the exemptions. Darryl will be continuing with more training classes in the month of December.

Assessor Caputo also informed the Board that he has full authority to present his findings of fraudulent exemption applications to the Washington County Sheriff’s

Office to pursue criminal charges. The Board voted to approve an official statement regarding the investigation of the fraudulent applications.

### **Resolution 57-2023 – Statement in Support of Town Assessor pursuing Fraudulent Exemptions**

The White Creek Town Board fully supports the efforts of the Town Assessor in identifying fraudulent exemption applications and pursuing appropriate legal venues against those individuals who do so. Motion to approve was made by Lance Wang, seconded by Gregory Austin and all others voted in favor.

Assessor Caputo expressed his concern about the security of the Town Offices. He feels that his filing cabinets should have locks and suggested that the door locks be changed in the Town Office. The Town Clerk assured the Board that all keys to the building are accounted for and other than an occasional meeting with civic groups at the Town Hall, only town employees have access into the building.

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

Town Clerk Lisa Austin-Cuddihy submitted the monthly report for October 2023 with revenue in the amount of \$2,516.00 with the Town's receiving a portion of \$461.74.

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

Budget Officer Laura Manning presented the monthly Operating Statement for the month to the Board. She stated that the town will be receiving additional monies for mortgage taxes in the amount of \$28,000.00 which will help with the fund balance. Gregory Woodcock asked if the Town will finish the year in the black and Laura responded yes.

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

Highway Superintendent Chris Rieben submitted a monthly report of activities to the Board. All the trucks are ready for winter weather. They have been ditching some roads and have finished patching potholes. Chris would like to purchase an old milk truck from Landview Farms; it could hold 6 thousand gallons of brine. They are asking \$2, 000.00 for it. The Board was not agreeable to make the purchase at this time.

**Audit Report – Resolution 57-2023 – Approval of Monthly Vouchers**

All vouchers were reviewed and signed off by the Board Members prior to the beginning of the meeting. Gregory Woodcock made a motion to approve all vouchers in the amount of \$45,157.05.

General Fund:     \$ 9,486.66

Highway Fund:    \$35,670.39

Motion was seconded by Gregory Austin and all others voted in favor of approval.

**Justice Court Report**

Town Justice Scott Lucey submitted the monthly report for October in the amount of \$2,250.00

**Adjourn**

There being no further business on the agenda, Supervisor Griffith made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Lance Wang and all others voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lisa Austin-Cuddihy  
White Creek Town Clerk