

**Danby Town Board  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
December 17, 2012**

**Present:**

Supervisor: Ric Dietrich  
Councilpersons: Leslie Connors, Kathy Halton, Dan Klein, Dylan Race

**Others Present:**

Town Clerk Pamela Goddard  
Deputy Town Clerk Susan McLellan  
Bookkeeper Laura Shawley  
Code Officer Sue Beeners  
Assessment Office Jay Franklin  
Public Garry Huddle, Ted Crane, Ronda Roaring, Ted Merritt, Tim Merritt, Elbern Woodward, Linda Hawsen, Valerie Burgess, Daniel Egar, Dale Burgess, John VanDeMark, Gould Colman, and several others

**The Regular Meeting of the Danby Town Board was opened at 7:00pm.**

**Tompkins County Assessment - Veterans' Tax Exemption**

Jay Franklin made presentation regarding the Veterans' real property tax exemption in relation to the County Assessment Office and the collection of Town and County real property tax. He reviewed the history of the "Alternative Veterans Exemption" from the 1920s to the present. There are specific dates of service during which a veteran must have served to qualify for this exemption. In addition, NYS has opted for a "Cold War" exemption which allows for a ten-year exemption for those who served during specific years of the "Cold War."

Franklin reported that 62 veterans in Danby currently are receiving the Alternative Exemption on County taxes. This number is used as a rough estimate of the number of veterans who might apply for a Town exemption. Approximately 1.8 million dollars of taxable value would be lost and \$10,600 in tax dollars would shifted to other tax payers in the town. The impact of the Cold War exemption is similar. It is estimated that the combined impact would be between \$6-10 on the median assessed value of a \$150,000 house. These numbers are based on the 2012 tax levy and on an \$18,000 maximum basic exemption. The exemption amount increases for those veterans with combat duty or a service related disability.

There was a session of Q&A between Franklin and the Town Board, clarifying the tax impacts for veterans and other property owners. Danby residents were also able to ask questions of Franklin regarding the impact of the tax base and other issues. Franklin clarified the application process and timing for qualifying for an exemption.

Dietrich asked for opinions from residents as to which level(s) of exemption should be granted from the Town. Residents expressed support for granting both the Alternative and Cold War Veterans' Exemption.

**RESOLUTION NO. 108 OF 2012 - VETERANS' EXEMPTION LEVELS**

**Resolved**, that the Town Board of the Town of Danby draft a Local Law to grant both the Alternative at a Basic Level of \$18,000 (Combat, \$30,000 and Disabled, \$60,000) and Cold War Veterans' Exemption at a Basic Level of \$12,000 (Disabled \$40,000).

**Moved by Race, Second by Dietrich. The motion passed.  
In Favor: Connors, Halton, Klein, Race, Dietrich**

## **Legislator's Report**

Frank Proto reported on activities of the Water Resources Council, Board of Health, the Environmental Management Council, and the County Planning Department asking for an extension to the comment period on SGEIS regulations through the NYS DEC. Each agency will make comments. These comments will be forwarded to the towns.

Proto also reported on funding for Youth Development, which has been restored in the County budget for 2013. There are concerns about future funding due to State cutbacks.

The County is examining TCAT service funding through a mortgage recording tax. The County is considering taking this step because the Federal Transportation Act has not been passed. The County can expect less funding from the Federal level, as "member items" have been cut. Funds collected through the mortgage recording tax will be dedicated to TCAT. The County is also exploring additional support from Cornell and Ithaca College.

Proto met with a representative of Congressman Reed for about 2.5 hours. The meeting, "covered a lot of ground," including gun regulation, Medicaid, the Farm Bill, Transportation Act, and other topics. Although topics that interest Tompkins County Residents are not always Reed's priority, Proto was told that the Congressman would have a presence here.

## **Set Year End Meeting**

The Board held a discussion regarding the date and agenda for the Annual Year End Meeting. The Board also discussed when to hold meetings in 2013. Consensus was to continue on the second and third Mondays. Therefore, the first meeting of 2013 will be held on Monday, January 14.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 109 OF 2012 - SET YEAR END MEETING**

**Resolved**, that the Town Board of the Town of Danby will hold its Year End Meeting at 5:00pm on Friday, December 28, 2012.

**Moved by Halton, Second by Klein. The motion passed.**

**In Favor: Connors, Halton, Klein, Race, Dietrich**

## **Association of Towns Resolutions**

Klein made a brief presentation about proposed resolutions for the Association of Towns Annual Meeting. He will be the Town representative, voting on these resolutions. As the designated representative, he recommends voting in favor of the proposed resolutions while being open to additional discussion.

## **Tourism "Gateway" Signage - Chamber of Commerce Draft Resolution**

A draft resolution and information regarding Tourism signage had been sent to the Board for consideration. Klein provided information about where these signs would be located and what they would say. He suggested that this be held until January, in order to gather additional information.

## **Privilege of the Floor**

Ted Merritt asked a question about Deputy Town Supervisor, based on, "a rumor heard that [the Deputy is] not an elected official and earns \$10,000 per year." Supervisor Dietrich clarified that the person holding this position is an elected official (Councilperson Dan Klein) and that the Deputy Supervisor receives only a minimal stipend per year.

Ronda Roaring requested that the Board consider having only one meeting per month in order to save travel costs for residents and Board members.

Crane apologized to the board for inadvertently omitting the article regarding Town Board vacancies from the December Danby Area News (unusable portions of the text appeared in the margin of one page). Related discussion that Willseyville Post Office may be closing and whether the Town can/should take any action on behalf of residents.

## **Town Response to Extended SGEIS Comments**

Halton presented two letters responding to NYS DEC regulations on HVHF gas drilling regulations for Board consideration. Halton suggested that both letters be signed by all members of the Town Board.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 110 OF 2012 - APPROVE SIGN LETTERS**

**Resolved**, that the Town Board of the Town of Danby will sign and send two letters to the NYS DEC; one requesting that the 30 day comment period be extended and the second making specific comments.

**Moved by Klein, Second by Race. The motion passed.**

**In Favor: Connors, Halton, Klein, Race, Dietrich**

## **Resolution Honoring Roy Casterline**

Connors presented a draft resolution, honoring the late Roy Casterline for years of service to Danby. There was a brief discussion regarding including the resolution in the Danby Area News. This will be published in an upcoming issue of the DAN.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 111 OF 2012 - ACKNOWLEDGING CASTERLINE'S LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION TO DANBY**

**Resolved**, that the Town of Danby acknowledge the lifetime of contributions made by Roy Casterline and his wife Mary Casterline to the Town of Danby. Roy held the position of Water Commissioner for 6 years, prior to his 35 years as Water Superintendent. During those same years, Mary was the Water District bookkeeper/clerk. Mary passed away in 2009, and Roy on December 2, 2012. Roy's presence and participation in the "community of Danby" will be missed by many.

**Moved by Klein, Second by Connors. The motion passed.**

**In Favor: Connors, Halton, Klein, Race, Dietrich**

## **CSEA Negotiations**

A final contract was received from the Town Attorney. Shawley and Dietrich wanted to do a final review of the contract. They suggested that approval of this contract be postponed until the Year End Meeting.

## **Aquifer Presentation**

Beeners confirmed that a presentation about the expanded study of the Danby aquifer will be held on Thursday, Feb. 21, 2013. The study should be finished by January 3, 2013 and then will go to other USGS scientists for peer review.

Beeners informed the Board that the Town will need to pay for some GIS assistance in taking Todd Miller's data and creating useful maps related to subdivision review, an Aquifer Protection Law, and Critical Environmental Area Designations. A resolution for the approval of expenditure of funds will come to the board at a future date.

## **Adjournment**

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:42pm.

---

Pamela Goddard, Town Clerk