

**Danby Town Board
Minutes of Regular Meeting
September 14, 2015
DRAFT**

Present:

Supervisor: Ric Dietrich
Councilpersons: Leslie Connors, Jim Holahan, Jack Miller

Excused:

Councilperson: Rebecca Brenner

Others Present:

Town Clerk Pamela Goddard
Bookkeeper Laura Shawley
Code Officers CJ Randall
Legislator Dan Klein
Public Ted Crane, Ronda Roaring, Jim Sczepanski

The Danby Town Board Meeting was opened at 7:10pm

Privilege of the Floor

Ronda Roaring spoke regarding the posting of building permits in a visible location on properties. She expressed the view that a building permit is not effective unless posted in a way that makes it visible from the road. She also requested that the Town web site be updated to include the monthly Code Enforcement reports, including previous months which are currently missing.

Jim Sczepanski asked questions regarding the intent of the Board in regards the Tax Cap. Supervisor Dietrich responded with an explanation of the problem municipalities are facing, with respect to the State mandate limiting tax growth to 1% during the next three years. Dietrich noted that the Town has tried to do due diligence in relation to the tax cap over the past three years. This year, the Town will have difficulty in maintaining services and staying under the tax levy limit as defined by NYS. There are major expenses, such as repairs to the Highway Barn roof and equipment replacement, that need to be addressed. By passing a local law enabling the Town to override the tax levy limit, Danby will be in a fiscally prudent position. Dietrich noted that there will be a public hearing on this local law at the next TB meeting.

Sczepanski had additional questions regarding the status of Highway equipment and road repairs in Danby. He expressed particular concern over the condition of East Miller Road and the need to repair this road before winter. Dietrich and Shawley responded to Sczepanski's questions.

Warrants

ABSTRACT #9 OF 2015:

HIGHWAY FUND

#189-219 for a total \$100,058.01

Approved, provisionally, pending further review as voucher #192 was not included.

Moved by Miller, Second by Holahan. The motion passed.

In Favor: Connors, Holahan, Miller, Dietrich

GENERAL FUND

#359-398 for a total of \$25,414.16

Approved, provisionally, pending further review as two vouchers #37x and 3xx were not included.

Moved by Holahan, Second by Miller. The motion passed.

In Favor: Connors, Holahan, Miller, Dietrich

WEST DANBY WATER DISTRICT

#39-43 for a total of \$902.47

Moved by Holahan, Second by Connors. The motion passed.

In Favor: Connors, Holahan, Miller, Dietrich

Approve Minutes

RESOLUTION NO. 80 OF 2015 - APPROVE MINUTES

Resolved, that the Town Board of Town of Danby approves the minutes of August 10, 2015.

Moved by Connors, Second by Holahan. The motion passed.

In Favor: Connors, Holahan, Miller, Dietrich

RESOLUTION NO. 81 OF 2015 - APPROVE MINUTES

Resolved, that the Town Board of Town of Danby approves the minutes of August 17, 2015.

Moved by Connors, Second by Holahan. The motion passed.

In Favor: Connors, Holahan, Miller, Dietrich

Schedule Budget Planning Meetings

The following special meetings were tentatively set for budget planning: Sunday October 4, 2:30-4:30pm. Monday October 5, 7:30pm. Both meetings will be held at the Danby Town Hall. The budget needs to be passed by November 17. A budget hearing will be set for one of the November TB meetings, either November 9 or 16.

Dietrich gave an overview of the current budget plan in regards the NYS tax levy limit. He suggested that the Board schedule at least two meetings, dedicated to budget planning, prior to the first Town Board meeting. Clerk Goddard noted that there are limited dates in which to do so. In addition to the two dedicated budget meetings in the first week of October, the Board may hold budget meetings prior to its regular TB meetings on October 12 and 19, starting at 5:30pm. Connors and Miller noted that they will miss the October 12 meeting, as it falls on a holiday weekend. Holahan noted that his availability for extra meetings in October will be limited, due to work obligations.

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan

Planner CJ Randall shared information regarding funding available for drafting a municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. She noted that there are approximately 4000 acres of farmland in the Town of Danby. She shared a new map, from Tompkins County, of important agricultural land in Danby. The new County Comprehensive Plan notes some of this farmland. Support is available through the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. The Dept. of Ag & Markets will provide up to \$25,000 in support of an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. There is a minimal match for these funds.

Randall reported on a recent training evening with the Planning Board, which included a discussion regarding how to protect farmland in Danby. Randall believes that the creation of a Protection Plan would be a good first step. She has seen good plans in other municipalities. Once a plan is in past, future funding could be available for the purchase of development rights on farmland, further protecting this important resource. Randall believes that drafting a plan would be a good way to engage the Danby agricultural community.

Stormwater Projects

Planner CJ Randall updated the Board on meetings and training attending by Planning and Highway. They attended part of a three-phase training on stream shed protection and maintenance and stream shed remediation. Hydrological maps are available through the USGS for drainage areas. GPS information connected to these maps will allow accurate and precise stream shed remediation throughout the Town.

Randall informed the Board that the County's West Miller Road ditch improvement project has been approved. Highway and Code will be attending an "environmental finance boot camp" in mid-October. This funding stream is a primary source for "green infrastructure." This training is being offered by Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Solar Projects in Danby - Highway Property and Gunderman Road School Property

Information was provided by CJ Randall on the status of a possible large scale solar installation project on Town Highway property. The preliminary interconnection agreement signed earlier this year is good though the end of 2017. Randall also reported on preliminary discussions regarding a possible joint project with the Ithaca City School District at the Gunderman Road school property. The Code Office is working with various County departments regarding these proposals.

Aquifer Protection Ordinance/Water Resources Update

There was a reminder that two public information meetings, regarding water resources, have been scheduled for Thursday, October 8 and Tuesday, October 27. Both will take place in the Danby Town Hall at 7pm.

Randall reported that she has contacted an hydrogeologist who is willing to look over the draft Aquifer Protection Ordinance for technical considerations related to water draw-down tests. This person has a lot of practical experience with related work in the Town of Danby.

Legislator's Report

Klein reported on Tompkins County's budget planning. There has still be no response from NYS regarding the inter-municipal tax cap plan submitted in June. Dietrich stated that, even if the Tompkins County plan is approved, this might not be enough to keep Danby under the tax levy limit for 2016. Klein voiced his support for Danby passing a local law to override the tax levy limit.

Klein reported that the County Legislature intends to stay under its tax cap of 1.8%, but just barely. Klein reported that he expects the County tax levy to increase but, due to increased assessments, the County tax rate will actually decrease for many property owners. For those whose assessments did not rise, taxes will actually go down. He stated that the average taxpayer will see an increase of \$15 for County taxes on their 2016 tax bill. The average Tompkins County home is now valued at \$170,000.

Klein reported that funds will be added to the County Historian's budget for 2016. In part, these funds will be used to install additional historic markers around the county. Klein suggested that anyone with ideas for historic markers should contact himself or Carol Kammen. Dietrich suggested that information about the Bald Hill community (now the Danby State Forest) should be noted on historic markers.

Short Reports/Correspondence

Jack Miller reported on activities of the Conservation Advisory Council. The CAC is working on a draft of a letter to be sent to Danby property owners who may be prospective easement holders. Joel Gagnon estimated that there are 320 parcels of private property in Danby sized at 20 acres or more. DEC guidelines for land management are available. The CAC will come up with goals for management plans in Danby.

Supervisor Dietrich reminded the Board that the Planning Board will discuss the most recent proposal for Gunderman Road PDZ10. He strongly urged the TB to attend that meeting, if possible. He suggested that this meeting will be significant. This meeting will be held Thursday, September 17.

Copies of the Justice's reports were distributed to the TB.

The Town Clerk's report noted that \$1,605.05 was distributed to the Town Supervisor for the month of August. This included 39 dog licenses, five building permits, and sales of hunting and fitting licenses. \$993.05 was distributed to the NYS DEC for sporting license sales, \$70.00 to the Animal Population Control Program through the NYS Department of Ag & Markets, and \$22.50 to the Department of Health for a marriage license.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm

Pamela Goddard, Town Clerk