

**Danby Town Board
Minutes of Regular Meeting
June 8, 2020, 7pm, via Zoom Videoconferencing**

Present:

Councilpersons: Leslie Connors, Joel Gagnon (Supervisor), Jim Holahan, Sarah Schnabel, Matt Ulinski

Others Present:

Town Clerk Alexandra Pfeifer
Justices Garry Huddle and Theresa Klinger
Bookkeeper Laura Shawley
Highway Sup't Carl Seamon
Code Officer Steve Cortright
Planner Jason Haremza
Legislator Dan Klein
Public Ronda Roaring, Cindy Parlett, Ted Crane, Bruce Richards, Kim Nitchman,
 Katharine Hunter, Kevin Feeney

Meeting Opened at 7:04 pm

Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

Laura Shawley added a Highway Resolution with regard to year end budget reconciliation.

Approve Minutes

RESOLUTION NO. 52 OF 2020-APPROVE MINUTES

Moved, That the Town Board of the Town of Danby approves the minutes of March 2 and March 9, 2020.

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

In Favor: Connors, Holahan, Schnabel, Ulinski, Gagnon

Privilege of the Floor

Ronda Roaring wished to know what progress was being made re: dog fines. She mentioned the process of what happens when a dog gets loose and its relationship with the SPCA. Many times the dog's photo gets posted on the Danby/South Hill Facebook page and the owner never contacts the SPCA about the dog running loose. She wondered, since the owner is never contacted by the SPCA, what happens to the dog? At what point does the dog become property of the SPCA?

Ronda also mentioned that she has comments about the Rules and Procedures of the Town Board, in hopes that the TB would be consistent with their grammar and punctuation in all of the policies under discussion and review.

Kim Nitchman, in response to Ronda's comments re: dogs and the SPCA, said that if the owner is not proactive in locating their dog that perhaps the dog is better off at the SPCA. She also added that dogs getting loose messes up hunting and that perhaps the DEC should get involved with that issue.

Matt Ulinski mentioned (not as a TB member), that in relation to the last couple of weeks and in the next 2-3 months re: the Black Lives Matter movement, that he would like to encourage the town government to foster more racial understanding and justice. He would also like to figure out how to make the town more welcoming to people of color.

Ted Crane commented on procedures of the meeting, noting that the approval of the minutes happened before the privilege of the floor, and that now it was too late to comment on the minutes (since they were already approved). Gagnon said he would make a note of it and change the order of the agenda for future meetings.

Justices' Report

Justice Huddle reported that Tod Sukontarak came into the court to measure the podium and the court clerk's desks for the shields. Sukontarak told Huddle that he is having a difficult time finding materials (citing that at Lowe's and Home Depot only 1 sheet of 3x2 plexiglass was in stock), but that he will do his best, and hope to get the shields done within a week.

Huddle also reported that the 6th district had a Skype call on Thursday with the State. He also added that adjournments keep getting pushed back. Huddle also reported that they were worried if they had enough wipes, hand sanitizer and other supplies. He also added that the court has a thermometer to take the temps of those who enter the courtroom.

Code Report

Cortright noted that he submitted his monthly report to the clerk. His monthly activities included 1 certificate of occupancy at 77 Nelson Rd. for a new duplex, and permits for a single family home at 10 maple ave, a garden shed at 2772 Spencer Rd, and a 2 car garage at 972 W. King Rd. His other activities included updating the hazard mitigation plan. No fire calls or code violations were reported this month.

Planner Report

Haremza began by noting that he submitted his report to the town clerk and the town board. After recapping the CAC and PB meetings (there was no BZA meeting this month), he noted his progress on the RFQ septic grant. Haremza gave an update on Howland Rd. Hemp Operation: the town sent a letter to the operator on May 5th, but the operator hasn't signed for it. Per the town attorney, Haremza also sent the letter by First Class mail, sent an email, and left a phone message in a last ditch effort to make sure that the owner has ample notice of the letter. Haremza expressed frustration at the lack of communication on the owner-operator's part. Haremza also reported that he attended 2 webinars on May 16 and June 18, that he is continuing to work on updating and improving the Town of Danby website (and gave a shout out to the planning group portion of the website, where links to the 4 working groups can be found), and concluded that in order to save postage, he would be sending out postcards instead of letters of notification.

Legislator's Report

Dan Klein reported that the Primary Election day is June 23rd, and that this year the West Danby Fire Station is not on the list of polling places. So, those that are voting in person who live in West Danby need to go to the Danby Fire Station to vote. He added that early voting is from June 13-21 for a half day each day at different locations in town.

Klein also mentioned that two paving projects were cancelled and that West Miller Rd and Jersey Hill Rd. were chip sealed. He also added that the foreclosure process (that usually occurs when property taxes have not been paid for three years) has been delayed, and now the owner has from now until July to pay taxes. The property in question (which has been published) is 2754 Danby Rd., is a five acre parcel, and has an assessment of 35k.

Klein also relayed to the TB information about a CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) grant for \$600k to use for rent payment for 150 households. The 600k grant was repurposed from a grant that was available to low-income families in order to make home repairs and fix roofs, etc. Since none of the repairs can take place because of COVID-19, the grant was repurposed in order to stave off evictions. Applications are on a first come first serve basis, and the deadline for applying is June 15th. The applications are processed through INHS (Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services). Klein added that Ithaca city has a separate grant for 200k, which is enough for 50 homes.

Schnabel suggested writing a newsblast and posting it on the website which includes the link for the housing application, as well as the information re: the polling locations and the due date for requesting an absentee ballot (which is June 16th.)

RESOLUTION NO. 53 OF 2020-Warrants

GENERAL FUND

#203-215 for a total of \$20,749.40

**Moved by Connors, Second by Holahan. The motion passed.
In Favor: Connors, Holahan, Schnabel, Ulinski, Gagnon**

HIGHWAY FUND

#100-110 for a total of \$158,538.51

**Moved by Connors, Second by Ulinsk. The motion passed.
In Favor: Connors, Holahan, Schnabel, Ulinski, Gagnon**

Reopening Plan

Cindy Parlett, who was the designated representative for the DCL (Danby Community Library), was available to answer any questions from the board re: the library reopening plan. She noted that she revised and shared the updated plan with the TB after receiving their suggestions. Ulinski said that he is comfortable with the revised plan. Parlett asked the TB if it was alright if Lynn Eastman and her high school age granddaughter were ok to go into the library to finish up updating the book collector catalog.

She noted that it is quite the process and takes two people to verify the books are on the shelf. Once this was done, then the DCL would be ready to implement curbside pickup.

Before the resolution came to a vote, the board talked about the availability of the barriers for the court clerk and the town clerk, and also about the wording for the website re: department hours and more information about By Appointment Only (what the suggested hours are for each department at the town hall.)

RESOLUTION NO. 54 OF 2020- APPROVAL OF TOWN OF DANBY REOPENING PLAN WITH THE INCLUSION OF THE LIBRARY PLAN

Now Therefore, Be It

Resolved, that the Town Board of the Town of Danby approves the Town of Danby Reopening Plan with the inclusion of the Danby Community Library's Plan

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

In Favor: Connors, Holahan, Schnabel, Ulinski, Gagnon

Highway Budget End of Year Adjustments

Laura Shawley explained that due to unexpected expenditures at the highway department at the end of 2019, the highway fund was over budget. She noted that from now on, there would be a different procedure in which the budget was updated and in real time, so that these types of expenditures could be better tracked and accounted for .

RESOLUTION NO. 55 of 2020-APPROVAL FROM THE TOWN BOARD TO INCREASE THE BUDGET IN THE HIGHWAY FUND FOR 2019.

WHEREAS: there were some extensive and unexpected machinery repairs that were needed in the second half of the year which caused the Equipment Contractual expenditures to be substantially over budget.

WHEREAS: an employee in the Highway Department who was not on the health insurance for the town needed to be put on the health insurance in the middle of the year which caused the health insurance budget to be exceeded for the year.

WHEREAS: the winter of 2019 lasted into the end of April and the amount of the snow removal contractual line exceeded the budget because of extra salt and sand costs.

RESOLVED: the Town Board acknowledges and approves the increase in the budget for 2019 of \$94,000.00.

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

In Favor: Connors, Holahan, Schnabel, Ulinski, Gagnon

Authorizing Use of Town Hall for Danby Youth Programs

The discussion began with the announcement that the State has authorized that Youth Programs can begin again. Schnabel noted that the date they can start is June 29th. Questions arose re: how many people could be in the building at a time as well as bathroom use. Gagnon noted in Melis Schildkraut's email that use of the Town Hall would be a backup plan in case of inclement weather (i.e thunderstorms, etc.), and that otherwise the Youth Programs are based outside. The TB would like Schildkraut to know that the Youth Programs should comply with the Danby reopening plan and would like feedback from Schildkraut for the next meeting. Ulinski brought up that since the Youth Program is through CCE (Cornell Cooperative Extension) that they most likely have more stringent restrictions re: health and safety. He also asked what would happen for pick-up if the program was cancelled because of rain? The bathroom issue was also brought up again, with the possibility of having one of the T.H bathrooms used for children and the other for adults. The issue of cleaning and distancing while inside also arose. The discussion ended with the issue being postponed until the next meeting when Schnildkraut could attend to discuss the use of the Town Hall with the TB.

Enabling Resolution for Planning Board and Planning Group

The extensive discussion began with a recap of how the Planning Group came to be: the Planning Group was created by the Town Board based on a proposal by Gagnon, where interested members of the TB, PB, CAC and BZA were a core group and members of the public made up the rest of the group. It was formed so that more residents could participate in the planning process. However, issues have come up because members of the Core Group sometimes are unable to attend meetings making it difficult to muster a quorum.

Ulinski noted that the PG, as proposed, was supposed to be a core group of appointed board members, and that the PG was an advisory board, which invited broad discussion of policy changes to propose to the governing bodies of the Town (TB, PB, BZA). Ulinski also added that currently the PB and CAC are not well represented on the PG and they need to be included in the decision making. Again, the formation of the PG was brought up as serving a need for the broadest participation and inviting those members of the public to make use of their talents and abilities. It was also noted that the PB plays a larger role and has a reciprocal relationship with the PB, as items of interest come out of the PG.

Schnabel asked if the CAC, PB and BZA could get opinions on this issue, adding that the members carved out time for boards and meetings, but are unable to participate in the PG. There was consensus that the other boards (since they have an investment as appointed members of the particular board) should be able to weigh in what comes out of the PG.

It was noted that a lot of discussion and ideas come out of the four working groups of the PG, and that somehow the information needs to get to the other boards. There was a discussion of having a synopsis of each working group being sent to the boards, and having minutes, etc. of the PG posted on the website so that more residents could be caught up on what the PG is doing.

Connors said that the PG has diverted from its initial charge which was to consider proposing interim changes to the zoning ordinance and then address big picture/general planning issues. The PG voted to not propose interim changes to the zoning ordinance, so should be focused on addressing general planning issues.

When the discussion moved to the tax proposal that the Tax Policy working group of the Planning Group, Kim Nitchman remarked that she was part of the planning group and she got to know other people in the town and enjoyed how people were working together with similar goals, whether they be taxes or open spaces. She added that she would like the board to pass this proposal, not only for the financial consideration of her family, but for others in Danby who own large tracts of land.

Haremza added that the PB and PG are working on parallel tracks to the same end goal. He also remarked that the PB taking on the big picture items also addresses site plan reviews and agribusinesses. He agreed that there should be better communication between the boards and the PG, and that there should be a standing agenda item on the PB that addresses the issues back and forth between the groups. He noted that communication is critical to the planning process and that the public needs to know what is going on, too. As for the tax policy proposal, he added that the comments from members of the groups can be made in email and that there should be a deadline for comments (such as the end of the month).

Due to time constraints, the Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) update was postponed until next month's meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Alexandra Pfeifer, Town Clerk