TOWN OF STANFORD TOWN BOARD
MINUTES

APRIL 14th, 2022

 The Town of Stanford Town Board met for their monthly meeting on Thursday, April 14th, 2022, at the Town Hall. Supervisor Burton called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance led by audience member Gloria Heuer.
 This meeting was dedicated to people of the Ukraine, with Supervisor Burton requesting a moment of silence for them. She introduced a Ukrainian couple, Michael and Olga, who were staying next door to the Heuer’s. Michael thanked the community for making them feel welcome and safe. Mark Lagus, Hunns Lake Road, also spoke of his Estonian heritage and had been deeply touched by the unity of Americans. He added that he was working on a fundraising campaign for the first weekend in June at the Stissing House.

Roll call: Wendy Burton – present

 Anne Arent - present

 Margaret Fallon – present

 Nathan Lavertue - present

 Frank Pepe – absent

 Also in attendance was Town Attorney Robert Butts.

LIAISON REPORTS: Anne Arent reported that the ZBA had two applications, one for a garage and one for an addition. After the public hearing on the addition for Atkins on North Anson Road, it was approved. A public hearing for the garage will be held next month.

 Nathan Lavertue stated that the Rec. Haunted House sub-committee has started working with Greg Arent as the chair. At their first meeting they planned to have an overall assessment of the Fortress for April 23rd. The soccer program has joined with Pine Plains and will have a three-season program, with 50 children already signed up for the spring season. Rec. Director Lauren Osterman had met with a person who may be the Assistant Director, who is qualified at the County level and may start in June. Ground is breaking for the new tennis courts at Noon on Friday the 15th, and they should be ready by the end of June. Lauren will also be partnering with the USTA on a program. The Rec. Capital Campaign committee will be holding their second public information and questions’ session on Tuesday, 4/26 at the Library at 6 PM, and will have information on their three proposals.

 Margaret Fallon reported from the recent CAC meeting: the Roadside Clean-up has been scheduled for April 23rd, and they will have a tent at Roosters to distribute garbage bags and will pass out donuts; the following week there will be a trail clean-up at Whitlock at 9AM, bring loppers and pruners and tick repellant, rain or shine.

SUPERVISOR’S REPORTS: Wendy Burton reported that the Community Garden had already received $3,300 in donations, including $300 from the Lions Club, and a $1.500 grant from Berkshire Taconic. Ann Derry is heading up the group that will meet shortly to design and plan the raised beds. Regarding Route 82, safety issues, having a lower speed limit has been futile, but she is looking into the cost of flashing speed signs. Thoughts were to have 500 people write letters and have them delivered to NYS DOT. Items that are being updated are the Town’s procurement policy, a policy to allow political parties to hold meetings at the Town Hall, and Jane Cottrell is also working on the Employee Handbook.

Financial reports: first quarter revenues have been good with the second sales tax check coming in at $193,453, so meeting the projected revenue of $300,000 should be fine. The Transfer Station revenues are on target and the Building Dept. is at 33% and Highway has had higher expenses due to winter invoices. Excess revenue, from PILOT fees, are covering the cost of the two new copy machines. Ms. Burton had given the Board her bank reconciliations and three payroll verification, and a motion to accept then was made by Margaret Fallon, seconded by Anne Arent. Motion carried with a roll call vote: Wendy Burton – yes; Anne Arent – yes; Margaret Fallon – yes; Nathan Lavertue – yes; Frank Pepe – absent. Also was mentioned that the 2020 audit has been completed plus the cash audit for 2021.

Supervisor Burton also mentioned that the Town Clerk came in 10th in the State for the sale of Habitat Stamps to hunters and fishermen.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Town Board Minutes

4/14/22, page 2

Renee Perpetua, 241 Market Lane – asked if the problem with our emergency services has been resolved? Supervisor Burton replied that at the last Fire Company meeting they were very close to getting a contract.

MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA: A motion was made by Wendy Burton to approve the agenda with two additions, to accept the resignation of a BAR member and to appoint a replacement. The motion was seconded by Margaret Fallon. Motion carried with a roll call vote: Wendy Burton – yes; Anne Arent – yes; Margaret Fallon – yes; Nathan Lavertue – yes; Frank Pepe – absent.

NEW BUSINESS:
1. ASSESSOR STEVE GOTOVICH – UPDATE ON NEW ASSESSMENTS, PART 3: Steve Gotovich gave his third presentation regarding the new assessments as follows:

Introduction:

Reval 2017, assessments brought up to 100% Market Value

Continuous yearly updates to keep up with real estate market

At the February Board meeting I reported on how the Covid driven market burst has outgrown my assessments. I must raise assessments by 21% to keep at Full Market Value.

During my March Town Board presentation, I explained that although assessments were going to be raised 21% in whole, various studies I did revealed that different properties gained value at different rates, and that I was adjusting my assessments to reflect those differences.

I also explained the various measurements of equity, and how they affected my work.

So, this month I’m going to address what this means to the individual property owners. I’ve already stated that a 21% raise in Assessments doesn’t mean a 21% raise in taxes.

 If a property owner doesn’t feel their assessment is correct, they should contact my office to set up a time to discuss your issues. This is called informal review.

The formal review is called the Board of Assessment Review (BAR). This Board consists of five residents that are familiar with real estate and make impartial judgements of what is presented to them.

Grievance Day is being held May 24, 2022 at the Town Hall, from 1-3 pm and 7-9pm.

The BAR Chairman is going to make a presentation next month on the ins and outs of the BAR.

If not granted relief by the BAR, the property owner can appeal in two different ways, if wished.

The first is through the Small Claims Assessment Review (SCAR) that is held in a venue outside of Stanford, most likely Poughkeepsie. You case will be addressed by a Hearing Officer. The property owner does not have to be present, but it is encouraged. The property owner may have representatives like a lawyer or an appraiser, but it is not mandatory. After hearing all that is presented, the Hearing Officer will make a determination at a later date.

The second way to appeal is through a Tax Certiorari (Certs). This is much more formal, involving Court filings and requires legal representation. This action is typically used by large or complex properties.

So the property owner has many ways to have their assessments reviewed.

The last thing I would like to address is what the role of the Town Board has in all of this. Basically, I will address Board member’s own property with them, or this process which I have tried to explain. It would be inappropriate for me to discuss with you members a third party’s assessment.

I am hopeful that if or when asked by your constituents, you try to forward the information that I have presented to you. I ask that you suggest anyone with concerns to contact my office directly.

I think this process’s challenge will be one of education…with emphasis on the fact that there is no direct relationship between rise in assessments to rise in taxes.

Thank you, Town Board, for giving me the opportunity to present over the last three Town Board meetings to try to head off confusion that’s bound to follow.

My office is open Tues, Weds, and Thurs 9:30 am to 3:30 pm.

2. REVISED FUND BALANCES AND RESERVES POLICY – 2ND READING AND ADOPTION:

Revisions: March 10, 2022 – 1st reading; April 14, 2022 – 2nd reading

Policy: (02) (b) **FUND BALANCE & RESERVES**

**Summary:** Establish long term goals and procedures for the establishment, management and maintenance of Fund Balances and Reserves.

Town Board Minutes

4/14/22, page 3

**Purpose:**

Ensure that taxation be implemented mindfully, strategically, and precisely and ONLY to that level required to meet the specific, designated, needs and objectives of the Town.

Establish reasonable goals for the establishment and maintenance of undesignated and unappropriated fund balances and, where necessary, legally authorized reserves.

Provide for a process to reach, maintain, and disburse such unappropriated funds.

Require that every reserve, fund balance, bank account, and CLASS (investment) account of the Town is properly classified, named, recorded as to purpose, and reported to the Town Board.

**Policy:**

* Taxation

The Board shall not raise taxation beyond the specific purposes

identified in the annual budget,

required for the establishment of reserves,

the attainment or maintenance of goals established for undesignated fund balance.

Excess funds shall not be hoarded, hidden away, or otherwise preserved without the knowledge of the community and without specific publicly announced purposes.

* Funding Risks: The Town recognizes that:

For purposes of cash flow and in the event of untoward, unanticipated, and emergency circumstances, the annual budgeted revenues may not be sufficient to meet the needs and objectives of the Town.

Tax revenues are not fully received in the early months of the fiscal year putting a strain on cash balances needed to cover operating expenses.

* Approved Goals:

To remediate these risks, Town will strive to reach and maintain goals of undesignated fund balances as follows:

General Fund “A” The equivalent of 20%of actual annual appropriations of the prior fiscal year.

Highway Fund “AD” - The equivalent of **20%** of actual annual appropriations of the prior fiscal year.

The goal for each fund balance shall be recalculated and the actual status reported at the commencement of budget development.

* Legal Reserves:

The Town will strive to establish goals for legal reserves as follows:

Remediation or replacement of significant facilities that are included in a formal long range facility planning document.

Emergency repairs or replacements to facilities other than those listed in its long-range facility plan that may not be covered by insurance or to cover costs while waiting for insurance compensation.

Replacement of large equipment, especially rolling stock within the Highway

Department, on a regular basis and as included in a comprehensive vehicle stabilization

plan.

Other reserve categories approved by the Office of the State Comptroller, including but not restricted to Contingency and Tax Stabilization Reserve and Snow and Ice Removal and Road Repair Reserve.

Reaching and Maintaining Goals.

During the annual budget development process an assessment of savings goals shall take place for each fund.

In the event that undesignated and available fund balances exceed goal levels, a determination will be made by the Board as to the application of the excess funds. Options include:

Temporary reduction of the tax levy, with the proviso to the public of the short-term nature of this reduction,

Re-designation to other funds or projects including capital, Highway, or formal reserves as may be allowed by law and proper procedure.

Any such re-designation will be approved by the Board, denoted within the budget documents, and explained in the reports on the status of fund balance.

In the event that fund balances have dropped below goal levels, every effort will be made to decrease expenditures, increase revenues, and/or increase taxation for an orderly and gradual restoration of the goal balances.

Motion to approve this policy made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Margaret Fallon. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

Town Board Minutes

4/13/22, page 4

3. GRANGE MONTH PROCLAMATION: The following proclamation was read by Town Clerk Bell:

**PROCLAMATION – GRANGE MONTH IN THE TOWN OF STANFORD – APRIL 2022**

 WHEREAS, the Grange strengthens individuals, families and communities through grassroots action, service, education, advocacy, and agriculture awareness, and has played a major role in the development of rural America and passage of important legislation during three centuries; and

 WHEREAS, the Grange of the 21st century continues to be an active force in thousands of neighborhoods across the country, creating connections between people, communities, and organizations even through periods of social unrest and disruption; and

 WHEREAS, the Grange emphasizes civic responsibility and the involvement of people in the legislative process, cultivating connections between citizens and their government, and offers opportunities for civil discussions among people of all viewpoints and opinions, serving as a safe haven for exploring important social and legislative issues of the day; and

 WHEREAS, the Grange strengthens hometowns through volunteerism, community support and legislative action, building up rural America for the benefit of all who live there; and

 WHEREAS, our local Stanford Grange #808 has been active in our community since its organization in Bangall on January 23, 1896, thus celebrating its 125th Anniversary in January 2021; and

 WHEREAS, Stanford Grange #808 has a history of accomplishment and service in its over 125 years of existence including the organization of the Stanford Fire Company in 1931, the organization of Stanford Junior Grange #414 in 1938 (the first organization for the children of the Town of Stanford), sponsoring the 1st Annual Stanford Community Day in 1959, and spearheading the building of the 1st Stanford Free Library Building in 1964; and

 WHEREAS, Stanford Grange #808 continues to fill needs in our community and holds community events of interest for Town Residents including Meet the Candidates Nights for local, regional, and state candidates for public office and for Board of Education Candidates for the Pine Plains Central School District, School District Budget Meetings, a Defensive Driving Course, fundraising Penny Socials for charitable causes, sponsoring a St. Pauly’s Textile Shed for clothing donations, helping with food insecurity through their Little Food Pantry, and continues to sponsor the Annual Stanford Community Day with 2019 as the 61st consecutive year; and

 WHEREAS, at the 155th Annual National Grange Convention in November 2021 in Wichita, Kansas, Stanford Grange #808 was recognized and honored as a “Distinguished Grange” by National Grange President Betsy Huber; and

 WHEREAS, Stanford Grange #808 is the only Grange in New York State and east of the Mississippi River to receive this prestigious award for twelve consecutive years.

 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Stanford proudly proclaims April 2022 as Grange Month, and, in celebration of this, the community is invited to the Grange Month & Distinguished Grange Open House on Tuesday, April 26th, 2022, at 7 p.m. at the Stanford Grange Hall.

Proclaimed this 14th day of April 2022 on the motion made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Margaret Fallon. Roll Call Vote as follows: Supervisor Wendy Burton – yes; Councilwoman Anne Arent – yes; Councilwoman Margaret Fallon – yes; Councilman Nathan Lavertue – yes; Councilman Frank Pepe – absent. Certified this 14th day of April 2022 *Ritamary Bell, Town Clerk*

4. ACCEPT RESIGNATION OF MICHELE INZEO FROM THE ZBA: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Nathan Lavertue, to accept Michele Inzeo’s resignation from the ZBA with regret. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

5. APPOINT NEW ZBA MEMBER: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Anne Arent, to appoint Benjamin Rathjen to the Zoning Board of Appeals, on the recommendation of ZBA chair Kathy Zeyher. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

6. ARP FUNDING RESOLUTION #4A – EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS: The following resolution was offered by Wendy Burton, seconded by Margaret Fallon:

**RESOLUTION #4 A OF 2022**

**TO TRANSFER FUNDS FROM AMERICAN RESCUE FUNDS ACCOUNT NY CLASS**

**NY 01-0010-0009 AND MOVE THE FUNDS TO THE GENERAL FUND #3900018**

Whereas the Town of Stanford will be investing American Rescue Plan funds build an interoperable emergency communications system.

Whereas the NY Class Account 01-0010-0009 American Rescue Fund Account contains funds for this purpose.

Whereas the Town of Stanford will transfer funds from NY Class Account 00-0010-009 American Account to the Millbrook General Fund Account 3900018.

.

Town Board Minutes

4/14/22, page 5

Now therefore be it resolved, the Supervisor is authorized to complete the following budget modifications and transfer the funds from the American Rescue Funds Account to the General Fund.

 00-510 Estimated Revenue +1,120.59

 00-4089 Federal Aid ARPA

 00-960 Appropriations +1,120.59

 00-01-1650-20 Communications Equip

 00-200 Cash +1,120.59

 00-209 Cash- ARPA

Roll call vote: Wendy Burton – yes; Anne Arent – yes; Margaret Fallon – yes; Nathan Lavertue – yes; Frank Pepe – absent.

 **Resolution #4A of 2022** adopted by the affirmative votes of the Town of Stanford Town Board members present and certified this 14th day of April 2022. *Ritamary Bell, Town Clerk*

7. HAUNTED HOUSE EXPENDITURES RESOLUTION #4B: The following resolution was offered by Wendy Burton, seconded by Margaret Fallon:

**RESOLUTION #4B 2022**

**TO APPROVE EXPENDITURES FOR THE HAUNTED FORTRESS**

 **WHEREAS**, the Town Board of the Town of Stanford has committed to renovating and operating the Haunted Fortress,

 **WHEREAS**, the Town Board of the Town of Stanford should establish the source of Financing for this project,

 **WHEREAS**, the Town Board currently has a Haunted House Account in the Bank of Millbrook.

 **WHEREAS**, the Town Board wishes to establish a budget of up to $15,000 for the Haunted Fortress.

 **WHEREAS**, the Town Board needs to modify the General Fund budget to record all expenses to renovate and operate the Haunted Fortress this year, and

 **NOW THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED** that the Town Supervisor is authorized to transfer up to $15,000 from the Haunted House Fund in the Bank of Millbrook, and

 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Town Supervisor is authorized to make the following budget amendments:

Appropriations                00-960

    Haunted Fortress Repairs    00-06-7181-40                                $15,000.00

Estimated Revenues    00-510

    Inter-fund Transfers                00-5031                                       $15,000.00

Roll call vote: Wendy Burton – yes; Anne Arent – yes; Margaret Fallon – yes; Nathan Lavertue – yes; Frank Pepe – absent.

 **Resolution #4B of 2022** adopted by the affirmative votes of the Town of Stanford Town Board members present and certified this 14th day of April 2022. *Ritamary Bell, Town Clerk*

8. ARP FUNDING RESOLUTION #4C – EMPLOYEE RETENTION INCENTIVE: The following resolution was offered by Wendy Burton, seconded by Margaret Fallon:

**RESOLUTION #4C 2022**

**TO APPROVE a onetime retention incentive to town of stanford part time employees using the American rescue plan funds received from the united states treasury**

 **WHEREAS**, the Town Board of the Town of Stanford recognizes and appreciates the dedication and value of our parttime, non-elected work staff, and the time they spent as frontline workers during the COVID period, and

 **WHEREAS**, a permitted use of American Rescue Plan Funds issued by the United States Treasury is to pay worker retention incentives,

 **NOW THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED** that the Town Board of the Town of Stanford authorizes the payment of a onetime retention incentive to a

list of employees, for a total of $21,400.94 which includes $1,520.83 in FICA taxes [Federal Insurance Contributions Act], and this payroll will be run separately with a check date of May 12, 2022.

 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that these funds will be taken from the New York Class American Rescue Plan account 01-001-0009

Town Board Minutes

4/14/22, page 6

Roll call vote: Wendy Burton – yes; Anne Arent – yes; Margaret Fallon – yes; Nathan Lavertue – yes; Frank Pepe – absent.

 **Resolution #4C of 2022** adopted by the affirmative votes of the Town of Stanford Town Board members present and certified this 14th day of April 2022. *Ritamary Bell, Town Clerk*

9. “AGREEMENT TO SPEND TOWN HIGHWAY FUNDS” FORM: The following form was signed by the four Board members present and will be sent to the County DPW:



10. APPOINT GARY LOVETT AND CURTIS DEVITO AS C.A.C. CHAIR AND CO-CHAIR:

A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Anne Arent, to appoint Gary Lovett to the C.A.C. as Chairman, and current member Cutis DeVito as Co-Chair. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

11. BROADBAND SUB-COMMITTEE: As the Town is trying to keep abreast of the area broadband issues, Supervisor Burton stated that James Griffith has volunteered to be the liaison with the County on this matter.

12. CELL TOWER LEASE: Ms. Burton informed the Board that the lease was almost complete as the owner Ted Bonte had agreed to change a few sections, but she was still waiting to hear back from our lawyer about a termination clause. These funds can come from the ARP funds until 2026.

13. FOREVER YOUNG CLUB LIAISON: Maeda Bloomberg has volunteered to work with the Forever Young Club in helping their members with things like driving to appointments, etc. and will get other volunteers to assist.

Town Board Minutes

4/14/22, page 7

14. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The Minutes of the March 10th regular meeting and the April 4th Special Meeting were approved as written on a motion made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Anne Arent. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

15, APPROVAL OF ABSTRACTS FOR APRIL 2022: Abstract #4 for April 2022 was approved for payment on a motion made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Anne Arent, as follows General Fund: check #s 6416 – 6471 in the amount of $1,107,069.95

 (Note: included in the above, Fire District $875,600 and Library $142,000)
 Highway Fund: check #s 4086 – 4110 in the amount of $72,891.30

Bangall Lights: check #3049 in the amount of $1,031.95

Escrow: check # 1013 in the amount of $ 4,445.00

Highway Vehicle Fund: check # 2601 – 2611 in the amount of $384,141.12

Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

16. OTHER:

ACCEPT RESIGNATION FROM THE B.A.R.: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Margaret Fallon, to accept the resignation of newly appointed Grievance Board member Mark Grames as they had decided to sell their home. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

APPOINT NEW B.A.R. MEMBER: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Nathan Lavertue, to appoint Robert Perri to replace the above-named Grievance Board member, as recommended by BAR Chair Stacey Adams. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR: No one addressed the Board.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Margaret Fallon, to close the regular meeting and enter into an Executive Session regarding litigation at 8:17 PM. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

 The Board exited their Executive Session at 8:31 PM on a motion made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Anne Arent. A motion was then made by Wendy Burton to approve the Town Board filing an appeal in the litigation discussed, the case of O’Connor vs. Town of Stanford. The motion was seconded by Anne Arent, with all present voting in favor.

 At 8:32 PM, a motion was made by Margaret Fallon, seconded by Anne Arent, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Ritamary Bell

Town Clerk