

**TOWN OF DRYDEN**  
**TOWN BOARD MEETING**  
**June 14, 2018**

Present: Supervisor Jason Leifer, Cl Daniel Lamb, Cl Linda Lavine,  
 Cl Kathrin Servoss, Cl Alice Green

Elected Officials: Bambi L. Avery, Town Clerk

Other Town Staff: Ray Burger, Planning Director  
 Jennifer Case, Bookkeeper

Supv Leifer opened the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

**Abstract Approval** – There were questions about vouchers submitted by the court for the court clerks to attend a conference in Lake Placid. After discussion and because it was determined there is still sufficient time to register, those vouchers (#395 and #396) were pulled and Supv Leifer and/or J Case will talk with the Justices.

Purchase of a Gradall was approved last month. J Case confirmed with the board that the first payment was to be sent to KS State Bank now. The cost of the machine is over \$388,000 and the town is paying over \$14,000 in finance fees (at 3.9%) over three years.

Discussion/comments:

Budgeting has moved away from having a reserve amount to make these purchases from.

Need for capital planning

Equipment replacement schedule

Financing expense

State contract

Financing through out of state bank

Town may need to address the question of how to research the best rate.

Consider borrowing from a local bank.

Consider the future payments at budget time

Supv Leifer will send a letter regarding purchasing procedures and process and get the equipment replacement schedule.

J Case explained that she had questions and concerns about the amounts billed by Lincoln Financial and the Consortium Health Insurance and wants to be sure they are correct before making payment. She asked the board to approve Lincoln Financial not to exceed \$1500.00 and Tompkins County Health Insurance Consortium not to exceed \$70,000.00.

**RESOLUTION #97 (2018) – APPROVE ABSTRACT #6**

Supv Leifer offered the following resolution and asked for its adoption:

RESOLVED, that this Town Board hereby approves Abstract #6, as audited, general vouchers #350 through #452, excepting #395 and #396, (\$900,774.63) and TA voucher #12 (\$1,600.00), totaling \$902,374.63, and also authorizes payment of the following:

Lincoln Financial not to exceed \$1,500.00

Greater Tompkins County Health Consortium not to exceed \$70,000.00

2<sup>nd</sup> Cl Servoss

Roll Call Vote	Cl Lavine	Yes
	Cl Green	Yes
	Cl Servoss	Yes
	Cl Lamb	Yes
	Supv Leifer	Yes

**Budget Modifications** – The Planning Department has requested a budget modification in the amount of \$200.00 for unexpected fees for legal research for Zoning Board of Appeals matters. The Highway Department has requested a budget modification to move proceeds from the sale of equipment and reimbursement from FEMA for storm work to budget lines where the funds can be used this year.

**RESOLUTION #98 (2018) – APPROVE BUDGET MODIFICATIONS**

Supv Leifer offered the following resolution and asked for its adoption:

RESOLVED, that this Town Board hereby approves the following budget modifications:

From	To			
B8020.412 Legal & Engineering	B8010.420 Zoning Attorney Fees		200.00	
DA2655 Sale of Equipment	DA5130.4 Machinery Contractual		2,097.06	
DA2701 Refund of Prior Year Expense	DA5142.4 Snow Removal Contractual		33,458.17	

2<sup>nd</sup> Cl Servoss

Roll Call Vote	Cl Lavine	Yes
	Cl Green	Yes
	Cl Servoss	Yes
	Cl Lamb	Yes
	Supv Leifer	Yes

**2017 End of Year Financial Report** – Jennifer Case reported the following fund balance changes:

- A Fund +\$123,250
- B Fund +\$44,897
- DA Fund +\$196,260
- DB Fund -\$80,811

Side notes –

- \$34,000 – in DA is a second payment of the Buffalo money and was moved to Trust & Agency.
- \$25,000 - went from A fund balance to A fund DPW equipment reserve.
- \$36,000 – set aside in the A fund for DPW equipment purchase (2018 Chevy crew cab to be delivered in 2018).
- \$150,000 - encumbered from DA for the purchase of two used trucks from the Village of Minoa.
- \$110,000 - encumbered in DB for paving that didn't get done in 2017 and will be done in 2018.

Cl Servoss noted there appears to be a large discrepancy between the actual revenue for the planning department for licenses and permits in 2017 and the budgeted amount for 2018 in the B fund. Only \$10,000 of the \$80,000 anticipated for 2018 has been received to date. R Burger said he expects plenty of projects and summer is typically the busier season. About half of the \$80,000 will come in for the townhomes at 802 Dryden Road. The department is still looking at the fee schedule and anticipates a new suggested schedule this summer.

**Personnel Manual Language** – There are two items that require clarification. The language regarding the source of disability payment money is misattributed in the personnel manual. The manual currently says we use NYS Disability and that is not the case. There is language that could be mistaken to say that we cover retirement health insurance coverage and that needs to be cleaned up. There will be suggested changes next week.

**Staff Meeting Feedback** – Supv Leifer reported that staff are pretty happy about the compensation study and they would like windows that open. There was discussion that it is hard for staff to socialize because everyone is in their own office. With respect to pets in the work place, we are seeing how this month goes. The dogs in Planning are now behind a gate. The board will revisit this in July. People love the health care benefit. Employees were invited to talk about what they like and what is challenging. A common issue is the website and a plan has been developed for a cross department group about what they would like to see on the website. There may be an external survey after an initial internal discussion. B Avery, R Burger, M Conger and someone from Highway will be part of the committee. Cl Lavine reported she has someone who would be willing to work on it. There will be a meeting Monday about what we need. There is also a need for a social media policy. Supv Leifer would like the website to be able to collect emails for communication purposes. After determining what we need and want on the website, we can choose a vendor. Cl Lavine will investigate what other municipalities use.

The goal is to have quarterly staff meetings. Prior to the next meeting (September) department heads will be asked for items for the agenda. There were suggestions to close town hall at 3:30 for the next meeting so that all staff could attend and to have a meeting with department heads only to address things that department heads can take care of with their staff. Budget will be a topic at the next staff meeting and the timeline for the budget will be laid out at next week's meeting.

Supv Leifer noted staff like direction from the board when crafting their budgets. At the July agenda meeting the board will formulate a message and goals for the budget.

**Sales Tax Offset Revenue** – Supv Leifer said this is a way to get more money from the solar panel PILOTS.

Cl Lamb explained that he and Supv Leifer met with County Directors of Finance & Assessment and the County Administrator to discuss the sales tax offset. NYS RPTL allows towns to enter into a sales tax offset agreement with counties. The sales tax is retained by the counties and the county property tax rate is offset. In this case the county will hold the sales tax revenues and lower their tax rate for residents. This is a popular thing for towns across New York to do, particularly in the Adirondacks and for any town that has a large amount of state forest lands. New York State Tax Law allows towns to tax state forest land; counties cannot. The town is leaving revenue on the table by not doing this. It has been passed over by previous town boards and supervisors because of the effort required in educating the community on why we are doing this. The town tax rate would go up from the current \$1.94 to \$4.30. The county tax rate would then go down from \$6.5 to something less than the increased town rate. The net effect on a tax payer would be a smaller tax bill. Every property tax payer in the town with one exception would see a reduction in their total bill. One taxpayer would see an increase of \$70 because they take advantage of an exemption available from the county that is not offered by the town. Increased revenue from the state forest lands would be about \$15,000 a year.

Additionally, because the PILOTS being entered into for solar projects are based on the tax rates, the town's compensation for the solar projects would double if we were to go with this

offset program. Cl Lamb calculates increased revenue from those projects of about \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Jay Franklin of Tompkins County Assessment will be at the board meeting next week to present an overview and answer any questions. No public hearing is required, and approval by the county is not necessary. Cl Lamb distributed a proposed resolution to board members for review, comment, and a vote next week. He said the town would not lose any revenue per sales tax; they'd base it on a forecast of what the town is expected to get each year. At the end of the year, the next tax rate number used would be pro-rated whether we went up or came in low on the sales tax revenues. The town would never be hit with an end of the year bill or surplus payment; it would just be corrected in the next year's rate.

Comments:

Administrative call by the Town Board; a good government action.

Saving taxpayer money.

Getting more from New York State.

Doubles the town's revenue from solar PILOTS.

Comptroller's rules regarding villages and sales tax allocation in budgets.

This will not affect the villages.

Effect on whole town and outside village portions of budgets.

Current towns in the county doing this do not have villages.

The Governor tried to lock in the rates for sales tax offset this year and may try again.

This seems to be a win/win situation.

Are there any cons?

The combined town & county rates go down.

The town will be able to tax state forest land at a higher rate.

Information will be posted on the website prior to the meeting.

Board members will be available to explain and do a press release.

Should there be an informal focus group for this?

**Status of CDBG RFP** – This is to have a housing stock condition study relating to applying for a grant for improvement. The town currently has a grant for \$24,000 to do the study. The Planning Department is doing the environmental review. R Burger recalls that we were going to have Stacy Murphy do the RFP and extend her contract. Supv Leifer sent her an email and expects he will have an answer next week.

**Staff Compensation Study** – Cl Lamb said this is a project the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs can do with input from faculty in ILR. He suggested expanding the study to cover elected officials as well as staff positions. The application will go to CIPA by the end of July. The time frame would be September through December with a presentation to the board in November or December. The board could adopt some of the recommendations in the following year to apply in the 2020 budget.

**Bridge Project Update** – Barton & Loguidice have assisted in drafting a revised needs statement for the Freese Road bridge. DOT wants to see the final and approve it. Cl Servoss will have more information by next week. The statement addresses historic significance, safety, and rehabilitation. Once this is done the Section 106 process can go forward. Cl Servoss will provide the statement and feedback next week. A court recently held a town liable for a collision that occurred on a poorly designed road.

The George Road bridge project is moving forward and there will be a public information meeting. Cl Servoss is hoping to schedule it at the Dryden Café the week of July 9 or July 16. It will be an open-house style.

## **Planning Board Request for 6 Month Moratorium on Development in Varna –**

### Comments:

We are selling Dryden short if we keep randomly approving the same sort of student/transient housing.

We should make development fit the Varna plan.

Just make sure developers are following the Varna plan. It will take care of itself.

It's the board's job to do that.

There was a discussion by the Planning Board about marketing Varna to developers.

It's about quality development

What will change in six months?

Let's see what developer has to offer and what concessions they might make.

The Board can manage this; that is why we have these plans in place.

What is the compelling need for a moratorium?

That request was based on the fact that there isn't enough water/sewer and/or capacity.

There are grants for improvement to infrastructure.

IAWWTF has additional capacity for Varna; the town would need to renegotiate that.

Can existing infrastructure handle increased capacity?

Transient housing interferes with the sense of community.

Cornell is building an amazing amount of new housing geared for that student population (3,000 bedrooms).

When that happens the housing stock in Varna will decline.

It would be nice to have closer housing for the Cornell workforce so they don't commute.

Design of the Trinitas project is intended for a certain population; the nature of it not conducive to families.

Why not build it for families of those who currently commute and design it for families?

This project is transient housing.

Projects have to fit the Varna plan or be a PUD.

The town can negotiate how it looks and whether there are units for affordable housing.

The design invites different types.

Guidelines put in place need to be followed.

Jim Skaley has done some research and sent a letter to the board regarding Trinitas Development and the project they propose for Varna (attached). If Trinitas sells the development, would the new owner be bound by promises made by Trinitas? The zoning that was approved as part of the Varna plan encourages higher density than was stated as projected buildout in the Varna plan. This project would double the population (likely students) of the central area of Varna. Students do not take the time to participate in civic affairs, volunteering, etc.

D Weinstein provided the board with a memo regarding the Planning Board's recommendation for a moratorium on development in Varna (attached). He said he had explained the Varna plan to the Trinitas people and they ignored it. The town is already way off the trajectory that the Varna plan laid out by increasing the ratio of townhouse/apartments to single family houses beyond the 1:1 in the plan. What had been envisioned for this area in the plan was a large collection of detached houses.

Cl Green said negotiations by the board may or may not get us closer to what was envisioned in the plan and asked what the moratorium will accomplish that negotiations with the proposed developer cannot.

J Skaley said the bulk density components are out of line with the projected buildout for Varna. The idea with the build out concept of the plan is to maintain the area as a hamlet,

not as a concentrated apartment unit development concept. You are bulking up the area with large units for transient populations. You cannot sustain community over a long period of time if you don't have permanent residents coming in and flowing through. The board needs to think about the vision for the community. If you don't have one and let developers define it for you, you will end up with something totally different. The moratorium would allow time to evaluate how to adjust zoning and put in mechanisms to incentivize single family housing.

Cl Lavine said home ownership is important. There is something to be lost in not having a moratorium because you are leading the developer on. This is college housing and that is their mission statement. They are not going to change because you tell them to. That is why a moratorium is useful.

J Wilson said he saw the moratorium as an opportunity to tighten review of environmental issues, including building efficiency and such things as are called out in the 239 planning policy from the County referred to at green building seminars and that are called out by the green building policy adopted by the city and town of Ithaca.

#### Additional Comments:

The final master plan for the area Trinitas is looking at envisioned about 95 structures. The idea was that they were owner occupied structures. People would like the town to hold off until there is a developer willing to build structures that are conceivably owner occupied. The town could be more proactive in soliciting that type of development. The bulk density table in the zoning was based on units per acre not bedrooms. Units per acre could be any combination of things. It wasn't defined properly in the plan and should have said predominately single-family units. It would be ideal to maintain the look of units for families along both sides of Route 366. Need to think about who will become permanent members of the community. The comp plan and Varna plan talk about density at 4 units per acre on average. Something this massive can change the whole character of the community. The apartment market in Ithaca is getting soft. Biggest gap currently is owner occupied places for people to buy in to the market. Softening of the market is not bad in an area with a very high cost of living. We need housing for people investing in the community and improving quality of life. This is a saturated market; get the data on how many units Cornell is building. East Hill Village is coming in and within 5 years Varna will be practically downtown. There is a lot of staff that need housing and this would be perfect housing for families. Developing a population that is not transient is a win-win situation. The demand for housing in Tompkins County has created high rents. Why not have more housing units to bring down the price of rents? Why ask this particular community to do that instead of investing in community by purchasing homes? The County has a plan to direct density to where there is already water/sewer infrastructure. If the market is in fact softening, the developer will change their plan. The Board can negotiate for condos or such under the existing Varna plan. If they ask for something beyond the plan, the developer has to know the town will get something for it. If the compromise is to let this area densify to the anticipated bedroom number, then other possibilities are eliminated along that corridor for moderate density increases. The special use permit process will match the proposal to the comp plan, Varna plan, commercial/residential guidelines, and if it doesn't match, the developer will have to come back with a different plan. Requiring the developer to integrate affordable housing has not worked well for this developer in another project.

Having different populations in the project would be problematic.

There is a need to be cautious.

The moratorium would give the Planning Board time to reflect on how the process can work and what changes might be useful looking at this project and future projects.

The community cannot negotiate; they can only speak at meetings under privilege of the floor.

There are definition problems and problems with the bulk density table.

This is a timely time to review this; Varna is the next frontier.

East Hill is really close to Varna.

It's a great place for families to live.

There is huge development pressure right now.

### **Agenda items for next week**

**107 Morris Road** – The owner has taken half the building down but has not put siding over the exposed area or taken care of the property. The 30 day deadline is next week.

**473 Bone Plain Road** – This is tabled until August. R Burger will contact the owner's pro bono attorney to see if things are happening. Cl Lavine said there is nothing to be salvaged. Board should just go ahead and demolish the place. There is no sense wasting time doing anything in the meantime.

**Apple Orchard PRV** – There is a meeting next week with D Herrick, and Atty Sokoni. Supv Leifer said Ithaca has changed their mind about one piece of this. He will speak with them after the meeting next week and have a report for the board.

**Trinitas** will introduce the project next week.

**Recreation/Parks Impact Fee** – Supv Leifer explained this can be a source of funding for the Recreation Reserve. It would be a per unit fee and offset the impact of development on recreation services in the town. With the 1061 Dryden Road PUD we got trail access. It would be a onetime fee for duplexes and other multi-family homes. There should be a discussion about putting it on single family homes. Workforce people can't afford more than \$140,000 for a home. It would be a town-wide impact fee and not apply to PUDs. It is common practice all over the state. He will discuss it with the town attorney. He would like to have this in place by the end of summer and will run it by the Planning Board for their opinion. There will be discussion on how to implement it and possible exemptions.

Cl Servoss met with the CDRC rep after the recent training and will provide information to board members via email.

There being no further business, on motion made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bambi L. Avery  
Town Clerk