

TOWN OF DRYDEN
TOWN BOARD MEETING
April 11, 2024
Zoom Hybrid

Present: Supervisor Jason Leifer, Cl Daniel Lamb, Cl Spring Buck
Cl Leonardo Vargas-Mendez, Cl Christina Dravis

Elected Officials: Bambi L. Avery, Town Clerk
Rick Young, Highway/DPW Superintendent

Other Town Staff: Ray Burger, Planning Director
*Cassie Byrnes, Secretary to Supervisor
Amanda Anderson, Bookkeeper
Chris O'Connor, Fire Coordinator

*Indicates attendance via Zoom.

Supv Leifer opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Financials & Human Resources

Abstract Approval

RESOLUTION #72 (2024) – APPROVE ABSTRACT #4

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

RESOLVED, that this Town Board hereby approves Abstract #4, as audited, general vouchers #285 through #401 (\$1,962,383.56) and TA vouchers #15 through #18 (\$7,034.52), totaling \$1,969,418.08.

2nd Cl Lamb

Roll Call Vote	Cl Vargas-Mendez	Yes
	Cl Buck	Yes
	Cl Dravis	Yes
	Cl Lamb	Yes
	Supv Leifer	Yes

Drawdown #2 for Sewer Capital Project

RESOLUTION #73 (2024) – DRAWDOWN #2 FOR SEWER CAPITAL PROJECT

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

WHEREAS, the Town has received invoice #2 from National Water Main Cleaning Co for \$370,057.30 for work completed on the Sewer Capital Project through January 31, 2024

WHEREAS, the invoice will be paid from CDBG funds (Project #336PR9-21) awarded to the Town for the sewer capital project, now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Board approves the payment of \$370,057.30 to National Water Main Cleaning Co to be paid in a timely manner when the funds are received.

2nd Cl Lamb

Roll Call Vote	Cl Vargas-Mendez	Yes
	Cl Buck	Yes
	Cl Dravis	Yes
	Cl Lamb	Yes
	Supv Leifer	Yes

**PUBLIC HEARING
PROPOSED LOCAL LAW
REQUIRE PILOT FOR SOLAR INSTALLATIONS**

Supv Leifer opened the public hearing at 6:07 p.m. The notice of public hearing was published on March 29, 2024. The purpose of this local law is to put potential projects on notice in advance of an application that the town will require a PILOT for the project. Currently the town must send the applicant a letter within 60 days that states we will require a PILOT.

Currently the town is anticipating two applications, one for a project on Morris Road and one on Caswell Road. Both have been advised they will be required to have a PILOT. When asked what the term of the PILOTs would be, Cl Lamb responded that for the ones in Willow Glen and Ellis Hollow, it was a 20-year term.

There were no more comments, and the hearing was left open at 6:13 p.m.

HIGHWAY/DPW DEPARTMENT

Highway Superintendent Rick Young asked the board to approve the purchase of two Felling trailers and two Ferris mowers.

RESOLUTION #74 (2024) – APPROVE PURCHASE OF TWO FELLING TRAILERS

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

RESOLVED, that this Town Board hereby approves the purchase of two Felling trailers, per NYS OGS contract, with funds from A1490.2 and DA5130.4, at a total cost not to exceed \$36,000.00.
2nd Cl Dravis

Roll Call Vote	Cl Vargas-Mendez	Yes
	Cl Buck	Yes
	Cl Dravis	Yes
	Cl Lamb	Yes
	Supv Leifer	Yes

R Young said he will be trading the three mowers that he has now, so the total he will be paying will be less than the \$32,000 he is asking for. He said every year for \$3,000 they will bring a new mower down and take the old one back regardless of condition. The school district has this arrangement and he believes this will work to the town's benefit with the amount of mowing that we do.

RESOLUTION #75 (2024) – APPROVE PURCHASE OF TWO FERRIS MOWERS

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

RESOLVED, that this Town Board hereby approves the purchase of two Ferris mowers with a municipal buy back contract with funds from A1490.2 at a cost not to exceed \$32,000.00.

2nd Cl Vargas-Mendez

Roll Call Vote	Cl Vargas-Mendez	Yes
	Cl Buck	Yes
	Cl Dravis	Yes
	Cl Lamb	Yes
	Supv Leifer	Yes

FIRE COORDINATOR

Chris O'Connor said there is a lot going on with the departments and what he is doing. This weekend is the annual Recruit NY weekend, established by the Fire Association of the State of New York. They provide recruiting materials and help advertise events across the state. Neptune will have an open house and recruiting event on Saturday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Varna will hold theirs from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. Varna has two new trucks and a lot of new/improved equipment.

The strategic planning workshop was a great success and C O'Connor hopes the town and the departments reap the benefits of this investment. He is interested in hearing from those who attended regarding what they thought of the process. What was most important to him was listening to the three firefighters from the White Marsh Fire Company outside Baltimore. They had been a department that was circling the drain, had a toxic atmosphere, and were not making all their calls. They developed a strategic plan designed to rescue their fire department. Four or five years ago they had an old firehouse. New members were not welcome and they relied on an outdated response system. They were only going on about half their calls because they were unable to field personnel to respond, and so were missing about 2,000 alarms each year.

In creating and executing their strategic plan they thought big. They now have a new firehouse with bunk rooms and all sorts of amenities. They have policies that welcome people to join and have an inviting atmosphere. They totally revamped their training program with many more high-quality training opportunities being made available to their members. They require their active members to perform standby at the fire station and based on feedback from members, they are going to increase the number of hours every active member is required to put in. They have a very successful bunker program that requires them to be a firefighter 1, be EMS trained, and have completed an emergency vehicle operations course.

Also contributing to their success is that they have recruited community members to be administrative support in the department. These are local professionals and business owners. This allows the firefighters to concentrate on training and going to calls.

The majority of their funding comes from the community in the form of donations and creative partnerships with local businesses. They don't get a lot of financial support from the county. They have not increased their fleet, and are making 4,000 calls with two engines, one ambulance, two pickups, a brush truck and two rehab vehicles. They have not missed a call in three years. Their average response time is 63 seconds and they plan to improve that, and their new model is to have enough trained people in the firehouse 24-7.

C O'Connor said the message here is that if you have a strategic plan and you get enough people coalescing around the concept of looking at new ways to accomplish things and getting the community involved you can create a perfect fire department.

C O'Connor announced that a lot of information, including a map of the department territories, has been added to the Fire Coordinator section of the town's webpage.

This past weekend he attended a course in western Pennsylvania put on by the International Association of Fire Chiefs. The course is designed for recruitment retention coordinators and walked attendees through the recruiting and retention process from the very beginning. It was an excellent course with a lot of very good instructors from all over the northeast. He would like them to come to Dryden. Once the IAFC is able to get another SAFER grant (that makes the course free for attendees), he hopes to be able to have the administrator of the program come to Dryden. It would be an excellent opportunity to jumpstart and professionalize recruitment and retention efforts.

Cl Lamb asked C O'Connor to help get the word out that there is an upcoming presentation at Neptune about the solar project for Caswell Road, and the departments, particularly Freeville, should be aware of it. There will be a battery storage safety specialist at the town board meeting the following night. C O'Connor is working to put together a training on solar sites of all types for the departments.

Cl Lamb said that next week Borger Station is scheduled to provide their annual report to the board. Varna Fire Department may be interested in that since the station is in their district.

Varna Fire Department has hired a consultant to advise them on the state of their current equipment and give ideas on replacement apparatus. The report has been sent to board members. Chief Mason Jager would like to have a date and time set for a meeting on the topic at the Varna fire station. The consultant will review the report and be available for questions. May 14 at 6:00 p.m. is a likely date.

Mark Bell presented Neptune's March statistics. They had 24 calls with an average of 8 firefighters per call. The average en route time was three minutes and average on scene time was seven minutes. It has been relatively busy lately and calls seem to come in batches. Their open house is on Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. They are having a chicken BBQ fundraiser to help one of their firefighters with funding to go to Africa to assist training firefighters there. The turnout gear they send with has her to stay as a donation to firefighters there. There will be bounce houses for kids and they will be pushing recruiting. He invited board members to attend.

C O'Connor said that the administrators have told him to save receipts for expenses for this type of event. There has to be a purchase policy in place prior to making reimbursements. They talked about policies that need to be in place and what may be appropriate. He is trying to get it figured out and hopes to have a good update on the SAFER grant for next week.

There were no further questions on the proposed solar law and Supv Leifer closed the public hearing at 6:48 p.m.

RESOLUTION #76 (2024) – APPROVING A LOCAL LAW ENTITLED SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS PILOT LAW

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

WHEREAS, the Town of Dryden scheduled a public hearing for April 11, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. for Local Law No. 1 of 2024 entitled "A LOCAL LAW CREATING A NEW CHAPTER 225 ENTITLED 'SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS PILOT LAW'"; and

WHEREAS, notice of said public hearing was duly advertised in the official newspaper of the Town and posted on the Town Clerk’s signboard; and

WHEREAS, said public hearing was duly held on the 11th day of April, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. and all parties in attendance were permitted an opportunity to speak on behalf of or in opposition to said proposed Local Law, or any part thereof; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board, after due deliberation, finds it in the best interest of the Town to adopt said Local Law.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board hereby adopts said local law as Local Law No. 1 of 2024 entitled “A LOCAL LAW CREATING A NEW CHAPTER 225 ENTITLED ‘SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS PILOT LAW’”; a copy of which is attached hereto and made a part hereof; and be it further

RESOLVED that pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act, adoption of the Local Law constitutes a Type II Action as defined under 6 NYCRR 617.5(c)(26) and (33); and

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk be and hereby is directed to enter said Local Law in the minutes of this meeting and to give due notice of the adoption of said Local Law to the Secretary of State; and be it further

RESOLVED that this resolution will take effect upon filing with the Department of State.
2nd Cl Lamb

Roll Call Vote	Cl Vargas-Mendez	Yes
	Cl Buck	Yes
	Cl Dravis	Yes
	Cl Lamb	Yes
	Supv Leifer	Yes

Discussion regarding TC3 Dorms -

Martha Robertson attended a meeting last Friday as a representative of the town’s Affordable and Workforce Housing Committee. Along with Amy Kremenek, President of TC3, there were representatives from Kendall, the Office for Aging, Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services and Longview. There are seven dorm buildings that were full at one point, but only four are currently being used for student housing. The dorms are owned by TC3 Foundation and they would like them put to good use. The housing committee met yesterday and had a conversation about this opportunity. There is a lot of enthusiasm among the group that met last Friday. The foundation probably doesn’t want to sell the land but they seem open to creative and good ideas. It seems that what is needed is some kind of an RFP sent to the housing market to see what a developer would propose. There are three good buildings (the ones furthest from the school and athletic buildings) with about 28 suites in each building. They would probably need some renovation and upgrading to meet most market uses, but represent a tremendous asset in terms of housing that with relatively minimal investment could be turned into some very much needed housing for the community.

The housing committee was interested in seeing if there was some way for the town to support TC3 in their efforts. Tompkins County has a grant opportunity for municipalities to apply for up to \$10,000 for projects that will support development of housing. They thought there might be a fit if the grant could be applied to hire a consultant to develop an RFP and help TC3 vet the proposals and make a decision. The grant is listed as being available to municipalities, but maybe if the town were supportive and applied on behalf of the foundation,

it might work out. It is rare that you find a building that can be repurposed for housing that is new enough that it's a decent building, but old enough that it will be worth investing in. The Foundation will need to articulate what their goals are in an RFP.

The housing committee wanted to update the board and look for feedback. Cl Buck said there should be a facilities assessment done; that would be helpful for decision making and planning purposes.

M Robertson believes there will be another meeting of that group in a couple of weeks. She is looking for an expression of support from the town and Cl Lamb said he is sure the town would sponsor the grant application. The town's housing committee will work on the application, but will need help developing the RFP. The Foundation does not have the skills to develop an RFP.

Mike Lane said he has heard reports on the meeting. M Robertson is enthusiastic about housing and should be. There is a lot of history here. Currently there is a survey out in which the college is trying to find out if there is interest in the community for having student housing for families. M Lane said one concern might be a mix of population of students and other members of the community. The buildings closest to campus are the oldest buildings and are not in good condition. The buildings that people seem to be most interested in are the newer buildings. The Foundation has bonds to pay for the building of these dormitories and with lower numbers of students (800 down now to 300) is not producing the income they need to make the payments. The former president of the college was trying to get the DEC police program to move their program there, but it did not work out. The idea of moving ahead with trying to decide what will happen with these buildings is a good one; he thinks moving ahead with an RFP needs more thought.

M Robertson pointed out the decision is up to the Foundation. Mixing populations may result in internships. The town's housing committee is not proposing any particular solution, and it is up to the Foundation to determine what their priorities are.

C O'Connor pointed out the buildings have sprinkler systems and are essentially safe from fire.

M Robertson said there really is an opportunity here, and if we can help support the foundation get best possible proposals to consider, she would hope we can do that.

The committee will apply for a grant to prepare an RFP if TC3 is on board.

COUNTY UPDATE – Mike Lane reported that yesterday TC3 sponsored a jobs fair and he understands it was very well attended by both students and the community. All types of job opportunities were highlighted. It was a nice thing the college did for the two county communities.

County Administrator Lisa Holmes will retire at the end of the year. A committee will prepare to do a national search. Lisa has been doing a great job and that will continue through the end of the year. A new County Attorney is expected to be announced soon.

The Rapid Response service started April 2. They had an open house at the Emergency Response Department and folks came in to meet the new hires. There has been feedback that this will have a negative impact on volunteers, but he doesn't believe that will be the case.

Cl Lamb said there was a productive meeting this afternoon about the design of the program. TCCOG disagrees on how the funding should be structured. TCCOG was unanimous in its view that the program will be compromised if a cost-sharing method is used.

They had a lot of good feedback from some in the legislature, and he believes a lot of legislators will support the county funding this. M Lane believes every municipality should share in the expense and believes that the municipalities need to have a dog in the fight. Traditionally costs for these services have been at the local level.

Cl Lamb said we can't expect to maintain tradition because we have lost the volunteers that the county seems to think municipalities still have access to. There has been a loss of over 20% for EMS over the last five years. The volunteer companies do not have the volunteers to provide what the county thinks the municipalities can sustain. If the municipalities could sustain this, we wouldn't need to do the program. He would like M Lane's support on this. It doesn't affect the Town of Dryden so much as the whole county. Right now, the Town of Dryden is a donor municipality. Dryden's ambulance service spends 20-30% of its resources in deployment outside of the town. Unless the county can provide this coherent service throughout the county, Dryden will continue to do this. There are 22 counties in the state that are already doing this. Four counties have ambulance service. The state has a role here and eventually will provide funding, and eventually make this a mandated service. It isn't right now, but in the Governor's budget there is a provision for the first time to make ambulance service a mandated service. The county should look at the bigger picture of where this is statewide and the sustainability of what we are trying to do here in Tompkins County.

M Lane disagreed and said if the funding is coming from the towns, villages, and city, and it needs to expand to full ambulance, the need for that funding help from the towns, villages and city becomes even greater. The county wants to help but localities that have provided the service in the past need to help as well.

Cl Lamb said we are all paying county tax dollars and this is a regional problem. You can't achieve any sort of continuity or consistency of service across the county if you are trying to do individual MOUs with municipalities. There needs to be standardized metrics across the county. The system right now is a patchwork system and you will have some municipalities refuse to enter into this cost-sharing. Municipalities like Dryden and Trumansburg will be left holding the bag. We can't go back to a system that is no longer sustainable.

Supv Leifer said between the town departments already providing light rescue. To expect Dryden to contribute is insanity. We already provide services outside the town to the City of Ithaca, Cortlandville, Groton, Slaterville and Caroline.

Cl Lamb said some counties already have county-wide ambulance service. The environment has changed drastically and there is no turning back the clock where we have the volunteers and Dryden is spending considerable money for ambulance service. The town has really made some investments and is spending 1.2 million a year on ambulance service.

M Lane said he has to look out for the taxpayers of the county. Cl Lamb will share a report with him and hopes that M Lane will be able to support TCCOG's position.

Supv Leifer said he is happy that the town of Dryden was removed from the county contract regarding Broadband. He is hoping the Town gets a state grant.

Discussion/Action Items

Court Audit – Cl Dravis and Cl Vargas-Mendez completed an internal audit of the court records. They are very organized and do a good job.

RESOLUTION #77 (2024) – ACCEPT INTERNAL COURT AUDIT

Cl Dravis offered the following resolution and asked for its adoption:

RESOLVED, that this Town Board hereby accepts the report of the Finance Committee for the internal audit completed on April 10, 2024, of the Town of Dryden Court.

2nd Cl Buck

Roll Call Vote	Cl Vargas-Mendez	Yes
	Cl Buck	Yes
	Cl Dravis	Yes
	Cl Lamb	Yes
	Supv Leifer	Yes

Climate Smart/Clean Energy Community Task Force – Cl Dravis said the Village became a Climate Smart Community recently and would like to join forces with the town.

RESOLUTION #78 (2024) - APPOINT VILLAGE OF DRYDEN REPRESENTATIVES TO THE TOWN OF DRYDEN'S CLIMATE SMART / CLEAN ENERGY COMMUNITY TASK FORCE

Cl Dravis offered the following resolution and asked for its adoption:

WHEREAS, the Village of Dryden Trustees have voted to become a Climate Smart and Clean Energy Community; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Dryden's Deputy Mayor Tom Sinclair was appointed to serve as the Village of Dryden's Climate Smart Coordinator; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Dryden would like to combine their Climate Smart and Clean Energy Community work with that of the Town of Dryden's Climate Smart / Clean Energy Community Task Force by becoming a member of the Task Force;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board approves the appointment of Tom Sinclair and any additional Village of Dryden representatives to the Town of Dryden Climate Smart / Clean Energy Community Task Force.

2nd Supv Leifer

Roll Call Vote	Cl Vargas-Mendez	Yes
	Cl Buck	Yes
	Cl Dravis	Yes
	Cl Lamb	Yes
	Supv Leifer	Yes

Broadband Committee Appointment -

RESOLUTION #79 (2024) – APPOINT BROADBAND COMMITTEE MEMBER

Cl Buck offered the following resolution and asked for its adoption:

RESOLVED, that this Town Board hereby appoints Joel Cisne to serve on the Broadband Committee.

2nd Supv Leifer

Roll Call Vote	Cl Vargas-Mendez	Yes
	Cl Buck	Yes
	Cl Dravis	Yes
	Cl Lamb	Yes
	Supv Leifer	Yes

Next week's agenda will include a public hearing on the South Hill Rec Way extension, a presentation on the Borger Station and a presentation on the solar project proposed for Caswell Road.

Ray Burger said there are a couple of special use permit applications, one for B & B Flooring on Route 13 and one for the martial arts studio on Peruville, coming back for very minor site plan amendments. Normally they would go through the Planning Board and they would make recommendations to the Town Board with the Town Board having final approval because of the SUP in place. These are not changing the SUP at all. He asked if in these two cases, the Town Board would delegate the amendments to Planning Board.

RESOLUTION #80 (2024) – DELEGATE REVIEW AND APPROVAL TO PLANNING BOARD FOR TWO SITE PLAN ADJUSTMENTS

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

RESOLVED, that this Town Board hereby delegates site plan approval to the Planning Board for two sites, 983 Peruville Road and 2217 Dryden Road, which are making minor site plan revisions.

2nd Cl Buck

Roll Call Vote	Cl Vargas-Mendez	Yes
	Cl Buck	Yes
	Cl Dravis	Yes
	Cl Lamb	Yes
	Supv Leifer	Yes

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bambi L. Avery
Town Clerk