

February 15, 2024

Schultzville, NY

The Clinton Town Board held the Regular Town Board meeting on this day in the Town Hall. Present were Supervisor Whitton, Deputy Supervisor Werner, Councilman Dykas, Councilwomen Mustello and Councilwoman Auspitz as well as Town Clerk Carol-Jean Mackin. There were approximately 45 people in the audience.

Supervisor Whitton called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM. **(Pledge done earlier)**

APPROVE MINUTES

MM Deputy Supervisor Werner, 2nd Councilwoman Mustello to approve the January 9, 2024 Town Board minutes. All aye. Motion carried.

MM Deputy Supervisor Werner, 2nd Councilwoman Mustello to approve the February 5, 2024 executive session minutes. All aye. Motion carried.

MM Deputy Supervisor Werner, 2nd Councilwoman Auspitz to approve the February 6, 2024 executive session minutes. All aye. Motion carried.

MM Deputy Supervisor Werner, 2nd Councilwoman Auspitz to approve the February 9, 2024 executive session minutes. All aye. Motion carried.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION: (Agenda Items only)

MM Supervisor Whitton, 2nd Councilwoman Mustello to open the floor to public discussion. All aye. Motion carried.

Melissa Karchmer - Secretary to the Highway Superintendent, appreciates the support on this issue of discrimination and harassment against her. She is usually here supporting her boss and she will do the same tonight. When discussing to make her wage whole, she points out the money is in the budget, the decision was already made. This is unprecedented. This has never happened to a highway worker before. The opposite happens, increases are promised with retroactivity. She started in January and expected a certain wage; Supervisor Whitton took the money away; he took food out of the mouths of her children. That was cruel. The research and justification on her pay was done during the budget hearings; she researched other town highway departments and they were similar to the original pay of \$25.30 per hour. She believes this wage was comparable and fair. The decision to restore pay should not be political, it should be a right vs. wrong decision.

Ralph Chianese – longtime resident of Clinton, regarding the intersection of Pumpkin Lane and Longview Dr. -it is a dangerous intersection. Visibility is poor and there is a dip and there is no reason why a stop sign should not be there, it is dangerous. He has witnessed accidents there and something needs to be done there. The Board reminded him this public session is for agenda items and he can continue to discuss this issue later in the meeting.

Bruce Martin – highway employee for 34 years asking the Town Board to help him retire, he has the years but not the age, asking to do an amendment to the contract so he can retire. He is the longest serving employee.

Lynn Tompkins – the original highway secretary, she is here on behalf of Melissa Karchmer. Lynn said she always got a raise, although sometimes it was 5 cents. Melissa puts in extra hours the town may not know about. She deserves a raise and to take it away is shameful.

Russ Tompkins – sees tonight the agenda the motions regarding Resolution 1. Hopes to restore the wage of the highway clerk.

Richard Dingee – here on behalf of Melissa Karchmer, watched a previous meeting where Supervisor Whitton said she is overqualified which made him squirm. She has a four year degree, that is an asset to the town and she works on Saturdays. Losing her would be an injustice to the town.

Todd Martin - Highway Superintendent, in Town Hall complex we have a full time Secretary to the Supervisor, Arlene is full time, there are two secretaries for the court, the biggest revenue is highway and he has one clerk for 32 hours. Added that the Town Clerk is full time with a deputy and another clerk. Without Melissa, the office would stop functioning.

MM Supervisor Whitton, 2nd Councilman Werner to close public discussion and return to the regular order of business. All aye. Motion carried.

SUPERVISOR’S COMMENTS

Deputy Supervisor Werner read them aloud on behalf of Supervisor Whitton:

- The Town is closed on Monday 2-19 for Presidents Day,
- We have exp bank fraud for \$9500, we closed account, opened a new one and added safeguards, thanked Tori Hoolihan, our bookkeeper for recognizing it and her quick actions,
- Justice Court audit was received on January 31, 2024,
- All Exemptions are due March 1.
- The BAR is for grievances with your assessment, call the Assessor with questions about your assessment,
- Letter to support the Historical Society’s grant to restore and upgrade the interior of the Creek Meeting House; the grant is a National Park Service grant, part of the Semi-Quincentennial Grant Program (250 years).
- We are at the beginning of the Hometown Heros Project in Clinton, placing banners of veterans who have sacrificed for our country on electric poles . Councilman Dykas added his comments that he always admired this project elsewhere, he will form a committee to explore this issue, appears to be self-funding; described the process. On the agenda for next month.

TOWN BOARD REPORTS: Posted on the web, townofclinton.com.

PLANNING BOARD, ZBA, CAC, CLIMATE SMART TASK FORCE, RECREATION, BUILDING INSPECTOR, ZONING ADMINISTRATOR, HIGHWAY, SCENIC AND HISTORIC ROADS, LIBRARY, ALTICE, ZONING REVISION, CEMETERIES, PROPOSED TRANSMISSION LINES, OTHER (QUARTERLY: WIC, SAFETY)

Councilwoman Mustello – the CAC has new website; it is the Home of the CAC and CSC: Clintoncac.com. developed by Barb Mansell and Jenn Brown, asking for people to submit nature photos,. The DEC has a new law expanding the wetlands habitat. The current maps will be for info purposes only. We will need to rewrite the zoning law for wetlands as a result.

Planning Board – read from report, posted online.

ZBA - read from the report, posted online; thanked Norma Dolan for 18 years of service before retiring. Please be respectful and polite when before these boards, they are volunteers who give a lot of their time to these positions.

Councilman Dykas- read from the Highway Report, posted online.

Councilwoman Auspitz - Library donations for the book sale begins March 5. The Friends Group is looking for volunteers for the book sale and plant sale scheduled for May 16 to 19.

Deputy Supervisor Werner - read the building inspector report, posted online.

Recreation Committee - met on Jan 29, hopes to reschedule skating party; banners up fundraising program has begun; check the recreation calendar, which is posted on the webpage to rent the pavilion; summer camp dates are also posted on the website. Next meeting Monday Feb 26 at 7 pm in Town Hall.

CSC - Climate Smart Committee Task Force - Discussion on the bronze certification; Town vehicle fleet inventory almost done. Looking to make the highway garage more efficient with grant funding. Pursuing riparian buffer planning.

MCEI, or Zoning officer - report posted online.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Discuss/Approve Farm Law – Whitton

Discussion: Deputy Supervisor Werner will work on the edits and present a final draft at the next meeting.

2. Approve Resolution to fund Building and Maintenance Reserve Fund – Werner

MM Deputy Supervisor Werner, 2nd Councilwoman Auspitz that the Town Board approves the following resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board approves **Resolution No. 9 of 2024**, which authorizes, directs, and empowers the Town Supervisor to appropriate and transfer Thirty Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$30,000.00) from the Town’s general fund surplus to the Building Repair and Maintenance Reserve Fund and to take such other actions necessary to effectuate the terms of this Resolution. All aye. Motion carried.

3. Discuss Resolution 1 of 2024 - Mustello

Comments by Councilwoman Mustello: she wants each individual motion to have a vote as opposed to a group approval in the resolution. She reviewed the salaries aloud individually and commented that this is not a comment on anyone’s work, all employees do a good job.

Sec. to Hwy Sup:

MM Councilwoman Mustello, 2nd Councilman Werner that the Town Board approves a change in the hourly wage for the Secretary to the Highway Superintendent from \$22.33 per hour to \$25.30 per hour for 32 hours per week effective January 1, 2024.

In discussion Councilwoman Mustello reviewed the salary history for the position: \$21.63 in 2023 and this budget gave her \$25.30 an hour, a 14 % increase, to true up the salary to that of the town’s Supervisor Secretary. As the prior Board agreed, the two jobs have a similar responsibility and duties. This is in line with other local highway secretaries with similar miles of roads etc. Councilwoman Mustello added that the current \$22.33 per hour wage is an increase from 2023. Deputy Supervisor Werner made the comments for Supervisor Whitton: The original budget proposal for the position is \$22.33. The budget goes through three phases, the Town Supervisor presents a tentative budget which contained all of the wage changes approved by this Board in Resolution 1. During the budget process, changes were then made to the tentative budget by the whole Board; budget changes are made monthly by the whole Board. The biggest issue is the wage to the Secretary to the Highway Superintendent – the hourly rate for Melissa has not been cut, but given an increase of 3.25 %, like all employees. A few employees received a greater increase because that was promised by the pervious Board, or the Board was fixing rates that had been previously frozen. The Town Supervisor is receiving a rate lower than was decided on by the previous Board. In four years there has been 64 percent increase in wage for the Secretary to the Highway Superintendent and the hours have increased by 220%. If the Board approves the higher rate, it means a 100.4 percent wage increase for her over 4 years with no additional duties added to the position. The average increase for other employees over the same time period is 22 percent. Much has been made to the Town Supervisor position which received an increase in hours worked but no increase in pay; this makes it possible for him to receive health insurance. He opted not to receive them like the Secretary to the Highway Superintendent at this time. Supervisor Whitton compares the Secretary to the Highway Superintendent wage to those in similar sized towns:

Clinton - 38 sq mi of roads, 4065 population with 9 highway employees, and Secretary for 32 hours a week.

Stanford - 50 sq mi of roads, 3692 population, 5 employees, Secretary for 20 hours a week.

Amenia - 43 sq mi of roads, population of 3830, 5 highway employees and Secretary for 15 hours a week.

Unionvale - closet comparison to Clinton: 37 sq mi of roads, population of 4574, 4 highway employees and no Secretary to Highway Superintendent.

In conclusion, the Secretary to the Highway Superintendent is receiving a wage increase of 3.25 percent, like most other employes to which the majority of this Board agrees. Councilwoman Mustello appreciates his metrics but comments that she is still underpaid according to other Towns as well.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Supervisor Whitton:	NO
Councilwoman Mustello:	AYE
Councilman Dykas:	NO
Councilman Werner:	NO
Councilwoman Auspitz:	AYE

MOTION FAILS.

Town Supervisor:

MM Councilwoman Mustello, 2nd Councilman Werner that the Town Board approves a change in the Supervisor's position from full time to part time at 22 hours per week for an annual salary of \$39,521 effective January 1, 2024. Councilwoman Mustello said there is no other town with a similar population with a full time Supervisor. His salary is higher than surrounding towns but voted on by the previous Board. The Town Supervisor's salary is \$19,000 more than the closet town. Councilman Dykas said the average NYS salary for the position is \$59,000.

Councilwoman Mustello said the Stanford Supervisor is paid \$19,000; the Washington Supervisor is paid \$20,879. Deputy Supervisor Werner said his comment is from a personal POV: Supervisor Whitton was out sick for three months and he was called to step in, it is not a part time job. Ray Oberly did it full time also. The least we can do is give him benefits, he is not taking any additional money. Councilwoman Mustello asked Supervisor Whitton to say he won't take benefits for the rest of his term; he can't do that. He stated that he is not taking them now.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Supervisor Whitton: NO
Councilwoman Mustello: AYE
Councilman Dykas: NO
Councilman Werner: NO
Councilwoman Auspitz: NO

MOTION FAILS.

Sec. to the Town Sup:

MM Councilwoman Mustello, 2nd Councilman Werner that the Town Board approves a change in the hourly wage for the Secretary to the Town Supervisor from \$26.50 per hour to \$25.30 per hour for 40 hours per week effective: January 1, 2024. Councilwoman Mustello is asking to return it to that to which the previous Board agreed, reviewed her salary from 2023, pointing out the previous Board gave her a 3.25 percent raise but on Jan 1 it was raised further. Supervisor Whitton said Cathy Gallinger was hired with the understanding she would receive this wage, which was not done. Her wage is comparable to other Supervisor Secretaries. Deputy Supervisor Werner said this position is integral to the Town and to the Town Supervisor's office, the increase is warranted. Supervisor Whitton said the Town Supervisor and the Town Clerk deal with the whole town, all others manage a single department.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Supervisor Whitton: NO
Councilwoman Mustello: AYE
Councilman Dykas: NO
Councilman Werner: NO
Councilwoman Auspitz: NO

MOTION FAILS.

Deputy Town Clerk/Deputy VSR:

MM Councilwoman Mustello, 2nd Councilman Werner that the Town Board approves a change in the hourly wage for the Deputy Town Clerk/Deputy VSR from \$24.21 per hour to \$22.78 per hour for 16 hours per week effective: January 1, 2024. Councilwoman Mustello reviewed the 2023 salary with a 3.25% raise, Resolution 1 changed that to a 5.9 percent raise. Deputy Supervisor Werner said the position is an important one and warranted.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Supervisor Whitton: NO
Councilwoman Mustello: AYE
Councilman Dykas: NO
Councilman Werner: NO
Councilwoman Auspitz: NO

MOTION FAILS.

4. Discuss/ Approve updated Fee Schedule - Whitton

MM Deputy Supervisor Werner, 2nd Councilman Werner that the Town Board approves the following resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board approves **Resolution No. 10 of 2024, the revised fee schedule.** Supervisor Whitton asked each department head for updates, he only heard from highway, those changes have been made. Councilman Dykas wants to discuss the cost of cremation burials; Deputy Supervisor Werner explained the charges. Councilman Dykas asks: Do we want a senior discount (to all fees)? Councilwoman Mustello said we need to think about it. All aye. Motion carried.

5. Discuss/Approve Designing an Evacuation Plan - Mustello

MM Councilwoman Mustello, 2nd Councilman NONE that the Town Board approves the following resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board approves Town Engineer CPL's proposal to design an evacuation plan for the Town Hall, Masonic Hall, Schoolhouse, Library and Highway Garage as per the proposal dated February 8, 2024 at a cost not to exceed \$5500.00.

Councilwoman Mustello explained she is working on fire drill plan. We need a map of how to get out of each building. Minute Man Press can help but there is a lot of other information that is not needed. CPL can design a plan, which they have done for Wappingers. They include exits and fire extinguishers and AEDs. Councilwoman Auspitz asked if we can split it up, Councilwoman Mustello said it would be a shame if something happened and one building did not have a plan in place. Supervisor Whitton said the \$5000 is worth it. Let's wait until next month so we can work out the numbers. All agreed.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Approve Rennia Engineering as Engineer to the Planning Board – Mustello

MM Councilwoman Mustello, 2nd Councilman Werner that the Town Board approves the following resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board approves Rennia Engineering as the Engineer to the Planning Board at the published rates. Councilwoman Mustello said the previous Town Engineer left the CPL firm for this one. The Planning Board has a good working relationship with peter Setaro and wants to use him for their consultant. Rates are comparable to CPL. Councilwoman Mustello asked Chairman Paul Thomas to comment: we worked with him for years, we want to add him to the roster, with CPL continuing with certain projects. The appointment maximizes the level of expertise. In addition, the rates are paid by the applicants, not taxpayer money. All aye. Motion carried.

2. Request for Traffic Signal Study at 9G/Hollow Rd - Whitton

MM Supervisor Whitton, 2nd Councilperson Werner that the Town Board approves the following resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board approves the Superintendent of Highways request that the NYS Department of Transportation conduct a Traffic Signal Warrant Study to the Town of Clinton at the intersection on State Route 9G/Hollow Rd (Town of Clinton). NYSDOT will notify the town of the findings and conclusions upon completion of the study. All aye. Motion carried.

MM Supervisor Whitton, 2nd Deputy Supervisor Werner to approve the following resolution BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board approve that the Town Supervisor may use a signature stamp. All aye. Motion carried.

Stop sign at Longview and Pumpkin – Supervisor Whitton will add this item next month to the agenda.

OTHER ITEMS

1. Resignations and appointments – Werner

RESIGNATIONS:

MM Deputy Supervisor Werner, 2nd Councilwoman Mustello to accept the resignation of Abbey Wiand as the Winter Seasonal Laborer effective February 2, 2024. All aye. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENTS:

MM Deputy Supervisor Werner, 2nd Councilwoman Mustello to approve the appointment of Abbey Wiand as the FT Laborer effective February 5, 2024 at a rate of pay as per the CSEA contract for \$1 less than the starting contract rate for 2024 of \$19.25 per hour for a period of 6 months or 1000 hours with paid leave benefits as per the CSEA Contract and full medical, eye and dental coverage with an employee contribution of 15%. All aye. Motion carried.

MM Deputy Supervisor Werner, 2nd Councilwoman Mustello to approve the appointment of Felicity Schaffer as Building Dept. Clerk effective January 29, 2024 at a rate of pay of \$22.33 per hour for 20 hours per week. Councilwoman Mustello asked if this was the Building Inspector's recommendation, yes it is. All aye. Motion carried.

MM Deputy Supervisor Werner, 2nd Councilwoman Mustello to approve the appointment of Daniel Vonderbrink as a member of the ZBA for a term of office of February 13, 2024 to December 31, 2026 filling the unexpired term of Norma Dolan who resigned. All aye. Motion carried.

2. Approval of Warrants - Mustello

MM Councilwoman Mustello, 2nd Councilman Werner to approve the following resolution BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board approves the:

February General Fund Warrant, vouchers numbered **30 through 99**, totaling \$ **38,545.95**

and the

February Highway Fund Warrant, vouchers numbered **17 through 49** totaling \$ **89,786.92**

All aye. Motion carried.

3. Motion to Move Funds – Whitton/Werner

MM Deputy Supervisor Werner, 2nd Councilman Dykas that the Town Board approves the following resolution: BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board approve **Resolution No. 11 of 2024** a motion to move funds. All aye. Motion carried.

4. Supervisor’s Report - Whitton

MM Supervisor Whitton, 2nd Councilman Werner to approve the Supervisor’s Report for January 2024. All aye. Motion carried.

OTHER/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

none

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

MM Supervisor Whitton, 2nd Councilman Werner to open the floor to public discussion. All aye. Motion carried.

Ed Pell – there are 4 million new settlers coming to the U.S. from the Canadian border and the southern border. Many are residing in Poughkeepsie. What are we doing to plan for their arrival in our town?

Ray Oberly – what is the status of the generator? Supervisor Whitton is looking into grants on the federal level, we probably will not use ARPA funds. Councilwoman Mustello said Supervisor Whitton was going to get a quote, Supervisor Whitton said it would cost about \$140,000 now. Mr. Oberly added he hopes we only have one electric meter, not three to save thousands of dollars. What is happening with the study on Kansas road? Deputy Supervisor Werner said we had a series of meetings with the town engineer. Meeting again this week, CPL has a plan to do a three phase project costing a half million dollars. Highway Superintendent Martin has a more modest plan. Councilwoman Auspitz said when talking to residents, they expressed that they love their road as is.

Ralph Chianese – concerning that some employees did get raises and others didn’t, this is political garbage. The Secretary to the Highway Superintendent works very hard.

Arlene Campbell, Planning and Zoning Board Secretary - also got 3.25 percent raise.

Dan Madsen - lived in town since 1972 never seen such craziness, Supervisor Whitton should be ashamed of himself. There is a waste of money. You spend \$5000 for an emergency plan - draw the plan yourself. Save the money and give Melissa a raise. Start doing the right thing. Pleasant Valley Supervisor is part time at \$35, 000. The people are angry and you need to try harder to make the right decisions. You are making decisions on the sly.

Ralph Chianese - disabled vet and corrections officer who has done more for the country than all of the Board members put together. Councilman Dykas took offense to that and the two, along with Deputy Supervisor Werner had a heated exchange.

Lynn Tompkins - the Secretary to the Highway Superintendent does interact with the public, she has as much interaction as any other clerk in the complex. Against decision made on Melissa's wage.

Russ Tompkins - you represent the public; control your emotions. Don't react. Deputy Supervisor Werner apologized. The Board did not represent the people tonight. Feels many would disapprove of the actions tonight; actions have consequences. He heard from some people that Supervisor Whitton was acting like a "Nazi," people are not happy with what they are seeing. Hopes he learns from public opinion. Feels the Board was wrong taking Melissa's wage away, should have followed Councilwoman Mustello's lead.

Jody Scagnelli - complained about the stop signs. Melissa spoke to her several times after that meeting. Todd followed through on the stop sign issue. We worked together and it seems a lot more reasonable to have stop signs and warning signs there. She was told the engineer is very expensive; maybe that money can be used in other ways. Since she brought it up it is now the town's responsibility and she feels she should be informed of a decision in a better period of time, 3 or 6 months. Melissa should have that raise.

MM Supervisor Witton, 2nd Councilman Werner to close public discussion and return to the regular order of business. All aye. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

MM Supervisor Whitton, 2nd Councilwoman Mustello that the Town Board adjourns the meeting. All aye. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned 8:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carol-Jean Mackin,
Town Clerk