

At the Town Board meeting of the Waterford Town Board held on March 6, 2018 at Waterford Town Hall, 65 Broad Street, Waterford, NY at 7 P.M. the following transpired:

There were present:

Councilman Ball

Councilman Boudreau

Councilman Marble

Councilman McClement

Supervisor Lawler

COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

There were none.

ACTION ON MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS AS FOLLOWS

Minutes of the Town Board meetings of February 6th and the Special and Agenda Meeting of February 27th were presented to the Board. A motion was made by Councilman Boudreau seconded by Councilman Marble to accept the minutes as presented. All in favor.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Financial Report and Submission of Bills and Petty Cash

Supervisor Lawler read the financial report for the month of February 2018. The petty cash report totaled \$41.65. The audited abstracts totaled \$267,262.19 and the payments in advance of audit totaled \$99,598.46. A motion was made by Councilman Boudreau and seconded by Councilman McClement to accept the reports, pay the bills and reimburse the petty cash accounts. All in favor.

Supervisor Lawler stated he was going to deviate from the agenda this evening. The public comment period normally comes at the end of the meeting, but in consideration of the time for those attending this evening he is going to open the meeting up for a discussion on the Reevaluation Assessment Project. He asks that each speaker state their name and address for the record and to try to limit it to one question as to allow everyone present a chance to be heard.

Dave Barnett from GAR was introduced. GAR is the company hired by the Town to conduct the reassessment project.

Mary Pliska- 4th Street- received the reassessment letter on Saturday. Most people cannot afford these new values, which she feels look more like a new home value. She called GAR, was told to go to the Library and look up comparables. The comparables looked bigger than her home. She has been fixing it up over the years, but she is not sure where you got these figures from. She has an issue with the assessment based on her homes' style. Does not feel there is much style in the village. Her home is also in the flood plain.

Dave Barnett- The values you received are preliminary. Through the month you have the ability to challenge your assessment with the informal review. They did all the work to gather information from the outside of your home. He encourages everyone to call the number listed on the letter and make an appointment. The goal of a reassessment project is to get your value right. There is a range of sales, not every property is the same, sales of properties in your neighborhood were looked at. Style is a term used by NYS Property Tax law, means the type of home you have such as colonial or ranch. This is not perfect, there will be adjustments. Their goal is to make sure that your determined value is fair and equitable. At the informal review you will submit all the information you want us to consider such as a recent appraisal, if you had refinanced and interior pictures. There is a form to be filled out which will accompany this information. After being reviewed we will render a decision, a notice will be mailed to you by the end of April. The tentative roll is filled by May 1st, this is NYS law. If you still disagree with the decision, you can file a grievance and go before the Board of Assessment Review which is comprised of Town residents. Grievance Day is the 4th Tuesday in May. He discussed the grievance form. They are required by law on the notice to give you an example (for a certain time), of your taxes. The last reassessment was in 1981. Flood plain is an issue. You can mention this at the informal review. We do not know everything about your home. This is something that will be an additional consideration.

Richard Kennedy- 56 4th St also owns 94 4th Street- when you say our assessment was based on homes the neighborhood, what neighborhood are you looking at?

Dave Barnett- each neighborhood was give a code, every parcel is part of a neighborhood code. Sales in your neighborhood were looked at. You can look at the residential sales with photos for your neighborhood, this is all online. There is a website listed on the letter and also a link on the Town website.

Richard Kennedy- Was the flood insurance looked at, does this factor in the numbers. Are the comparables for a home in the flood plain based on other homes in the flood

plain? What is entailed in the informal review process, is this an added expense to the taxpayer?

Supervisor Lawler stated that the point of a reassessment is to find the accurate value. This is the first step in getting to that. Look and see, are there houses in my neighborhood that sold for this? We can't all assume that all of this is correct, there will be changes.

Dave Barnett- At the informal review will gather all your information, if we need an interior visit – we will do so. There is no extra expense for the informal review. There is a neighborhood delineation, the village is its own neighborhood. Homes in the flood plain share this characteristic. You are being compared to other homes with the same characteristic.

The Supervisor asked how everyone can see these comparables.

Dave Barnett- On line, look up sales in your neighborhood find sales most similar to yours. There is a comparable tab on the site. This is a third party search engine, GAR does not maintain this. If you want exact properties significant to you, call the number, 1-866 910-1776 and we can provide you those sales.

Don- 44 Clifton St- he has an appointment, his appraisal is over 10 yrs old, should he get a new one.

Dave Barnett- It is very early in the process for anyone to do that. They can be expensive. Utilize the resources we are providing you first. But you are well within your right to get an appraisal.

Kathleen Wheeler- 5 Carriage Way- her home is 15 yrs old. Only 4 houses were built on her street. Any comps for her neighborhood are not near the same. Where did the comps come from? They don't even have a road. She feels the old assessed value is probably more accurate.

Supervisor Lawler- We want to get the value of your home right. If the comps are wrong or not understood, go through the process.

Kathleen Wheeler- At that point, what is next.

Dave Barnett- Explained the review process a resident can go through. Not all properties are the same. Once you see the sales and range of value, you can see where you value came from. At the informal review, adjustments can be made during this time, before grievance day.

Supervisor Lawler added that the informal reviews will be held at the K of C on Grace Street. Appointments will allow everyone to have their time without waiting in line.

Bridget Framont- 3 Carriage Way- Her home is 15 yrs old, not many new homes in Waterford or her neighborhood. Were the comparables used from Waterford. Her road is not finished and her driveway is broken up, was this considered?

Dave Barnett- Yes, the comparables used are from Waterford. In this case they may have expanded outside your neighborhood to find another comp for a 15 yr old home with similar style that sold. They try to stay in your neighborhood. You have a unique scenario, they can provide you those sales. The road issue may have been considered, that is something to bring up at the informal review meeting. Our goal is to get your value right.

Bridget Framont- Why did we go up 100% in one year, why not do this over a 5 year period.

Dave Barnett- A reassessment project is parcel specific. There are a lot of inequities in the current rate. Real Property Tax Law requires a uniform percentage. At 100% there are things you can gain, all of your exemptions go up as you go up to 100%. County Sales tax revenue also goes up. These values you see are preliminary, there are always adjustments that can be made based on your review process.

Supervisor Lawler added that every reval goes to 100%, that's how it is done. This does not change how much money in taxes the Town collects. We want to be fair to everybody, ensure that everyone pays their fair share. Every time someone like Momentive challenges their assessment and we go to court, we lose. We can't defend our assessment role. Our equalization rate is not defensible. This is the only process available to get to 100%. The Town hired this company who specializes in reassessments to handle this impartially.

Alexis- 22 Charles St- had a question regarding the size of her property.

Gentleman- 48 Middle St- He questioned the taxes being net neutral and if the tax rate will go down.

Dave Barnett pointed out the illustration in the letter.

Supervisor Lawler listed the changes that will occur to the county, town, and school district taxes as a result of this reval. The taxes will be net neutral. As your value goes up, the tax stays the same, unless you were undervalued.

John- 51 Broad Street- Did you go outside Waterford for commercial properties. Did you take into consideration where the building is, such as the neighborhood? Flood insurance is an issue too. Property was recently listed.

Dave Barnett- Yes, we may have gone outside Waterford, we want to stay in Waterford if we can, it depended on the type of (property) business it was. Things we considered were parking etc., and the market area. Properties that were compared is available. Bring sale information and listings to the informal meeting.

Candace- 116 Broad Street- Owner occupied residential with vacancies.

Dave Barnett- Pointed out that 4 units and above is deemed commercial. When looking up comparables make sure you are staying within your class.

Heidi Knorr- 23 Front Street- She has a two family home, are all units considered rentable? What about family occupied, these don't generate extra income. For those who see a change after this process, what percentage can they expect.

Dave Barnett- Provide all this information at the informal review. A two family is considered a two family no matter who lives there. If the materials provided substantiate a reduction, than a reduction will be given.

Gina Thompson- 26 2nd St- Were neighborhood foreclosures considered. Spoke of her fondness for Waterford but lack of outdoor opportunities for children.

John- 62 Middle St.- After a grievance is filed, what is the percentage that get lowered.

Dave Barnett- About 15% of property owners come to an informal review, we cannot say that out of that 10% will get a reduction. It varies by every community; how many inequities there are and the information being provided. We encourage you to make an appointment; we will listen and take your information. It will force us to look at your value, we will review it and if there is a reduction warranted, we will give it. Once you get a reduction, and we send you the notice at the end of April, there is no further action to be taken. You will see that reflected on the 2018 school tax bill.

John- 62 Middle St- Questioned the raising of taxes.

Supervisor Lawler explained the tax based on an assessment.

The time frame and dates to keep in mind: May 1 tentative roll is filed, Grievance Day end of May, July 1st the final roll is filed.

Jason Thompson- 26 2nd St- The Village is artificially assessed to begin with. The village deals with things the Town does not, such as floods and people coming around for events. OK with this because they had lower taxes. Just because this is fair does not make things right. He met with a real estate agent and she gave him a selling price. Why is the ownership in him to prove GAR's assessment is wrong. Why is this his problem.

Supervisor Lawler stated its not your problem, but there is a process and we are asking you to tell them that they are wrong. He is seeing an underlying problem here and that is the flood plain. He wants this to be relooked at. We need to make sure the comps for your home are in the flood plain also.

Scott Stalker- The flood plain does need to be taken into account. GAR is an employee of the Town and needs to be measured on the accuracy of these assessments vs job performance. Do new homes do better than older homes in this process, such as homes in the village? There is an affordability gap. He feels the letter was terrible. Everyone should get their comps immediately, this work you have already done.

Dave Barnett- They heard about the flood plain when they did their initial workshop and were cognizant of this. Most of the village is in the flood plain. When talking comparable sales, we mean the same things as your home, an example would be the flood plain. Basic and Senior Star will adjust based on 100%, they go up. Any exemption on file is reflected in that new equation for you. Regarding the letter, they are mandated on a lot of things in the letter, as a convenience to the property owner they provided the toll free hotline. They want to get your value right. You can see the range of sales in your neighborhood. For owners, the full process is the informal review, grievance day and then small claims.

Councilman McClement was on the assessment website, and described step by step, after clicking on the comparable link and spoke of the neighborhood codes shown.

Scott Stalker- It will cost over \$9,000 to live in his home. \$4,000 of that is flood insurance.

Supervisor Lawler was notified of an issue with the live stream of the meeting. He instructed Russ M. to look into this immediately and do what needs to be done to get it back up and running.

Chris Lynch- 49 4th St- He is looking at a \$8,000 tax bill in 6 months with flood insurance.(\$2800, base cut) The Town interest in the values should be conservative. You should consider doing this on a more current basis to keep values current. If it is found that considerable changes need to be made in the upper 1/3, which are here tonight, there may be errors in the middle and lower third. Those assessments not changed or lowered need to be looked at also. He pays taxes and has reasonable expectations. Is there a mandate for the number of comparables given.

Dave Barnett- They used 4 to 5 comparables for each parcel.

Jim Bowen- 4 Van Ness St, also owns 2 Van Ness- this 100% valuation came out of nowhere. His elderly neighbor had her taxes go up, not sure how she will afford this.

Getting more money from the county was mentioned. No one ever says their taxes are too high. This whole process is not right. What is revenue neutral?

Supervisor Lawler spoke about the lawsuits the town faces each year by people whose taxes are too high. The Town was sued by Momentive to reduce their tax bill by 60%, they pay 40% of school taxes.

Dave Barnett- spoke about inequities

Tom Keebler- Van Ness- The tax increase he is facing is not ok, 2-3% he could understand not 100%. There is a short time frame to get all of this done and he is not sure if he can before he leaves for work out of town. Small children at home. What happens if he cannot get this done in time. The whole procedure is wrong, very frustrated, horrible process.

Dave Barnett- We want to accommodate your schedule. There are extenuating circumstances. There are statute dates we have to abide by, Real Property tax law, we can try to accommodate you if you are away, within reason. Call the 1-866 number.

Supervisor Lawler stated this does not generate any more money for the Town. The numbers used on the letter are from the 2017 tax bill. He explained to current suit by Momentive to have their tax bill reduced by 50%. The school district is partnering with us on this, it is in their best interest.

Doug- 11 John St.- Will this have an impact on Village taxes in June?

Mayor Mahoney was in attendance and answered no.

Doug- 11 John St- The attractive taxes were what made him buy his home here. Waterford is charming. He lives in the flood plain, he asks them to take that into effect. He looked at the comps for his property, there are soft factors to be considered also, such as abandoned properties. When taxes go up landlords will pass on to tenants, will this generate more vacancies?

Chris Callaghan- 9 6th St- Questioned the projected percent increase in school tax is higher than the town/county on his form. Understood that STAR is already included in figure.

Dave Barnett- The change is the tax rate itself, will need to look at this one specifically.

Ray Morris- 98 4th St- Thanks the Town Board for taking the hit for the village. Maybe its time to combine the village and town. 1981 since the last assessment, year after same board members sit before us, why now?

Supervisor Lawler explained the driving factor was the amount of commercial lawsuits as well as property owners in the recent years. Should this have been done 10 yrs ago, not sure the reaction would be any different. There is a growing inequity; we have an incomplete tax roll. Code Enforcement did their own internal audit and worked hard the last 10 months to help clean up the assessment roll by looking at building permits issued, and work done without permits. We found a lot of properties that had no building permits for decks, and additions that were built, and even a home. How do we get these big businesses to pay their fair share, our current assessment roll is not fair. We can't defend our assessment roll.

The Supervisor has items he needs to speak with Dave about; the flood plain, comparables, and mistakes that could have went in the other direction. Not everyone will be happy, but he does not want anyone to pay one cent more that they have to.

He went over the review process for property owners.

The Supervisor stated that they will go back and audit the process to make sure comps line up. They are trying to do this as transparent as possible. He has lived in Waterford for 65 years and grew up on Clifton Street.

Sue Coreno- her home was assessed at \$129,500, when she looks out her front door she sees an abandoned home and makeshift car repair on the street. This needs to be taken into consideration. Her daughter's assessment was lowered.

Supervisor Lawler thanked everyone for taking time to attend the meeting and for their comments and questions. He said that he and the board had learned a great deal tonight, especially about flood insurance and its potential impact on market value. Supervisor Lawler said that he had some homework to do and that he would meet with the consultants to review the process to address the questions and issues raised by residents tonight.

The Supervisor adjourned the meeting at 9:25PM to allow those in attendance who did not want to stay for the remaining meeting to leave.

The Supervisor resumed the meeting at 9:42PM.

Committee on Seniors, Highways, Wastewater Treatment, Water Authority, and Cemetery.

Councilman Boudreau gave the Highway Department report for the month of February 2018. The Highway crew has filled potholes and repaired two storm drains. They cut down two fallen trees in the cemetery. A winter storm is coming tomorrow. The Town of Waterford has declared a Snow Emergency for all town roads effective Wednesday March 7, 2018 at 9am until further notice. All town residents are asked to park in their

driveways and follow all posted alternate parking signs. Those who are non compliant will be ticketed and towed at the owners expense. Call the Highway Department at 518-235-3413 with questions. Please watch your distance with the snow plows as they plow the roads for the safety of all. Also, please remember not to put your garbage cans and recycling can in the road, but put them at the end of your driveway. The Councilman extended a thank you to the Waterford Police Department in assisting the Highway crew this winter. The Councilman then read the Senior Center report as submitted by Director Mike Mahoney. Their pot luck luncheon was held on February 20th, 36 seniors attended. The St Patrick's luncheon will be held on March 20th at noon. Please see Sue Rock to sign up or call the center at 518-235-8500, reservations are required. Town and Village Board members are invited to eat and serve at the luncheon. New members are always welcome call 518-235-8500 for more information. The senior meals program for February delivered 187 meals and had 61 people dine in. Councilman Boudreau then read then the Waterford Senior Van report for the month of February as reported by Neil Quantock, Van driver, with an average daily mileage of 109 miles. He reported on the Wastewater Treatment Plant for the month of February as reported by Craig Falcone, Plant Operator. They performed normal maintenance, continued new employee in-house training and completed yearly group training with the Highway Department. Councilman Boudreau read the Water Commissioners report. Consumption for the month of February totaled 31,890,000 gallons. The Water Department completed 92 service calls and continued equipment maintenance and weekly safety meetings. The department is working on snow removal from hydrants as time and manpower allows. Any community assistance in clearing hydrants for emergency use is appreciated.

Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Services

Councilman Ball read the Police activity report and arrest report for the month of March 2018. The Waterford Police Department is an accredited department, the review was just completed and the department is in very good shape. He spoke of the ongoing opioid crisis and the development of an educational training for residents regarding treatment, cure and intervention for opioid addiction. More details to follow. The Red Cross is seeking blood donations; there is a blood drive March 14th from 1-6 at the American Legion Post 1450, 275 Grooms Road, Halfmoon.

Committee on Veterans, Grants and Funding, Buildings, and Special Projects

Councilman McClement spoke about the group Rebuilding Together Saratoga County. Representative Michelle Larkin had spoken to the board last year about the funding available to assist with home repairs for the elderly. They were able to work with some Waterford residents in completing some of their repairs. Currently they have a decent amount of state dollars geared to assisting veterans and the disabled with needed home repairs. Please call 518-587-3315 for more information.

Committee on Youth, Playgrounds, Pool, Festivals, Liaison to Village, Museum, Library and WHCS

Parks and pool:

We are accepting applications for the following positions for the parks and pool

Pool Director and Life guards. Must be Red Cross certified by June 15th. Applications will be accepted until April 9th in the Supervisor's Office.

Assistant Park Director, Counselors and a Pool Concession Worker. Must be at least 17 years old. Applications will be accepted for the park positions will be accepted until April 27th in the Supervisor's Office.

Library:

The Genealogy Day on Feb 25th was well received and they are planning on doing it again possibly twice more in the fall.

The bathroom remodel project is now complete. Both bathrooms are handicap accessible and unisex. There is a baby changing station in one of them. In addition to the bathrooms they have added automatic door openers to the front doors, The Friends of the Library meet the 3rd Saturday of the month at 10:30 am in the Van Schoonhoven Community room. They are busy making plans for several fund raisers this year. Also the Knitting Circle meets every other Thursday at 6 pm. Puzzle fans should check out our community puzzle that is set up in the adult reading room.

Museum:

March 13th at 7 pm Van Schaick Country Club- Harry Howard : New York's most famous firefighter.

Christina Lillpop , Collections Manager of the FASNY Museum of Firefighting will be presenting on New York firefighting history of the 19th century with a special look at a notable figure, Harry Howard. Admission is \$5 for members, \$6 for not yet members. Dinner is available but not included. The restaurant is under new management.

April 14th 10-11 am. Docent training at the museum. If you are not sure what a docent is please stop by the museum and check it out or call 238-0809.

April 21st. 10 am Canal clean sweep at the old Champlain canal Lock 4 in front of the Waterford Historical Museum. The museum is once again participating in Earth Day by cleaning up the canal, T shirts are available for volunteers.

Waterford Memorial Day Parade

Wed May 23 rd at 7 pm with a ceremony at Soldier's and Sailors park. Anyone interested in participating please feel free to contact me thru the supervisor's office.

Waterford Halfmoon School

This Friday March 9th High School Murder Mystery

March 15 School board and finance meeting beginning at 6

March 16 High School Snow ball

March 18 is the annual PTO auction

March 30-April 6 is Spring recess.

GENERAL ORDERS

RESOLUTION #26

RESOLVED, that Mary Shannon Carrigan and Christina McClement be and are hereby authorized to attend the NYS Town Clerks Association Conference in Albany, NY April 22-25, 2018.

Offered by Councilman Ball

Seconded by Councilman Boudreau

Councilman Ball yes

Councilman Boudreau yes

Councilman Marble yes

Councilman McClement yes

Supervisor Lawler yes

RESOLUTION # 27

Be it resolved that the Town Board of the Town of Waterford hereby authorizes the Town Supervisor to execute an agreement with UHY LLP in an amount not to exceed \$21,012.50 for audit services to be performed relative to the Town's 2017 financial records.

Offered by Councilman Boudreau

Seconded by Councilman Marble

Councilman Ball yes

Councilman Boudreau yes

Councilman Marble yes

Councilman McClement yes
Supervisor Lawler yes

RESOLUTION #28

RESOLVED that the Supervisor be and he is hereby authorized to sign a contract with Canaday Sweepers in an amount of \$5,000.00 for street sweeping for 2018.

Offered by Councilman Boudreau

Seconded by McClement

Councilman Ball yes
Councilman Boudreau yes
Councilman Marble yes
Councilman McClement yes
Supervisor Lawler yes

RESOLUTION # 29

RESOLVED, that the Supervisor be and he is hereby authorized to sign a contract with JGS Recycling and Hauling Inc for electronic recycling for the year 2018.

Offered by Councilman Coudreau

Seconded by Councilman Marble

Councilman Ball yes
Councilman Boudreau yes
Councilman Marble yes
Councilman McClement yes
Supervisor Lawler yes

RESOLUTION # 30

RESOLVED, that the Supervisor be and he is hereby authorized to sign a contract with TRUGREEN Commercial in an amount of \$422.30 for weed control at Clement Park and \$4,721.81 for treatments of the ball fields at the Middletown Road ball field complex.

Offered by Councilman Boudreau

Seconded by Councilman Marble

Councilman Ball yes
Councilman Boudreau yes
Councilman Marble yes

Councilman McClement yes
Supervisor Lawler yes

RESOLUTION # 31

RESOLVED, that the Supervisor be and he is hereby authorized to sign a household hazardous waste collection agreement with Care Environmental Corp. for 2018.

Offered by Councilman Boudreau

Seconded by Councilman McClement

Councilman Ball yes
Councilman Boudreau yes
Councilman Marble yes
Councilman McClement yes
Supervisor Lawler yes

RESOLUTION # 32

RESOLVED, that the Supervisor be and he is hereby authorized to sign a contract with Old Saratoga Associates LLC for pollution control at the Sugarloaf Pond for algae control and pondweed control for the 2018 season at a cost of \$4200.00.

Offered by Councilman Marble

Seconded by Councilman McClement

Councilman Ball yes
Councilman Boudreau yes
Councilman Marble yes
Councilman McClement yes
Supervisor Lawler yes

RESOLUTION # 33

RESOLVED, that the Supervisor be and he is hereby authorized to sign a contract with Mountain Top Portable Toilets LLC for the 2018 season.

Offered by Councilman Boudreau

Seconded by Councilman Marble

Councilman Ball yes
Councilman Boudreau yes

Councilman Marble yes
Councilman McClement yes
Supervisor Lawler yes

RESOLUTION # 34

RESOLVED, that the Supervisor be and he is hereby authorized to sign a contract with Wild Goose Chase for the year 2018.

Offered by Councilman Boudreau

Seconded by Councilman McClement

Councilman Ball yes
Councilman Boudreau yes
Councilman Marble yes
Councilman McClement yes
Supervisor Lawler yes

RESOLUTION# 35

RESOLVED, that the Supervisor be and here is hereby authorized to execute an agreement with Adirondack Mountain Engineering, PC in an amount not to exceed \$7500.00 for a Land Use Regulations Audit.

Offered by Councilman Ball

Seconded by Councilman McClement

Councilman Ball yes
Councilman Boudreau yes
Councilman Marble yes
Councilman McClement yes
Supervisor Lawler yes

Councilman Boudreau made a motion to adjourn at 10:02pm, seconded by Councilman McClement. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Shannon Carrigan
Town Clerk