

Regular Town Board Meeting
January 11th, 2022
7:00 P.M. via Zoom

MTG #2
RES, # 50-56

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Joseph P. Wilson, Jr., Town Supervisor
Teresa Cheetham-Palen, Council Member
David Deyo, Council Member
Jennifer Whitney, Council Member

TOWN COUNSEL

Bryan Liam Kennelly

TOWN OFFICIALS

Savana Li, Water Superintendent
Kimberly Smith, Town Clerk

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT

4 participants logged onto the Zoom platform

SUPERVISOR WILSON called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

APPROVE MINUTES:

RESOLUTION APPROVING TOWN BOARD MINUTES

RESOLUTION NO.: 50,2022

INTRODUCED BY: TERESA CHEETHAM-PALEN
WHO MOVED FOR ITS ADOPTION

SECONDED BY: JENNIFER WHITNEY

RESOLVED, that the Town Board minutes from December 14, 2021 and the Town Board minutes from December 21, 2021 are accepted and approved.

Duly adopted this 11th day of January, 2022, by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisor Wilson, Ms. Cheetham-Palen, Mr. Deyo, Ms. Whitney

NAYS:

ABSENT: Mr. Biesemeyer

Robert Biesemeyer, Deputy Supervisor joined the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

(none)

OLD BUSINESS DISCUSSIONS

COVID UPDATE:

Supervisor Wilson gave a Covid update in regards to tests delivered by the State through the County. Some of the tests have already been delivered to members of the *Golden Peaks*, the Senior Citizen's group, and also to some of the town employees. We currently have an employee out with Covid now.

There are approximately 30 test kits to distribute. Supervisor Wilson plans to keep half of the kits (15) to be distributed at the Town Hall and half of the kits (15) will be given to the Keene Valley library to distribute. Residents can go to either location to pick up one (1) box, as there are so few to distribute.

Councilmembers Ms. Cheetham-Palen and Mr. Deyo are in agreement with that distribution plan.

Discussion ensued regarding vaccination clinics. There are currently no traveling clinics scheduled within the Town of Keene. Residents can make appointments through Essex County Public Health in Elizabethtown. They need to call to register for an appointment, (518) 873-3500. You can also call any of the Kinney Drugs or Walgreens to schedule an appointment.

Councilmember Biesemeyer is concerned for those that are unvaccinated. They may now be more apt to get vaccinated with this recent surge if there were a walk-in clinic rather than having to register first someplace. There are individuals currently on ventilators that are unvaccinated and are hanging on for dear life. When it is closer to home, it seems to resonate. The clinic at the school was very easy, no registering, no phone calls, no paperwork, no computers. They could just walk in and get vaccinated. And that was attractive to a lot of people. And it worked.

RESOLUTION ADOPTING OFFICIAL NEWSPAPERS

RESOLUTION NO.: 51,2022

**INTRODUCED BY: TERESA CHEETHAM-PALEN
WHO MOVED FOR ITS ADOPTION**

SECONDED BY: ROBERT BIESEMEYER

WHEREAS, New York State Town Law Section 64, Subdivision 11 requires the Town Board to designate an official newspaper for the Town,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, the Keene Town Board hereby designates *The Sun Community News* (Valley News), and *The Adirondack Daily Enterprise* as the Town of Keene's official newspapers for 2022.

Duly adopted this 11th day of January, 2022, by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisor Wilson, Mr. Biesemeyer, Ms. Cheetham-Palen, Mr. Deyo, Ms. Whitney

NAYS: none

NEW BUSINESS DISCUSSIONS

STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS:

Supervisor Wilson discussed the Governor's State of the State from last week stating that it had 2 (two) things that are very relevant to the Town of Keene. One has to do with hiking and committing more money to the trails and also to do with stewardship and educating hikers, which we do. He will keep his eye on the budget to see what happens with it. The other thing is the Governor is recognizing that the cost of recycling is more than small towns and small municipalities can handle. "Municipalities cannot handle or afford this burden (of recycling) and as a result, more waste ends up in landfills...." The idea is to put the cost of recycling back onto the producers of those items.

Further discussions amongst Board Members: details are slim right now, but if producers produce plastic bottles, part of the cost of recycling would fall on them, if they produce cardboard packaging materials, part of the cost to recycle would fall on them. Not all of it would fall on the consumers.

Mr. Biesemeyer: The question for us that I think is pertinent is when is it going to filter down so we will actually see some of the revenue from the State? It is a good thing that the Governor is recognizing that it is an issue, but until it gets to the point where we talk to our Representatives, like Dan Stec, and it filters on up to the Governor's office and plays out, it will be some time until it reaches that point. It is good that they are recognizing that it is too much of a burden on small municipalities.

Supervisor Wilson: Exactly. This is not going to change our dump next year but it is a step in the right direction.

Town Board members agree that at least it is being recognized and is a step in the right direction.

RESOLUTION TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP WITH ADIRONDACK PARK LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW BOARD (LGRB)

RESOLUTION NO.: 52,2022

**INTRODUCED BY: DAVID DEYO
WHO MOVED FOR ITS ADOPTION**

SECONDED BY: TERESA CHEETHAM-PALEN

WHEREAS, the LGRB was created by the Legislature of the State of New York and is composed of representatives appointed by the county legislatures of the counties lying in whole or in part within the Adirondack Park; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of New York has provided only partial funding for the LGRB to perform its statutory functions as outlined in Executive Law Section 803-a; and

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Keene has authorized an appropriation in the sum of Three Hundred Dollars (\$300) in support of the work of the LGRB in representing the interest of the local governments of the Adirondacks.

Duly adopted this 11th day of January, 2022, by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisor Wilson, Mr. Biesemeyer, Ms. Cheetham-Palen, Mr. Deyo, Ms. Whitney

NAYS: none

**RESOLUTION TO PURCHASE A LAPTOP/COMPUTER FOR
WATER DEPARTMENT USE**

RESOLUTION NO.: 53,2022

**INTRODUCED BY: ROBERT BIESEMEYER
WHO MOVED FOR ITS ADOPTION**

SECONDED BY: TERESA CHEETHAM-PALEN

WHEREAS, the Water Superintendent needs a laptop/computer for daily reporting to the Department of Health, for administrative needs, and also for schooling purposes,

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, to purchase a laptop/computer up to Six Hundred Dollars (\$600) for the use of the Water Department Superintendent.

Duly adopted this 11th day of January, 2022, by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisor Wilson, Mr. Biesemeyer, Ms. Cheetham-Palen, Mr. Deyo, Ms. Whitney

NAYS: none

Supervisor Wilson: Aaron Miller has offered to assist with any technical help with picking out a laptop/computer that may be appropriate and have the right specs to fit the needs.

Savana Li: Discussed the Town Board Site Visit to Water District 1 scheduled for Thursday, January 13th at 5:00 p.m. If any Board Members need to come at a different time, she can set that up individually.

Mr. Biesemeyer stated that he may need to cancel that appointment but he appreciates that she is willing to accommodate with another time.

ESSEX COUNTY AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDS:

Supervisor Wilson explained that the county has a substantial amount of ARPA funds and one of the approved uses for that is to pay Town employees a Premium Pay Bonus for their service during the Pandemic. The County is willing to make an allocation to each Town based on our population that we (the town) could then use for Premium Pay for our essential workers. The details are still being worked out, but it is something that the Town Board needs to be aware of and consider how the funds will be spent.

How will it be decided....

- Effective start date for an employee?

- Do elected officials get it?
- Full-time employees?
- Bonus pay? One time?
- Employees whose income is the sole source of the town?

As the Board gets more details, those questions are ones they will need to discuss.

ANNUAL AUDIT OF THE BOOKS FOR TOWN OFFICIALS

It was agreed that the Annual Audit of the Books for the Supervisor's Office, the Town Justice's, the Town Clerk, the Tax Collector, and the Code Officer will take place at the Town Hall on January 18th, 19th, and 20th. The books will be reviewed by each Town Board member by January 20th and the formal adoption of the audit will be at the January 25th, 2022 board meeting.

CASH HANDLING FOR TRANSFER TICKET SALES AND HIKER PARKING FEES

Supervisor Wilson explained that we are returning to the previous practice of cash being handled directly through the Supervisor's office and not through the Town Clerk's fund. He referred to a memo drafted by the Town Clerk in which she agrees with this practice.

Kimberly Smith explained that if the funds go to the Supervisor's clerks when it comes in, then it can be deposited directly into their account rather than sitting in the Town Clerk's account and being transferred over only once per month.

Ms. Cheetham-Palen was in agreement.

Mr. Deyo stated that if the Town Clerk is comfortable with it, he is okay with the recommendation.

Kimberly Smith explained that it is still best practice to have 2 (two) people count the hiker parking funds together. The funds from the KV Grocery and the Hardware store both come with a report to verify the funds. Since the hiker parking does not, there should be verification of the funds.

Mr. Deyo was also in agreement with this remaining the same way.

Mr. Biesemeyer agrees that there should be 2 (two) people counting the cash when there is not a voucher that goes with it. He questioned who could actually make deposits into accounts. Kimberly Smith explained that she can only make deposits into her own account, and that Supervisor Wilson's clerks, or whomever he has designated, are the only ones that can make deposits into the Supervisor's accounts. Mr. Biesemeyer does not want cash/funds to be sitting at the Town Hall for a significant amount of time.

Supervisor Wilson explained that his deposits are made either by him or the Clerk to the Supervisor. If there is a deposit ready, he can also have the part-time clerk bring it to the bank. Mr. Biesemeyer inquired if he can also make deposits as Deputy Supervisor, and Supervisor Wilson verified that yes he can. Mr. Biesemeyer offered to do so at any time as needed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (none)

RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE 2021 BUDGET

RESOLUTION NO.: 54,2022

**INTRODUCED BY: ROBERT BIESEMEYER
WHO MOVED FOR ITS ADOPTION**

SECONDED BY: TERESA CHEETHAM-PALEN

RESOLVED, that the Supervisor is authorized to transfer within funds to balance lines at the year end for 2021.

Duly adopted this 11th day of January, 2022, by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisor Wilson, Mr. Biesemeyer, Ms. Cheetham-Palen, Mr. Deyo, Ms. Whitney

NAYS: none

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT:

Supervisor Wilson stated that they are making progress on the Supervisor's Monthly Reports. Laura is working on November's and as soon as the last cycle of bills are processed and they get their bank statements back they will be able to work on December's. Once that is done, they will start the AUD for 2021. So there is not a report right now but they are getting back on track to having the AUD submitted on time.

Ms. Whitney asked if the October one was done.

Supervisor Wilson stated yes, that she just finished that (October) but because they are having problems tracing on through they are not officially closing out or signing off on October, September, or August until they get the whole set done. So they are going to come in a big pile.

AUDIT BILLS:

RESOLUTION TO AUDIT THE BILLS

RESOLUTION NO.: 55,2022

**INTRODUCED BY: TERESA CHEETHAM-PALEN
WHO MOVED FOR ITS ADOPTION**

SECONDED BY: DAVID DEYO

RESOLVED, that the Town Board approved the audit of the bills for 21-740 through 21-785.

Duly adopted this 11th day of January, 2022, by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisor Wilson, Ms. Cheetham-Palen, Mr. Deyo

NAYS: none

ABSTAINED: Mr. Biesemeyer, Ms. Whitney

Mr. Biesemeyer and Ms. Cheetham-Palen agreed to go to Town Hall on the morning of Wednesday, January 12th to close out the signing of bills for 2021.

Supervisor Wilson stated that he has no further business and invited Town Board members to discuss any issues.

Mr. Biesemeyer brought up the discussion of the Christmas Tree at the Holt House. He requested that the lights be turned off after Martin Luther King Day due to the fact that half of them are out and it is a poor reflection on the Town. The wind keeps knocking them off, it is difficult to repair, and thinks that it is best to turn them off. Mr. Deyo stated that he agrees.

Ms. Whitney stated that East Branch Friends of the Arts is paying for it (the tree lighting) for the winter and that she and Supervisor Wilson have emailed them, but they have not responded.

Mr. Biesemeyer added that it is an embarrassment the way that it looks right now. Half of the lights are missing in the middle and part of them are hanging off and flopping in the wind. It's a reflection on the Town and it looks like no one cares when we don't maintain something, and it's difficult to do. It's not realistic to keep those trees in good shape for an extended period of time. The tree is so big and it's right in the line of fire of all the wind.

Supervisor Wilson offered to go out one more time with T.J. and see if they can get that middle section of lights working, they will keep them on. And if they can't get them to turn on, they will turn the tree off.

The Board was in agreement with Supervisor Wilson trying to fix it one last time, and then to turn off the lights if they could not get them working.

No further business to discuss.

ADJOURNMENT

RESOLUTION TO ADJOURN

RESOLUTION NO.: 56,2022

**INTRODUCED BY: DAVID DEYO
WHO MOVED FOR ITS ADOPTION**

SECONDED BY: ROBERT BIESEMEYER

RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Keene has completed all business and hereby adjourns the Regular Meeting at 7:36 p.m.

Duly adopted this 11th day of January, 2022, by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisor Wilson, Mr. Biesemeyer, Ms. Cheetham-Palen, Mr. Deyo, Ms. Whitney

NAYS: none

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly E. Smith
Town Clerk
Town of Keene