

Regular Meeting

The Regular Meeting of the Ephratah Town Board was held at 6 PM on Wednesday, February 14th, 2024 at the Ephratah Town Hall. Roll call found the following members present:

Supervisor	Todd Bradt
Councilman	Andrew Chorlton
Councilman	Eleanor Smith
Councilman	George Cosselman
Councilwoman	Paula Keppler
Clerk	Cynthia Wesselmann
Hwy Superintendent	John Polenski Jr
Code Enforcement Officer	Devon Percival
Attorney	Michael Albanese

The meeting was opened with Salute to the Flag, led by Supervisor Todd Bradt.

Eleanor Smith made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the regular meeting on January 10th, 2023. 2nd by Andrew Chorlton. 5 ayes, carried.

Andrew Chorlton made a motion to pay General bills, Abstract #2, claim 76 thru 97 in the amount of \$10,295.74. 2nd by George Cosselman. 5 Ayes, carried.

Eleanor Smith made a motion to pay Highway bills, Abstract #2, claim 55 thru 75 in the amount of \$24,647.14. 2nd by Paula Keppler. 5 ayes, carried.

Communications:

- The Ephratah Transfer Station will be closed on Monday, February 19th, 2024 for the Presidents Day Holiday. They will reopen Tuesday, February 20th from 10am-6pm.
- Kristen Baker has expressing interest in the Board of Review and they need to replace Paula Keppler as she stepped down to run for Town Councilwoman.
- A taxpayer and resident wrote in regarding the graffiti on Schoolhouse Rd and bridge on the corner. They would like the Highway Department to investigate the responsible parties to pay for said damages. The Town Board would like highway to contact the Sheriff's Dept. to help with issue.
- Carl Ovitt Jr. of 225 Murray Hill Rd, wrote in expressing interest in the Planning Board. The Town Board wanted to talk to him at the next meeting.

Resolution 41

George Cosselman made a motion to accept resolution 41 to appoint Kristen Baker of 4926 State Rte 29, Johnstown, NY to the Board of Review, term to expire 9/30/2028, filling a vacant seat left by Paula Keppler as of 12/31/2023. 2nd by Paula Keppler 5 Ayes, carried.

Public Input:

- George Cosselman Jr of 4861 State Rte 29, Johnstown, NY would like to know why some of the local properties with junk cars haven't been given a ticket or perhaps a Junk Yard application. He cited in the Town Code, chapter 93, paragraph A, property owners are allowed only 2 unregistered cars; 1 uncovered and 1 covered. He believes that the growing blight leads to safety issues and is depreciating properties as well as being unsightly for people investing money.

Reports:

Code Enforcement Officer:

- Devon Percival has recommended that the Code Enforcement in Caroga Lake help with issuing tickets, as he has been tied up with Carver, DEC and other reports due soon.
- Mr. Percival addressed the Old State Rd concern and they have a court date with DEC.
- He has also been dealing with the Dept of Health and trash on Rte 67. That ticket is due in court.
- Mr. Percival has deemed the corner of Church Rd and Rte 29 as vacant commercial property and no one should be living there, approved by the Dept of State.
- He has been working with DEC to get new violation and or unsafe structure papers together.
- Mr. Percival noted that National Grid will be doing a matting upgrade to the substation and transmission lines.
- Mr. Percival also spoke to the town board about Code Smart, a fairly cheap Code Enforcement program to consider.
- The DOH rejected the septic system at Brookside Tavern, therefore they will need to upgrade. They will be looking into an aerobic septic system as long as the design meets engineering standards and will need to be serviced by professionals.
- The Town Board has recommended Mr. Percival contract the Sheriff's Dept to serve the tickets for any junk and or debris with sticker penalties for violators.

Resolution 42

George Cosselman made a motion to accept and approve Resolution 42 allowing Brookside Tavern to explore the use of an aerobic septic system meeting standards put out by the NYS Professional Engineer Program. 2nd by Eleanor Smith. 5 Ayes, carried.

Resolution 43

Eleanor Smith made a motion to accept Resolution 43 to reach out for resources with the Caroga Lake Code Enforcement Officer Anthony Fancher at \$35.00/hr with a \$2,000.00 budget to write and help issue tickets. 2nd by George Cosselman. 5 Ayes, carried.

Planning Board:

- Devon Percival said that the Planning Board has a correction, on a property that they are working on.

Highway

- Highway Superintendent, John Polenski Jr, said the NY State Comptroller's Office issued a check to the town in the amount of \$374.97 from lost funds that he had helped recoup.
- Mr. Polenski Jr. informed the town board the monthly fuel dip was within a ½ gal difference.
- Highway has finished brush hogging Cromer, Eaker and Murray Hill Roads.
- Mr. Polenski Jr. informed the town board that the salt shed is eroded and broken. Him and his Deputy, Steven Cornaire, presented a proposal and for a new salt shed after doing extensive research. The new galvanized salt shed would save the town from losing salt and provide some cold storage in the summer. The Town of Johnstown will let the highway department borrow their paver but they will still need an engineer for the concrete walls. Mr. Polenski Jr. is confident Mr. Cornaire can lead in this project with the help of our highway employees as well. He asked the town to consider locking in the price quotes that they received. The entire project may be under \$100,000.00, but did not need to be done all at once. They will see the engineer this week.
- The Highway Department replaced the thermostat for \$50.00 to help reduce the heating costs.
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- Mr. Polenski Jr. has been certified as a CDL instructor for the town and will be

training the new employee to plow.

- The Highway Dept has received and completed the work place violence and sexual harassment training for the year.

Resolution 44

Eleanor Smith made a motion to accept Resolution 44 to allow the Highway Supervisor John Polenski Jr. to purchase a galvanized steel master building from Steel Master Buildings, LLC, on behalf of the town, in the amount of \$21,880.00. The building comes with a 50 year warranty. 2nd by Paula Keppler. 5 Ayes, carried.

Resolution 45

Andrew Chorlton made a motion to accept Resolution 45 to contract with Charles Walz of Walz Consulting and Engineering in Mohawk, for the concrete walls, for the town’s new salt shed. 2nd by Eleanor Smith. 5 Ayes, carried.

Youth:

- They have been shut down for now but have schedule available for upcoming activities in 2024.

Assessor:

- The Assessor, Lyn Yuenger, said they are continuing data collections until March 1st. Anyone turning 65 in 2024 should come in before March 1st to sign up for any senior exemptions that may be available to them. They have received three more Ag exemptions and said there are more seniors applying for exemptions this year.
- Ms. Yuenger noted that there are still buildings without building permits.
- Any questions or concerns please contact the Assessor’s office at (518) 762-5688.

Supervisor:

- The Supervisors report was issued and is on file.

Historian:

- The Historian, Abby Cretser, has been doing research on Raymond Duesler.
- Ms. Cretser is also doing research for Courney and Jim, the owners of Brookside with old pictures from within the town; as well as scanning firehouse videos for the archives.

New Business:

- The Supervisor, Todd Bradt, said the town website has been updated by Delos Woodruff of Little Guy Creations in Glenville for \$599.00; for the year.
- The Planning Board Chair, Bill Simpson, plans to speak at the March 13th town board meeting about reducing the speed limit on New Turnpike Road to 45 mph.
- The town board will be auditing the clerk and judges books at the next meeting.

Resolution 46

Eleanor Smith made a motion to accept Resolution 46 to amend 2024 Highway Fund Balance to bring forward unexpended Capital Reserve monies budgeted in 2023 as follows and to make such transfer to the Highway EQ Capital Reserve Fund:

DA599 – Appropriated Fund Balance	\$14,000.00
DA960 – Appropriations	\$14,000.00
(DA9950.9 – Transfer to Cap Reserve)	

RESOLUTION for Town Board authorization to transfer from the 2024 Highway Fund

appropriated reserve monies to the Highway Capital EQ Reserve fund the amount of \$14,000.00.

2nd by Andrew Chorlton. 5 Ayes, carried.

Unfinished Business:

- Mr. Bradt said the attorney, Michael Albanese, would be drawing up the Ambulance contract.

George Cosselman made a motion to adjourn the town board meeting. 2nd by Eleanor Smith. 5 Ayes, carried. Time 7:37 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Wesselmann
Town Clerk, Town of Ephratah