

Regular Meeting

The Regular Meeting of the Ephratah Town Board was held at 6 PM on Wednesday, October 9th, 2024 at the Ephratah Town Hall. Roll call found the following members present:

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

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

Andrew Chorlton made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the regular meeting on September 11th, 2024. 2nd by Eleanor Smith. 5 ayes, carried.

George Cosselman made a motion to pay General bills, Abstract #10, claim 442 thru 450 in the amount of \$36,154.09. 2nd by Eleanor Smith. 5 Ayes, carried.

Eleanor Smith made a motion to pay Highway bills, Abstract #10, claim 430 thru 441 in the amount of \$11,410.98. 2nd by Andrew Chorlton. 5 ayes, carried.

Communications:

- The Ephratah Transfer Station will be closed on Monday, November 11th for the Veteran's Day Holiday. They will be open on Tuesday, November 12th from 10am till 6pm.
- The Town received an inspection report from the NYS Ag & Markets on the Dog Control officer Daniel Robinson, at his address on Wimple Rd. This was completed on 9/6/24 and was rated satisfactory.
- Notice of a 2024 Christmas in Ephratah Parade was sent in to be posted. The 2nd year of the parade will be held in Ephratah on Saturday, December 7th, with a winter storm date of 12/8 if needed. The parade coordinator, Michelle Bills, can be reached at (518) 848-6726 or by email at terrybills285@yahoo.com.

Public Input:

- RGL Fire Chief Mark Souza and Kris Ruggeri of the Ephratah Fire Department addressed the Town Board regarding the 2025-2027 Fire Contracts. Mr. Souza said that they would like to replace an older 1997 fire truck but the truck costs have increased substantially. They may only be able to replace air packs that are 22 years old, with an approx cost of \$130,000 at this time, and will continue shopping around. Mr. Souza applied for a grant but it seems to be competitive and doesn't look good. They would like a three year contract and spoke of the increasing costs of the trucks and to maintain the departments. Danny Keck, president of the RGL Fire Department also spoke on the 17% increase in insurance and increasing costs for the truck repairs. Both departments approached the board asking for a 10% increase per year, over the next 3 years.

Reports:

Code Enforcement Officer:

- Mr. Percival had a couple of court cases adjourned until the 17th and 24th of Oct.
- Mr. Percival is checking on a property line for the next Planning Board Meeting and has a structure condemnation pending.
- Mr. Percival spoke to the Town Board on the following points:
 1. He would like to reinstate building and inspection fees from the Dept of State Schedule for costs that need to be recouped. Tabled until the November meeting.
 2. Code Enforcement would also like to implement a Vacant Building Registration and Abandon Building fee of \$250 yearly for residential properties and \$500 for commercial. This fee can be added to the tax bill, as other communities have done; finding that vacant structures are not good for the community as a whole. Tabled until the November meeting.
 3. Mr. Percival would also like to implement the I Work Cloud permit program. This software would put building permits on line and could be tracked and provides receipts for fees collected. This tracks permits and violations, and everything is logged for view. This tool would help Code Enforcement with a cost of \$4,500/year. GIS would upload information yearly. It switches to a civil penalty with a fine list, unless they want a court date. It also provides citizen engagement and with a right for the Town to cancel at any time.

Resolution 74

Eleanor Smith made a motion to accept Resolution 74 to contract with the I Work software company for \$4,500/year. 2nd by Paula Keppler. 5 Ayes, Carried.

Planning Board:

- The Dollar General had to change a couple of the design specs, and is available for review at the clerk's office. The public hearing is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 21st at 6pm, at the Ephratah Town Hall.

Highway

- Highway Superintendent, John Polenski Jr. was absent but has his report on file.
- The Highway Dept has been busy cutting back trees on roads and making repairs to the town parking lot.
- The State has accepted and agreed that New Turnpike Rd needs to be slowed down to 45 mph from 55mph. Once they get the final notice, the speed limit on the road will be posted.
- Mr. Polenski Jr. met with the Fulton County Highway Superintendent, Mark Yost, and they will be signing the TE-9A papers to help lower the remaining town roads to 45 mph as well. DOT has recommended doing 5-6 roads at a time. The first roads Mr. Polenski Jr has asked to be reduced will be Mud Rd, Hart Rd, Old State Rd, Murray Hill Rd and Fical Rd.
- They have also turned in the quarterly mine employment to MSHA for the town pit. Mr. Polenski Jr. and his Deputy Steve Cornaire agreed to close the pit on November 1st, as it gives them time to utilize any materials needed for winter.

Resolution 75

Andrew Chorlton made a motion to accept Resolution 75 to reduce the speed limit on Mud Rd, Hart Rd, Old State Rd, Murray Hill Rd and Fical Rd from 55mph to 45 mph. The Town Board has approved these on forms 5TE-9A. 2nd by Eleanor Smith. 5 Ayes, Carried.

Youth:

- The last day of soccer will be this Saturday, October 12th.
- The Ephratah Recreation Commission will be having a Halloween Party for the youth on Saturday, Oct 26th at 2pm.
- They are tentatively planning on making new bathrooms at the ERC next year.

Assessor:

- The Assessor, Lyn Yuenger, said they are doing data collections in preparation for the 2025 Tentative Tax Roll.
- Anyone who has done any building or demolition needs to call or come in to the office to inform the Assessor, ideally with the permit and they will be able to update the property assessment. The Assessor noted that there are forms available to be made out for any new Agriculture structures for that exemption before March 1st, 2025. Also available are the forms for anyone turning 65 before 12/31/25 for the Enhanced Star exemption and Senior exemption if your income is under the limit.
- Property owners can apply for the Basic Star exemption on line at www.tax.ny.gov/star from September 15th, 2024 through March 15th, 2025. You would need your social security number and property tax ID.
- Any questions or concerns, they are available on Tuesday evenings from 6-8pm at the Town, or call the Assessor's Office at (518) 762-5688.

Supervisor:

- The Supervisors financial report was submitted and is on file for review.

Historian:

- The Historian is available for any questions or research needed. Abby Cretser said her Deputy June Frasier will not be available due to health issues.

New Business:

Resolution 76

Eleanor Smith made a motion to accept Resolution 76 to adopt the Tentative Budget, making it a Preliminary Budget with an increase of 2%. 2nd by George Cosselman. 5 Ayes, carried.

Resolution 77

Andrew Chorlton made a motion to accept Resolution 77 to hold a public hearing for the RGL and Ephratah Fire Dept contracts, to be held at the next Town Board meeting on November 13th at 6:10 and 6:20pm respectively. 2nd by Eleanor Smith. 5 Ayes, carried.

Resolution 78

Andrew Chorlton made a motion to accept Resolution 78 to hold a public hearing for the 2025 Town of Ephratah Preliminary Budget, to be held on November 13th at 6:30pm; at the town hall. 2nd by George Cosselman. 5 Ayes, carried.

Old Business:

- The salt storage bids came in as follows: B&B Foundation at \$66,500 including Excavation and Carney at \$65,000 and \$5,400 for excavation \$70,400. Noting that Mr. Polenski Jr will be applying for chips monies.

Resolution 79

George Cosselman made a motion to accept Resolution 79 to contract with B&B Foundation for the salt storage building walls for \$66,500. 2nd by Eleanor Smith. 5 Ayes, carried.

Resolution 80

Andrew Chorlton made a motion to accept Resolution 80 to set the time for Trick or Treat in the Town of Ephratah from 5-8pm on Thursday, October 31st, 2024. 2nd by Eleanor Smith. 5 Ayes, carried.

- There is also a truck or treat being done by the RGL Fire House, the Rhodes family, the Frasier family, and others; Stephanie Gray has put out a map of the participating addresses.

Andrew Chorlton made a motion to go into an Executive session for Litigation. 2nd by George Cosselman. 5 Ayes, carried. Time 7:29pm

Eleanor Smith made a motion to come out of the Executive session. 2nd by Andrew Chorlton. 5 Ayes, carried. Time 7:48pm

Eleanor Smith made a motion to adjourn the town board meeting. 2nd by Andrew Chorlton. 5 Ayes, carried. Time 7:50 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Wesselmann
Town Clerk, Town of Ephratah