

September 7, 2021

The regular meeting of the Varick Town Board was called to order by Supervisor Robert Hayssen at 7:00 p.m. Present at this meeting were councilman Richard Peterson, Tom Fox, and Richard McCulloch, Highway Superintendent, Ben Freier, Water Operator, Ben Karlsen, Town Clerk, Donna Karlsen, Bookkeeper, Angela Testa, Attorney for the Town, Frank Fisher, Assessor, Anne Morgan, Assemblyman Jeff Gallahan and his assistant Alexis Ogra. Also present were Rick and Donna Whitmore. Absent: Councilman, Eric Riegel.

Petitioners to Address the Board: Assemblyman Gallahan introduced himself to the board and reviewed his first year in office. He discussed the proposed COVID vaccination mandate by the Governor and the expiring additional unemployment benefits. Supervisor Hayssen thanked him for attending the board meeting.

Mr. and Mrs. Rick Whitmore who purchase water from Varick Water District No. 3, reviewed their account ledger they received from the Village of Waterloo with the board members. This ledger showed the history of their water account beginning with October 18, 2011. According to the ledger, they received water usage charges from October 18, 2011, to July 2014. This ledger demonstrated their meter discontinued working the beginning of the third quarter of 2014 as it shows a water consumption bill amount of \$9.90, which is considerably lower than prior billed amounts. Ben Karlsen had retained this meter and confirmed that the meter was unable to record water flow.

It was explained to the Whitmores' the Village of Waterloo were contracted during that time to read meters and complete the billing and collection process for this water district. The town did not become aware of the inoperable meter until April of 2018, at which time the water department installed a new meter and provided the Village of Waterloo with the meter number. We were unaware that the Village of Waterloo was still unable to read the meter until the town took over the billing the second quarter of 2021. As reflected in their Account Ledger, they were not billed for water consumption from April 2014 until July 15, 2021.

The water department, with permission from their son, was able to access and manually read the meter on July 15, 2021, which showed a water consumption from April 2014 to July 15, 2021, in the amount of 336,070 gallons which they were billed for the second quarter of 2021. Mr. and Mrs. Whitmore agreed that they had not been billed for any of this water consumption prior to the 2021 second quarter water billing. They felt that because it was an error in the town's water billing, they should not be responsible beyond a year's worth of water consumption and was requesting a reduction in their water bill. The board explained that the consumption from March 28, 2014, to April 2018 was unable to be metered and the board would not hold them responsible for payment of four years' worth of estimated water consumption. The board will notify the Whitmores' their decision on the water bill once they have had an opportunity to discuss the matter.

Abstract: A motion by Richard McCulloch, seconded by Tom Fox and so carried unanimously to approve Abstract No. 9 General, Vouchers A0021-129 to A0021-133 in the amount of \$713.50, Highway, Vouchers DAO21-056 to DAO21-65 in the amount of \$91,235.80, Varick Water District No. 1, Vouchers, VW121-021 in the amount of \$25, Seneca Lake Water District, Vouchers

SWS21-067 to SWS075 in the amount of \$10,834.86, Varick Water District No. 3, Voucher VW321-020 in the amount of \$25, Varick Water District No. 4, Vouchers, VW421-033 to VW421-037 in the amount of \$4,594.17, Varick Sewer District No. 1, Vouchers, VS121-043 to VS121-044 in the amount of \$385.78, Varick Sewer District No. 2, Vouchers SSS21-028 to SSS21-029 in the amount of \$1,210.82, South Seneca Ambulance, Voucher No. SAF21-008 in the amount of \$6,337.17

The board agreed to table the payment for the meter reading equipment until after training and first reading is complete in October.

Highway: Mr. Freier reported that the culvert box is expected to be delivered in approximately 4 weeks which will result in this work to be completed in the Spring of 2022. This will be delivered and stored at Seneca Stone as they have the equipment to load the culvert box once it ready to be installed. Paving of King's Corners Road has been completed from the bridge to McCulloch Road. The department has hauled millings to Seneca Stone and received a \$6,500 credit.

Supervisor: The town received a draft copy of the State policy and procedure audit report on the water districts. Supervisor Hayssen will work with the town clerk and bookkeeper to respond to this draft audit report.

A motion by Richard McCulloch, seconded by Tom Fox and so carried unanimously to approve the bookkeeper's report.

Water Operator's Report: Mr. Karlsen reported that Robert Dwello resigned the middle of August after receiving a job offer. Mr. Karlsen stated that they were able to change about 85 meters in Seneca Lake Water District prior to his leaving and noted there is more work to be done but will wait until next spring to look for his replacement.

Water/Sewer Operator Monthly Report for August 2021

- Marked out Dig Safety's
- Got weekly meter reads
- Did weekly water tests for each district
- Took bac t samples in all 4 districts
- Filled out and submitted monthly water report to health department
- Data logged water usage in each district
- Answered questions dealing with each water district and sewer system
- Called in Dig Tickets for upcoming projects
- Changed meters out on Seneca Lake Water District
- Cleaned shop
- Fixed broken curb stops
- Installed new 2-inch water service for Knapp Winery
- Ordered new parts for upcoming projects
- Changed Grinder pumps out
- Cleaned around hydrants, valves
- Received updates regrading new meter reading equipment

- Retrieved Final reads as needed for closings on properties
- Took Bac T samples for water break in Seneca Falls
- Unplugged sewer due to grease build up at pump house
- Spent time at Mormon camp pumping and looking at issue with pumps.
- Attended work meeting pertaining to demolishing garages near water service and sewer

A discussion was held regarding payroll for Ben Karlsen, Angela Testa, and Donna Karlsen resulting from their added duties since taking over the water and sewer billing from the Village of Waterloo. Figures will be put together to be presented to the board for review at the October board meeting.

Varick Sewer District No. 1: Nothing to report

Varick Sewer District No. 2: Mr. Karlsen reported that he discovered sewage flowing from the one of the holding tanks at the pump station. With assistance from Yaws, they found there was a minimum of 14 inches of thick grease build-up in the pipe blocking the flow of sewage into the tank. Mr. Karlsen recommended a letter be sent to the homeowners reminding them what can and cannot be put through the sewage system. He is finding the grinder pumps are failing due to items put through that is not allowed as well. He also reported that the Mormon camp had issues with both their grinder pumps, but it was due to a piece of their equipment not working properly. Brewers came and pumped out the system and this bill will be sent to the Mormons for payment.

Mike Crowe would like to connect to the sewer district. His property is outside the district, but he has a right-of-way on property along East Lake Road. The board approved a tap and informed him that the owner of the property the right-of-way would need to complete the application for connection and would be responsible for the cost of the tap, operation and maintenance fees and would be assessed another unit on his tax bill associated with this tap.

Varick/Romulus Summer Recreation Program: Angela Testa reported Samantha Pundt emailed her a video of this year's program for the board's review and can be viewed at the October meeting if a laptop is available.

Assessor: Anne Morgan reported that she has been busy answering questions resulting from the mailing of school tax bills. She reported that the processing of deeds is still moving slowly through the Real Property Tax Office.

Frank Fisher prepared an introductory local law resolution for the board's consideration granting a partial tax exemption to persons with disabilities and persons aged sixty-five and older which will replace the adopted partial exemptions in place. Mrs. Morgan reviewed the partial tax exemption scales adopted by the Towns of Romulus and Ovid. She noted Ovid adopted a more conservative exemption scale and that this local law, if passed, would become effective January of 2023. Mrs. Karlsen noted that this would be Local Law No. 3 of 2021 if both exemptions were adopted under one resolution by the board after the public hearing was held. She also reported that the existing exemption for persons with disabilities was adopted by Local Law No. 1, of 2000 and the Senior Citizens Tax Exemption was adopted by resolution at a meeting held December 2006. The board, after some discussion agreed to use Ovid's income tax exemption scale and

directed Frank Fisher to prepare a resolution based on the recommended changes to his introductory resolution for consideration at the October board meeting.

Planning Board: A sample of the proposed post card notifying residents of the newly passed noise ordinance was presented to the town board for their consideration. The board will consider sending a mailing to include other town business as well.

Town Clerk's Report: A motion by Richard McCulloch, seconded by Tom Fox and so carried unanimously to approve the Town Clerk's Report: Supervisor; \$150, NYS Ag & Markets; \$10, Total disbursements: \$160.

Minutes: A motion by Richard McCulloch, seconded by Tom Fox and so carried unanimously to approve the minutes of August 3, 2021.

New Business, Old Business, Correspondence:

A motion by Richard McCulloch, seconded by Tom Fox and so carried unanimously to approve the Amendment to the Town of Varick General Fund, Resolution No. 21-005.

A motion by Tom Fox, seconded by Richard McCulloch and so carried unanimously to approve Resolution No., 21-006; Town of Varick Adopts Local Law No. 2 of 2021 "A Local Law To Amend the Responsible Pet Ownership Ordinance of the Town of Varick.

Mrs. Karlsen reported the town received a total allocation of \$183,896.88 from the ARPA Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund. There are specific items these funds can be spent on, and consideration by the board will be completed to determine how these funds will be dispersed.

Mr. Fisher reviewed the solar exemption RPTL-487 options. The board chose to opt out of the exemption and have the value of the land be taxed at its full assessed value and requested Mr. Fisher to prepare a resolution introducing this as a Local Law for approval at their October board meeting.

A motion by Richard McCulloch, seconded by Tom Fox and so carried unanimously to enter executive session to address business that came before the board at 8:45 p.m.

A motion by Tom Fox, seconded by Richard McCulloch and so carried unanimously to come out of executive session at 9:15 p.m.

The board has agreed to adjust Whitmore's current bill for metered water consumed and provide a payment plan as follows:

1. The cost per gallon of water will be reduced from its current rate of \$8.00 per gallon to the 2018 water rate per gallon of \$7.00. This rate will be applied to all gallons used from April 2018 to July 15, 2021. The operation and maintenance fee for the second quarter of 2021 is still due which will bring the balance on their new bill to \$2,352.49.

2. The board has agreed to provide a payment plan over the next twelve months with no interest. This plan will allow one quarter of this amount or \$586.12 to be paid per quarter beginning with the 2021 third quarter billing. This amount will be in addition to any future billing received for water consumption. Future water billing will be subject to penalties if it becomes past due.

A motion by Richard Peterson, seconded by Richard McCulloch and so carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Karlsen
Varick Town Clerk