

TOWN OF STARK

County of Herkimer

State of New York

703 Elwood Road

Fort Plain, NY 13339

TOWN OF STARK BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 2024 (REVIEWED AND APPROVED MARCH 12, 2024)

The Town of Stark Board meeting was held on February 13, 2024 at the Town Justice Court Building.

Supervisor Richard Bronner called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Councilman Emil Ziaja led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call as follows; Supervisor Richard Bronner-present, Councilman Tony Grescheck-present, Councilman Emil Ziaja-present, Councilman John Voght-present, Councilman Joseph Hubiak-present, Highway Supt. David Hajczewski-present, Town Clerk Eleanor Smith-present. Also attending, Father Innocent, Father Nektarios, Butch Woodruff, Nick and Sue Jordan, Greg Sacco, Kay Moyer, Connie Young, Ken Richards, Bob Cernia, Marie and Jack Armstrong, Xenia Williams, Keith Schue, Steve and Ali Collins and Laura Fonrevatsky. Also, others who attended but did not sign in.

Town Clerk Eleanor Smith read the minutes from the January 2024 meeting. Supervisor Bronner asked if any additions, corrections or changes to the minutes. A correction was made for the next meeting to be held February 13, 2024. Also, an addition was noted to be included of a question that was asked about how the Town would come to a decision if the windmills would happen or not. Supervisor Bronner advised it would be a decision of the Town Board and people of the Town of Stark. Supervisor Bronner then asked for a motion to accept the minutes with changes. Councilman Town Grescheck made a motion to accept. Councilman Ziaja seconded. All approved.

Before the public meeting was opened, Supervisor Bronner made a statement that there had been no updated documents to review from New Leaf Energy, therefore, any questions regarding windmills may not be answered, but the Board could answer questions pertaining to the Town. The open meeting started at 7:30 PM. The question was asked when there would be information and Supervisor Bronner advised they wer trying to schedule a meeting by the end of this week or early next week with New Leaf Energy, Labella engineers and the special counsel for the Town and perhaps be ready for the March meeting;

or not. It will be posted on the Town Website when there is a definitive answer. Question was asked if there is a deadline and Supervisor Bronner said there was no deadline. Another question asked about decision to be made by the Town Board and people of the Town of Stark if it would be limited to registered voters or people who pay taxes in the Town of Stark. Supervisor said that has not been determined. It was Supervisor Bronner's opinion (whether it was legal or not) it should be people who live in the Town of Stark. People of the Town participation would be to come to a Town meeting and voice their opinion. The opportunity for participation of the Town residents. Supervisor Bronner thought that notification would be by mail but wasn't sure at this time. He didn't want to give out information that wasn't legal. Question asked if there was some kind of referendum for people having input. Supervisor Bronner said not that he was aware of. Connie Younge explained options for the residents to express their position of being in favor, opposed or undecided would be for them to attend a town board meeting but not clear at this time how it may or may not affect decision of town board itself. Supervisor Bronner stated anything the Town does will be for the betterment of the Town itself. He also explained there are no more comments at public meetings. That had already been done at the school. Supervisor Bronner advised the town board would have to review the final environment impact statement. If they agree with it, the Town Board can move forward. If they don't, it goes back to New Leaf to continue revising it until it gets to a point that the Town can handle it. The final stage may not happen in 30 days or 6 months. It depends how long it takes to get there. The town has not received and up dated visuals. It was asked about definition of betterment for the Town. Supervisor Bronner opinion was whatever relieves the taxpayers of the Town at an acceptable cost. Not a legal opinion, just his opinion. Supervisor Bronner didn't have an answer for the windmills being here as a fraud for the people coming to the community paying more taxes. Supervisor Bronner has not had contact with Terra Gen but has heard it is a multi county and multi township project. Question was asked if any of the Town Board members went to the Town of Springfield meeting. No one went. It was noted that it was recommended to sit down with those member as they had a wealth of knowledge and things presented were extremely concerning. There was a man there who would come and speak with the Town Board. His name is John Kanuth phone #315-725-6940. Keith Schue was also at meeting as a speaker, his number 407-470-9433. Question was to expand on the idea of hydroelectric. Supervisor Bronner said it was an idea from Allan Woolrich he gave 2-3 years ago concerning Community Co-op. He lives in Florida now and is a hydroelectrical engineer. He visits his dad in Van Hornesville and sees all the water going through town and not being of any use. Supervisor Bronner felt that if the feed mill never became productive again, perhaps could help community with hydro power. The hopes for the power would be difficult to do locally. It would have to be hooked to the grid somehow with the whole community involved. Will it work and at what cost is unknown. It was presented that John Kanuth video of the house he was raised in. He no longer lives there but it was put into a wind farm. They've tried to sell it but they can't, as windmills affect the property values. Connie Young wanted to put a plug for the VH Community Corp. regarding other options for the area. This also appeared in the Town of Stark Newsletter and that members of the Community Corp. are interested in conducting interviews in this area

with hopes of developing a vision for other programs, other sources of commercial development that would lift community itself but also in terms of sources for new taxes. It was to attention that wind power has different rate structure than hydro power. It was greed with loss of value to surrounding townspeople and to make sure all mi's are dotted and t's are crossed before signing anything. Also it was noted to make sure of having an attorney to read agreement. From what the monastery has seen in the paper work, there was nothing about responsibility or liability if anything goes wrong. Another resident advised they were newcomers to Van Hornesville. They moved here in July and knew nothing about windmills being located here in the area. He is an engineer and his field is energy. His professional judgement based on information he has, putting wind farms in this area is foolish. Another statement was corporations are coming here and taking over the land. Instead the land could be used for something else. There is a marketing website for information. Another resident expressed her opinion. She believes the landowner owns the land and they should be able to do what they want with the land. Nothing to do with anyone at the meeting, but if she wanted a windmill, she pays the taxes on and takes care of her land it shouldn't be for anyone to tell what to do or not do. She doesn't want to see a bunch of big industries come here and doesn't want to see all the housing. Her personal opinion the town board should pass it. There was more discussion that got a little heated and Supervisor Bronner thank everyone for their comments. The public portion of the meeting closed at 7:54 PM.

The Town needs a Board of Assessment Review Member (BAR). Ed Mower and Don Sheldon are current members, but we should have a third member.

Certification for Phil Greene as Code Officer was presented.

Water Board asked about grants to upgrade and improve the water system, specifically if we need to drill another well for back up. Right now all is fine.

Grant for sand and salt barn will be reapplied for. The original application didn't have a document signed and on file with the state.

A company called A.D.E.I. Energy, a renewable energy company. They requested our local law and current regulations. Supervisor Bronner sent them Land Use Regulations, Sub-division Regulations and Local Law.

Supervisor Bronner received a land use plan to mine and restore property back to original state in the area near Hicks Road and Jordanville Road on property formerly owned by Ed Mower. Chris Fredricks applied for the permit. DEC is the lead Agency on the project.

Herkimer County Sales tax revenue was up this first quarter. The County snow contract was payment to the Town was up this year. Revenues are tied to the sales tax. Chips Revenues for the coming year will be as previous years.

The Town sold the old Town gas and diesel storage tanks. We replaced them last fall with new ones. Motion made by Councilman Grescheck. Seconded by Councilman Hubiak. All approved.

The Town reviewed the Supervisor's report. Councilman Grescheck made a motion to approve. Seconded by Councilman Hubiak. All approved.

The Board audited the Highway Fund vouchers, the General Fund vouchers, and the Water district Fund vouchers. Councilman Grescheck made the motion to pay the bills. Councilman Hubiak seconded. All approved.

The Next meeting will be March 12, 2024. Councilman Grescheck made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Hubiak seconded. All approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:47 PM.