

**NEW LISBON TOWN BOARD—REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING—MARCH 10, 2015
7:30 PM—TOWN HALL, GARRATTSVILLE**

Present: Supervisor Robert Taylor, Councilwoman Connie Chase, Councilmen Joseph Gregory and John Pegg, Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker, Clerk Charlene Wells, Co. Rep. Edward Lentz, Residents John Bugyi, Willard Lasher, Tom Riso, Ray Gorton, Melissa Doyle, Edward George, Sue Smith

Absent: Councilman Robert Eklund

Supervisor Robert Taylor opened the meeting at 7:30 PM. A motion was made by Connie Chase, seconded by Joseph Gregory and carried 4/0 to accept the minutes for the February 10, 2015 regular meeting as written.

Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker noted that they still have sand left, but they had to have Lenny Melillo move large frozen chunks with his excavator. They are looking forward to spring, hoping that the snow continues to melt slowly. They have drawn in some crusher run material to have on hand if we have some flooding issues. If not, it will be used for regular road work. Supt. Whitaker noted he is working on ideas for setting up the 2009 Freightliner truck. He advised that the Walton Hwy. Supt. only has to meet with his Hwy. Committee when a deal comes up in the surplus program to get approval to purchase. Supervisor Robert Taylor will check with Attorney Tillapaugh about giving the authority to a Hwy. Committee and how many Board members can be involved.

Supervisor Robert Taylor noted that one employee benefit to be looked at is sick days. He questioned if our employees misuse them. Supt. Bill Whitaker advised that our present crew does not misuse their sick days. They only take them when they are sick or have doctor appointments. He further noted that when he worked for the school they had 12 sick days per year and could accumulate them to 180 days. The County also gives 12 sick days per year.

PUBLIC HEARING ON TIME WARNER CABLE FRANCHISE---OPENED AT 7:45PM

David Whelan from Time Warner Cable arrived so the public hearing on our renewal of our cable franchise was opened at 7:45 PM. Our expiring agreement was for 10 years and they are asking for a 15 year renewal. Mr. Whelan noted that it is a Federal requirement to have a franchise agreement for them to operate in the Town. The biggest issues of the agreement typically are the line extension policy and franchise fees. He noted that they must extend the line if there are at least 35 homes per mile, but their policy is if there are at least 20 homes per mile. Under that density, they do not have to extend the line. If someone wanted to pay the cost to extend the line, they would. It presently cost approximately \$25,000 per mile. NY State has had programs where they provided matching funds and there may be a new program this year. If we have locations where we might meet the 20 homes per mile requirement, we should let him know as they might be able to get state money to offset some of the cost to extend the line. Mr. Whelan will provide us with a map showing where our present service area is. He thought we had approximately 87 customers. County Representative Edward Lentz noted that it is most important to get more people hooked up to broadband. He also would like to see a franchise fee paid to the Town, but not passed through to the users. Mr. Whelan advised that it is the policy of Time Warner Cable to pass back a franchise fee paid to the Town as a user charge to customers. He further noted that a franchise fee can only be up to 5% of only the cable service fees (not including internet & phone fees). Supervisor Robert Taylor had previously talked with Mr. Whelan about getting our two internet bills free or at a lower rate as part of the franchise renewal agreement. Mr. Whelan stated that he will check further on that issue. Co. Rep. Lentz noted that even if we only got a small franchise fee, enough to cover the Town's internet service cost, it would be something. Mr. Whelan will get back to us on the issues discussed. With no further questions or comments, a motion was made by Joseph Gregory, seconded by Connie Chase and carried 4/0 to close the public hearing at 8:05 PM.

The regular monthly meeting resumed at 8:05 PM. Kevin Morse of Kaatirondack Benefit Planning was present to discuss medical insurance. He noted that they work for the Town to find the best plans and deal with the insurance companies at no cost to the Town. He presented the Board with a comparison of our current insurance plan and several options to cut our cost. One option would be to get a higher deductible plan and set up a Health Savings Account for the employees deductible

expenses. However, because of changes made with the Affordable Care Act, the Town could only fund 50% of the HSA, leaving the employees with a \$1500.00 (single) or \$3000.00(family) deductible. Another option would be a high deductible plan with the Town setting up an HRA. The Town would have to pay someone to administer the fund which would pay the employees' deductible expenses and the town would hold any money not used. Mr. Morse noted that because of our small group size, the Affordable Care Act does not mandate that we provide a health plan. He felt that we were on the high end of providing good benefits to our employees. He also noted that if we decided to change benefits for new employees it would be okay as long as it was adopted policy. We could also mandate spouses to be covered on their own insurance plans if they have that option or we could consider increasing the employee contribution. If we went to a high deductible plan we could increase salary to cover the deductible. Supervisor Robert Taylor noted that some places have a union working between the Board and employees where we have always worked directly with our employees to provide them with good benefits. Mr. Morse noted that they will continue to stay on top of the changes made by the Affordable Care Act and will continue to seek out the best plans for us.

A motion was made by Joseph Gregory, seconded by Connie Chase and carried 4/0 to advertise for sealed bids for up to 5000 yards of sand and prices per yard for crusher run, Item 4, bank run, cobbles and #2 stone to be opened at the April 14, 2015 meeting.

Tom Riso questioned on how the County is planning on expanding broadband to more residents. Co. Rep. Edward Lentz advised that last year a company, Farr Technologies completed a plan for doing this. It would cost about 30 million dollars for someone to add fiber and radio wireless transmissions to increase broadband to more County residents. Now the County has to find grant money to carry out the plan. Supervisor Robert Taylor noted that he had attended a meeting with NAT reps to see what they might give the Towns that would be affected by the new transmission line if their proposal is selected. They may be able to help with broadband issues by allowing access off of their towers.

Edward George questioned about why our bulldozer was sitting all winter on Texas Road. Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker noted that they were working there in the fall and will continue there in the spring. Mr. George questioned the safety of leaving our equipment unattended there, but was told that they have never had an issue of any problems with the equipment being tampered with.

The New Lisbon Senior Citizens group sent a thank you note to the Board for providing them with funds for 2015. They intend on going on several day trips and will let the Clerk know so she can advertise them on the Town website and to invite others who may be interested in attending.

Mohawk Valley Economic Development District will be holding a Grant/Funding Opportunity informational luncheon on March 20, 2015 in Mohawk. The Assoc. of Towns is sponsoring a Town Finance School on May 7-8, 2015 in Saratoga Springs and May 14-15, 2015 in Rochester. The NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets sent notice that they inspected DCO Elizabeth Fish and found everything in proper order. She is now working as DCO for the Town of Burlington.

Supervisor Robert Taylor noted different items he learned about at the Assoc. of Towns conference in NYC in February including an additional retirement plan, how to negotiate a fire department contract, grants, establishing a reserve, etc. Councilman Joseph Gregory questioned him on the \$1100.00 bill for his room at the conference, wondering if that also included the room for Councilman Robert Eklund. Supervisor Taylor advised that was just for his room as Councilman Eklund didn't attend. He noted that we are paying Suburban Propane \$50.00 a year to rent the propane tank for the stove for the Town Hall. He questioned if maybe we should switch to an electric stove to save money in the future. Sue Smith commented that since the Town Hall could be a disaster shelter if needed it would be better to leave it gas since we could still use the burners if the power was out.

Ray Gorton asked the Board if he needed to reapply this year for the seasonal mowing position. There were no complaints about his job performance last year and a motion was made by Joseph Gregory, seconded by Connie Chase and carried 4/0 to hire Ray Gorton as our seasonal mower for cemeteries and town properties at \$11.00 per hour.

A motion was made by Joseph Gregory, seconded by Connie Chase and carried 4/0 to pay General Fund bills #32 through #46 for a total of \$130,431.88 and Highway Fund Bills #35 through #47 for a total of \$13,624.40. Supervisor Taylor paid General Fund bills #28 through #31 for a total of \$551.09 with prior Board approval. The Supervisor's monthly report was submitted to the Board.

Councilman Joseph Gregory noted that due to the high cost of Medical insurance many towns are only providing medical insurance for the employee at the single rate. Supervisor Robert Taylor noted that if we do this it may cut our pool of future job candidates. A motion was made by Joseph Gregory to go to single pay only for new employees. Supervisor Robert Taylor and Councilwoman Connie Chase noted that they were not ready to make that decision yet. There was no second on the motion.

Councilwoman Connie Chase advised that she had conducted the audit of Town Clerk/Collector Charlene Wells. After reviewing the audit document, a motion was made by Joseph Gregory, seconded by John Pegg and carried 4/0 to accept the audit of the Clerk/Collector as done by Councilwoman Connie Chase.

Robin Lasher has advised that several of the tables and chairs in the Town Hall community room need replacing. A motion was made by Connie Chase, seconded by Robert Taylor and carried 4/0 to purchase 2 tables and 20 chairs, at an approximate cost of \$500.00 to \$550.00. We should check with her near budget time each year to see if anything needs updating.

Councilman Joseph Gregory advised that he had called our insurance agent questioning if our auto liability would be going up because of an employee having a DWI. Supervisor Robert Taylor and Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker had previously called on this issue and were advised that it would not affect our insurance. Councilman Gregory stated that he had several people who don't believe that our insurance didn't go up and has requested copies of the insurance bills to show them. Supervisor Taylor will ask John Ryland to come discuss our insurance renewal.

The last issue of the Assoc. of Towns Town Topics discussed the issue of having an employee handbook. We have combined our adopted employee policies into notebooks, but an employee handbook would be more thorough. The Board had no objection to Councilwoman Connie Chase and Town Clerk Charlene Wells starting to work on this.

Edward George noted that perhaps the Town should consider giving incentives for growing medical marijuana here since we have lots of agricultural land..00.

With no further business, a motion was made by Joseph Gregory, seconded by Connie Chase and carried 4/0 to adjourn at 9:15 pm.

Charlene R. Wells, New Lisbon Town Clerk