

## **NEW LISBON TOWN BOARD---NOVEMBER 10, 2015---7:30 PM REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING---TOWN HALL, GARRATTSVILLE**

Present: Supervisor Robert Taylor, Councilmen Robert Eklund, John Pegg & Joseph Gregory, Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker, Clerk Charlene Wells, Co. Rep. Edward Lentz, Residents Lenny Melillo, Tom Riso, Louie Colburn, Edward George, Barry Braunius, Andrea Denekamp, John Braunius, Sue Smith, Donald Smith, John Bugyi, Pam Goodspeed, Brian Ryther, Willard Lasher, Keith Woodbeck, Russ & Tonya Card, Don & Barbara Smith, Tim Miller, Adam Burgess    Absent: Councilwoman Connie Chase

Supervisor Robert Taylor opened the regular monthly meeting at 7:30 PM. A motion was made by Joseph Gregory, seconded by John Pegg and carried 4/0 to approve the minutes for the October 13, 2015 public hearings and regular meeting as written.

Richard Galbreth of SOL Providers/Vanguard Energy presented a proposal for installing solar panels on the Town Hall and Hwy. Storage Building roofs. He noted that he grew up in Garrattsville and his partner; Ken Stabler owns property in the Town. The company has installed 400 systems on homes, businesses and municipal buildings. They have some solar panels left over from a job that got cancelled and have made us the best offer they can at \$27,000.00 for each location. We would be eligible for a \$4800.00 incentive from NYSERDA for the Town Hall, but not the hwy. building since that one is on Otsego Electric. The system would last at least 25 years, with a 9-10 year payback period. The Town Hall system would also cover the streetlight district usage. There would be a 10 year warranty on workmanship. They could remotely monitor the system. The solar systems would be a supplement to our current electric and on unsunny days we would still pull electric off the grid. The proposed panels would have an efficiency of 14-15%. Councilman Robert Eklund stated that he thought the best panels have up to 20% efficiency. Richard advised that we could get panels with up to 21.5% efficiency, but the total cost would be up to \$18,000.00 more per system. The proposed systems would be compatible with future options such as a battery backup. Councilman Eklund added that maybe we should have a battery backup added right from the start. Co. Rep. Edward Lentz questioned if we would have enough sun here since we're in a valley. Richard responded that we have plenty of sun to operate a solar system. Typically we wouldn't get much out of it in February due to less sunny days and snow on the roofs. Flo Loomis questioned if we could put in two systems at the town hall instead of putting one at the highway property. Richard responded that we wouldn't make enough money off the extra electricity produced to warrant putting in the second system at the Town Hall location. Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker questioned putting it on the hwy. garage roof and Richard advised that he would utilize the south side of the Morton storage building, not the hwy. garage. Lenny Melillo questioned the demand charge which could be assessed to us. Richard advised that with the solar system, our usage will be low enough so they would not be able to put on a demand meter. Plus, since our demand would be more during the daytime, the solar would be working then. Councilman Joseph Gregory questioned what it would cost for repairs. Richard responded that they charge \$60.00 per hour for labor, but after a certain point it may be wiser to upgrade the panels. Supervisor Robert Taylor thanked Richard for the proposals and noted that due to the cost involved, we would have to go out for bids if we were interested in proceeding. It was also noted that we would have to check with our insurance to see what the cost would be to insure the systems.

Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker noted that they finished the concrete floor in the storage building. He thanked Hwy. employee Barry Braunius for the extra effort he put into working on the floor, including bringing in his own skidster and plate tamper. Tom Riso had advised that the concrete should be sealed to help protect it from the salt and they have completed that. Supt. Whitaker advised that he went to Albany and checked on the 2009 Freightliner. The plow stuff is in and they have fixed the hole in the cab. They are waiting on the box. He also checked on the Volvo grader. They could not get a remanufactured transmission to put in so they got a new one just shipped in from Sweden. It was originally a \$45,000.00 part and they're charging us \$26,500.00. It is getting ready to be worked on and hopes it will be done in a few weeks. He also noted that the County took the grader up for us, saving a trucking fee. We help the County Highway Dept. out during the winter when they need to borrow tools and/or parts, as the County part shop is not open on the weekends.

New highway employee, Barry Braunius addressed the Board concerning what he felt was the inappropriate visit at home he received from a councilman advising him that his position was going to be eliminated by the Board. He further noted that the sign the councilman had on his front lawn and the letter he sent out against the Supervisor were uncalled for and a poor representation of a town official.

Lenny Melillo noted that he met with the Bookkeeper and came up with our cost for a highway employee including the base pay, social security, medical insurance, dental, retirement, sick time, vacation days, personal time, holidays and supervision cost by the Hwy. Supt. His figures were that it cost us \$39.75 per hour for an employee on the family medical insurance plan and \$31.38 per hour for an employee on the single medical plan. (Includes \$4.80 per hour for supervision). He estimated with 125 hours of overtime an employee on the single plan would cost us \$70,000.00 per year and one on the family plan would cost us \$87,000.00 per year.

Andrea Denekamp questioned how a part of the Hwy. Superintendent's salary could be included in the cost of the employees. She also noted that the Town is saving money by only allowing new hires to have single medical insurance coverage.

Supervisor Robert Taylor advised that he contacted Cornell and they advised him that the state average per mile for highway expenses is \$9,000 to \$16,000 per mile. He figured our town would be at \$6,700 per mile, with that figure being lowered if we added in our five bridges. He figured the cost per resident is \$400.00, which is lower than the County average. He noted that Cornell has lots of valuable information on roads that we can utilize and that they are going to be sponsoring a workshop on ice & snow. He felt the efficiency of our highway department is good.

Co. Rep. Edward Lentz compared our town with Hartwick. Hartwick has 59 miles of roads, 3 bridges and 5 hwy. employees. We have 64 miles of roads, 5 bridges and 4 hwy. employees. With our hwy. budget being approximately \$100,000 less than Hartwick's, he feels that we are doing a pretty good job with our resources. Even though Hartwick has a bigger tax base, we're doing more with less.

Andrea Denekamp questioned how many miles each of our men covers. Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker advised that it varies because their routes vary due to the size of the truck. He estimated that if a single axle truck was down it would add 2 extra hours to complete the round and if a 10 wheeler is down it adds 3 hours. He is not sure how they would be able to handle all the things that come along with the winter with one less man. Councilman Robert Eklund stated that the Board knew there was going to be a vacancy in the hwy. department and that Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker knew that the Board was going to consider not filling the position. Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker responded that the Board never told him not to hire a new man. Andrea Denekamp added that it was a bad way to treat a resident by having him commit to taking a job with the town, with it being implied that he would have a full time job and she was ashamed to think that the Board would even consider eliminating the job. She did not agree with Lenny's maximum employee cost including part of the Hwy. Supt.'s salary.

Councilman Joseph Gregory commented that since we are low on money and we've been talking about cutting something, he went to see the new employee because he felt that he wanted him to know ahead of time that his position may be eliminated. Supervisor Robert Taylor stated that Councilman Gregory had no right to confront the new employee on his own and he is ignorant of what his duties as a councilman and as a part of the Board are.

Lenny Melillo commented that residents should be more involved in town government all of the time, not just when there's a hot issue. He suggested placing a digital sign at the end of the town hall driveway with meeting information and it could also be used for emergency information.

Supervisor Robert Taylor reminded Councilman Joseph Gregory that he is supposed to be providing copies of each meeting's video to the Town Clerk. Councilman Gregory advised that the tapes are on U-tube. Supervisor Taylor responded that he still wants him to submit an unedited copy to the Clerk and that we will not pay for any more copies. Councilman Gregory stated he would provide copies.

John Bugyi asked Councilman Joseph Gregory if he was going to support cutting a man. Councilman Gregory said he would like to and he would like to see us use a part-time employee instead. Supervisor Robert Taylor added that he thinks that we should look into the impact of cutting a man

before we make a decision. Sue Smith added that we were having a good discussion on the issue, but why would we consider cutting a man now with the winter ahead of us. Louie Colburn asked why we couldn't take the plow trucks off the insurance during the off season to save money.

Councilman Robert Eklund stated he is unhappy with the information he gets from Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker when he asks for it. He wants more accounting of the overtime hours. Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker added that he is a working superintendent, not just sitting in the office. Keith Woodbeck commented that with such a big budget, the Hwy. Supt. is responsible to know what costs are. He further added that if the Board wants more control over the highway department, we should go to an appointed hwy. supt. and we could have a job description of what was required for the job.

John Braunius commented on the letter that Councilman Joseph Gregory sent to voters. He felt it showed a lack of competency and professionalism and was disrespectful. He added that the comment he made about Alzheimer's was unacceptable and an embarrassment.

Pam Goodspeed questioned how Councilman Gregory picked who he sent his letter to. Councilman Gregory stated that he used the voters' list as it was too expensive to mail to everyone. Pam further added that she can't believe that he's on the Town Board and that he faces no responsibility for his actions. Many commented between the comments that Councilman Joseph Gregory should resign.

Tom Riso noted that 316 people voted in the election, about 48% of the registered voters. Ed George added that in Butternuts that they had about 48% vote and they were upset by the low turnout.

Co. Rep. Edward Lentz stated that he is a big supporter of freedom of speech, but that Councilman Gregory should show better judgement as a Town official and that his being purposely deceitful to the public on the issues is wrong. He suggested that the Board pass a resolution of censure against Councilman Joseph Gregory's unprofessional actions. A motion was made by Supervisor Robert Taylor to pass a statement of censure against Councilman Joseph Gregory for the action he took by going to the new highway employee and telling him that he was going to be out of a job as it was wrong and not his place to do this. There was no second so the motion failed.

Tom Riso questioned why the Fire Department doesn't charge fees. Supervisor Robert Taylor suggested that he ask the Fire Department members since it was their jurisdiction. Co. Rep. Edward Lentz suggested that one Board member be appointed to be a Fire Dept. liaison.

Adam Burgess, who works for a highway department, added that the average per man is 10-12 miles, with 13-14 being the high end. He suggested with one less man, if one is out sick, you'd be in a bind.

Edward George commented that he would like to see covers on the loads we're hauling since they're supposed to be covered and he's noticed sand on the roads in places. Supt. Bill Whitaker added that we've never had a problem with them not being covered.

Co. Rep Edward Lentz advised that since that they didn't get grants; they are leasing the sites for the last EMS towers. The County Board has come to an agreement with the CSEA, with retroactive raises from 0 to 2%. The user fee and tipping fee will remain the same with waste disposal. They are still working on the County budget asking each department to make a 4.8% reduction. They are not filling about 12 vacant jobs and possibly 5-6 jobs may be cut, including 2 road patrol deputies. The public hearing on their budget is November 30th at 6:00PM. The solar site is going ahead with an April 2016 target date. Strategic Plan meetings have been held around the County.

Supervisor Robert Taylor thanked County Rep. Edward Lentz for all the time he put in and work he has done while serving as our County Representative. Reese-Marshall has moved the town hall fuel tank to the inside. Suburban Propane has installed the new gas tank.

We received notice from Otsego County that our 2016 Workers' Compensation amount will be \$9671.61. This is down from \$11,312.05 in 2015. We received notice from NYMIR that their rates will increase in 2016 an average of 3.5%. The attorneys for Yogi Bear Campground have filed to delay their court proceedings and to combine all of the prior years into one case. A thank you note was received

from the New Lisbon Senior Citizens for the funds which helped for two outings. The Association of Towns sent information on a webinar for new officials on Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015, a town officials school Jan. 13-15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 in Albany and their annual conference Feb. 14-17<sup>th</sup>, 2016 in NYC.

Kevin Morse from Kaationrondack sent information on our medical insurance plan. The current plan will renew at an 18.79% increase over 2015 rates. He also provided another option under CDPHP, one option under Excellus BCBS, and two options under MVP. Councilman Joseph Gregory noted that the cheapest option under MVP would save us about 5% over the 2015 rates. Councilman Robert Eklund commented that our employees shouldn't be penalized by having a worse insurance plan. We haven't been giving out big raises and they do contribute 10%. Lenny Melillo added that many plans are dropping things like medical air flights from coverage and that we have a good plan and we at least know what we getting. After further discussion, a motion was made by Robert Eklund, seconded by John Pegg and carried 3/1 (Joseph Gregory against) to remain with CDPHP and remain with the same coverages as the 2015 medical insurance plan. Councilman Eklund added that residents should send letters to Senator Jim Seward who is in support of the 2% tax cap, but also has ties to the Insurance Dept., about the increases in medical insurance.

A motion was made by Robert Eklund, seconded by Joseph Gregory and carried 4/0 to pay General Fund bills #174 through #188 for a total of \$9,043.80 and Highway Fund bills #177 through #190 for a total of \$46,157.47. Supervisor Taylor paid General Fund bills #168 through #173 and Highway Fund bill #191 for a total of \$6,541.26 with prior Board approval. The Supervisor's monthly report was submitted to the Board.

Town Clerk Charlene Wells reported that she spoke with Susan Eckhardt of Time Warner Cable about our franchise renewal. According to her, we cannot get our two internet connections free since our franchise is a cable franchise. We can only get free cable hookups. We can charge a franchise fee of up to approximately \$4,000.00. Any franchise fee would end up being charged back to the approximately 90 subscribers per Time Warner policy. After further discussion, a motion was made by Robert Taylor, seconded by Robert Eklund and carried 4/0 to accept the fifteen year cable franchise renewal with Time Warner Cable, without charging a franchise fee and authorize the Supervisor to sign on behalf of the Town.

The 2016 Budget was figured with a 1% raise for hwy. employees. Hwy. employee John Bugyi asked if the Board would increase their raise by 3 cents to 20 cents. A motion was made by Robert Eklund, seconded by Robert Taylor to increase the hwy. employee raises to 20 cents per hour. Robert Eklund & Robert Taylor voted yes and Joseph Gregory and John Pegg voted no, so the motion failed 2/2.

Councilman Robert Eklund made a motion to remove funding for one full time highway position. Councilman Joseph Gregory stated he would second it if the motion included that the position would not be eliminated until spring. Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker commented it was not just numbers that needed to be considered. Supervisor Robert Taylor added that a study of the impact should be done before considering eliminating a full time hwy. position. The motion was made by Robert Eklund, seconded by Joseph Gregory and carried 3/1 (Robert Taylor against) to plan on eliminating a full time highway position in the spring, at which time we will review data to make an informed final decision on the issue.

Supervisor Robert Taylor reworked the 2016 Preliminary budget so that the tax rate was decreased from 7.26 to 6.99. Co. Rep. Edward Lentz suggested that we could increase the General Fund County Sales tax revenue estimate to \$85,000.00 which is closer to what we have been receiving. The hwy. equipment fund has been used in the past few years to supplement the repair account as needed. Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker thought he might look for a surplus truck for the salter and we would need funds if we find another big truck in the surplus program. The Board agreed to increase the general fund sales tax revenue to \$85,000.00 which should make the budget meet the .73% tax cap allowable increase. After further discussion, a motion was made by Robert Taylor, seconded by Robert Eklund and carried 4/0 to adopt the revised 2016 Preliminary Budget as the 2016 Final Budget, staying under the .73 tax cap, and authorizing the Supervisor to make any further adjustments necessary to do so.

Councilman Robert Eklund asked that overtime only be used in snow emergencies or other types of emergency situations. Supervisor Robert Taylor felt that that was an unreasonable request. Councilman Joseph Gregory felt that we caused the grader transmission problem by running it too fast all over town. Hwy. employee Barry Braunius stated that the grader operator John Bugyi doesn't overwork or misuse our equipment. Hwy. Supt. Bill Whitaker added that there was a design flaw in the grader's transmission and Volvo should have recalled them for repairs, but they didn't. They use the grader all over town in a pattern, followed by the roller.

With no further business, a motion was made by Robert Eklund, seconded by John Pegg and carried 4/0 to adjourn at 10:00 PM.

Charlene R. Wells, New Lisbon Town Clerk