**Caroline Town Board Meeting Minutes of April 19, 2023**

The Town Board Business Meeting was held hybrid at the Caroline Town Hall on April 19, 2023, and was called to order at 7:09 p.m. by Supr. Witmer

**Attendance**:

Supervisor Mark Witmer

Councilmember Cal Snow

Councilmember Tim Murray

Councilmember Katherine Goldberg

Councilmember Kate Kelley-Mackenzie

**Recording Secretary**:

Jessie Townsend, Town Clerk

**Public Present:** 11 **Zoom**: 9\_

Supr. Witmer opened the meeting with Pledge to the Flag.

## Privilege-of-the-Floor

*Tonya Van Camp* – Thanked Supr. Witmer for his acknowledgment of the petition to postpone vote on zoning but disagreed with other comments in his statement he read at April’s Agenda Meeting. She hopes tonight’s zoning discussion will include an answer to their question of holding the vote on a zoning law until after January 1, 2024. She shared concern and disapproval of comments made by County Legislature Representative, Dan Klein at the Agenda Meeting.

*John Morse* – Spoke about the large audience turnout at the April Agenda meeting, noting that all speakers at that meeting voiced opposition of zoning. Noted that the applause during privilege of the floor had been cut from the video recording of that meeting, questioned the legality of doing so. Thanked RC Quick for his donation of a podium for speakers at Town meetings. He wants to hear the thoughts of each Councilmember regarding the most recent petition and address the zoning law in open meetings. Lastly, he expressed his displeasure with Dan Klein’s comments made at the Agenda Meeting.

*Bruce Murray* – Had questions regarding a survey that was distributed by the Ag Committee and how they came to choose who received them, noting that he, a tree farmer, did not receive one. He spoke about the praise given for a petition supporting a Moratorium in 2021 but fails to give positive acknowledgement to a petition turned in last month that had many more signatures. He opposes any further extension to the longstanding Moratorium. Also displeased with Dan Klein’s comments.

Supr. Witmer responded that the Board had received the draft zoning law at the last meeting and added they plan to discuss this tonight and will move forward without regard to the political calendar. Clerk Townsend also clarified that meeting recordings are not altered in any way. The hybrid conferencing system will cancel sound when it picks up widespread noise in the room. Clm. Murray added the importance of refraining from speaking out during meeting discussions so that all speakers can be heard by those attending on zoom.

## Committee Reports

**Supr. Mark Witmer** – Supr. Witmer provided the following:

*Correspondence of Note:* FEMA Open House events on new Flood Insurance Rate Maps on 26 April, 4:30 - 8:30 pm at Ithaca High School Cafeteria and 27 April, 4:30 - 8:30 pm at Tompkins County Whole Health Building (Health Department), 55 Brown Road.

*Supervisor’s Notes:*

* Submitted 2022 Annual Report on Town climate progress to the Tompkins County Climate Protection Initiative (TCCPI). I highlighted the progress on zoning planning, our NYSERDA-funded community-wide LED bulb distribution, LED streetlight conversion, and LED conversion for Slaterville and Brooktondale Fire Departments, the community geothermal feasibility study for Speedsville, and the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan work by our Ag Committee.
* Propose amending land use moratorium extension period to 9 months. Public Hearing is set for May 3 at 7 pm.
* Egg Geothermal will be doing a site visit to Speedsville as part of their Feasibility Study for Community Geothermal on Tuesday, April 25.
* Superintendent Spencer, Mr. Guggenheim, and I met with Town engineer Donald Harner at Ekroos Road on April 3 to finalize Ekroos Culvert and Boyer Creek stream stabilization plan for RFP. Mr. Harner is now preparing RFP.
* Tompkins County Soil & Water and Barton & Loguidice are developing plans for maintenance repairs to Six Mile Creek at Banks Road FEMA Stream Stabilization Project.
* Slaterville and Brooktondale Fire Departments’ LED lighting has been installed as part of Brighten Up Caroline from our Clean Energy Communities Award (NYSERDA). Project close-out planned for next week. The NYSEG rebate has recently increased, which will reduce our original project cost.
* Superintendent Spencer and the town board met with Labella to discuss the new highway facilities project. They will be submitting their proposal for Phase 1 of the project.

**Town Clerk, Jessie Townsend** – *Clerk -*March Collection Reporting as follows: 1 dog impoundment fee, 18 dog license renewals, and 11 building permit fees. That report was submitted to Supr. Witmer on 4/11 with check# 298 for $2,527. *Taxes* – 2023 Town & County tax season concluded with a total amount collected of $2,834,584.95 with only 92 parcels remaining unpaid as of April 1st.

**Clm. Katherine Goldberg** – *Ag* – Next Ag Meeting is set for May 11th. They will be sharing information collected from the Ag survey and the Event held on April 6th. Clarified that the Ag survey was sent to landowners that receive an Ag exemption on their property. This list was provided by the Assessment Office, and she apologized to those farmers/producers that may have been overlooked. They received a lot of good information back from that survey; however, some returned only referred to “no zoning” which she explained was useless information for the Ag Committee, adding they have absolutely nothing to do with zoning or its process. She hopes that helps clear up any confusion one may have about these two, very separate, initiatives. Lastly, a Facebook group had been formed to advertise the April 6th event. After consideration of this page, she is recommending that the page be taken down.

**Clm. Kate Kelley-Mackenzie –** Continues her research on broadband funding opportunities.

**Clm. Cal Snow** – Continued work with Mark, Susan Holland and Steve Gibian to begin the grant process for the Historic Town Hall preservation project.

## Proposal to Amend Land Use Moratorium Extension to Nine (9) Months

Supr. Witmer introduced the amended Moratorium Ext. Law. The language of the law was not changed, an amendment was made by changing the expiration date of six months to nine months (February 1, 2024). The Public Hearing has been set for May 3rd ahead of the Agenda Meeting beginning at 7:00 PM.

## Discussion of Proposed Zoning Law

Board members took this opportunity to have a general discussion about the draft law, to share personal thoughts with one another and to determine which areas in the draft they wish to discuss or possibly edit.

Supr. Witmer stated that zoning is the only tool that can be used in determining the location and types of developments the community desires to have here and will protect the town from sprawl and aid the goals set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. Does not want to see commercial sprawl, particularly on prime farmland along Route 79.

Clm. Snow believes in personal property rights and would prefer to explore other tools that could implement a broader regulation to guide development in areas, such as an enhanced site plan law.

Clm. Murray noted that community members and professional planners have researched and carefully created this draft law over the past 2.5 years. His focus remains on preserving farmland and water protection. He suggests listing specific areas in the draft to discuss and recommended starting with the proposed water overlay.

Clm. Goldberg has various issues with the draft as it stands, and questioned language used throughout the draft such as sprawl, rural character and other words that can be defined differently. Besides definitions, other specific areas that she would like to discuss include the hamlets, water overlay, use table, and enforcement.

The Board agrees to focus the next discussion on the water overlay.

## Resolution 78 of 2023. Approval of Vouchers for Payment of Town Bills

Motion by: Witmer Second: Snow

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board approves payment of vouchers for bills in the amounts of $20,639.38 for the General Fund, $37,168.21 for the Highway Fund, and $229.32 for the Streetlight Fund.

**Motion carried.**

**Ayes: Witmer, Snow, Murray, Goldberg, Kelley-Mackenzie**

**Nays: None**

## Approval of Minutes

The Caroline Town Board approved the Minutes of March 15, 2023, March 21, 2023, and April 5, 2023

## Highway Truck Purchase

Hwy. Supt. Bob Spencer provided a proposal for the purchase of a new one-ton truck. This will replace the 2018 truck and is part of the capital improvement rotation schedule. There is a 2022 model available now, otherwise a 2024 model will have to be ordered. Board members had questions and would like more information from Bob such as trade-in value of current truck, the number of bids, and the cost for a base model. Members are also concerned that they are not made aware of these discussions until the day of the meeting and would like more notice to consider capital purchases.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Supr. Witmer and seconded by Clm. Murray and carried unanimously at 9:09 p.m.

----**Meeting Adjourned----**

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessie Townsend, Town Clerk