

Supervisor O'Rorke called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. Also attending: Councilwomen Benway and Finke, Councilmen Meredith and Norris, Highway Superintendent Jordan, Town Clerk Brooks, and 15 members of the public who signed the attendance sheet. Absent:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regarding the approval of Minutes of February 13, 2012 Regular Town Board Meeting (distributed 3/9/12 at 1:54 pm) submitted by the Town Clerk. Supervisor moved and was seconded by Councilman Norris. Councilwoman Finke asked two questions, page 5, Old Business, 3rd to last line, "less than", Clerk Brooks said that was verbatim. Councilwoman Finke questions page 17, bottom, believed Attorney Wukitsch had said no, minutes read, 'yes', [unable to understand]; Attorney Wukitsch said 'yes' was the correct answer, his answer is consistent to the minutes. The adoption of the foregoing Motion was duly put to a vote, and the vote was as follows:

BENWAY-AYE NORRIS-AYE FINKE-AYE MEREDITH-AYE O'RORKE-AYE

Motion Carried

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Kevin Kemnah asked the Town Board to adopt a proactive local law to ban hydrofracking; precedent set in two towns by home rule. He questions, re IDA and Water Park, stated New Baltimore would pay \$x to Coxsackie for Treatment Plant, how is it divided, or will New Baltimore or the Water Park pay for the Water Park. Answer: anyone who uses water will pay for their water use; Supervisor has not seen PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) but part of PILOT will return to Village of Coxsackie, allowing them to bring the project into New Baltimore.

Jeff Ruso asked about newspaper articles about the Town Court. He personally requested the NYS Office of Comptroller do an audit, requested annual [reviews] audits from Town, and has before him what the Town justices said. He has reviewed monthly reports of other towns, lack of Town Board auditing is consistent, 18 of 20 are lacking. Justices are responsible for financial activities, not their clerks, Code requires Town Board to review the annual reports of the elected officers. June 13 Town Board minutes reflect a [review] was done by Mr. Fitzgerald, minutes reflect same comments for 2009 and 2010, did talk about dutch doors, dawn to dusk hours, did not spend time talking about the Town's accounts. At February meeting, he heard it was the court clerks' math skills, bank, and political-motivation. Full accounting audit is required and asked for that, pointing out the Board would 'loan' \$1700 toward shortfall. Town of Goshen, April 2011, loaned \$5000 for shortfall, NYS Comptroller's office recommended they personally pay back the amounts. Mr. Ruso was motivated to run by financial accounting and asks Board to resolve to get audit from NYS Comptroller, and submit good plan of corrections.

Supervisor offered that it was a last minute addition to agenda tonight.

Pat Monks had the privilege of being one of the justices' clerks for over a year and left for personal reasons; strong in math and detection, she said their books are complicated, without any agenda, she spent entire afternoons reconciling, and to please keep this in mind.

Pam Trombley, also justices' clerk for a period, didn't understand why just Justice Farrell in newspaper, bank fees should have appeared in both justices' accounts, [finances] were always corrected by the time the deposit was made.

CORRESPONDENCE

From O'Connell Aronowitz, Attorneys at Law- Attorney for the Town Wukitsch read letter to Town Supervisor O'Rorke regarding censure of former New Baltimore councilman Arthur Byas annulled by Supreme Court, referencing Greene County Board of Ethics letter of censure April 28, 2011, regarding violation of Code Section 16, Code of Ethics, then November 3, 2011



Greene County Board of Ethics member Joseph P Konopka, Jr's finding, referring this to Town Board for further action. February [], 2012, the Albany County Supreme Court ordered that original letter of censure, and finding of violation, be vacated, annulled, and declared of no legal force or effect. Court annulled without foundation and fact, and without legally sufficient proof. As original letter read into record, request amendment of record to reflect this decision; Attorney Wukitsch said no necessity to amend the record, minutes were accurate as of the date written, since the Town Board saw fit to read, Attorney Wukitsch has summarized the Court's opinion so no need to read full opinion. The request made to amend the minutes to reflect the court determination has been entered into Correspondence and is sufficient. The Town Board took no action; had it done so, it would be a different matter.

From NYS Home Energy Assistance Program- seeking comments for next year, send comments by close of business March 9; email to nysheap@otda.ny.gov

From NYS Comptroller- Town of New Baltimore selected for audit of STAR applicants to insure requirements have been met; entrance conference will begin March 9, 2012. Examiners will be available to meet with any town officials.

From NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (administering FEMA)-correspondence with checks totalling \$35,769 to reimburse Town for federal portion of FEMA; State is still to come with 12.5% of FEMA.

From Cornell Cooperative Extension, on behalf of Catskill Creek Watershed- invitation to March 19 meeting presentation by NYSDEC's Dan Miller regarding habitat restoration. He has created maps of historic wetlands.

From NYS Comptroller- acknowledgement of extension granted due to being unable to file Annual Financial Report as Town waits for Town justices to reconcile, under Section 30 of General Municipal Law, law provides for 60 days, granted 60 days, due by May 1, 2012. From Revitalizing of the Hudson River- April 13 program at CGCC addressing aspects of revitalizing Hudson River waterfronts, economic development and mapping projects. Town Board members and public invited.

From Community of Environmental Legal Defense Fund and Pennsylvania Community Rights Network- has to do with stopping Marcellus Shale drilling, discusses aspects of drilling, the event is April 28, 2012 at Wilkes-Barre Community Rights Network.

From Cornell Cooperative Extension of Greene County-informational meeting regarding the Emerald Ash Borer at AgroForestry Center, Acra, on March 15; Supervisor hopes a Board member may attend. Clerk Brooks has a flier with further information.

From NYS Tax and Finance Office of Real Property Tax Services- complaints on Tentative Special Franchise full values, none in Town of New Baltimore, Assessor Bennett is handling this on behalf of the Town.

OLD BUSINESS

Resolution for Appointment to the ZBA

Supervisor said this carries over from February agenda, 2 applicants who have expressed their interest to the Town Board, one with zoning background. Supervisor read.

RESOLUTION MARCH 12, 2012

RESOLUTION TO APPOINT ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEMBER

RESOLVED, that James Eckl is hereby appointed to the New Baltimore Town Planning Board, said term expiring on December 31, 2016.

Supervisor moved and was seconded by Councilman Norris. No discussion. The adoption of the foregoing Resolution was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

ROLL CALL VOTE: BENWAY-AYE FINKE-AYE MEREDITH-AYE

NORRIS-AYE O'RORKE-AYE Adopted



Discussion Regarding the Abandonment of Van Gurpin Lane

Carrying over from February, Town Board received request from Highway Superintendent to abandon certain sections of Van Gurpin Lane. Under Highway Law, Section 205, Attorney said the Town Board would approve and affix signatures to Certificate of Abandonment; anyone who feels they are aggrieved has up to one year to challenge abandonment determination. Supervisor received a letter, and Attorney Wukitsch suggested notifying owners along Van Gurpin Lane. Two letters were received. From Coxsackie Antiques Center, that borders Van Gurpin, there was confusion over User Road or Town-Dedicated Road. Close to 20 years since Town has maintained it, the Town does not own the property; the property owners do. The Johns were concerned how it affected their property line and easements; Supervisor contacted them and they are now comfortable with abandonment. An objection from Sunny Farms attorney, said Attorney Wukitsch, centers on 1) a claim that abandonment means their property is landlocked, and 2) claim that there is still travel along the roadbed by the owners and the Town should continue to maintain the property. Highway Superintendent Jordan's 14 years have included nothing (no plow, trimming) and travel is more by ATV. Attorney Wukitsch responds to claim 1): when User Road, after more than 6 years the property reverts to landowners, landlocked the landowners would have easement by necessity, property the Town previously worked as a prescriptive easement, and can see why they want the Town to maintain but it has not been the case for years, Superintendent Jordan figured to put road back in would cost over \$50,000 Councilman Meredith figured more than that and there is pavement to the billboards; answer: no. Superintendent Jordan said years ago it was shale. Supervisor said a threat of legal action suggests Attorney Attorney Wukitsch correspond to lay out our position on the easement.

Mr. Kemnah asked how one would get to one's property if the land reverted to the property owners; Attorney Wukitsch said when it becomes a situation of being landlocked, the law does not favor landlock, and there would be a creation, without any writings, of an easement by necessity such that affected property owners would continue access; abandonment means the Town is relieved of any responsibility for maintenance of the easement. Supervisor added that if Town doesn't maintain it and doesn't abandon it, the Town has liability issues. Attorney Wukitsch will send letter to Sunny Farms and this will be taken up next month. Councilwoman Finke asked if there were any other roads in same situation; none the Town is aware of. Councilwoman Finke asked how many user roads? Superintendent Jordan answered 90%, adding that originally all were User Roads. Attorney Wukitsch said the only area with a high percentage of non-User Roads would be a congested area of new development on top of new development. Ellie Alfeld added that each district has them to some degree.

Supervisor asked Town Board's consideration to add *Town Justices Update* under **OLD BUSINESS** with no objections.

Town Justices Update

Councilwoman Benway met with the Justices and read a letter, reporting their accounts are completely balanced, math errors had to do with more fees requiring many steps up the bank officer ladder, gave bank statements for National Bank of Coxsackie that are all reconciled. Councilman Meredith asked how much is owed; the justices owe nothing, have disbursed checks and their monthlies to go to NYS, have returned checks they did not cash. Supervisor has 4 checks that reimburse petty cash, and an uncashed check. Supervisor has reports through February. Council woman Benway read.





Town Court of New Baltimore

P.O. Box 67 Hannacroix, New York 12087 Phone (518) 756-2079 Fax (518) 756-7007 Town Justices

Joseph A. Farrell Jr Joseph F. Cosenza

March 12, 201

Dear Supervisor O'Rorke and New Baltimore Town Board Members:

We are writing in response to your letter dated February 15th regarding the Courts accounts. As you are fully aware, this matter was originally presented to the Town Board by the Justices so that the process of turning over court revenues to the Town Supervisor could be completed for the year ending December 31, 2011. Our efforts were impacted by the loss of experienced court clerk staff in early 2011. During this time, the Justices were required to devote a substantial amount of their time towards keeping the Town Court functioning. As one of the busicst Courts statewide, we have processed over \$3 million in fines and fees of which over \$1.5 million has been returned to the Town over the past 15 years.

Unfortunately, our ability to address the Court's staffing issues was delayed because of the previous Town Board's interference in the hiring process. Once the Justices were able to focus on the Court's bank accounts, it was determined that not only were these accounts being assessed bank fees, but the Town's Bicentennial account was also assessed bank fees from the courts account. During our review, it was necessary to escalate this matter to the Bank's Regional Management as the local branch was unable to assist the Court.

We have researched the Town Board's assertion that a Town Justice is personally responsible for the reimbursement of bank service fees. In fact, the NYS Comptoller's Handbook clearly states, "There is no legal restriction preventing a bank from imposing a service charge on an account maintained by a town or village justice...The town or village justice is entitled to be reimbursed by the municipality for the service charge upon submission of a claim or voucher". Nonetheless, we have concluded our discussions and the Bank has committed to return all bank fees. Once these bank fees have been returned, the Courts bank accounts will match its cash book records.

In terms of the Court's, financial record keeping responsibilities, the Justices remain committed to complying with the Rules & Regulations set forth by the NYS Comptroller's Diffice and Office of Court Administration. Towards that end, the Justices recommend that the Town Board adopt the following rules:

- New Justices should start with new accounts.
- The former Justice's account should be zeroed out
- Audits should be conducted on a regular basis.

In addition, the Courts ability to function properly in administering justice in carrying out its financial record keeping requires that appropriate staffing levels are maintained.

Insofar as the Court has been successful in negotiating the return of bank fees, thereby fully reconciling the Court's accounts, the checks authorized by the Town Board that were issued to the Court last month are being returned. Additionally, we are submitting a monthly reconciliation of the Court's bank account and east book records. In the future, these reports will be available for review at the Town Court.

Judge Joseph A. Farrell, Jr.

Judge Joseph F. Cosenza.

Councilwoman Benway commented great to get fees reversed and deal with local bank where, if a fee appears, corrections are easier. Supervisor believes their checks are back; Town is paid for November through February to prepare for Supervisor's Annual Financial Report submission extension. Supervisor and Councilwoman Benway contacted Town's accountant and an independent accounting firm; the NYS Comptroller's office felt it did not warrant an audit but offered an auditor to assist them with reconciliations because busy courts get behind on those; one-year veteran Dawn Palmateer has completely caught up; 6+ staff within 2year period, and the Town has been made whole.



Councilman Norris researched using NYS Comptroller's website: not unique to New Baltimore, a Long Island water district had similar problem and Comptroller's office recommended moving to another bank; thinks on his part there was a rush to judgment here, a process was in place that needed more time, justices did a great job, and personally apologizes for the strength of his own words.

Ellie Alfeld commends Councilwoman Benway for giving up her leisure time and Sundays, her work with the justices speaks volumes. Supervisor appreciates the justices' own work so Town could move on with its Annual Financial Report, glad to work it out through lots of bureaucracy; all accounts are now balanced and \$1700 more in General Fund. Councilwoman Finke assumes they'll be opening their accounts. Supervisor expects staff is up-to-date going forward.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution to Pay Claims

Supervisor has pulled voucher 2012 03 70, the third installment of Ambulance District 2 to Town of Coxsackie, who were 3 years behind in billing; the Town Board will not make that full 2011 payment until rectified with surplus fund. Supervisor asked if everyone had reviewed the claims, and Councilwoman Finke who arrived after meeting began.

RESOLUTION MARCH 12, 2012

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE SUPERVISOR TO PAY AUDITED CLAIMS

WHEREAS the Town Clerk has presented claims to the Town Board for audit and review and,

WHEREAS the Town Board has audited claims 2012 03/01-69, 71-77, it is

RESOLVED, that the Supervisor is hereby authorized to pay claims 2012 03/01-69, 71-77.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Clerk will prepare an abstract and hold it for public review until March 31, 2012.

Supervisor moved and was seconded by Councilwoman Benway. Councilman Norris asked about the pulled voucher, Supervisor reminded the bills were held up, Councilman Norris remembered another billing where they billed for full amount and not what we agreed to; Supervisor reviewed they are to notify us in July for year before, and September to predict year before we've had 2 full years of no correspondence, adding they know they must wait for this last portion. Supervisor suggests the EMS Committee take this on, another concern came up with Ravena Rescue Squad; Councilman Norris has reached out to Supervisor [Coxsackie] to accept amount budgeted. Councilman Norris will follow-up. The adoption of the foregoing Resolution was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

ROLL CALL VOTE:

BENWAY-AYE

FINKE-AYE

MEREDITH-AYE

NORRIS-AYE

O'RORKE-AYE

Adopted

Resolution to Appoint Steve Grimm as Part Time Operator in the Wastewater Treatment Plant

Two operators are related and vacation together, need a third operator.

RESOLUTION MARCH 12, 2012

RESOLUTION APPOINTING TEMPORARY
PART TIME WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATOR



RESOLVED, that Steve Grimm is hereby appointed as a Temporary Part Time Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator, effective immediately at a rate of \$12.68 per hour.

Councilman Norris moved and was seconded by Councilwoman Benway. Councilwoman Finke asked if he is an engineer; answer: no, comes with extensive experience, adding that chief operator is not engineer either. Councilman Norris pointed that he has operator's license. The adoption of the foregoing Resolution was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

ROLL CALL VOTE:

BENWAY-AYE

FINKE-AYE

MEREDITH-AYE

NORRIS-AYE

O'RORKE-AYE

Adopted.

Resolution to Change Cleaning of Town Hall to a Contractual Relationship

To make a change in the way we were compensating the individual who is cleaning Town Hall, limited number of hours, will become contractual, not covered by Workers' Compensation or liability, will do her own FICA filing and receive a 1099; the agreement and duties expected of her are attached.

RESOLUTION MARCH 12, 2012

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUPERVISOR TO EXECUTE AGREEMENT FOR CLEANING SERVICES AT TOWN HALL

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does hereby authorize the Supervisor to execute an agreement for the cleaning services at Town Hall effective March 16, 2012.

Supervisor moved and was seconded by Councilman Norris. No discussion. The adoption of the foregoing Resolution was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows: ROLL CALL VOTE: BENWAY-AYE FINKE-AYE

MEREDITH-AYE

NORRIS-AYE Adopted

O'RORKE-AYE

Resolution to Approve Attendance at the Planning Federation Annual Training

RESOLUTION MARCH 12, 2012

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE ATTENDANCE AT THE NEW YORK PLANNING FEDERATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does hereby authorize Planning Chair Rundberg and Supervisor O'Rorke to attend the Annual Conference and Training School of the New York Planning Federation April 15-17, 2012, and authorizes reasonable expenses for transportation and meals.

Councilman Norris moved and was seconded by Councilwoman Benway. Councilwoman Finke asked where it was held; Saratoga Springs. No further discussion. The adoption of the foregoing Resolution was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

ROLL CALL VOTE:

BENWAY-AYE

FINKE-AYE **MEREDITH-AYE**

NORRIS-AYE

O'RORKE-AYE

Adopted

Resolution to Approve Attendance at Town Clerks' Annual Training



RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE ATTENDANCE AT THE NEW YORK STATE TOWN CLERKS' ANNUAL CONFERENCE

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does hereby authorize Town Clerk Brooks to attend the Annual Conference and Training School of the New York State Town Clerks, to be held from April 22-25, 2012, and authorizes reasonable expenses for transportation and meals.

Supervisor moved and was seconded by Councilman Norris. Councilwoman Finke asked where it is held; Saratoga Springs. No further discussion. The adoption of the foregoing Resolution was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

ROLL CALL VOTE:

BENWAY-AYE FINKE-AYE

MEREDITH-AYE

NORRIS-AYE

O'RORKE-AYE

Adopted

. . .

Town Clerk Brooks thanked the Town Board.

Resolution to Appoint Committee to Audit Supervisor's Records

Supervisor brought this to Town Board's attention at last meeting; Deputy Supervisor Norris read.

RESOLUTION MARCH 12, 2012

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE COMMITTEE FOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF TOWN SUPERVISOR'S RECORDS

WHEREAS Town Law §123 requires an annual review of financial records for all town officers who receive and disburse monies, and

WHEREAS this review is to be conducted by the Town Board or by a certified public accountant hired by the Town Board, and

WHEREAS annual reviews are completed for Town Justices, Tax Collector, Town Clerk, and

WHEREAS the Town Supervisor has brought to the attention of the Town Board that an annual review by the Town Board has not been completed for the past two years of the Supervisor's records, and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board approves Lisa Benway and Mike Meredith to complete an annual review of the Town Supervisor's records and to file a report with the Town Board.

Councilman Norris moved and was seconded by Councilwoman Benway. Councilwoman Benway and Councilman Meredith need to get the information from Supervisor; will need to be noticed as a Special Meeting if there will be a quorum (if all 3 gather together in the same place at the same time). Councilman Norris thought if members come individually the notice would not be necessary. The adoption of the foregoing Resolution was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

ROLL CALL VOTE:

BENWAY-AYE

FINKE-AYE

MEREDITH-AYE

NORRIS-AYE Adopted O'RORKE-Abstain

Discussion of Late Fees for Sewer #2, Water #2 and Water #3



Supervisor reviewed: a local law establishes a fee and a resolution modifies a fee; only Sewer District 1 fees appear in the Town Code. For Sewer District# 2, Water# 2 and# 3, the Village of Coxsackie provides the sewer and water; they provide the invoice we mail that indicates nonpayment of fee results in relevy on the Village taxes; we took that off years ago, but invoices are preprinted with the fee amount, and in the past the Town of New Baltimore late fee, established by resolution, was 5%. Village of Coxsackie's invoices print with a 20% fee. New Baltimore's Sewer District# 1, in the Code Book, follows property taxes, at 1%. Supervisor and Attorney Wukitsch will put together a local law, but ask Town Board for input: follow property taxes, resolution 5%, or follow Village of Coxsackie 20%. Councilwoman Benway felt 20% was hefty for a late fee. Supervisor reminded that Town of New Baltimore pays Village of Coxsackie when bill is due, so the Town never incurs the late fee; the residents of the district then pay the Town. Supervisor believes Tax Collector Taylor would like it the same as property taxes, about 30 accounts in Water District #2; Water 3 and Sewer 2 have only one customer. Ellie said 5% is still less than 12% on annual basis. Supervisor commented that same individuals pay the late fee each year. Clerk Brooks clarified the 1% on property taxes is per month, Supervisor said 5% was quarterly, and 20% is a flat fee; three different animals/rates. Bob Knighton said purpose is to encourage folk to pay their taxes. Supervisor said, if you're not running surpluses, the special district must borrow from Town's General Fund to meet expenses. Councilman Norris asks for same rate for districts; Supervisor asks which one to change, 1%/month or 5% quarterly. Supervisor suggests Town Board consider, discuss at Work Meeting, and April decision.

Supervisor added Highway Superintendent and Town Clerk set the roadside cleaning dates for Town-wide Roadside Clean-up, sign up for orange bags at Town Clerk's Office and at Recycling Center. Highway crew will pick up bags on Monday, April 30 and Monday, May 7. Press release will go to newspapers tomorrow. Councilwoman Finke will make sure this makes the home page of the website.

Councilwoman Benway reminded everyone of <u>Special Meeting</u>, Wednesday, March 14, at 7pm.

Recycling Center fence blew over; Buildings and Grounds/Recycling Committee will give direction to Highway in terms of repair or replace; the fence has been there since the Recycling Center opened about 20+ years ago.

Clerk Brooks asked for retraction on home page of website for the erroneous <u>Town-wide</u> <u>Cleanup Day</u> that appeared in the newsletter; there is no Town-wide Cleanup Day, only roadside.

Councilwoman Finke asked how <u>state contracts</u> work [unable to understand]; Superintendent Jordan said vendors will list products and services on the state, normally at a favorable rate, and all towns and villages may buy from that list. Councilwoman Finke asked if they all expire on one date or at one time; Attorney Wukitsch and Superintendent Jordan said some do and some do not. Councilman Norris said the (Navistar) International did expire in December, did not resubmit paperwork, but held that price for New Baltimore when, after truck's cracked frame was discovered, Superintendent Jordan, under Highway Committee's leadership, had phoned and vendor had said they would hold price for the Town. Councilwoman Finke asked [unable to understand] resolution doesn't have to be adopted before the expiration; Attorney Wukitsch didn't believe so.

Ellie Alfeld asked if the <u>fire extinguisher</u> needed to hang on the wall, or sit on the floor; Supervisor referred to Code Enforcement Officer, Councilman Norris added security alarm company is nearly done with installation.

ADJOURNMENT



With no further business to come before the Board, with one tabled resolution, Supervisor moved to adjourn, Councilman Benway seconded. No discussion. The adoption of the foregoing Motion was duly put to a vote, and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

BENWAY-AYE

FINKE-AYE NORRIS-AYE

MEREDITH-AYE O'RORKE-AYE

Motion Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 pm.

Respectfully,

Janet A. Brooks Town Clerk