

Minutes of the meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Durham held January 21, 2003, at the Town Building in Oak Hill, N.Y.

Present: Robert Young - Supervisor
 William A. Carr, Jr. – Councilman
 Robert Elpel – Councilman
 Gary Hulbert - Councilman
 Linda Sutton – Councilwoman
 Recording Secretary: Charles Soderblom - Town Clerk
 Others Present: Wesley Moore - Highway Superintendent
 Gordon Bennett – Sole Assessor

The Supervisor called the meeting to order at 7:32 P.M. with the Pledge to the Flag. Sixteen people were present.

Mr. Young received a check from the County for \$7147.11 reimbursing the town for snow removal on county roads.

Mr. Young wanted to clear the air on the plaque for Fred & Helen Mack. His understanding was it was from the town board and the town board would pay for it. It would be \$30 each.

Mr. Young spoke to Senator Seward’s office about the police grant and said, “It’s going to work out”. We have to figure out how we are going to pay the grant. It will cost the town \$1500.00 Mr. Carr said there is not a guarantee that we will get the grant and Mr. Young said they were holding it for the Town of Durham. There was further discussion on how the grant can be confirmed when we have not even filed and submitted the grant paperwork.

Wesley Moore read the Highway Superintendents Report for December 2002. They have been using a large amount of materials and fuel to clean up after the many storms. The town hauled 250 tons of snow sand from Callahan. Carvers, low bidder on delivered sand and Borwegen Trucking hauled in sand from Carvers. There was a nine day period were the town ran out of salt because the port in Albany had also run out. 108 tons of salt was delivered last week. James Reed Sales in Athens delivered 4700 gallons of liquid calcium chloride. They used more calcium because of the lack of road salt. Wesley talked to Greene County Highway today and most of the sand suppliers are totally out of sand. Callanan in Ravena is the only one with sand left. The new truck, cab and chassis, had been delivered to Ben Funk the beginning of January and is at Arrowhead getting the plow equipment on. Mr. Carr commented that the town did an extremely good job on the roads after the recent storms. Wesley said that with the night crew and the day crew they have been working around the clock in 12-hour shifts. Wesley mentioned that there are people parking cars in the road during snowstorms. In addition, private contractors are pushing snow across the road and leaving some in the road and then Wesley has to send a truck back to clean the road again. He is going to start informing the residences that they are liable for damage done to vehicles or personal injury.

The building inspector's report was filed.

The police report was filed.

The dog control officer's report was filed. Merton said to call if there were any problems.

Mr. Young reported that Harold Kelly, Trinity Motors, had written a letter giving the town stock, which was valued at about \$5,000. Tal Rappleyea, attorney, was going to look into the matter to see how it should be handled. The letter was addressed to Mr. Cullie. The board agreed that Mr. Cullie would reply to the letter thanking Mr. Kelly for his generous offer and letting him know that our attorney would look into the matter and would be communicating with him in the future with a carbon copy to the town.

Mr. Young asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December meetings. Mr. Elpel made the motion seconded by Mr. Hulbert with all in favor.

Charles Soderblom, tax collector, reported that about \$550,000 has been collected.

Two representatives from the Hudson River Valley Greenway made a presentation to the board regarding the Greenway and its mission. There are five criteria for the Greenway: regional planning, natural and cultural resource protection, economic development, public access to natural and development features, i.e.) river trail, heritage, and environmental education. If the Town of Durham were to join, they would receive sources for grant funding and technical assistance. The agency is not permitted to impede on home rule. They will only involve themselves in town issues if asked. The Greenway has been in existence for 11 years. You can opt out of the program any time the same way you joined by passing a resolution. To date none of the 180 communities have opted to leave. Mr. Elpel inquired as to how the Greenway is currently being funded. It was explained that it is state funded. Mr. Elpel stated that originally the Greenway was not to be government funded and asked when it changed and why. Mr. Edwards of the Greenway was not able to answer the question. Mr. Elpel stated that the Farm Bureau has always opposed the Greenway because they feel it is an infringement on personal property. Mr. Edwards explained that the Greenway has recently established an Agricultural committee to look at ways to protect farmland and keep farming a productive business. Mr. Carr commented that we need to make sure that natural and cultural resource protection was not euphuism for an infringement on business or expansion. Mr. Carr suggested that the board research some of the examples that Greenway has been involved in other communities and how it affected them. That would enable the board to make a positive informed decision.

Mr. Young stated that he was in favor of joining the Greenway. Mr. Carr commented that the town board has a responsibility to the town and its constituents to do a fair and equitable assessment of the Greenway prior making a decision. Additional discussion followed with no decision.

Mr. Cullie reported that the Task Force did not hold a meeting the month of December and the next meeting will be Monday, January 27, 2003, 7:30 p.m. at the East Durham Fire House. He reported that the open house held Sunday January 19th honoring Fred & Helen Mack for their years of service to the community was well attended. Nine organizations recognized them for their dedication to the community.

A letter was received from the Historical Commission and distributed to the board.

The contracts for the Town of Durham Ambulance Squad, East Durham Vol. Fire Co. and the Oak Hill-Durham Vol. Fire Co. were reviewed by the Mr. Rappleyea and the board and approved.

The board revisited the topic of purchasing a domain name with the .us address. After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that no action would be taken.

Mr. Holt inquired of the board as to when the construction of the bridge on Sunside Road would be completed. Mr. Moore explained that the county is handling this and due to the early cold, construction has been halted. The expense to have special concrete mixed to complete the project was cost prohibited. At this time, the project is expected to be completed in the spring as soon as weather permits. Mr. Holt's concern is the intersection of Jennings Road and Route 145; the snow banks are high and the intersection is slippery. Mr. Moore explained that the town maintains Jennings Road and is working to cut back the banks as much as possible to improve visibility.

Mr. Cullie read a report to the board from the Grant Committee indicating that he has contacted Senator Seward's office to determine if the Police Grant is still available. He was informed that it in fact was and the procedure for review and acceptance was reviewed. He included that the if the town board were to act on this grant it would need to apply 30% matching funds that can not be federal funds. Mr. Sutton stated that he would like to pursue this grant with the board's approval. Mrs. Sutton asked if the money the town receives from the DWI program could be used as matching funds. It was explained that it could not. The board indicated to Mr. Sutton that the grant should be pursued and to provide the grant committee with the necessary information.

Mr. Cullie asked the Mr. Young if he has received any information pertaining to grants and has it been given to a member of the committee? Mr. Young stated that anything he has received has been put into the board members boxes. Mrs. Sutton clarified that the information is supposed to go to the grant committee as well. Mr. Young denied having received any information concerning grants. Mr. Cullie questioned this, due to the fact he had received correspondence regarding a publication listing available grants and that Mr. Young had received the same correspondence. Mr. Carr suggested we be significantly more careful when grant related documents come into the town to make sure that they are passed on to the members of the grant committee. It will create an unfortunate and erroneous negative impression if these documents continue to be lost.

Mr. Bennett addressed the topic of the Senior Citizen Sliding Scale with the board. In the past, the town has followed what the county has done. Typically, the county raises the scale \$500.00 per year so that anyone who receives social security increase or increases in income does not fall out of the exemption loop and not get something that they have gotten in the past. It is Mr. Bennett's suggestion that being the social security increase was 1.5% or 1.7% last year that we would also increase the sliding scale by \$500.00. The current exemption is \$13,500 to \$19,199. The exemption would become \$19,699 on the top end. Mr. Bennett will provide the board members with the old scale and the new scale so that they can review and discuss it at the next meeting.

Mr. Bennett went on to explain that he has a meeting with the office of Real Property Services people who do the equalization rate survey, which is performed on a yearly basis. It is their preliminary indication that the value in Durham has changed between seven and nine percent of the last year. The data used to calculate the change is very in-depth and it is anticipated that we would come up with a very similar number when we do our in house analysis. Mr. Bennett feels that this will probably be the case. Once the numbers are finalized there will need to be a meeting with him and the town board to discuss those final determinations of the amount of change through our sustaining equity. The in-house analysis will break the roll down to determine where in the roll changes have occurred. Mr. Carr emphasized the necessity for these analyses to head off future inequities. Additional discussion followed.

At 9:00 p.m. Mr. Carr made the motion seconded by Mr. Elpel to adjourn for executive session to discuss possible litigation regarding property assessment. The meeting was called back to order at 9:25 p.m.

Mrs. Sutton made the motion seconded by Mr. Hulbert with all in favor to approve the following transfers:

From:	A 3120.400	Police Contractual	\$508.10
To:	A 3120.101	Police PT Per. Svc.	
From:	A 7310.401	Youth Prog. Bus Contr.	\$250.00
To:	A 7310.410	Youth Prog. Contr.	
From:	DA5142.100	Snow Per. Svc.	\$3,793.94
To:	DA5142.400	Snow Contr.	
From:	A 1680.410	Central FAX	\$34.90
To:	A 1670.400	Central Photocopier	
From:	A 1990.400	Contingent	\$40.76

To:	A 5010.400	Highway Spv. Contr.	
From:	A 5132.400	Garage Pole Barn	\$144.66
To:	A 5132.400	Garage Contr.	
From:	DA9089.801	Emp. Benefits Optical	\$225.34
To:	DA9089.803	Emp. Benefits Uniforms	

Mrs. Moore advised the Board that we are still in possession of the money that the tower company put in escrow when they applied for the permit. The money needs to be returned as outlined in the application. **Mr. Hulbert made the motion that the money be returned to them, seconded by Mr. Carr with all in favor.**

Mrs. Sutton questioned that letter received indicating that Mr. McCall contacted the State on behalf of the Town regarding the light situation at Troy Savings Bank and Durham Elementary. It was verified that the Board had given him permission to ask the two property owners if they could somehow shield the lights that face the highway. Mr. McCall contacted DOT regarding the situation and the letter that the Board received copies of is their response.

Mr. Carr made the motion that the meeting be adjourned at 10:00 P.M. Seconded by Mr. Hulbert and carried.

Minutes approved:

Charles G. Soderblom, Clerk/Collector