

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Durham held April 5, 2005 at the Town Building in Oak Hill, N.Y.

Present: Robert Elpel - Councilman
Linda Sutton – Councilwoman
Gary Hulbert – Supervisor
William Carr – Councilman
Jodi Wood- Councilwoman

Recording Secretary: Chris Kohrs - Deputy Town Clerk

Others Present: Charles Soderblom – Town Clerk
Wes Moore – Highway Superintendent
Tal Rappleyea – Attorney
Guenther Ohm – Legislator

The Supervisor called the meeting to order with the Pledge to the Flag at 7:30 PM. Twelve people were present.

Mr. Ohm announced that there would be a job fair at Columbia-Greene Community College on April 26. The county is looking into constructing a “burn building” at the training center in Cairo. This building will be a two story steel construction with a basement and its purpose is for live burn drills.

Wes Moore recapped the damage, which occurred with the excessive rain received over the weekend. He estimates that it will cost between \$45 and \$50 thousand to make the necessary repairs. The county is holding a meeting in Cairo on Friday to evaluate the damage throughout the county and to determine if we would be eligible for FEMA funding. FEMA would reimburse for materials and overtime payroll. The flood washed away part of the supports for the Arch Stone Bridge in Cornwallville and has made it necessary to close the road until further notice. Cochrane Road between Hulls and Cunningham Road also received major damage.

Senator Seward will hold a public meeting at the Town Hall on Thursday May 12 at 7 p.m.

Mr. Hulbert received a quote from Frazier Associates to do a comprehensive plan for \$30,000 plus. After some discussion, it was decided that Mr. Hulbert would contact Nan Stolzenburg who previously quoted \$23,185.00 for the same service.

The board reviewed the Site Plan Review Law. One correction was made and a public hearing is schedule for May 3, 2005 at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Hulbert announced that he had Disaster Relief forms for residents who suffered damaged due to the storm. This funding will only apply if the State declares the town a disaster area.

The board received notice that our application for the Donohue Grant had been received.

Mr. Hulbert read the responses he had received from Senator Seward and Assembly Hooker pertaining to a letter he had written to them on behalf of the board regarding the burden of school tax on the property owner.

Mr. Seward shared the following information regarding the Senates attempt to address this concern. The senate's budget included a property relief proposal that would send \$990 million in direct school property tax relief to eligible homeowners when phased in over five years, in addition to the current STAR exemption. The program would offset the effects of inflation on the original STAR program and replace regressive school property taxes with state broad-based tax revenues.

The plan also provides an additional 30 % increase in the STAR enhanced exemption for eligible senior citizens commencing in the 2005-06 school year, growing to 36% in 2009-10.

The goal is to reduce reliance on the property tax as a means of funding education, and instead boost the amount of money going to education based on broad, statewide sources such as the income or sales tax.

The office Assemblyman Hooker sent a response letter acknowledging the adverse affects of New York State's current methods for funding public education. He will consider the recommendations, which were made by the board.

1. Ensure equity in a formula for funding education based on the taxpayers' ability to pay.
2. Decrease the revenue raised from tax sources based on the value of dwellings.
3. Refrain from imposing state mandated requirements upon school systems without corresponding state funding.
4. Adjust the formulas on revenues earmarked as aid to education from state lottery and other future gaming activities so that the annual percentage is substantially increased from current levels.
5. Maintain the enhanced star exemption for the town's neediest citizens, but also increase the star exemption for senior citizens specific all at all income levels.
6. Regain lost revenue from the above actions through income tax.

Dr. Goldstein voiced concern with the published New York State School District Report card results. Cairo-Durham School District fell at the bottom of the list. The Durham Elementary scored higher as an individual building. Mr. Goldstein asked if the board had any input with the school board. It was explained that there was not a directed relationship between the two boards. Any concerns should be taken directly to the school board and administrators.

Ms. Wood made the motion seconded by Mr. Carr to approve the bid from Catskill Fence to repair the fence at Brandow Park. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Mrs. Sutton made the motion seconded by Mr. Carr to adjourn at 8:25 p.m.

Minutes approved:

Chris Kohrs, Deputy Town Clerk