

January 17, 2024

Chairperson Marc Couey called the monthly meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Agenda – Chairperson Marc Couey read the agenda as printed. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Supervisor Don Stanke, a second was made by Chair Marc Couey. Motion Carried.

Roll Call – Clerk Diane Parduhn recorded the list of attendees. Present were Chairperson Marc Couey, Supervisor Don Stanke, Clerk Diane Parduhn, Acting Treasurer Sharon Storms, and Road Supervisor Randy Olson. Electors attending the meeting included Bob Hirshey. Absent Treasurer Judy Shadewald and Supervisor Joe Halverson.

Approval of December Minutes – Minutes for the following meetings were reviewed by Board Members, December Regular Minutes, December 30th emergency meeting to fill treasurer role temporarily, and January 10th emergency meeting to accept an offer on sale of land. No corrections or additions were offered. Supervisor Don Stanke made a motion to approve the December 20th minutes, the December 30th minutes, and the January 10th minutes. The second was made by Chair Marc Couey. Motion Carried.

Treasurers Report – Treasurer Sharon Storms gave the treasurers report. Checking balance as of December 31, 2023, is \$223905.48, cd balance \$43231.93, and the ARPPA balance is \$30.80. Because the ARPPA account is now so small and earns no income, there was discussion regarding keeping that account open. The balance currently in the account is \$30.80 and that is interest earned since the last check was written. In the month of December, the account earned only \$0.12 in interest. The full \$60,000 of ARPPA funds have been spent on the building of the new town hall. With such a low balance the account is no longer a value. A motion was made by Supervisor Don Stanke to close the ARPPA account, a second was made by Chair Marc Couey. Motion Carried. Clerk Diane Parduhn will close the account as soon as possible after the meeting.

Treasurer Sharon Storms reported that approximately half or more of the property taxes had been collected and processed in time for the January settlement. She reported the January settlement payments were to Riverdale School District for \$54,237, Ithica School District for \$10,732.25, Richland School District \$79,358.94, SW Technical College for \$16,351.12 and to Richland County for \$103,458.79, for a total of \$264,138.10.

Treasurer Sharon Storms also reported that the Town of Orion had an overpayment of \$0.22. She asked the Board if they would want her to issue a refund for such a small amount. She shared that the County Treasurer recommended the board set a policy that limits the amount the town will refund to avoid having to make individual decisions. In addition to the refund of \$0.22, there is still a check that has not been cashed for an overpayment in January 2022. The original check was number 1632 in the amount of \$126.14. At our November 15, 2023, meeting it was determined that check #1632 should be voided and a new check issued along with a letter sent via certified mail to the original payee. A replacement check was issued November 15, 2023, and sent the next day to the payee along with a notice that the check had to be cashed by December 31, 2023, or it too would be voided, and no repayment would be made. Following the discussion of overpayments, the board made the following motions:

*Supervisor Don Stanke made a motion to not refund the \$0.22 overpayment, a second was made by Chair Marc Couey. Motion carried.

*Chair Marc Couey made a motion to place a stop payment on check #1632 (if not already done) and on check #1788, a second was made by Supervisor Don Stanke. Motion carried.

The clerk will bring to the next meeting a draft policy for refunding overpayments to the Town of Orion.

Treasurer Sharon Storms was asked by the board to provide a list of hours worked so that a fair wage could be determined at the January meeting. She presented her list of hours worked to the board and said they were as accurate as she recalled although it did not include hours of meeting with the clerk to assist with check account balance and prep for this meeting or exchange of mail. After some discussion, Sharon felt there was at least two more weeks of work before taxes would be completed and the board proposed paying her \$450/month for two full months. Chair Marc Couey made a motion to approve payment of \$450/month for a total of \$900 to Sharon Storms for acting as treasurer during this emergency. A second was made by Supervisor Don Stanke. Motion carried.

Approval of Bills – Bills presented for approval at the January meeting totaling \$65,492.49 were reviewed by supervisors. Supervisor Don Stanke made a motion to approve payment of the bills totaling \$65,492.49, using checks numbered from #1809 – #1826, including the EBT debit for IRS and acknowledging the January Settlement payments totaling \$264,138.10 using checks #1809 - #1825. The second was made by Chair Marc Couey. Motion carried.

Roads – Randy Olson presented a letter for signature for First Net, a program that would allow his phone to switch to whatever carrier is available where he is working. This is important when working in our township as the phone service is not always good and he needs to be able to connect in the event of an emergency. He also reported the Culverts are in on Wegner Road. Short discussion about expanding the parking lot in the New Town Hall to avoid a larger lawn which will require constant upkeep. Discussion to be continued later in the year.

Fire & Ambulance reports.

Muscoda Joint District – Chairman Marc Couey reported that Richland County purchased their old ambulance.

Richland Rural Ambulance District – Meeting to follow our Board Meeting

Richland Rural Fire District – No report.

Other Business –

1. **End of year tax forms** – Clerk Diane Parduhn reported that she had asked for help with the 2023-year end taxes because she did not understand the process, or the IRS webpage or forms needed. She spoke with Aaron Halverson at Halverson CPA Inc. They will complete our tax forms for an estimated price of approximately \$200. Supervisor Don Stanke made a motion to hire Halverson CPA to process our year end tax forms, second was made by Chair Marc Couey. Motion Carried.
2. **Clerk Wages** – Clerk Diane Parduhn shared the workload with the board and suggested an hourly wage, an extra payment for election work, or a yearly wage increase. It was agreed on by the board and the clerk that a pay raise of \$400 annually would be appropriate. Chair Marc Couey made a motion to increase the Clerk salary by \$400 annually to bring the total wage for the clerk from \$7,800 per year to a total of \$8,200 per year effective on February payment, a second was made by Supervisor Don Stanke. Motion Carried.
3. **Update on Sale of Land in Orion** – Chairman Marc Couey reported we received three offers in the amounts of \$42,000, \$43,000, and \$45,000 each. At the meeting held January 11, 2023, the board accepted the offer of \$45,000.
4. **New Town Hall Updates** – Chair Marc Couey reported there have been no complaints since the outside light was adjusted. The building is almost complete, we may be able to have our February meeting in the new building, for sure moved in by March.
5. **BOR Training** – Clerk Diane Parduhn will make reservations for Chair Marc Couey, Supervisor Don Stanke, and herself to attend the WTA District meeting.

Schedule for next meeting – February 21, 2024, at 5:30

Public Input – None

Approved by Orion Town Board on