

Caroga News Flash

Town Board Meeting Highlights

May 11, 2022

TownOfCaroga.com contains all back issues of the ***Caroga News Flash***.

This monthly meeting started at 6:00 PM and lasted 110 minutes at Town Hall with 15 citizens. No zoom access was available for public participation. No special presentations were made.

The Board has not given details about finances or timelines for the Clubhouse or capital projects (for legal guides on capital project financing, see www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/GMU/99-G and www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/publications/pdf/capital_planning.pdf).

As part of monthly reporting, Supervisor Horton introduced a new approach to financial planning. He proposed that the Town pay to hire a professional accountant (PhilipBeckettCPA.com) “to do a financial analysis of the impact of the Municipal Center project on tax rates. The analysis would entail evaluating construction costs, avoided maintenance/construction costs, energy and operational savings, increased revenue from enhanced golf course operations.” He added, “I have to get more information to him...**I’m definitely behind.**” He proposed no actions or resolutions.

When asked about timelines, Councilman Sturgess emphasized, “Not yet...There’s a ton of moving parts....**The insurance company has pretty much already given us all the money that we’re asking for.** So, no, we’re not worried about missing a two-year rebuilding deadline.”

In addition, the Board expressed no public concerns about changing needs for Town Court facilities. According to the meeting agenda, the Fulton County Board of Supervisors recently passed Resolution #148 to **create a Centralized Arraignment Plan based in Johnstown** for Town Courts in the county. Caroga’s Board did not publicly discuss how this new court system plan will impact their proposed new Municipal Center with costly facilities for local arraignments.

The Board invites members of the public to look at pictures of their proposed Clubhouse / Town Hall Municipal Center — in the Clubhouse or Town Hall — and give them feedback about the plan.

Resolutions / Local Laws:

- 1. “Plan B” Town Hall Capital Renovation Project** — What is the backup plan for Town Hall? Supervisor Horton said, “We talked about how we failed in other attempts to get public support for replacing the building ... I want to be sure that the Town’s people know that we’ve done everything possible to be honest and open about what’s going on with the Town Hall.” He proposed spending \$9,500.00 for C.T. Male to update their cost assessments of known Town Hall deficiencies with building structure, roofing, and asbestos in order to document the high cost of unrepaired building failures. He asked that his attempt to approach the Town Board be made part of the public record. The Board rejected his proposal with a 2 (yes) to 3 (no) vote.
- 2. Pandemic Safety Measures** — The Board voted to roll back precautions with in-person capacity limits and to resume pre-COVID meeting procedures (4-0 vote, 1 abstention). Mr. Sturgess summarized the rationale by stating, “We’re sick of not seeing you people here.”

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3. **Zoom Meetings** —Effective 4/9/22, the amended § 103-a of NYS Open Meetings Law (OML) for Towns declares, “A public body may, in its discretion, use video conferencing to conduct its meeting pursuant to the requirements of this article ... where ... the governing board ... has adopted a local law.” The Board voted **not** to pass a law (5-0 vote). Note that OML always has supported public participation via video conferencing, and it has allowed public officers’ participation via video conferencing if they do so from a publicly accessible location with proper notification (e.g., an apartment lobby in Florida with advance public notice). The 2022 amendment allows an option for Town Boards to pass a law permitting rules like those from the Governor’s Executive Orders during the pandemic (e.g., public officers’ participation from undisclosed private locations). OML § 103 supports using webcasts (e.g., Zoom) for public access and government transparency (see www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/PBO/103).
4. **Caroga Tourism** — Appointed Robert Becker to fill a vacant committee position ending 12/31/24 (5-0 vote).
5. **Building Permit Fees** — Amended the Fee Schedule (a) to clarify wording for the 2-year limit from “There is a two-year limit on renewing permits” to read, “There is a one-year limit on renewing permits.” and (b) to set the fee for Certificate of Compliance at \$100.00 (4-1 vote).
6. **Budget Modifications** — (5-0 votes)
 - Accepted grant revenue A4889 \$5,000.00 with increase to Recreation Trails C/E A7145.4
 - Amended 2022 Budget page 18 to correct missing numbers due to clerical copying errors
 - Funded carpet Youth Recreation C/E A7310.41 \$3,000.00 from C/E A1620.4 \$3,000.00
7. **Town Hall Renovations** — Approved \$2,850.00 carpet covering for Town Hall gym (5-0 vote)
8. **Miscellaneous** —
 - Accepted \$3,094.00 Fulton County Highway Contract for mowing county roads (5-0 vote)
 - Waived vital records fees for David Cummings to do historical genealogy work (5-0 vote)
 - Paid bills as presented for audit (5-0 vote); approved 4/13/22 meeting minutes (5-0 vote)

Announcements:

- ❖ **Bike Trails** — Congratulations to Jeremy Manning for the Town’s grant award for trail projects. Trails will open for riding on Sunday, May 15, 2022. A Bike Festival is planned for August 21.
- ❖ **Caroga Tourism** — The committee seeks new members to fill vacancies. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Council Member Barb DeLuca (bdeluca@caroga.town). The committee meets at Town Hall on the last Wednesday evening of each month.
- ❖ **Cleanup** — Thank you to Lynne Delesky and all volunteers who helped with town-wide cleanup.

Next Public Meetings:

Special Board Meeting

Friday, May 20, 2022 10:00 AM at Town Hall (in-person only)

Town Board Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, June 8, 2022 6:00 PM at Town Hall

To subscribe by email, contact James@JamesLong.com

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