

Caroga News Flash

Town Board Meeting Highlights

October 11, 2023 Monthly Meeting October 11 and 19, 2023 Budget Meetings

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The October 11 monthly Board meeting began at 6:22 PM and lasted 124 minutes. Twenty-six citizens participated at Town Hall, and 11 households participated via zoom. Budget sessions were also held on October 11 at 5:30 PM and October 19 at 5:00 PM with officials Scott Horton, Rick Sturgess, Don Travis, Barb DeLuca, and Jack Glenn.

Meetings featured town budget finances with debates about uses and misuses of municipal resources. Mr. Horton presented his plan to use town assets for private profit to build an inn on the Town Hall site. Notably, the *New York State Constitution*, Article VIII, § 1 regulates gifts or loans of public funds to private entities. This serves to protect against diverting municipal funds for private enterprises, but allows “payment by...towns...to charitable...institutions” for public purposes. Ironically, Mr. Horton cited this provision to announce, “Donations to a 501(c)(3) [i.e., Caroga Historical Museum, Nick Stoner Trailers, and Fish & Game Club] may not be legal...If so...then we will need to cut those items from the budget on November 8.” Public input is welcome about the Town’s 2024 budget decisions.

Resolutions / Local Laws:

1. November 8, 2023 5:00 PM Public Hearing for the Proposed Preliminary 2024 Budget —

The Board adopted the amended Tentative Budget as the Preliminary Budget (5-0 vote) and approved a budget hearing (10/11: 5-0 vote) and Local Law 2023-02 Tax Cap Override (10/19: 5-0 vote). [See page 2 summary.]

2. 2023 Budget Changes — Approved the following adjustments for the current year (5-0 vote)

From: A7180.11	Club House Manager	\$3,000.00	To: A7180.13	Club House P/S	\$3,000.00
From: A7145.1	Trails P/S	\$1,900.00	To: A7145.40	Trails C/E	\$1,900.00
From: A7180.41	Port-a-John	\$ 450.00	To: A7180.42	GC Merch	\$ 450.00
From: DA9060.8	Health Insurance	\$6,000.00	To: DA9050.8	Unemployment	\$6,000.00

3. Other Business —

- Four Board members overruled Supervisor Horton’s proposal to ignore reported irregularities with the Board of Assessment Review, and the Board agreed to meet with the Assessor during executive session on 11/8/2023.
- Set a public meeting for October 18, 2023 at 5:00PM to discuss planned 2024 ProcacciaCOR treatment of invasive Eurasian Water-Milfoil in East and West Caroga Lakes with Minerva Town Supervisor Steve McNally, Lake Luzerne Council Member Jim Niles, and Lake Manager Glenn Sullivan (5-0 vote)
- Approved Clerk Gilbert’s \$150.00 purchase of PolyCom Soundstation 2 communication system (5-0 vote)
- Set town-wide Halloween Trick-or-Treat for Tuesday 10/31/2023 from 5:00 to 7:00 PM (5-0 vote)
- Approved 9/13/2023 & 10/4/2023 (amended) minutes (5-0 vote); Approved bills presented for audit (5-0 vote)
- Approved 2024-2028 Fulton County contract for Transfer Station (10/19: 5-0 vote)
- Approved 2/1/2024 golf cart storage contract for \$1,150.00+heat/month at 1785 Highway 10 (10/19: 5-0 vote)
- Supervisor ended Witches+Warlock’s Ball support; Approved \$150.00 Trunk-or-Treat prizes (10/19: 5-0 vote)

4. Tabled Agenda Items —

The 10/11/2023 Agenda included resolutions to “call for a public hearing on November 8 at 6:05 PM to amend the Zoning Ordinance” and to “modify the building permit fee schedule to remove a permit for excavation”. The Board tabled these proposed resolutions for a zoning hearing and permit fee change. Public comments emphasized:

- Officials have not followed procedures mandated by the Town *Zoning Ordinance* and NYS *APA Act*.
- Proposed zoning amendments have not been publicly discussed nor voted on by the Planning Board.
- Removing excavation permits will adversely impact zoning enforcement and the *Comprehensive Plan*.

Planning Board Chair Al Kozakiewicz gave a presentation about zoning amendments at the October 11 meeting.

- He reviewed rules for shipping containers, docks, accessory dwelling units, and accessory structures.
- He noted the 11/30/2021 ZBA decision that “an accessory structure cannot be a principal building.”
- The *Town of Caroga Zoning Ordinance* and New York State Adirondack Park Agency Act § 802 both define “principal building” such that, “An accessory structure does not constitute a principal building.”

Upcoming Meetings and Events: <https://TownOfCaroga.com/calendar>

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Public Hearing for Comments on 2024 Preliminary Budget November 8, 2023 5:00 PM at Town Hall

Tax Rate (Per Thousand)	2020	2023	2024	1-Year Increase	4-Year Increase
General Townwide	\$1.00	\$1.10	\$1.25	13.6%	25.8%
Highway Townwide	\$4.07	\$5.19	\$5.19	0.0%	27.5%
Fire Contract	\$0.89	\$0.91	\$0.95	4.4%	6.7%
Fire Truck Purchase			\$0.52		
Total	\$5.96	\$7.20	\$7.91	9.9%	32.7%

Elected Officials' Annual Salaries (per Town Law § 108)	2023	2024	1-Year Increase
Town Board Council Members	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00	0%
Supervisor	\$15,450.00	\$18,000.00	16%
Town Justice	\$18,320.00	\$22,000.00	20%
Town Clerk/Tax Collector	\$39,300.00	\$48,000.00	22%
Superintendent of Highways	\$51,500.00	\$60,000.00	16%

On 10/11, Mr. Sturgess asked, "What's the golf course year-to-date sales?" Mr. Horton replied, "\$309,000.00. We budgeted \$285,000.00, up from \$135,000.00 four years ago." Neither mentioned how accounting is done for expenses. According to the 2024 Preliminary Budget, golf expenses totaled -\$395,249.00, resulting in a total 2023 net loss of -\$86,249.00.

Nick Stoner Municipal Golf Course Operating Revenues	2020	2023	2024
A2025 Golf Course (Memberships, Fees)	+\$135,000.00	+\$189,179.23	+\$200,000.00
A2025.1 Golf Course Rentals (Carts)		+\$ 61,710.01	+\$ 70,000.00
A2025.2 GC Merchandise		+\$ 19,816.61	+\$ 20,000.00
		[+\$ 38,294.15 ?]	
Annual Golf Operating Revenue	+\$135,00.00	+\$309,000.00	+\$290,00.00

Nick Stoner Municipal Golf Course Expenses	2020	2023	2024
A1620.42 Golf Course Building C/E	-\$ 12,500.00	-\$ 40,000.00	-\$ 40,000.00
A1670.41 Golf Course Printing C/E	-\$ 0.00	-\$ 2,000.00	-\$ 2,000.00
A1910.41 Golf Course Unallocated Insurance C/E	-\$ 2,000.00	-\$ 2,500.00	-\$ 2,750.00
A6410.41 Golf Course Publicity	-\$ 2,000.00	-\$ 3,000.00	-\$ 3,000.00
A7180.1 Total Personal Services	-\$100,000.00		
A7180.1 Golf Course Superintendent		-\$ 68,960.00	-\$ 68,960.00
A7180.11 Golf Course Manager		-\$ 38,000.00	-\$ 32,000.00
A7180.12 Golf Course Laborers		-\$ 60,000.00	-\$ 60,000.00
A7180.13 Golf Course Club House P/S		-\$ 20,000.00	-\$ 26,000.00
A7180.2 Equipment	-\$ 10,000.00	-\$ 15,000.00	-\$ 10,000.00
A7180.21 Golf Carts		-\$ 45,000.00	-\$ 30,000.00
A7180.4 Contractual Grounds	-\$ 25,000.00	-\$ 46,500.00	-\$ 44,000.00
A7180.41 Port-A-John	-\$ 1,040.00	-\$ 2,000.00	-\$ 2,000.00
A7180.42 Merchandise		-\$ 13,959.00	-\$ 15,000.00
A9040.81 Worker's Compensation-GC	-\$ 1,330.00	-\$ 1,330.00	-\$ 1,330.00
A9050.81 Golf Course Unemployment	-\$ 11,000.00	-\$ 11,000.00	-\$ 11,000.00
A9060.81 Golf Course Health Insurance	-\$ 20,000.00	-\$ 26,000.00	-\$ 26,000.00
A9950.93 GC Equipment Reserves			-\$ 35,000.00
A9950.94 CG Improvement Reserves			-\$ 10,000.00
Annual Golf Expenses	-\$184,870.00	-\$395,249.00	-\$419,040.00

Annual Net Loss	-\$ 49,870.00	-\$ 86,249.00	-\$ 129,040.00
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