

State of New York
County of Fulton
Town of Caroga

Minutes of a Caroga Town Board meeting held Friday April 1, 2022 at the municipal building 1840 State Highway #10 at 10:00 am with the following persons in attendance by roll call. The flag salute followed the roll being called.

Supervisor Scott Horton - Here
Council Member John Glenn – Here
Council Member Barbara Deluca - Absent
Council Member Richard Sturgess – Here
Council Member Donald Travis – Here

Also in attendance was Ralph Palcovic.

Supervisor Horton stated “we have a major project in front of us.” He noted you can only save the taxpayers money by looking at long term solutions not short-term fix. He will keep bringing numbers to the board. If there is success with grants long term, he knows it will be a big tax savings. He thinks it will be a minimum impact to the taxpayers. He has initial costs and has asked the board to meet to approve going after two grants. One is a member item with USDA from Congresswoman Stefanik’s office. The Supervisor has been in contact with her office. He would be asking for 2.2 million dollars.

The other is called The Northern Borders Regional Commission Funding. It is a federal grant program. The maximum we can ask for is \$350,000.00.

Council Member Glenn read to the board that the deadline is April 11th at 5pm. Supervisor Horton confirmed the short deadline but thinks we can do it, as indicated in the email he sent out to the board. The Supervisor has already begun to working on this but can only go so far without the board’s approval.

Supervisor Horton made the following motion to apply for the grant and if the board approved that he would like to hire a grant writer.

RESOLUTION #2022-057 to allow Supervisor Horton to apply for a member item grant from Elise Stefanik’s office most likely through USDA in the amount of 2.2 million dollars was offered by Supervisor Horton at the town board meeting held on April 1st, 2022.

WHEREAS, Supervisor Horton received information from the office of Congresswoman Elise Stefanik on grant money that was available, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to apply for a grant through the office of Congresswoman Elise Stefanik through the USDA in the amount of 2. 2 million dollars.

Seconded by Council Member Glenn

Discussion: Council Member Glenn asked what the impact to the taxpayer was. Supervisor Horton responded it is a grant not a loan. The Supervisor did not think there was any matching funds required. The grant is for the year 2023. The Town would not know until the end of this year. Supervisor Horton explained that in talking to grant writers they say projects are approved if they have a regional effect. Specifically, the recreational side. The Supervisor stated having a modest/modern clubhouse would improve play and attract golfers from Albany, Saratoga, Utica and Long Lake. Council Member Sturgess stated it is a no strings attached grant. Council Member Glenn wanted to get answers to questions he anticipates getting from the public. Supervisor Horton noted there is no match and no payback.

Adopted by the following vote; 4 Ayes, Horton, Glenn, Sturgess, Travis

Supervisor Horton stated the second grant through Northern Borders Regional Commission may require some matching funds but the project is so large that wouldn't be any problem. It would have a regional impact as stated with the other grant. Supervisor Horton stated there would be no impact on the taxpayers. He is asking for the maximum and see what we get.

RESOLUTION #2022-058 to allow Supervisor Horton to apply to Northern Borders Regional Commission Funding Grant in the amount of \$350,000.00 was offered by Supervisor Horton at the town board meeting held on April 1st, 2022.

WHEREAS, Supervisor Horton received information that grant money was available from the Northern Borders Regional Commission, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to apply for a grant from Northern Borders Regional Commission in the amount of \$350,000.00.

Seconded by Council Member Sturgess

Discussion: Council Member Glenn again expressed concern about the impact to the taxpayers. Supervisor Horton stated there was no payback to it. Council Member Sturgess referred to an email dated March 30th at 9:17 pm containing the figures for the project. He stated by applying for another grant it would bring the bond down to 3.45 million. Supervisor Horton noted the short deadlines and stated we were almost shovel ready. Supervisor Horton noted he hopes to be looking for other grants at the state and federal levels.

Adopted by the following vote; 4 Ayes, Horton, Glenn, Sturgess, Travis

Supervisor Horton stated he met with Nick Zabawsky of Orion Management Company one of the best grant writers around along with the Center for Regional Growth on Tuesday. He gave the town a proposal for services to help with the two grants. His fee is \$100 per hour, and he projected a cost of \$4,500.00 (capped). The clerk asked if there was money in the 2022 budget line item for grant writing. The Supervisor stated the cost would come out of contingency.

Council Member Sturgess went to school with someone who did grant writing for a few years. He wondered if the town could hire a grant writer to have on retainer. They would let the town know if there were monies available. Council Member Sturgess remembers reading in the newspaper about the millions of dollars Mr. Zabawsky got for Gloversville or Johnstown.

Council Member Glenn stated he called Mr. Zabawsky about grant information for a sewer system but he never returned his call.

Supervisor Horton stated the grant writer line in the budget is at zero.

Council Member Glenn suggested going forward having money in the grant writer line item. Council Member Sturgess agreed. He thought someone could spend 10 hours a month focusing on searching and then if there was a project the amount could be amended. Supervisor Horton noted we are just beginning the grant process. There are no interest and low interest loans to go after. Several board members were in favor of putting money in the grant writing line item. Council Member Glenn suggested transferring \$5,000.00.

The clerk asked Mr. Palcovic if while they were doing the firehouse project, they reached out to the community for help with grant writing. Perhaps someone has that expertise. Mr. Palcovic noted that once you engage in a state, local or federal grant it becomes a municipal project and prevailing wage would impact the project. They stayed away from federal grants. Mr. Palcovic and Council Member DeLuca were sent to school for this specialized skill set. The clerk asked if there was someone in the community that writes grants and we just don't know about them.

Supervisor Horton noted the project was too large to take risks. Mr. Palcovic stated there were other grant writers out there who may get paid less than \$100 an hour. Supervisor Horton noted some grant writers charge on a percentage basis, and some as a lump sum. But right now, Supervisor Horton did not have the time. Mr. Palcovic stated it is a specialized skill set. He also noted they are diverse. The Supervisor said he has been researching grant writers for a year.

RESOLUTION #2022-059 to hire Nicholas Zabawsky Grant Writer was offered by Supervisor Horton at the town board meeting held on April 1st, 2022.

WHEREAS, Supervisor Horton has researched grant writers for a year now, and

WHEREAS, Supervisor Horton gave copies of a contract for professional services by and between the Town of Caroga and Orion Management Company of Amsterdam NY, and

WHEREAS, the contract sets the scope of services, responsibility of the client, compensation and method of payment, and terms in the three-page documents on file in the town clerk's office, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to hire grant writer Nicholas Zabawsky of Orion Management Company for an approximate cost of \$4,000.00 with a fee capped at \$4,500.00 to prepare complete applications for funding under the Congressional Community Project Funding and Northern Borders Regional Commission programs per the terms of the contract.

Seconded by Council Member Glenn

Adopted by the following vote; 4 Ayes, Horton, Glenn, Sturgess, Travis

To finance this Supervisor Horton stated there was \$26,000.00 in the budget on the contingency line item. Council Member Sturgess suggested moving over \$9,500.00.

RESOLUTION #2022-060 to transfer funds was offered by Council Member Sturgess at the Caroga Town Board meeting held on April 1st, 2022.

WHEREAS, the board discussed the need to hire a grant writer which then necessitated the need to put money in the line item to pay a grant writer, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to make the following transfer:

From: Contingent A1990.4	\$9,500.00	
To: Grant Writing A1010.41		\$9,500.00

Seconded by Council Member Glenn

Adopted by the following vote; 4 Ayes, Horton, Glenn, Sturgess, Travis

Supervisor Horton noted that Joanne Young has asked to attend a town finance school. Each board member was given information on this. The Town of Oppenheim is willing to share the expenses. The Town of Caroga would pay the registration of \$200.00 (prior to May 1st) and Oppenheim would pick up the hotel and travel expenses.

RESOLUTION #2022-061 to authorize a \$200.00 training expense for the bookkeeper was offered by Supervisor Horton at the Caroga Town Board meeting held on April 1st, 2022.

WHEREAS, the bookkeeper Joanne Young asked Supervisor Horton about paying for an upcoming Town Finance School offered by the Association of Towns, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Caroga would pay the registration fee of \$200.00 and the Town of Oppenheim would pay for the \$114 per night room and travel expenses, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to authorize spending \$200.00 for a training expense for the bookkeeper.

Seconded by Council Member Glenn

Adopted by the following vote; 4 Ayes, Horton, Glenn, Sturgess, Travis

Supervisor Horton noted that the architect and the civil engineer did a site visit yesterday at the pit area where the potential salt shed will be relocated. They also looked a little more closely at the proposed site for the municipal project. He had hoped to have a proposal from Environmental Design Partners (EDP) out of Clifton Park for the board to look at today. Basically, the town would contract them directly. Council Member Sturgess and the Supervisor

told the Phinney Group the town did not have a lot of money and didn't want to use their services for this project. The Supervisor didn't have a lot of time but thought the board could easily get a bid specification for the salt shed, saving the architect fees.

One document the town needs is a feasibility study. Yesterday EDP made a sales call at no cost to the town so they could come up with a feasibility study. Things to be considered; is there enough room, the electromagnetic radiation and separation of distance between the cell tower and other buildings in case the tower falls. If the town wanted them to continue then they would do the engineering part of it. They would locate the septic and well and the electrical entrance.

Council Member Sturgess asked if the town could do an RFP yet. The Supervisor stated since EDP are already looking at the site for the salt shed he would have them look at the municipal project. The Supervisor thought they could be used for both projects. EDP will come back to the town with a proposal.

Supervisor Horton stated his neighbor Brian Drain is willing to do some preliminary electrical design gratis for the town. He will look at how to get power to the pit site. Mr. Palcovic noted that the Department of Environmental Conservation will tell the town where to put the pit. He noted that runoff and drainage will be examined. It was noted that there are wetlands at the bottom of the hill.

Community letters of support. Supervisor Horton stated when you go out for grants, they like to see letters of support. It is very important to have them. The Supervisor is thinking of asking some of the Associations, the Caroga Arts Collective, the fire company, the Nick Stoner Trailers, the Chamber of Commerce, and people involved in the bike trail to send letters of support. Council Member Travis stated he would bring this up at the next Fish and Game Club meeting. They will be needed by April 11th. Supervisor Horton was going to draw up some draft form letters.

Supervisor Horton thought there were only two properties the town would put up for sale, Fisher Road and the building lot on East Shore Road. He spoke to Clayton Sitterly and the town attorney about this. The attorney said the best way to handle the sale of property is you have to have a public hearing. He asked the board for their input on this. The Fisher Road property has not been used for a while. The Highway Superintendent told Supervisor Horton he didn't think there were any valuable minerals there. The Supervisor stated it would not make a good park. Council Member Sturgess asked when the last time it was logged off was. He also thought there was a lot of gravel and sand up there. This would cost the town a couple of weeks pay for some guys to go in and check the site out. Council Member Sturgess was in favor of logging it first for the money. He did not know how this was done. The clerk stated a forester would be hired to evaluate the land.

Supervisor Horton stated he was trying to find capital to offset this program. Council Member Sturgess stated he sees the bills each month and sees how much the town spends for sand. If we have it sitting there.... Supervisor Horton stated we either do it or we don't do it, right now we cannot assess the property. We have to either look at selling it or we say we don't want to sell it because there may be potential there. He can't put a dollar amount on it. Council Member

Sturgess noted a vacant lot recently sold on Hilley Road for less than \$2,000.00 an acre. Council Member Sturgess estimates that land in Caroga is worth \$1,100.00 an acre, so the town would get \$8,800.00 for that land. Council Member Sturgess wants to work on it. He wants to see how much money could be generated if the property were logged. The Supervisor did not have the time to do this. It was noted that the state can help with this process. The Clerk and Mr. Palcovic noted that Council Member Sturgess would need to contact a forester. The trees would be looked to see if there is a value there. If there is then the town would sign a contract for professional services. Council Member Travis noted one of the members at the Fish and Game Club is a forester. Mr. Palcovic thought maybe he would look at the property for free. Council Member Sturgess will look into this. He will bring back information at the next meeting.

The other property the town owns is on East Shore Road it is about 135' x 130' people use it for parking. The town does not own the beach. Council Member Glenn wants to put a pier out in front of the lot. Supervisor Horton asked if the board wanted to pursue looking at selling it. He stated it is convoluted as the town got it in a tax sale. Council Member Sturgess wondered what the property was worth. The clerk stated an appraiser has to be brought in. The Town has to give it to a realtor to sell so there is no impropriety with the sale. There are two properties behind the lot that may be landlocked if it were sold. The Supervisor stated you would have to give them access, but not a driveway. The clerk thought there was a right-of-way in the deed. Council Member Travis thought maybe the neighbors want to purchase it. Council Member Sturgess thought the land would be more valuable if a lot of people were interested in the lot. Several conversations were going on.

Council Member Glenn wanted public docking. He stated there was waterfront revitalization funds available. His dream is to have a public pier out there. There could be a gazebo at the end. Council Member Sturgess did not think selling the property was "worth a squeeze." He estimated both parcels would bring in about \$25,000.00 after realtor's fees etc. that is a hassle. He did not want to start the project Council Member Glenn was talking about right now. Maybe future boards would.

Supervisor Horton stated there is no consensus right now and the discussion was tabled. He has more to discuss with the board.

At this time Mr. Palcovic left the meeting.

Salt shed project this has to be done this year so the golf course can use the building for a maintenance shed. Insurance is going to stop paying the \$2,200.00 a month in November. This was to end this month but the Supervisor got it extended. A salt shed has to be built over at the pit. First a site plan has to be completed. This requires a survey and an engineer has to review it. The Supervisor estimates the cost of the shed to be about \$40,000.00. The site has to be evaluated. EDP will come back with two different proposals one for feasibility and then if it is feasible then they configure the building on the property.

Supervisor Horton first wanted to get the document showing the governor signed off on the alienation of the property. This project has to go to the planning board, the zoning is OK. The town needs to notify the Adirondack Park Agency about the two projects the salt shed and the

municipal build. The Supervisor did not think it would be jurisdictional to them as the projects are in the APA Hamlet designation.

Council Member Sturgess asked what the terms were on the cell tower property. Did the town sell the rights to the property? The clerk noted the town sold the rights a few years back. They have access rights. Council Member Sturgess asked how the town acquired the parcel. The clerk stated the property was donated to the town years ago for recreational use. When the town wanted to use the property for the cell tower and highway barn project the town had to go through the alienation process which took a year to get passed in the legislature, both the senate and the assembly. The governor then had to sign it. The file is in the clerk's office.

Supervisor Horton stated the town had a 99-year lease for \$10,000.00 a year but another board took a buy out for \$50,000.00 or so.

At 11:05 Jeremy Manning entered the meeting. (He was here for a dump permit)

Supervisor Horton held a meeting with the code officers and the assessor. He is trying to get better communications there.

The Supervisor noted meetings like this will be needed to keep things moving. Supervisor Horton noted the Phinney Group should have a site plan soon. They are tweaking the plan now. There should be a presentation at the next board meeting by the Phinney Group. The Supervisor wants to get people excited about the project. He would like to put the plan up in the Post Office for all to see. The numbers are being funneled down. We have to see what happens with these grants.

Supervisor Horton stated as projects go the town barn project is not that expensive. The current structure can't be modified to work better. That project may be in the 1 million to \$800,000.00 range.

Mr. Manning leaves.

Supervisor Horton stated when that gets cleaned up, he thought the amount of pride that comes from this town is going to be amazing. People will say this should have been done a long time ago. He thinks this will bring credibility to the board's decision making the last couple of years. The Highway barn needs to be moved for parking, it is an eyesore and we can't build around it.

At 11:10 Council Member Glenn made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council Member Sturgess. All Board members were in favor of the motion.

Submitted by,

Linda Gilbert, RMC, CMC
Caroga Town Clerk

