

State of New York
County of Fulton
Town of Caroga

Minutes of the Caroga Town Board work session held Wednesday April 3, 2024 at the municipal building located at 1840 State Highway #10 at 6:30 pm with the following persons in attendance by roll call. The flag salute followed.

Supervisor Ralph J. Palcovic - Here
Council Member John Glenn – Absent
Council Member Barbara DeLuca – Here
Council Member Richard Sturgess – Here
Council Member Matthew Cooper – Here

Also in attendance were Steve Stedman -greenskeeper, and seven members of the public.

Council Member Glenn was listening in on the meeting from Vermont.

Supervisor Palcovic noted there were three (hand drawn) drawings in front of the council members. One was the highway garage, the other two were of the pro shop area.

The supervisor stated that the Highway Superintendent stated that the existing print/designs of the proposed highway garage is inadequate – it is too small. Mr. Voght, Supervisor Palcovic and Council Member Cooper met recently with the architect to come up with a new preliminary drawing of the highway garage. The drawing showed a structure 153' by 60', the previous design was 140' x 40'. The drawing shows 5 full bays. The bay to the right is a wash bay. The only open sided bay is for the garbage truck. The smaller trucks will be garaged on the left side. The back of the building has offices and maintenance area will be taller. The shed roof will be 24' on the low side to the back. The previous design cost was estimated at \$800,000.00 with a 20% contingency. Costs have increased since then and square footage has been added. This will probably hit the 1million dollar number.

Council Member Sturgess noted this does not include septic, power, or access to a well.

The Supervisor stated some of the civil engineering still needs to be done. The wetlands boundary has not been determined. Supervisor Palcovic believes there is a contract for \$4,000.00 to design the electrical. Phinney was not aware of this and will research this. If the money has not been utilized Council Member Sturgess and the Supervisor were in favor of bidding out the electrical design. It would be for a 400 amp - 3 phase for the compressor and welder.

Council Member Cooper noted the building will not house the tractor, excavator, and loaders. He suggested building to have expansion room.

The power from the road will be underground. The roadway improvements can be done in house. The Supervisor has talked to Mr. Voght about cutting some trees and reinforcing the subbase so it is two vehicles wide. On a side bar it was noted by the supervisor that we have

been paying almost \$900.00 a month (times two) for temporary lighting through the winter. They are gone now.

The new drawing was shown to Phinney and they were going to come up with a number for the cost per square foot. This will be a pre-engineered building. They have not heard back from Phinney in two weeks.

Council Member Sturges was concerned about the ¼ million not accounted for here, electrical, septic, oil water separator. Where will that money come from. The Supervisor stated it could come out of savings per the bookkeeper and former supervisor.

Council Member Sturgess noted the fuel tanks have to be moved this is not in the design. The Supervisor stated the gas could stay where it is. Permits will have to be obtained it was noted.

Council Member Cooper stated we have to find out the cost to put a shovel in the ground. He noted the need to have a survey to plot the building on the land.

Council Member Sturgess asked about having a project manager/clerk of the works. This will be an added cost. The Supervisor noted the first need is to get a print back from Phinney and an estimated cost. He wants to see a civil engineering print. Environmental Design Partnership are not under contract with the town but are under contract with Phinney. They did not return Supervisor Palcovic's calls.

Council Member DeLuca stated we have spent over \$144,000.00 on plans. They were not all for the highway. Everything is billed all together as one big project. Supervisor Palcovic stated resolution 2022-170 is for Phinney to design electrical service for garage -\$4,000.00, resolution 2022-049 professional services up to \$175,000.00. There is also resolution 2021-072. We have paid Phinney from 1/1/2020 to 12/23/23 - \$115,907.00. Council member Sturgess noted a lot of that was paid for by the insurance company. He did not know the breakdown for the garage. That is the only thing we have received.

Council Member DeLuca asked if what they are doing now is included in the money, we have already paid them. Probably not was the response from several board members. A board member thought Phinney could give the town a break out.

Supervisor Palcovic suggested a resolution at the meeting next week to authorize a redesign of the highway garage, or is there an alternative?

Council Member Sturgess noted we are paying them thousands of dollars to take a design we've sketched out and put it on big piece of paper. He asked if it would have the concrete on it. We will get the sub surface, test analysis on the land.... Should we get a price for everything? Supervisor Palcovic asked if we were going to another engineering firm. He noted we are under contract with them. We will need go to bid documents.

Council Member DeLuca noted with the fire house project every week it was something else, more money, more money, more money. That is the way this works even when you think you have everything planned out.

Supervisor Palcovic thought we would do the septic ourself with the help of civil engineering plans. Council Member Sturgess thought we could handle the power side of it. Council Member Cooper noted National Grid would have to be involved. The clerk noted NG has a planner.

Supervisor Palcovic noted the fire house did a design build contract. They got all of the subcontractors.

We are waiting on Phinney before anymore decisions can be made.

At 6:55 pm two members of the Planning Board leave this meeting for the Planning Board meeting across the hall.

It was asked how much has Phinney billed the town for. The bookkeeper should have that information and it might be separated out. The Supervisor did not think it was broken down. He noted the town was charged \$59.00 to change the contact's name from the former supervisor to the current supervisor. Supervisor Palcovic will check to see where the print is and what the town is under contract, residual monies we may be under contract for. The board members agreed.

Golf Course - Mr. Stedman created a drawing of the clubhouse building. The size is 48' x 60' without the lean-to for golf cart storage. Supervisor Palcovic noted if we go with a modular structure that is as big as we can go. A reason to do that is that prevailing wage would not have to be paid. It would be done as a manufactured home.

Council Member Sturgess wanted to talk about the time and money that has been spent on designing a building for use by the golf course and as a town hall. He understands the project never got to the point where things could have been toned down. He stated nothing was talked about for two years, it was put on hold, nothing was done. Just a conceptual drawing was given to us. Every item on the agenda tonight talk to each other in a major, major way. He thought the board was being extremely short sighted right now not taking into consideration a town hall building. He noted the constant repairs going into the town hall building is absurd. Council Member Sturgess was in favor of still putting a full basement under the club house that is adequate to handle town hall. If a basement is put in at least, we have something to start with. It might be a longer-term project. If a new roof is needed on the current town hall for \$300,000.00, when do you say enough is enough? He noted the project got out of sight. The former Supervisor answered a member of the public that the cost for the dual structure was 10 million. That would have included the highway garage and money from insurance that could have been backed out. The number scared people. We never had numbers strictly on just the drawing they gave us. We never worked on getting the price per square foot reduced. Parts of the project like the banquet room could have been put on hold for when the golf course had a good year.

Council Member DeLuca stated that building was beyond the needs of what we needed, above and beyond. Supervisor Palcovic stated the dollars were not there. He stated we have a million dollars left in the golf course club house fund. Out of 3 million. Council Member Sturgess stated plus the \$666,000.00 for in compliance... Supervisor Palcovic stated we have a million in hand. The Supervisor stated that is anticipated money, but not money in the bank.

It was stated we don't have a timeline from the insurance company to get the remaining money.

Supervisor Palcovic stated something that wasn't considered on that site was the gasoline spill from years ago. It could still be a potential problem. This has been confirmed with Warrensburg. 100% remediation was never done. Council Member Sturgess though we should remediate the area. Supervisor Palcovic couldn't anticipate how much it would cost. He stated we know the footprint of the previously existing golf course building is free and clear but the area around the highway garage could be a question. He noted the town had to purchase the property across the street and stated several sample wells were drilled.

Council Member DeLuca knows a huge amount of time was spent on the previous design of the golf course building. She didn't believe we need a building that big. It was stated the total square footage of the building up and down was 17,000 sq ft. The proposed club house is 48' x 60' or 2,800 sq ft. That does not include having carts under a lean-to. The lean-to area is 40' x 35'. The square footage is 4240 with the golf cart shed area.

Mr. Livingston asked if a major cleanup was ever done. Supervisor Palcovic stated a subsurface aeration was done.

Council Member DeLuca asked Mr. Stedman if this is something he could live with. He stated he is not an architect or designer he just put it on paper. He put the entrance to the pro shop is to the right, as are the bathrooms. Then you go out to the carts on the right-hand side. The 18th green is on the upper left-hand corner of the drawing. You want to be able to see people coming off the course.

Council Member Sturgess thought it would have been nice to have all town buildings energy efficient.

Council Member DeLuca noted the highway superintendent was asked to come up with a plan to replace trucks. Council Member DeLuca compared and thought that if there was a plan set up to replace buildings – over 5 or 10 years it would have been more efficient than just grouping the plan all together.

Council Member Sturgess noted the major issue at the site of the previous golf course building was parking. He wanted to have a professional to design the area to solve this problem. Supervisor Palcovic noted the old cart storage building will be paved over on the back side. He understands the parking problem. Council Member Sturgess noted the safety issue with cars crossing Irving Pond Road. Supervisor Palcovic agreed an engineer is needed to design the area. We will have to go out to bid on this. The Supervisor stated the old highway garage, with some retro fitting, will turn into a maintenance shop. Cosmetically it will be revamped.

Council Member Glenn wanted something brought up about the legal part but was told he could not participate in the discussion.

Council Member Sturgess thought there were so many problems associated with the old structure. The question now should be irrelevant. He asked if this board was going to continue

this project with the inclusion of town hall into it or not adding town hall into it. If it is a no, he wanted to know the path of least resistance to start the process of the town hall project. Council Member Sturgess noted years ago when Supervisor Palcovic was a council member the board at that time determined a new town hall building was needed. Supervisor Palcovic has all of the engineering papers, and a design from CT Male for a new town hall. He noted the need to have a grant writer. We need a place to put a new town hall. In the past a building was built for the utilities but consideration was not made for now having a new clinic on the site.

Council Member Cooper stated the project needs to be looked at in pieces, and time phased. We know we have to do something with the highway department it was voted on. We know we have money out there and we need to do something with the golf course. There is grant money out there to do something with the town hall. No one is saying we don't want to do anything with the town hall. One thing at a time the supervisor interjected. Council Member Cooper stated things have to be done in reasonable chunks that we can digest and show forward progress.

Council Member Sturgess noted the savings that the Phinney Group stated we would save by combining the two projects is astronomical – it was like 1.5 million vs building two separate structures. We should take the time now to save ourselves money in the future. Council Member Cooper noted that is why we are having a work session. It wasn't sold to the public. The public voted down the money to be spent on the shop. Council Member Sturgess stated the public didn't vote on the combined golf course/town hall building. Explain the potential savings, look into it. That is the direction we were going in.

Council Member DeLuca noted we do not have the money to do the town hall now. We have the money for the highway garage, the public voted for it. We have the money for the golf course building. That's what we have right now. She asked Council Member Sturgess if he thought we shouldn't build the golf course and wait until we have another couple million and then do it at the same time. It has been said tomorrow the price goes up. Council Member Sturgess thought the public should be asked what they want. He thought the project could be scaled down to the minimum needed for town hall and golf course building and ask the public if we should bond the money to do the project.

Council Member DeLuca thought we should do what we have to do right now. We can't handle all these projects at the same time. She was sympathetic to Council Member Sturgess for all the time he has spent on this. All we did for years was talk. Council Member Sturgess thought this was extremely short sighted. He is looking to the long-term future of Caroga.

Council Member DeLuca was in favor of looking for grants to pay for a new town hall.

Council Member Sturgess wanted to know an actual number from the insurance company on when the code compliance part of the policy is done. Supervisor Palcovic will go down and see the insurance agent in person. Council Member Sturgess thought there was \$500,000.00 and another \$144,000.00 to use on the old highway garage to make the R value compliance should be able to come out of this amount. He wanted something in writing on when the funds expire.

Supervisor Palcovic again noted there is a million dollars in the golf course account. Council Member Sturgess thought there was more. He wanted to know the cost per sq. ft for the town hall.

Supervisor Palcovic will find out if there are inflationary clauses and about the code compliance monies.

Council Member DeLuca discussed using the old highway barn for use by the golf course instead of renting the old fire house for over a thousand dollars a month and it doesn't involve digging holes. The parking situation can be resolved. The Supervisor stated the architect didn't know about the spill in a certain area. The voters turned down revitalizing the pole barn. Council Member Sturgess stated the voters turned down bonding it. That didn't mean we couldn't do it.

Supervisor Palcovic and Council Members DeLuca and Sturgess could not justify moving it 20 feet. That was for parking. That is Council Member Sturgess's concern. The parking doesn't need to be so big if town hall is not located there.

Council Member Sturgess wanted to see a professional drawing of the existing structures and the parking flow and golf course flow vs the public. In relationship to a new golf course building have a site plan.

Supervisor Palcovic gave background on the last bond issue for town hall. There were multiple public hearings, a mailing went out, and the bond was for \$999,000.00, and it still failed. Now the cost of the building could be 2 million. This is why Council Member Sturgess keeps going back to combining the projects, because of the cost savings. One roof, one heating system.

Council Member Cooper reiterated we have to find out the remaining amount of insurance money and then figure out what our next step is after that. He stated the club house is a stand-alone project. The golf course and the highway garage are independent projects. Council Member Cooper asked what is the next step with the golf course. The board has to come together on what the next step will be. Council Member Sturgess stated the board is going to have to vote him out of it. Council Member Sturgess is still going to keep going down the road of a combined town hall and golf building until the board says the projects will not be combined. He wants the board to vote on this. Council Member Cooper stated he was in favor of a combined structure but it comes down to the money.

Supervisor Palcovic reiterated the ground contamination issue. If a hole is drilled and it comes back positive for hydro carbons... would lead to unforeseen costs. NYS would require a plan. He has this in writing.

This discussion will continue at the April Board meeting.

Expansion of the drug testing program. Supervisor Palcovic noted it would be for persons whose safety depends on being sober. Currently only the DOT Highway personnel are being tested. Other considerations are the divers, and the golf course equipment operators and any others that would operate any other town equipment.

Council Member Sturgess is opposed to this. Council Member Cooper has thought about this and has talked to his customers on how they handle things. Anytime there was an incident – with a driver they were tested. There is nothing saying the town can't do that if there is an incident. Supervisor Palcovic stated as long as everyone knows it is a condition of employment.

Council Member Sturgess suggested passing a resolution whereby in the event of an incident.... Council Member Cooper and the Supervisor note you need a policy. Only safety sensitive employees would be involved. Employees who drive town equipment.

It is understood that cannabis is legal. The board reviewed information from the town clerk provided by St. Mary's Employee Assistance Program and ENERGETIX the drug testing coordinator.

The clerk explained there is a random quarterly pool of non-DOT employees. If there is a positive test the employee is referred to counseling at St. Mary's no one is fired or loses their job. No one knows about it.

Supervisor Palcovic noted there was a problem twice at the school because there wasn't a policy in place.

Council Member DeLuca noted with most of the drugs listed you are not supposed to be operating heavy equipment. She is a licensed medical professional. The clerk stated the person may have a prescription for one of these medications.

Council Member DeLuca and Council Member Sturgess were in favor of a policy if there was an incident. In the event that someone gets hurt.

The board will continue to think on this for the next meeting.

The clerk noted that Council Member Sturgess commented on the condition of the front entrance door to town hall. The clerk noted it is a Brazilian wood. Special oil is needed to revitalize it. One board member wanted to paint the door. The clerk noted the thermostats need maintenance. The elections inspectors sat in a room at 62 degrees from 6 am – 9 pm. The maintenance man will be contacted.

Council Member Cooper asked if there was going to be open discussion as listed on the agenda. No was the answer.

At 7:50 pm Supervisor Palcovic made a motion to adjourn, Council Member DeLuca seconded the motion. All board members were in favor of the motion. Palcovic, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

Submitted by Linda Gilbert, Caroga Town Clerk