



MINUTES
TOWN BOARD
TOWN OF OSSINING
APRIL 14, 2020
REGULAR MEETING
7:30 P.M.

THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING ONLY

Pursuant to Governor's Executive Order 202.1 dated March 12, 2020

Members of the public can view the meeting via computer or mobile app:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/410507577>

Members of the public can listen to the meeting by dialing in via phone:

+1 929 205 6099

Meeting ID: 410 507 577

****Please note that by dialing in, your phone number will be visible to the host, participants, and attendees of the meeting.****

SUPERVISOR

Dana A. Levenberg

COUNCILMEMBERS

Elizabeth R. Feldman Gregory G. Meyer
Jackie G. Shaw Northern Wilcher, Jr.

I. CALL TO ORDER-PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE-ROLL CALL

The Regular Meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Ossining was held on April 14, 2020 via video conference, pursuant to Governor's Executive Order 202.1 dated March 12, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Supervisor Dana A. Levenberg. Members of the Board present were: Councilmembers Jackie G. Shaw, Elizabeth R. Feldman, Gregory G. Meyer, and Northern Wilcher Jr. Also present were Town Counsel Christie Tomm-Addona, Budget Officer Victoria Cafarelli, and Town Clerk Susanne Donnelly.

Supervisor Levenberg said the following: Before we continue with our roll call and the start of our meeting, I would like to ask everyone to pause for a moment of silence for those in our community that have tragically lost their lives to the Coronavirus. This past week, we have seen hundreds of New Yorkers per day lose their battle against the Coronavirus, and we know some of those deaths have been in our own Ossining community. We think constantly of the families of those that have passed, and how difficult it is at this time to lose a loved one when we are not able to mourn together with families and friends. In particular, we have lost four family members of those very close to our Town Board: Highway Superintendent Pete Connolly's father in law, Sam Ferri, OVAC Chief Nick Franzoso's father in law, John Duffy, Assessor's Office aide Sharon Palaia's grandmother, Agnes Eliassen, and Village of Ossining Deputy Mayor Rika Levin's father, Benjamin Levin. Please join me in a moment of silence for those we have lost. We have lowered Town flags to half-staff at the direction of the State and County in memory of those lost to this terrible scourge.

II. PUBLIC HEARING

- 2020 Cabaret License for Club Fit

Supervisor Levenberg said the following: We had adjourned this public hearing at our last legislative session until tonight's meeting, and it is clear that we will

not be able to resume our in-person meetings any time soon, nor will Club Fit be able to open and operate as normal any time soon. So, we will be adjourning this public hearing once more, and will re-notice at a future date.

Councilmember Wilcher moved and it was seconded by Councilmember Feldman to adjourn the public hearing to a future date.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Supervisor Levenberg made the following announcements:

I know everyone wants to hear about how our Town has been addressing Coronavirus and what we have been doing to help. But, before I begin, I need to make everyone aware of the importance of filling out the US Census. The Census should have sent three mailings to you to encourage everyone to respond online or by phone. The fourth and final mailing is going out now and should be received in mailboxes this week or early next week and gives people an opportunity to respond in writing by mail with a paper survey provided. You can, of course, still respond online, but if that is daunting, there are other options. We have a lot of our neighbors with a very high response rate and we need to step up our game to show we are a community that also understands how important it is to get our number 100% correct. Ensuring an accurate count is more important than ever right now, did you know that the Census responses are invaluable in planning for and responding to crises like the Coronavirus pandemic? The Census bureau produces timely local data that are critical to emergency planning, preparedness, and recovery efforts for all types of emergencies. Data on businesses assist in measuring the economic impact of disasters, and statistics from the American Community Survey can help identify vulnerable populations like the elderly. Learn more on the census website – www.census.gov. Town of Ossining's response rate is good – I would say OKAY-- but not great, so check your mail for your unique code to respond today. Let's catch up to some of our neighbors who have already surpassed 60% response rate, like Croton and Briarcliff and New Castle! Get those responses in! I promise it is painless, it only takes about 10 minutes to complete.

Now onto our current reality:

I would like to thank the Ossining community for their patience and understanding as we all shift to our new normal. Although our offices remain closed to the public, we have been able to continue to provide nearly all of our usual services to the public, with the exception of the Justice Court which has been closed by the State through the beginning of May. I am so proud of our dedicated staff for all they have done to make this transition as seamless as possible, by working just as hard – if not harder – from home, coming up with creative solutions to offer remote services, answering office phone calls on their cell phones, and so much more that goes on behind the scenes. We also have many of our essential staff members continuing to work on the front lines, serving our seniors with daily meals, working to ensure our roadways and sewer infrastructure remain operational, even in a storm like yesterday's, overseeing essential construction of affordable housing, maintaining our parks and public spaces, and most importantly regularly disinfecting all of our workspaces that are in use at this time.

I know two of our departments are coming up against a few important deadlines – the Town/County taxes on April 30 and deadlines for filing tax exemptions on May 1, with mailings going out regarding the town-wide revaluation next week. My fellow Town Supervisors and I have been working closely with the County Executive and Board of Legislators to develop a relief program for those that may be experiencing hardships that will make it difficult for them to pay their Town and County taxes on time. I will be discussing this in more detail with the Board in our Work Session, but please do know we feel the legislative solution will indeed be very helpful.

I would also like to share this message from our Assessor Fernando Gonzalez. The Preliminary 2020 Assessment Change Notices will be in the mail Wednesday, April 22. Please review your value and compare it to recent sales of similar homes in your neighborhood. If you do not agree with your value, the package you will receive in the mail in the coming days will include information and instructions to have an Informal Review with a Tyler representative via telephone or e-mail. We encourage you to call or go online to set up an appointment as soon as possible, Informal hearings will be conducted until May 12. The deadline for exemptions is still May 1. Please submit your signed exemption application or renewals even if you have not yet completed or filed your 2019 Tax Returns. If you have any questions, please give our Assessor's office a call at (914) 762-8274, they are happy to help in any way they can!

Our Highway Department really stepped it up yesterday to respond to the damage caused by the high winds and rain we experienced yesterday. Office Assistant Fern Quezada took in almost 70 calls yesterday! As of this morning, we had 107 customers without power in the Town, mostly due to a tree down on wires on Croton Dam Road. Con Ed has been working around the clock to get power restored, hopefully by this evening. I also learned that Con Ed held a dry ice distribution this afternoon to help those that lost power. If power is not restored and they continue to provide this assistance, I will be sure to share via Facebook again.

Another important new development from the State that impacts our Town departments has been the decision to allow all New Yorkers to vote by mail in the upcoming primaries in June. Since we have our Town Clerk Sue Donnelly who serves as our liaison to the Board of Elections with us tonight, Sue do you want to give us an update on that and how people can obtain an absentee ballot in advance of the election?

Town Clerk Donnelly stated that as off right now people can apply for an absentee ballot.

As of today, the number of people testing positive in the Town of Ossining are 76, 493 in the Village of Ossining, and 50 in the Village of Briarcliff. Although we have begun to see some positive numbers across Westchester in terms of the number of hospitalizations and recovered individuals, the high numbers in our own community remind us that it is as important as ever to remain vigilant in our efforts to slow the spread of the virus by remaining home as much as possible and exercising social distancing and wearing masks if you need to go out for essential needs. We owe it to our entire community to take these necessary steps to ultimately reduce the number of positive cases and prevent deaths from this serious illness.

I have been encouraged by the volunteerism throughout the Ossining community and beyond – those that have been helping to put food on tables, educate our children, make masks, donate food to healthcare workers and EMTs, and so much more. The Gullotta House has been offering free meals every Friday afternoon from 4pm to 6pm at the Stop and Shop Parking Lot in Ossining. The Village of Ossining continues to partner with Feeding Westchester to offer weekly food distributions on Tuesdays. The specific locations and times have changed, so please check in weekly for specific instructions. There has also been good news out of our State and Federal government, with much needed assistance on its way via unemployment benefits, loans for small businesses, extensions on utility payments, assistance with mortgage payments, and moratoriums on evictions. These much needed relief programs will hopefully provide piece of mind for those experiencing hardships right now, and I would encourage those that can support these efforts to please do so – your neighbors are counting on you.

We have been regularly sharing updates on these fronts via our e-mail blasts so I strongly encourage you to sign up for our Friday Supervisor's Updates and

regular updates from some of our departments, including the Receiver of Taxes. Just go to www.townofossining.com/cms/contacts/email-signup to make sure you are on our lists. You can also sign up for direct updates from New York State at now.ny.gov/page/s/coronavirus-updates. We also have a dedicated page on our Town website where you can find up to date information about Town services and helpful links, at www.townofossining.com/cms/coronavirus-disease. We also continue to post to our Facebook and Instagram pages, so please follow us “The Town of Ossining, New York” and @townofossining. I held a Facebook Live Q&A last week and plan to do so again soon – follow us so you don’t miss a beat!

There are many local businesses that continue to offer virtual services during this time and we have featured many of them on our website. Besides ordering from local eateries, and we have been limiting this because we are all watching our own wallet, I also ordered some much needed cleansing products from Bella Maiya Day Spa. I know Klara was also offering Easter baskets and is now thinking ahead to Mother’s Day, as is Wonderous Things, who will take you on a virtual shopping tour in their store, and Dunkin Kehn is still offering natural beauty products online since they closed their brick and mortar location in Briarcliff. Please do take some time to check out our local offerings – the list of small businesses that need your support is much longer than this sampling I provided tonight!

The Ossining PTA and Ossining Schools have launched a Virtual Learning Academy with fun classes prerecorded and available on YouTube – I think I want to try out the Cardio Drumming Fitness Class! For more information and class links, send an e-mail to OssiningPTACouncil@gmail.com or mmastrogiacono@ossiningufsd.org.

The Ossining Public Library has been doing an amazing job at providing the community with a variety of online resources to help with remote learning, book recommendations, or exploring the world outside your doors, from the comfort and safety of your house. Check out their website www.ossininglibrary.org or follow them on Facebook and Instagram - @ossiningpubliclibrary.

Councilwoman Feldman gave a shout out to Nick Franzoso and OVAC for disinfecting Ossining’s and other local towns’ ambulances, police cars, and fire trucks.

IV. LIASON REPORT

Councilwoman Feldman asked the public to please not set their leaf piles on fire.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

VI. BOARD RESOLUTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes—Regular Meeting – March 10, 2020

Councilmember Shaw moved and it was seconded by Councilmember Wilcher that the following resolution be approved.

Resolved, that the Town Board of the Town of Ossining hereby approves the March 10, 2020 minutes of the Regular Meeting as presented.

Motion: Carried

B. Approval of Minutes—Special Meeting – March 16, 2020

Councilmember Wilcher moved and it was seconded by Councilmember Shaw that the following resolution be approved.

Resolved, that the Town Board of the Town of Ossining hereby approves the March 16, 2020 minutes of the Special Meeting as presented.

Motion: Carried
Abstain: Wilcher

C. Approval of Minutes—Regular Meeting – March 24, 2020

Councilmember Feldman moved and it was seconded by Councilmember Shaw that the following resolution be approved.

Resolved, that the Town Board of the Town of Ossining hereby approves the March 24, 2020 minutes of the Regular Meeting as presented.

Motion: Carried

D. Approval of Voucher Detail Report – April 14, 2020

Councilmember Feldman moved and it was seconded by Councilmember Shaw that the following resolution be approved.

Resolved, that the Town Board of the Town of Ossining hereby approves the Voucher Detail Report dated April 14, 2020 in the amount of \$384,339.59.

Supervisor Levenberg said the following in regard to the resolution: Thanks again to all of our departments for pulling together another check run to ensure our vendors get paid on their usual schedule – this is certainly more of a challenge when we are not all in the same place like normal, but our dedicated team is amazing!

Motion: Carried

E. Resolution Declaring Vehicle as Surplus and Authorizing Disposal

Councilmember Feldman moved and it was seconded by Councilmember Wilcher that the following resolution be approved.

Resolved that the Town of Ossining hereby declares the following vehicles as surplus equipment and authorizes disposal in accordance with New York State law by sale or otherwise “as is”:

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT:

#73 2001 JEEP CHEROKEE VIN# 1J4FF48S21L601376
#54 2005 INTERNATIONAL VIN#1HTWEA2R85T046733
GENERATOR YELLOW TRAILER KOHLER 150R0Z28 SER# 173989
GENERATOR BLUE KOHLER VH4D TRAILER 4829749
GENERATOR IDE INTERNATIONAL 75-1D414 SER#78811

CEMETERY:

1997 FORD F350 DUMP WITH PLOW VIN#1FDKF3868VEC75826

SENIOR CENTER:

#7 2005 CHEVY ASTRO VAN VIN# 1GMEL19XX5B123911
#4 2015 FORD TRANSIT PARTS ONLY VIN# NM0GS9E76F1223551

Supervisor Levenberg said the following in regard to the resolution: Every year, we inventory equipment that has outlived its useful life for the Town’s needs, declare these items as surplus, and sell them at an online auction. Thank you to Highway Superintendent Pete Connolly, Lead Mechanic Gary

Cecere, and Fern Quezada for regularly monitoring our fleet and facilitating this annual auction.

Motion: Carried

F. Title III-C/NSIP: Nutrition Services Contract, PY 2020

Councilmember Shaw moved and it was seconded by Councilmember Feldman that the following resolution be approved.

Resolved, that the Town Board of the Town of Ossining authorizes the Supervisor to sign an agreement with Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services for the purposes of receiving grant funds for the Senior Nutrition Program for the program period January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020 for the III-C Programs and October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020 for NSIP (Nutrition Services Incentives Program), with the following grant and match amounts:

PROGRAM	FEDERAL FUNDS	CONTRACTOR MATCH
III-C-1	\$49,038	\$16,346
Estimated III-C1 NSIP	\$11,642	N/A
III-C-2	\$20,041	\$6,681
Estimated III-C2 NSIP	\$8,474	N/A

Supervisor Levenberg said the following in regard to the resolution: This resolution approves our annual program contract for our Senior Nutrition Program, including additional grant funds for this current program year. Thank you to Site Director Kathy Asaro and her staff for working hard to keep our seniors fed, safely in their homes, by delivering meals to them, especially during this difficult time.

Motion: Carried

VII. CORRESPONDENCE TO BE RECEIVED AND FILED

VIII. MONTHLY REPORTS

Councilmember Feldman moved and it was seconded by Councilmember Shaw that the following resolution be approved.

Resolved, that the Town Board of the Town of Ossining hereby accepts the following monthly reports for the month of March 2020:

- Town Building Department
- Tax Receiver’s Office
- Town Clerk’s Office
- Town Supervisor’s Office
- GE Helicopter
- Dale Cemetery

Motion: Carried

IX. VISITOR RECOGNITION

Visitors shall be accorded one (1) four (4) minute opportunity to speak

Mindy Lamar asked what cost saving measures the Town is implementing during the COVID-19 crisis. She also asked for clarification on whether or not the state has the final word on extending the deadline for property taxes and penalties on late property tax payments.

X. WORK SESSION

At 8:07 PM, Councilmember Shaw motioned to adjourn into Work Session and Councilmember Feldman seconded.

- **Discussion of Proposed Property Tax Relief Legislation from Westchester County Board of Legislators**

XI. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:41 P.M., Councilmember Feldman motioned to adjourn to Executive Session for advice of counsel, personnel, and contracts and Councilmember Shaw seconded.

Motion Carried: Unanimously

At 9:29 P.M., Councilmember Wilcher motioned to return to the Regular Meeting and Councilmember Feldman seconded.

Motion Carried: Unanimously

At 9:29 P.M., Councilmember Wilcher motioned to adjourn the Regular Meeting and Councilmember Feldman seconded.

Motion Carried: Unanimously

Approved:



Susanne Donnelly, Town Clerk