

State of New York
County of Fulton
Town of Caroga

Minutes of the Caroga Town Board regular monthly meeting held Wednesday May 8, 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 – Here
Council Member Barbara DeLuca – Here
Council Member Richard Sturgess – Here
Council Member Matthew Cooper – Here

The zoom portion of the meeting was facilitated by Zack Vosburgh. Departments represented were Larry Voght – Highway Superintendent, Jeremy Manning – Bike Trail, Mike Kunath – (Black Fly) BTI, Walter Hogan – Lakes Management, also in attendance were John Livingston – BAR Member, John Byrnes- Zoning Board of Appeals Member, and Adam Ferrari – Golf Clubhouse. Scott Horton & Deborah Correll were also in attendance. There were six members of the public in attendance. There were 19 attendees online using zoom at the highest participation point.

At 6:30 pm Supervisor Palcovic opened the public hearing on the New York State Restore New York Grant Project at 2144 St. Highway 10 Caroga Lake.

Scott Horton explained that the purpose of the Restore New York Grant was established about eight years ago for the sole purpose of revitalizing urban centers, rural areas, disadvantaged communities and stabilizing neighborhoods. This is parallel to the \$10 million grants that both Gloversville and Little Falls received last year to revitalize their downtown. These grant funds are only available to private property owners. Municipalities and not-for-profits are excluded from applying for the grant. Between the grant funds and the owners' investments, once completed, the building would be brought up to code with new overhead doors, new exterior doors, new heating, a handicapped accessible bathroom, new thermal pane windows, new insulation, new roof and upgraded electric. This would make the old Shutt's gas station code-compliant and ready for lease and bring additional life to Caroga's Town Center. It would get rid of blight and greatly improve the appearance of the town center area. Mr. Horton noted the alternative is to continue to use it as a residential garage instead of a new, viable retail business in town. Mr. Horton and Debbie have always had a desire to clean up the blight in Caroga. This is the sixth property they have purchased and cleaned up. This is the only project for which they've asked assistance. All others they've cleaned up solely at their own expense and with their own funds.

They have already had several people approach them who are interested in leasing the property. Many others have stopped by just to say how much better the place already looks. The purpose of this project is not only to improve this property, but hopefully spur other property owners into rehabilitating their town center properties. There have already been improvements in other town center properties including the CAC, Vrooman's, Lakeview Store, a few residential properties and

the laundromat. All are steps in the right direction. They believe this is one more step in the right direction.

There were no online speakers for the public hearing at this time.

John Livingston understands that the purpose of the Restore New York Grant is to rehabilitate, and restore blighted structures and transform them into residential, commercial and mixed-use developments. This would bring revenue to the town and also get rid of another blighted property. In addition, this property, in the middle of town center, is underutilized as many other properties are. This town is a tourist driven community and this would be a year-round attraction opposed to the mostly seasonal attractions we have now. This would be something people could stop and visit instead of just driving through our town on their way to another destination. Our town needs more attractions. The old Shutt's Garage already looks 100% better thanks to Scott Horton and Debbie Correll's personal financial investment and sweat. Mr. Livingston can only see a positive result with this grant if it's awarded.

Shirley Holliday stated she was in favor of the grant. He has tried to restore and cleanup the area. It is a good start because we have so much blight in this town.

Supervisor Palcovic noted there have been 10 written emails or communications received in regards to this project. All are in favor of the project. There have been no negative comments to date.

The public hearing remained open.

Department Reports:

Wheelerville Bike Trail – Mr. Manning stated he is still in the cleanup phase of the trails. There are three guys up there working right now. There are a lot of trees down and damage this year by way of water and frost. He hopes the trails can be opened up this weekend if the rain stops. Things need to dry out from winter still.

Mr. Manning thanked the Highway Superintendent Larry Voght for his help with the culvert pipe situation under the driveway parking lot. The state was contacted on this. Mr. Manning asked for stone or gravel at the very bottom of the trail head which was washed out this winter.

Mr. Manning is working on updates to the website Wheelervilletrails.com to include lodging, places to get food, bars, and things to do in the area.

The big news is that he was successful in the 2023 Smart Growth Grant that he applied for. The town received just shy of \$100,000.00. It was written this past January. He hopes he can begin using the funds on August 1st. There are some administrative steps to go through.

Another thing happening is a Demo Bike Day will be held on June 1st & 2nd. GT Bikes and one of the former builders of the trails, is now running the demo team. He is based out of San Diego. There is no cost – anyone who wants to ride a bike and check it out can sign a waiver and try out a bike. These are all new high-end bikes.

Supervisor Palcovic travels throughout the state and ADK Park for meetings. Our trails are highly recognized by the Adirondack Park personnel for the bike trails on the mountain. We are using our

resources and they are impressed. The Fulton County Tourism Bureau has taken out ads about the Wheelerville Trails and the CAC. Both are included in booklets. Distribution is statewide.

Mr. Manning noted there will be a full billboard at the Vail Mills intersection on the bike festival. He noted a big part of this is co-ordination.

BTI – Mike Kunath reported that the black flies are out. There are streams popping up that were never there before – run off coming from other streams. It will be a bad season he thinks if it continues like this. He received an email from a resident on Kasson Drive concerned about the black flies. He checked the streams in the area and there was larva. Everyone has been out doing the best they can.

Sole Assessor – Leigh Anne Loucks submitted a written report. The Tentative Tax Roll has been filed with the town clerk and is available for review. She is reviewing the short-term rental sites weekly to keep the list updated, and she is updating RPS. The Assessor has completed a large amount of property record cards and inputting into system so they would be updated for the next tax roll. The assessor has emailed legal information from the Town Attorney.

The assessor is updating the file to have the most current STAR information, as NYS releases the STAR reports. She is retrieving the sales and paperwork from FCRPTS every two weeks to be sure the most current owners are reflected in the upcoming tax roll.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector/Registrar/RMO – The clerk reported that the office is busy selling transfer station permits. Checking is being done to make sure people are not using their property for Short Term Rentals (STR). There are a couple of people who use their property personally and as a STR. There is a list of those. As tax collector, Linda Gilbert, reported that one check bounced on April 11, so \$40.00 is still owed to the Supervisor. A spreadsheet was created to show how money was distributed. The tax collection books are ready for audit whenever the board members have time. The monthly town clerk report was included in the packet to the board.

Code Enforcement & Sanitation – Mr. Fancher submitted a written report. For the previous month, 27 permits were issued with a value of \$1,148,580. Fees in the amount of \$5,500 were collected. 24 inspections were done on open permits. He attended a conference in Saranac Lake and came back with good information and contacts for infrastructure help for the town.

Short-Term Rental applications are starting to come in with positive feedback. Numerous lack of compliance and violation notices went out this week. Enforcement is underway.

Dog Control – Dutcher - No report.

Golf Course – Mr. Stedman submitted a written report. He had a problem finding good screened topsoil. Eventually he found some without stones and 11 yards were delivered yesterday. The irrigation system will be hooked up next week. The sod delivery for the #4 and #10 tee boxes is about two weeks out. Mr. Stedman has contacted Fulton County Soils and Water for help with drainage projects in the fall which will limit course closures and cart availability. The areas of concern are #3, #10, #15, #16, #17 & #18. He is hopeful for dryer days ahead.

Highway – Mr. Voght reported on his available funding: CHIPS - \$114,367.44, PAVE NY - \$26,394.21, Emergency Winter Recovery - \$23,390.81, POP (pot hole) - \$17,563.66 and there is a

roll over from last year in the amount of \$60,072.70. The total of these various funds is \$241,739.82. **the total was amended to \$241,788.82 at the June meeting.**

Mr. Voght listed the roads he wants to pave this year: Vrooman Road, North Shore to North Branch, North Branch, Everson Road, and Kirchen Grove Road. He will also pave all the bad spots on South Shore East Caroga Lake Road. He is still waiting on blacktop quotes.

As a taxpayer Mr. Hogan wanted to compliment Mr. Stedman. At the end of the season whatever is left in the weed program gas cans it is used up by the golf course. He went down to pick up the cans from last year and noticed a lawn mower. Mr. Hogan commented on the new machine and Mr. Stedman told him it was five years old. He takes care of his equipment.

Lakes Management Program –Mr. Hogan reported that ProcellaCOR is slated to be applied the first week on June weather depending. The areas to be treated are the channel, West Caroga Lake (Vrooman Road) and the campsite. The APA meeting is next week May 16th. The town is scheduled for review between 1 – 4 pm. Erin Ziemann will do the presentation for the town.

The divers are set up. They will meet this Saturday. There will be five divers and one tender. They have to figure out the schedule as there used to be two four-hour shifts. The harvester will get worked on. It will go in the week after Memorial Day. They won't dive until the second week in June when the water temperature is comfortable.

He is still having trouble with the grant through SFS. He does not have access to the grant yet. He has incurred some expenses that the town will not get reimbursed for until this is strengthened out.

A resident stopped over to show him pictures of something they took out of West Caroga along the shore. He has no idea what it is. Two or three pickup truck loads were taken out of a green material. It was last fall and Mr. Hogan was not sure if it was there now. Marcus Harazin will be consulted. Supervisor Palcovic did provide the individual with contact information for DEC waters biologist. Mr. Hogan stated what was taken out was pretty disgusting. He hoped it wasn't an algae bloom.

Supervisor Palcovic stated that the APA is watching ProcellaCOR closely. They have high hopes, and we hope we are another success story. So far it is all positive on the results. Other communities are also watching. Minerva Lake is four years out and are tickled with their results. Supervisor Palcovic noted this did not eliminate the need for divers. Monitoring still has to be done. Hopefully the program can be cut back to be less expensive.

Mr. Voght interjected that usually when he goes out to bid he goes off the Fulton County bid. This year he did it different he went out and got different people to give him quotes on black topping. Cobleskill Stone so far is the best and has beat the price for Fulton County. Supervisor Palcovic stated state price is not always the best.

Mr. Voght noted he can't get 12" culvert pipe. He tried yesterday and they didn't have one in stock.

Council Member Glenn noted that Erin recommended that the town consider treating the Turtle Bay area. We don't have the money at this time. We are permitted for that area. The DEC permit is good but the APA may require the town to refile. The APA permit is good for one year.

Council Member Glenn received notice from Mr. Olm that he expects the town's Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program will be fully staffed at the boat wash station from 7:30 am to 6 pm across from town hall, and at the West Lake Fishing access site launch from 7:30 – 4 pm, and at the East Caroga Lake Campground launch from 7:30 am – 4 pm. Stewards at these locations are being provided by the Adirondack Water Institute (AWI) All will begin on May 24th. It was noted that a conference was held on April 24 with the staff at AWI to plan the 2024 season. Onsite steward training will take place after Memorial Day weekend.

Town Hall Building – Council Member Cooper stated that now that Mr. Baker is back, work will continue with the building cleanup and disposal of what we have. Supervisor Palcovic asked Mr. Voght if he had any idea of when the scrap metal pile out back will be disposed of. Mr. Voght stated a dumpster will be brought up. He does not have time to dispose of it at Bornt's. It will be thrown into the county dumpster.

CTC (former PLRT)– Council Member DeLuca didn't have a report. The meeting last month was cancelled.

Short Term Rental Committee – Council Member DeLuca reported she is working with the code officer to get the applications out.

At 7:00 pm Supervisor Palcovic asked for any more comments on the public hearing. Mr. Vosburgh indicated that Mr. Harazin had raised his hand however Mr. Harazin did not respond when called upon. The public hearing was closed. The Supervisor stated in regards to the Restore New York Grant Project at 2144 State Highway #10, there were no negative comments noted, or received in writing or in person. Scott Horton & Deborah Correll left the meeting.

Supervisor's Report:

Supervisor Palcovic stated he is in conversation with CT Male to get an official opinion on our legacy spill area. He has not engaged in any contracts just had a preliminary discussion about having a professional environmental review of the spill before any holes are dug.

Supervisor Palcovic stated he has tried multiple times to communicate with the Phinney Group re: the Clubhouse or Highway Garage. He has had no replies to date. It has been over two weeks.

At 7:00 pm Council Member DeLuca made a motion enter into an executive session to review a personnel matter. The motion was seconded by Council Member Cooper. All board members were in favor of the motion – Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

At 7:05 pm Council Member DeLuca made a motion to exit from the executive session. The motion was seconded by Council Member Sturgess. All board members were in favor of the motion – Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

There were no decisions made as a result of the executive session.

Public Comments and Questions

Nancy Menghini stated she and her husband are building up on London Bridge Road next to the big blue building. She is concerned about wood stacked and placed on the property line. She asked if there was a setback from the property line. Her concern is mice and rodents that would live in the

wood pile. It is close to the opening of her garage. Supervisor Palcovic recommended talking to the code officer about this. She stated she would read the book. Council Member Sturgess didn't think the town could tell a person what to put on their property if it is not a structure, Mrs. Menghini stated if she were putting up a fence on the property line the wood would need to be moved. It was stated that the fence has to be one foot off the property line for maintenance of both sides. She was asked about talking to the neighbor.

An online attendee had two questions. One had to do with the rock pile on Kasson Drive. When she left in August it was understood that the builder was out of compliance with the size of his lot. Then she heard that the compliance office said in September or October that it was decided that nothing was wrong with the lot. She asked if he was going to continue to build. She heard he was given the go ahead. She hopes this would be resolved.

The second question was since Scott Horton was voted out in the last election why is he still so involved and why his name is still on the email list when you email the board. The caller stated this information was posted on the Caroga News flash, which Council Member Sturgess pointed out is not affiliated with the town. The caller stated what she sees is that nothing has changed since last summer and it is very, very distressing for those who have been here for 70+ years.

Linda Gilbert received a report from the boat wash station from last year. The statistics are disappointing. Only 301 boats stopped there. At 7am all season long only 2 boats stopped. At 7 pm all season long 2 boats stopped during that time frame. We have to use our money more efficiently, and figure out how this money can be better spent rather than having someone sit and wait for someone to drop by to have their boat washed. It is a law. Perhaps the town needs to put a law in place that says if you don't have a sticker, you can't put the boat in our waters. Spending \$25,000.00 in salaries to wash 301 boats comes out to \$84.06 per boat. There were 30 days last year when no one stopped at that station and we paid someone all day long. This is a waste of tax payers state money, and local money and energies. She hopes the committee will review the report and see how we can more efficiently spend these tax dollars. Council Member Glenn stated he will have the lakes management committee review this at their meeting on Tuesday May 15th at 5:30 pm at town hall. Supervisor Palcovic stated the statistics do kind of speak for themselves.

Old Business:

Grant Writer – The Code officer brought back information for the Town Board from his training in Saranac Lake.

New Business:

The Town Clerk received three applications for Firework Displays. They are on 7/3 at Pine Lake, 7/5 at the CAC, and on 7/6 at Canada Lake.

Every board member should have gotten a copy of the recommended updates to the Zoning Ordinance from the Planning Board. Supervisor Palcovic stated it is preliminary.

Correspondence:

- 1) Notice from Thriving Communities Program Submitted by Anita Long – Caroga was not selected
- 2) Letters of Interest to serve on the Comprehensive Plan Committee from Doug Purcell, Dave

Cummings, Anita Long, Rachel Simonds, and Jeremy Manning (today).

Supervisor Palcovic suggested waiting another 30 days before appointing this committee. Council Member Glenn asked who was the head of this committee. The Supervisor replied there isn't one. It doesn't exist yet. Council Member DeLuca stated town law has a list of who should be on the committee and how many people should be on the committee. The Town Board selects the committee, then the group decides who is the leader.

3) From Board of Elections to Town Attorney Re: Terms of Town Officials

4) Training Seminar in Utica for Planning & ZBA Members 5/22/24 4:30 pm – 8:15 pm

5) Caroga Transfer Station Closed 5/27 for Memorial Day Open Tuesday 5/28 - 8 am – 4 pm.

RESOLUTIONS:

RESOLUTION #2024-064 to approve three Firework Displays was offered by Supervisor Palcovic at the May 8, 2024 regular Caroga Town Board meeting.

WHEREAS, the Clerk received three applications along with the proof of Certificates of Liability Insurance, the Federal Explosives License/Permit and Pyrotechnician Certificate of Competence from Majestic Fireworks, Inc. 29 College St. Clinton NY 13323 (315) 853-2237 for displays on July 3, July 5, and July 6 in the Town of Caroga and

WHEREAS, the Caroga Lake Volunteer Fire Company Fire Chief Howard Dutcher was notified of the applications, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby approve all three applications for firework displays on July 3 at Pine Lake, July 5 at the Caroga Arts Collective, & July 6, 2024 at Canada Lake in the Town of Caroga.

Seconded by Council Member Glenn

Adopted by a vote of 5 ayes: Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

RESOLUTION #2024-065 to accept the mowing Contract between the Town and the Fulton County Highway Department on 7.28 miles of county rights-of-way in the Town of Caroga was offered by Supervisor Palcovic at the May 8, 2024 regular Caroga Town Board meeting.

WHEREAS, the Clerk received three copies of the contract for mowing for the year 2024 from Fulton County, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to accept the mowing Contract in the amount of \$3,094.00 between the Town and the Fulton County Highway Department on 7.28 miles of county right-of-way's to be mowed once before June 30th and once before September 30th of 2024 in the Town of Caroga

Seconded by Council Member Sturgess

Discussion: the Highway Superintendent stated he didn't even see the contract. Council Member Glenn asked if he needed more time to read it over. Mr. Voght replied "no, it's fine."

Adopted by a vote of 5 ayes: Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

RESOLUTION #2024-066 to accept a donation from Scott Horton in the amount of \$500 to cover the payment to the Empire State Development Corp for the grant application fee was offered by Supervisor Palcovic at the May 8, 2024 regular Caroga Town Board meeting.

WHEREAS, the Caroga Town Board desires to support Scott Horton & Deborah Correll as they apply for funds from the Empire State Development Corporation for a grant to renovate the property they own in town center at 2114 State Highway 10 in the Town of Caroga, and

WHEREAS, Scott Horton has agreed to pay the town for the expenses incurred to submit the application to Restore New York, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to accept a donation from Scott Horton in the amount of \$500 to cover the payment to the Empire State Development Corp. for the grant application fee.

Seconded by Council Member Glenn

Adopted by a vote of 5 ayes: Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

RESOLUTION #2024-067 to make the following budget adjustments which will reflect this donation and the subsequent payment to the Empire State Development Corporation was offered by Council Member Glenn at the May 8, 2024 regular Caroga Town Board meeting.

WHEREAS, the bookkeeper/budget director has indicated the need to make a budget adjustment to accept the donation from Mr. Horton for the payment to the Empire State Development Corporation, and

WHEREAS, the resolution authorizes payment to the Empire State Development Corporation, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that budget adjustments shall be made as follows:

From: A2705 Gifts and Donations	\$ 500.00	
To A1010.41 Grant Writing C/E		\$ 500.00

And be it further **RESOLVED**, that the Board does hereby authorize payment to the Empire State Development Corporation in the amount of \$500.00.

Seconded by Council Member Cooper

Adopted by a vote of 5 ayes: Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

RESOLUTION #2024-068 to upgrade the network at the Caroga Municipal Building was offered by Supervisor Palcovic at the May 8, 2024 regular Caroga Town Board meeting.

WHEREAS, Canada Lake Computer serves as the IT Contractor for the town, and

WHEREAS, it has been determined that an upgrade is necessary in the Wi-Fi technology at town hall now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that a new Ubiquiti router, a UniFi access point, misc. CAT 6 connections and configuration of the networks are included in the quote from Canada Lake Computers for deployment of maxim performance of the wireless networks for a price of \$418.99.

Seconded by Council Member Sturgess

Discussion: this will improve the zoom connection and the golf course network. Supervisor Palcovic has had conversations with the Canada Lake Computer owner and this should beam the signal across the street attempting to save the cost of wireless over there. Concerns were noted, the equipment is still necessary regardless and will be installed. If it can do all of the data downloads necessary it will be tested before anything is disconnected. Council Member Sturgess wanted to know if the point-of-sale system needed to be hard wired or could it be run off Wi-Fi. The phone service cannot be shut off.

Adopted by a vote of 5 ayes: Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

Council Member Sturgess made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 10, and April 24th Town Board meetings. Supervisor Palcovic seconded the motion. All Board members were in favor of the motion: Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

Council Member Sturgess made the motion to approve the bills as presented for audit. Council Member Cooper seconded the motion. All Board members were in favor of the motion: Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

At 7:27 pm 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: Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

Submitted by Caroga Town Clerk

Linda Gilbert, RMC, CMC

Highway #'s 63 - #77 \$31,973.02

General #'s 144 - #179 \$17,189.19

Prepaid #'s 103 - #130 \$58,245.72

General Park #'s 16 - #30 \$4,640.69