

State of New York
County of Fulton
Town of Caroga

Minutes of the regular monthly Caroga Town Board meeting held Wednesday December 11th, 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

Department representatives in attendance were: Jeremy Manning – Wheelerville Bike Trail, Steve Stedman – Golf Course Greenskeeper, Roy Stock – Deputy Highway Superintendent, two highway employees, Planning Board Member - Alternate & Comprehensive Plan Member - Anita Long, Former Town Highway Superintendent Steve Putman, and three members of the public. The meeting was also available via Zoom facilitated by Zack Vosburg. At the start of the meeting, there were 9 participants, at the peak of the meeting there were 16 participants, and at the adjournment there were 15 participants.

Supervisor Palcovic called the meeting to order: A moment of silence was held for Floyd Chappell. Mr. Chappell was a long time Caroga Lake resident who helped a lot of people in the town. He recently passed away. He was a member of the Caroga Lake Fire Company and did an ungodly amount of work to maintain the equipment over the years. Floyd will be missed.

A motion was made by Council Member Sturgess to waive the reading of the minutes. Council Member Cooper seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion; All board members were in favor of the motion: Palcovic, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

At 6:31 pm Supervisor Palcovic made a motion to enter into an executive session for personnel matters “the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation.” The motion was seconded by Council Member DeLuca. Hearing no further discussion, All board members were in favor of the motion: Palcovic, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

At 6:50 pm Council Member DeLuca made a motion to exit from the executive session. The motion was seconded by Council Member Cooper. All board members were in favor of the motion: Palcovic, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

Department Reports:

Wheelerville Bike Trail – Mr. Manning reported that the trails are open for winter riding were open briefly. He hopes to reopen them when things freeze up again. Brett Fielding has been up there quite a

bit using the donated Sled Dog Groomer (for fat biking and snowshoeing). This piece of equipment has been on loan to the town for the past three years from Tim McGlocklin of Bleecker. He also made the signs for the bike trail.

Mr. Manning is working with Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to schedule a site visit to verify that the work was done this fall to get reimbursement. He hopes to do this in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Manning found out today the town should be getting a donation from 84 Lumber of an 8' x 10' shed. It will be used for tools. It will be unassembled and he needs a place to store it. It is on pallets. The parking lot at the bike trail is too icy to bring a truck up there. Mr. Manning will coordinate with the highway department.

Supervisor Palcovic reported that the County Tourism Bureau is cutting a check to the town for \$15,000.00 for the trails system. It was noted that the tourism budget is funded by the bed tax for the most part.

BTI -Mr. Kunath reported this Friday is the start of the 30 - hour pesticide course he and Mike Sokira are conducting. It will be held at the firehouse. There are four students. Paul Brink, will be the new hire for the Town of Caroga.

The pesticide usage reports that DEC requires are due in February. He has completed them. Mr. Kunath is working on riparian reports and sending out any changes in ownership so he may have access to the property to apply BTI.

Sole Assessor – Leigh Anne Loucks submitted a written report. Supervisor Palcovic read that the assessor continues to update property record cards online. Exemption forms are being returned at a good rate. Some residents are receiving requests from the state for their STAR exemptions. The assessor will go to people's homes if needed to pick up paperwork. There are still a lot of sales going on. The assessor is also updating lists and breakdown for property class parcels. She is always available to help. The supervisor related a story of a resident making a mistake on some paperwork but the assessor was able to assist in correcting it.

Code Enforcement & Sanitation – Mr. Fancher submitted a written report. Supervisor Palcovic stated 12 permits were issued for a valuation of \$198,820.00 and \$1,575.00 in fees were collected. 22 inspections on open permits were conducted. The property of the house fire on Morey Road was condemned and a letter to clean up was sent out.

Mr. Fancher was a key player in the roof repair contract for this building. It seemed to go very well with one change order. Council Member Sturgess asked if everything is dry. Supervisor Palcovic reported there is apparently one wet spot in the janitor's office on the concrete. Mr. Fancher is aware of it. They have to wait until the snow goes and the rain stops to fix it. The contract is complete but they will make good on the fix.

Mr. Fancher is working on his yearend report and is looking at changing some of the zoning laws and language in the ordinance. Both the Planning and Zoning Boards will be directly involved in some revisions.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector/Registrar/RMO – The clerk, Linda Gilbert reported, she is working on records retention and filing of the 2024 records, and preparing for tax collection season.

The clerk noted there were three more correspondence this evening. Each board member received an email from Denny Fincke supporting the petition not to allow bikes on the golf course. Mr. Harazin thanked the board for relighting the street light at the end of West Lake Road, and under new business there was an item about getting brochures on the 100th Anniversary of Kane Mt. At first thought the town was going to have to pay for them. In a subsequent email from Mr. Farber, it was stated that since the town support the museum that brochures would be made available to the town.

Lastly the clerk noted an opening for a board clerk. She noted there are seasonal part time employees that could fill that position. Supervisor Palcovic stated should they file... he has already put forth one denial.

Dog Control – There was no report from Mr. Dutcher

Golf Course – Mr. Stedman reported that the equipment is put away. There are two golf carts under the pavilion. He was only able to get 38 inside. All of the batteries have been disconnected. He tried to burn off the remaining gas in tanks. There is probably a gallon in each one. He is working to get the cutting units off and sent to Latham. They take about two months to grind them. The equipment is being serviced.

Mr. Stedman will be taking 10 DEC credits. Every three years he needs 30 credits. He likes to take 10 per year. His license expires in December of 2026.

He has received phone calls about memberships. Mr. Stedman stated the decision is not usually made until the January board meeting. He suggested looking at a November decision for people looking to purchase Christmas gifts. Supervisor Palcovic stated we actually took some in at this year's rate. He did not want to turn customers away. Council Member Sturgess thought a gift card needs to be printed and they can use the gift card to purchase what they need for the 2025 season instead of honoring ... There seems to be a history of this and people are a year behind. If there was a card for X amount of dollars then when the memberships become available next year the recipient could use the card for credit toward the membership. They may have to add to it if the rates were raised. Supervisor Palcovic stated we need to come up with a better plan to deal with it at this time of the year. The clerk noted if it is a gift she didn't like putting a dollar value on the certificate. Council Member Sturgess stated it's not difficult to look up the membership rate.

Highway – Deputy Highway Superintendent Roy Stock reported that he is keeping the roads open and maintaining the vehicles the best they can. Supervisor Palcovic complimented him on the snow removal job last week. It was round the clock for days. No complaints were received.

Tomorrow Mr. Stock will be meeting with the DEC Forester about the trees in the Kane Mt. parking area.

Lakes Management Program – Supervisor Palcovic reported that the town has submitted documents for reimbursement from the various grant programs on the lakes.

Town Hall Building – Council Member Cooper didn't have anything additional. The roof was the issue for the past month.

CTC/Caroga Tourism Committee – Council Member DeLuca reported that the tourism committee will meet tomorrow night. A meeting had been scheduled with Fulton County Tourism but thanks to the snow the meeting was cancelled. The meeting is rescheduled for Monday.

There are some preliminary discussions about a winter carnival around the snowmobile poker run. There is a meeting on Wednesday December 18th on that.

Comprehensive Plan Committee – Council Member DeLuca reported the December meeting was cancelled. They are still working on getting the survey questions down to a workable level. They are also working with the people at Survey Monkey and hope to be ready to go by the beginning of the year.

Supervisor's Report:

Supervisor Palcovic reported that the equalization rate is 15.48%. "It did go up for the Town of Caroga." He stated all equalization rates across the board changed. Unless you are in the Town of Bleecker which has a 98 or 99% assessed valuation and the lowest equalization rate because they are one of the only towns close to the 100% residential assessment rate. The Town of Caroga is at 40%.

Supervisor Palcovic stated the highway position to be filled...the board will appoint the Highway Superintendent at the year commencing meeting.

The clerk wanted to go back and make the point that the Caroga Taxes are going to go up 15.48% just so the public is aware. It is like a \$300.00 hit. Due to the county tax increase. The clerk stated the Caroga equalization rate is 40.90. Last year we paid \$12.40 per thousand at the county level. This year the rate is \$14.32 per thousand. That is an increase of \$1.92 per thousand. Supervisor Palcovic stated the county rate went up due to the cost of doing business, employee wages, union contracts. Everything costs more. The clerk stated the Town of Caroga taxes went up two cents. Supervisor Palcovic stated the county chose not to use more fund balance to protect future budgets.

Supervisor Palcovic stated that the septic system grant funding for Fulton County is still being investigated. The supervisor received a reply back from Assemblyman Smullen office. They didn't completely understand this issue. Another reply came from Mark Walzack's office. They had talked to the Department of Environmental Conservation and stated our county does not have a history of contaminated water. The Supervisor was glad to know we have been proactive. He believes people in Fulton County should still have access to this grant. Council Member Sturgess thanked the supervisor for continuing to work on this issue.

The Landfill contract renewal is an action item. (this was being taken care of by the highway department)

Supervisor Palcovic put together an addendum to his report. There seems to be a lot of miss information going on in regards to everything that is going on with building projects and properties. This includes the club house and highway department garage. The Supervisor was formerly a board member some years ago. He has dealt with this first hand.

The Current Status-Facts

- **1999 Petro hydrocarbon Spill south side of highway garage**
 - **DEC immediately involved-oversight**
 - **Lawsuit, 10s of thousands of dollars**
 - **Remediation and stabilization in accordance with NYS DEC**
 - **Environmental Contractors, lawsuit resolved**
- **Nov was the 4-year anniversary of Club House Fire**
 - **Preliminary design plan did not consider legacy spill consideration**
 - **No environmental impact assessment was made**
 - **Cost of preliminary design and engineering 100, 00.00 plus or minus**
 - **Implications of soil disturbance in legacy area-Immediate stop work, DEC notification within 2 hours, environmental release, full remediation at an unpredictable cost**
- **Environmental implication to move forward**
 - **The current Town Board engaged CT Male this summer to conduct an assessment of legacy spill area**
 - **During this assessment CT Male looked at the larger picture**
- **Discovery**
 - **Recommendation not to disturb legacy spill area**
 - **The current NYS Permits to have fuel tanks PBS had expired 2 years ago**
 - **CT Male was then engaged to correct the 2-year-old deficiency**
 - **In the Course of that action- A notice of Violation from NYS DEC was discovered—1 year old**
- **Moving forward**
 - **As most of you know we have engaged CT Male to perform preliminary site engineering to locate a conceptual clubhouse building with future growth plans to place the municipal offices in the lower level.**

Additional current status

- **Highway public works building**
 - **Preliminary design plans and siting of building were inadequate**
 - **During redesign process we asked the design architect about wetlands assessment due to proximal location**
 - **They replied it appears the entire project area is within NYS wetlands mapping**

- **Inadequate environmental assessment initially**
- **EDP engineering has recommended ACOE and APA review of entire area**
- **Review is forthcoming**
- **The assessment is to find out where the future DPW may land or may not**
- **Preliminary design and engineering cost??**
 - **Re-engineering and redesign will far exceed 1 million bond issue approved by the taxpayers**

Supervisor Palcovic explained the town bought the house across the street because the well was contaminated. The town was sued and the suit was settled. Insurance does not cover ground contamination. The area was never 100% remediated he stated. The supervisor noted Mr. Putman's well was also test numerous times. That was where we were.

November was the four-year anniversary of the club house fire. There was a preliminary plan to put the clubhouse in the legacy spill area. No environmental impact was included in the preliminary design. The addendum was created to give the facts. A concern was the creek. If a hole had been dug for a foundation and if the additive MTBE was found the town would be required to do full remediation at an unpredictable cost. There were no environmental considerations given with the thought process of putting the club house on that location. The town hired CT Male and Jeff Marks has been a great guide. CT Male checked with the state, and also reviewed our records. They submitted a report and came up with an assessment of the legacy spill area. During the assessment CT Male found a deficiency with our fuel tanks. The highway garage tanks have petroleum bulk storage permits and they are required to be renewed and inspections done. CT Male is working with the state to update our permits. Supervisor Palcovic hopes we are not fined. Currently, CT Male is working to locate a clubhouse building not within the legacy spill area.

Supervisor Palcovic continued to update the public with facts on the plan to build the new highway garage. The preliminary designs could not properly house the town equipment. This was discovered last January or February. There was no room to walk around the equipment parked inside. The previous town supervisor was asked about a wetlands assessment. Only an environmental impact statement was done. As the resizing of the design of the highway building was being done the architect who has worked on the project from about day one was asked about the wetlands assessment. The town has now engaged Environmental Design Partnership (EDP) to come up with another design for the building. Currently EDP is working to come up with a wetland's boundary assessment. An environmental engineer has flagged the area. The topography of the site has changed. Both the Adirondack Park Agency and the Army Corp of Engineers will be consulted on the placement of the garage site. The building can not be built until the right environmental site is found. We are not going to fill in wetlands. Every step along the way costs more money. Supervisor Palcovic stated the approved 1-million-dollar bond issue will not be enough money.

Supervisor Palcovic asked for questions. (applause) A highway employee asked if any renovations would be conducted on the existing building. Supervisor Palcovic stated, "cosmetic, and structural as necessary, yes." The garage can be cleaned up with the work being done in house.

Mr. Manning asked about the location of the proposed highway garage being by the salt shed. Supervisor Palcovic confirmed it is near the salt shed. Originally it was park land which was alienated over twenty years ago to build a cell tower. Land was traded in this cumbersome process.

It was asked what will happen with the current town hall property. Supervisor Palcovic stated we have to come up with a 10-year long range plan. Everyday there are spot fires he has to deal with therefore he has piles of work.

****Public Comments and Questions**

Mr. Brady noted the Highway Superintendent position was briefly touched on. Supervisor Palcovic stated the appointment would be made at the first meeting of the year.

Mr. Vosburg stated there was no one online with a comment or question.

Old Business:

Supervisor Palcovic noted the light at West Lake Road parking lot was reestablished. The population was very happy with that. There are a few more to do. The supervisor is working on it.

No discussion on the policy to establish a Non-DOT Testing Pool.

Supervisor Palcovic noted that the resolution made to list East Shore Road for no thru trucks was not in compliance with the rules. The Clerk stated that resolution 2024-106 should be rescinded.

RESOLUTION #2024-109 a resolution to rescind Resolution #2024-106 which posted East Shore Road as no thru trucks was offered by Council Member Sturgess at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on December 11, 2024.

WHEREAS, at the November meeting of the Caroga Town Board resolution #2024-106 was passed to post East Shore Road for no thru trucks, and

WHEREAS, it has come to the boards attention that a local law is necessary to post the road for no thru trucks, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to rescind resolution #2024-106.

Seconded by Council Member Cooper

Hearing no further discussion the resolution was:

Adopted by a vote of four ayes; Palcovic, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

Nothing new to report on lower the speed limit on County Highway 111. This is a slow process to hear back from the Department of Transportation. Supervisor Palcovic reported County Highway 111 is on the paving list for next year by the county.

Supervisor Palcovic made a motion to set the rate for the person doing snow removal at town hall & Clinic buildings.

RESOLUTION #2024-110 to set the rate for the person doing snow removal at town hall & clinic building was offered by Supervisor Palcovic at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on December 11, 2024.

WHEREAS, the Caroga Town Board held its monthly meeting to conduct all town business on December 11, 2024, and

WHEREAS, there is a need to set the rate of pay for the Janitorial maintenance person for the town hall and clinic building, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby set the rate of \$18.00.

Seconded by Council Member DeLuca

Hearing no further discussion the resolution was:

Adopted by a vote of four ayes; Palcovic, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

New Business:

The Board Clerk Christine Putnam stepped down from the position 11/23. The clerk wondered if one of the seasonal people would take on the job. Supervisor Palcovic stated he would keep that in mind when the unemployment applications come in. The position will also be advertised.

Does the board want to order brochures for Kane Mountain? The clerk explained that since this was placed on the agenda it was thought that the brochures would be given to the town.

FYI total Election Cost for 2024 \$3,432.81

No December meeting of the Comprehensive Plan committee

Set date of Year end Meeting. Supervisor Palcovic stated it would be December 27th at 4 pm.

RESOLUTION #2024-111 to set the 2024-year end meeting was offered by Council Member Sturgess at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on December 11, 2024.

WHEREAS, the Board would like to conclude the business of the year 2024 with a year end meeting, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to set December 27th at 4 pm as the date and time for the year end meeting.

Seconded by Council Member Cooper

Hearing no further discussion the resolution was:

Adopted by a vote of four ayes; Palcovic, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

Correspondence:

Transfer Station Hours Christmas Holiday closed 12/25 open Thursday 12/26 noon to 4 pm

New Year’s Day Closed open Thursday January 2nd Noon – 4 pm

Email from Canada Lakes Conservation Assoc. re: testing of your well for possible salt contamination

Email from Allen Farber - Mr. Purcell didn’t think town should have to pay for Kane Mt. brochures

Email from Denny Fincke re: bike trial on golf course and delay of rebuilding golf buildings.

RESOLUTIONS:

RESOLUTION#2024-112 to make the following transfers as necessary to maintain a balanced budget was offered by Supervisor Palcovic at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on December 11, 2024.

WHEREAS, the bookkeeper Joanne Young has determined that certain transfers are necessary to maintain a balanced budget, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the following transfers be made to maintain a balanced budget.

From A1990.4 Contingency	\$ 5,000.00	
To A1620.4 Building C/E		\$5,000.00
From A1990.4 Contingency	\$ 350.00	
To A7145.4 Recreation Trail C/E		\$ 350.00
From A7180.13 Clubhouse P/S	\$ 700.00	
To A7180.12 G/C P/S		\$ 700.00
From A1990.4 Contingency	\$ 5,000.00	
To A7145.1 Recreation Trail P/S		\$5,000.00
From A1670.41 GC Merch print & Mail	\$ 250.00	
To A1670.4 Print & Mail C/E		\$ 250.00
From DA5142.1 Snow Removal P/S	\$ 3,000.00	
To DA5130.4 Machinery C/E		\$ 3,000.00

Seconded by Council Member Sturgess

Hearing no further discussion the resolution was:

Adopted by a vote of four ayes; Palcovic, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

RESOLUTION #2024-113 to fund the following reserves as set out in the 2024 budget was offered by Supervisor Palcovic at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on December 11, 2024.

WHEREAS, the Caroga Town Board desire to fund various reserves for future expenses, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the following reserves are hereby established.

Capital Reserve	\$20,000
Garbage Truck Reserve	\$20,000
Golf Course Equipment Reserve	\$35,000
Golf Course Improvements Reserve	\$10,000

Seconded by Council Member DeLuca

Hearing no discussion the resolution was:

Adopted by a vote of four ayes; Palcovic, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

RESOLUTION #2024 -114 to set the date of December 20th 2024 as the date that all bills for the year 2024 must be submitted to the town for payment was offered by Supervisor Palcovic at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on December 11, 2024.

WHEREAS, the town clerk indicated the need to post a legal notice in the newspaper to close out the books of the Town of Caroga for the year 2024, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to publish in the Leader Herald newspaper an ad setting the date of December 20th 2024 as the date that all bills for the year 2024 must be submitted to the town for audit and payment.

Seconded by Council Member DeLuca

Hearing no discussion the resolution was:

Adopted by a vote of four ayes; Palcovic, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

The clerk asked if there were any decisions as a result of the executive session. Supervisor Palcovic stated a decision was made that the board would be hiring Mike Harrington before the end of the year for janitorial maintenance.

RESOLUTION #2024-115 to hire Mike Harrington for janitorial maintenance was offered by Council Member DeLuca at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on December 11, 2024.

WHEREAS, the current janitor/maintenance person Robert Thompson is filling until another person was hired for the job as Mr. Baker left the position a few months ago, and

WHEREAS, the Caroga Town Board held an executive session earlier this evening, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby hire Mike Harrington before the end of the year for janitorial/maintenance work for the Town of Caroga municipal building and clinic.

Seconded by Council Member Sturgess

Hearing no discussion the resolution was:

Adopted by a vote of four ayes; Palcovic, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

Council Member Sturgess made the motion to approve the minutes of the November 11th Town Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Cooper. Hearing no discussion: All board members were in favor of the motion: Palcovic, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

Council Member Sturgess made the motion to approve the bills as presented for audit. The motion was seconded by Council Member DeLuca. Hearing no discussion: All board members were in favor of the motion: Palcovic, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

At 7:35 pm Supervisor Palcovic made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council Member DeLuca. All board members were in favor of the motion: Palcovic, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

Submitted by Caroga Town Clerk

Linda Gilbert, RMC, CMC

General #405 – 430 \$21304.43

Highway #'190 – 211 \$12,721.66

Prepaid #'s 305 – 330 \$ \$113,355.48

General Park #107 – 110 \$745.96