

TOWN OF WILTON

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REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING-August 2, 2018

Supervisor Johnson called the Regular Town Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Supervisor Johnson led the board and the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call

Roll Call by the Town Clerk showed all board members present.

Arthur Johnson-Supervisor
Steve Streicher-Councilman
Duane Bogardus-Councilman
John Lant-Deputy Supervisor
John McEachron-Councilman

Also present was Director of Planning and Engineering, Ryan Riper, P. E. and Jeff Reale, Comptroller and Mark Schachner, Town Counsel.

Public Comment Session

Eric Rosenberg of 16 Craw Lane submitted a letter to be entered into the minutes. *First, let me mention that my activities here with regard to my involvement in the town are not motivated by politics. I am not taking action based on membership or as a representative of any organization or political party. Also, my involvement is not personal. I am focused on issues without regard to any specific person who may or may not be involved. It would be helpful if people stop fabricating motivations as a way to disparage me. When I first started getting involved in this town, lots of people told me about some of the things that go on. I have mentioned some of them to members of this board, and unfortunately, all of the things I was warned about have repeatedly been proven true. Most towns would welcome the participation and interest of its residents. Most towns would welcome input and fresh ideas from new residents. But not the town of Wilton. Instead of addressing issues and trying to make things better, the people sitting before me spend their time trying to disparage those who raise concerns and ask question. The question is why?*

And now this is happening to me. People are brought into meetings solely for the purpose of disparaging me. People are fabricating my motivations. People are calling me names like bully, grandstander, or troublemaker. And now I've received letters from the town's attorney informing me that town officials have no obligation to meet with residents or respond to letters by residents regarding questions and concerns. That is not how things work in the United States of America. One of the challenges facing this town is we are strongly divided by political party, something that too many people refuse to even accept as possible, or just don't care. Besides the actions of Town officials, recent statements by the chairman of the Wilton Republican committee make it clear that this is true. Everything in Wilton is political, he says. Nothing is going to get better or change in this town until the Democrats start getting their own people elected. From the statements he made, the message was clear: the Wilton Republican committee and the members of the town board are, are for all intents and purposes, essentially one and the same. Back in May, there was an ethics training workshop. Let me read a small part (read from the outline):

Fundamental/Overriding premises - Officials should be objective and unbiased – decisions made on merits of issue, regardless of who are proponents and who are opponents.

Avoid appearance of impropriety.

The only reasonable conclusion is these ethics guidelines mean nothing. At a minimum, if you are a member of a certain political party, you are treated with preference. Ignoring the truth doesn't make it right and doesn't mean it doesn't exist. The concerns I and others have been raising, and the questions that have been asked, seem to me to be questions and concerns that members of this Town Board should be asking. My concerns and questions aren't political, so why are they being treated as if they are. My questions and concerns are of importance to all the residents of Wilton. So, why aren't the members of this board concerned that state laws and local ordinances are not being followed in many instances. Why aren't the members of this board concerned that there are no official procedures, or town records being created, with respect to certain aspects of running our Town. Why aren't the Members of this Board concerned that some of our employees are not doing their jobs properly? Why aren't the members of this town board concerned that decisions are being made by Town officials, whether elected or appointed, without all of the necessary information before them? Lots of question, but no answers. Things are best resolved when people on opposite sides of an issue get together, share their viewpoints, and work towards reaching a compromise. Something I strongly believe in. However, it is now been made more than clear that town officials of Wilton, have no interest in engaging in a dialogue. At least not with some people. Finally, you shut down all avenues of communication, you refuse to treat all the residents of Wilton the same, which leave people no other choice but to take outside measures to address certain issues. And then you seem shocked or fight back harder because people take the only avenue of redress they have, such as making comments in open meetings, or taking outside action. You refuse to take responsibility for your actions or inactions, and do all you can blame to point the finger at others. Sitting before me is group of people who are supposed to represent all of the residents of Wilton, yet it is obvious that they don't. You can continue to bring in people to sing your praises, you can

continue to ignore that these issues don't exist (or maybe you just don't care that they exist), but that doesn't mean these issues aren't real. Sitting before me are a group of people who claim to love this town, yet, sitting before me is a group of people who seem to spend a lot of time and effort trying to keep Wilton stuck in the past. The two unanswered questions are, why, and what are you so afraid of?

Approve Pending Minutes

On a motion introduced by Councilman McEachron, the board adopted the following resolution:

RESOLUTION #127

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, to approve the minutes from the July 5, 2018 and July 16, 2018 meetings, as typed.

The adoption of the resolution was seconded by Councilman Bogardus, duly put to a vote, all in favor. The motion passed 5-0.

WWPP

Margo Olson said there is information on the flyer about our 2018 Photograph Show. We are accepting photos now through November 1, 2018.

Ms. Olson said it's been a great summer with a lot going on. It's been fun working with Gavin Park. We have two college interns in addition to our year round Environmental Education and Conservation interns. It's an exciting opportunity to work with the college interns and it's part of our mission to do environmental education. It's nice to not just work with younger kids but to work with the college kids as well. One is a student at St. Lawrence University studying Conservation Ecology. The other intern is a student at RPI studying Environmental Science. It's been a nice opportunity to work with the kids at Gavin Park both going to the park and having some of the field trips come to us. We have had many other community groups come to camp Saratoga and it's in great shape with all of the work the town has done including having the restrooms completed and the new sign is beautiful. There are plans for later this month to have a group from the Navy to do some volunteer work which was put together by Larry Gordon. We have had programs for the public with the Karner Blue Butterfly Walk where people can come and enjoy and learn about the butterflies. There is a Nature Crafts Program and a Pond Exploration. Thanks to the operating grant we are able to offer those programs for free. We are starting to look ahead to the fall. We will be working with a lot of different school groups. **Councilman Bogardus** asked if the new directional signage is up. **Ms. Olson** said it is being worked on. Ryan Riper has helped with the design and it was rather elaborate. We are trying to narrow it down and look at exactly what we need to simplify it. **Ms. Olson** said the annual fundraiser, Wild About Blue, will be held on Sunday, November 4, 2018 at Saratoga National. This year our Metamorphosis Award will be honoring Laura Clark. Her husband Jeff was involved with a lot of different outdoor recreation. Laura is a librarian at the Saratoga Springs Library. She has a real commitment to education as well as outdoor recreation.

Committee Reports

Deputy Supervisor Lant said there was a change in the Court Building project and asked if there are any updates. **Supervisor Johnson** said MJ Engineering is in the process of coming up with a concept plan. **Mr. Riper** said they were on site a couple of weeks ago and met with Judge Towne. They went through the building and the space available.

Deputy Supervisor Lant said the Tooker property was discussed yesterday. Mr. Tooker gave the property to the town and asked if it's costing him \$17,000. **Supervisor Johnson** said the conservation easement was donated to Saratoga Plan. We, as a town, committed \$10,000 towards the closing costs and other items involved in the transaction. Mr. Tooker very generously donated the land which is worth almost \$1,000,000. There is a county grant involved for about \$32,000, which will be passed through the town to give to Saratoga Plan. A part of the land donation we may need for road improvements and reconfiguration at the Jones/Ingersol/Old Gick intersection has been excluded from the conservation easement. The town has pledged \$10,000 and they came up a little short, about \$22,000, for the donation, closing costs, town donation and county donation. **Councilman Lant** asked if Mr. Tooker had to pay that money. **Supervisor Johnson** said he did not. It was a valuation of the donation. It is not a monetary contribution, it is a land contribution. **Mr. Riper** said it is a conservation easement so the land can never be used for anything other than agricultural purposes. Saratoga Plan will manage that. The land will remain in the trust of Mr. Tooker's family. **Supervisor Johnson** said the town gave support to get the grant and also supported with the \$10,000. Saratoga Plan is short money and they are looking for more money.

Councilman McEachron said the part time clerk wages has been brought up and we have received information back on the number of part-time clerks we have in the town. **Supervisor Johnson** said he spoke to the Comptroller about this and budgeting for it in 2019. When this issue came up the clerks received a pay increase to \$14.00. We recognized the two clerks have been here longer and should be making more money. Typically during the course of the year we don't make salary adjustments. **Councilman McEachron** said the problem is we should have given the new clerks the rate of pay the current clerks were making and moving the current clerks to \$14.00. We missed that as a board. **Supervisor Johnson** said we had a new clerk hired at \$14.00 per hour. We had current clerks who were making less and we passed a resolution to make them equal. Then the question of them being here longer, should they get more money. We are trying to rectify that by increasing the court clerks hourly rate in the 2019 budget when we normally do salary adjustments. The other two clerks would remain at the \$14.00 rate to do away with the inequity based on employment longevity. **Councilman McEachron** said this was discussed in May because we didn't have the information on the number of part time employees. He said he received an email the next day which verified only two clerks were affected, which is what we anticipated, which is why we didn't increase their pay that night. **Mr. Reale** said like the Supervisor stated, we normally don't increase hourly rates until budget time. In the past, we have given part time employees a 5% raise each year during the budget process. We have four part time positions but only three are filled at this time. He said he is working on the salaries for the 2019 budget and the Supervisor said he wanted to give the two court clerks more than 5% because they have been here longer. **Councilman McEachron** asked why we didn't start the new clerks at the same rate of pay as the existing clerks. **Mr. Reale** said it is at the discretion of the department head because we do not have a salary schedule for part time employees. As long as it is within their budget, the department head sets the salary for part time and seasonal employees. **Councilman McEachron** said he feels as though a part time clerk does what a full time clerk does except twenty less hours and no benefits. We created the problem by hiring a new clerk at a higher rate of pay and it's our job to fix it now, not six months from now. **Councilman Streicher** asked if it is difficult to pay an employee retroactive. **Mr. Reale** said there is no problem.

On a motion introduced by Councilman McEachron, the board adopted the following resolution.

RESOLUTION #129

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, to approve the hourly rate increase to \$15.00 per hour to the following part time Court Clerks effective June 7, 2018:

**Rebecca Dietz
Cheryl Brennan**

The adoption of the resolution was seconded by Deputy Supervisor Lant duly put to a vote, all in favor except Supervisor Johnson who was opposed. The motion passed 4-1.

Supervisor Johnson said he was opposed but not because it is not warranted. He said he would like to be consistent to what has been done in the past.

Comptroller's Report

1.) 2018 Budget Transfers

On a motion introduced by Councilman McEachron, the board adopted the following resolution:

RESOLUTION #129

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, to approve the 2018 budget transfer requested for and listed in the Comptroller's 8/2/2018 Report (attached) to the Town Board.

The adoption of the resolution was seconded by Councilman Bogardus duly put to a vote, all in favor. The motion passed 5-0.

2.) 2018 County Sales Tax Distribution

Mr. Reale said Saratoga County requires, by board resolution, the town determine how we want to take our sales tax revenue distribution. It would be in credit or cash. **Mr. Reale** said he recommends cash.

On a motion introduced by Councilman McEachron the board adopted the following resolution:

RESOLUTION #130

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, to approve the payment of the town's portion of the 2019 county sales tax in cash.

The adoption of the resolution was seconded by Councilman Bogardus, duly put to a vote, all in favor. The motion passed 5-0.

Not on the Agenda

Councilman McEachron said when he ran for the council position he answered hundreds of emails. He said he answered probably 90% of them regardless of their political party. He said he has people come to his place of business, talk to them and take time out of the day regardless of their political affiliation. We are here for the town.

Executive Session

Councilman McEachron made a motion to adjourn to executive session at 7:28 p.m. to discuss the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person. **Councilman Bogardus** seconded the motion with all board members in favor. The motion passed 5-0.

Deputy Supervisor Lant made a motion to reconvene at 8:32 p.m. **Councilman Streicher** seconded the motion with all board members in favor. The motion passed 5-0.

Supervisor Johnson said there was no action taken.

Adjournment

On a motion introduced by **Councilman Bogardus** and seconded by **Councilman McEachron** all board members in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Baldwin, Town Clerk

_____ Supervisor, Arthur Johnson

_____ Councilman, Steve Streicher

_____ Deputy Supervisor, John Lant

_____ Councilman, John McEachron

_____ Councilman, Duane Bogardus