

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN BOARD
TOWN OF RICHLAND
1 BRIDGE STREET, PULASKI, NY

DATE: August 17,2022

KIND OF MEETING: Special Town Board Meeting with Kristy LaManche

PLACE: Grand Jury Room, H. Douglas Barclay Courthouse Pulaski, NY

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Supervisor Kern Yerdon
Councilwoman Donna Gilson
Councilman Allen Goodsell
Councilwoman Sue Haynes
Councilman Robert North

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Grant Writer Kristy LaManche, Water Supervisor Ron Novak Water Clerk Mary Yerdon and Town Clerk Millie Newcomb

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. with Supervisor Yerdon leading in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilwoman Gilson gave a brief background of why she invited Kristy to the meeting today. The Town has Kristy on retainer in case something comes up that may be applicable to what the Town is working on. Councilwoman Gilson's biggest concern is the water system is getting older. We have issues going on in the system that need to be corrected. One of the biggest things that the Town is looking for is help that we may be able to get is help with the Water. The other thing is we have a very aged out building where our highway building is. We all have talked about this over the years as what would be the most likely cost effective thing to do with those buildings, or to build or buy something. Another thing that Mrs. Gilson and Ms LaMache have talked about is the church in Fernwood. Not knowing what they may want to bargain for or if it's something that we are going to do and if grant money is available to maybe make it a park. Councilwoman Gilson hasn't heard of any other Solar projects and if Solar could help support water and doesn't know if it's available to the Town or if we can do that at the Well Site and help with the Electricity. Per Supervisor Novak, the Town has the land and the 3 phase infrastructure he believes where you could put a solar field out there. He would have to check but doesn't believe that it would violate any of the WellHead protection. Supervisor Yerdon

believes that they have talked about this before about the Richland Well Site. He believes that it would be about 66,000 solar panels and they discussed it and decided that they didn't want to disturb the well site area, to try to keep it open. Solar Panels are supposed to be safe, but they really haven't been around that long so the Board decided not to do it at that location. Councilman Goodsell said that he always worries about fuel spills and equipment going in and out and chances of something happening. Supervisor Yerdon agreed and always thought about taking care of people and water. Mr Novak suggested expanding the solar field on County Route 41 at the Water Control Building. There is a considerable amount of property there and most of the property is now filled with a considerable amount of fill and would need a lot of work to be done to build on that land. If the Town was to build a new Town Barn on that land it would need a lot of subsurface work to do but if you put solar panels there you can put them almost to the train tracks and utilize the power from them. Kristy asked the Board if they are working with Regional Planning on the Climate Smart Community stuff, did the plan not you prepared with them mention any of this stuff about sighting and potential areas that make the most sense?. According to Councilwoman Gilson and Supervisor Yerdon the answer was no. Councilwoman Gilson went on to say the gentleman (Mike) they met with didn't tell them and that he was to come back , no they didn't get that far with him where they may be able to put something like this that would support the Town. Councilwoman Gilson did tell him that they could come up with some actions that the Town could move with to get the points. The town has not located anything in the area just yet. Councilwoman Gilson said that she knows that he is coming back and that she could talk to Comp Board Chair Dawn Holyinski if she has had further conversation with him. Councilman Goodsell asked if a project like this has to be near a high powered line that the project could hook up to. This has been some of the problems with the Town of Albion site, they haven't been able to find any lines that they could attach to. The Gravel pit in Fernwood was another site that the Town was looking at. There wasn't a line close enough to hook to. It's all about finding those 3 phase lines. Per Mr Novak and according to the companies with Solar Projects, the lines in the Town of Richland are maxed out. The Board said that is what they have heard now for over 1 year.

Talking about water, Kristy asked Councilwoman Gilson and Ron Novak about the aging infrastructure of the Water System. What is the overall need for the Water System? Source, distribution, what is the Town looking for or what in terms are you looking at or what are your needs or cost associated with it . What if anything have you done to pursue EFC, have you tried to pursue anything in terms of Water. Councilwoman Gilson will let Water Supervisor Novak talk about that. Mr. Novak wasn't aware if the Town had tried to track down any funding. The Board has had Dustin Clark here from B&L. Per Kristy, when you speak about drinking water/infrastructure we talk about NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation, we talk about NYS Water Infrastructure Improvement Act. There is also through homes and Community renewal, the community development block grant, and also the USDA Rural Development can provide assistance for infrastructure projects as well. They have this big co-funding between EFC CDBG and USDA where you apply to all of them and they work together and make you do some things that Kristy doesn't understand, but they do have these opportunities for grant and or low

interest loans for infrastructure projects. When you talk about drinking water through NYS Water Improvement act, (WIA) there is for drinking water side you can get up to 60% of your eligible cost reimbursed through grant funding. They (WIA) like to see it paired with a project listed on the drinking water state revolving fund or DWSRF the IUP which is the intended use plan. Mrs. LaManche gave the Board some information on those funds. The purpose of the meeting today is to give Kristy a better idea of what the Town is looking for and to try to understand the current and projected needs over the next year. When these opportunities come up and she thinks it is on our priority list, she can send Donna or Kern a summary of "hey this is out and deadlines are this, grant amount is this, it might fit for the Towns Water project or Fernwood project. Having this conversation helps her look for the Town then work on applications on the Towns behalf. It may be too late for this round so it's a good time to assess the Towns' needs for the next round. It's a good time to plan for the needs. There are 2 different programs with the WIA and the IMG. We would be looking at the WIA Funding and looking at the Drinking Water funding. Around this time the Intended use plan is finalized. You would like to submit to the State Revolving fund and that would get us eligible depending where the town scored for zero percent financing if the Town scored for hardship, subsidized financing, but we are talking about million dollar or more type of projects not a few hundred thousand types of funding where the town is replacing a pump. What she is suggesting is this is something that the Town and what she is hearing from Ron Novak is if the Town wants to look into an overhaul of the Towns Water System, to get going with many upgrades and repairs to the aging water system then we have to look at the big picture. Also to look at bond and other funding to figure out how to pay for this in the short term while we are waiting for things to close on an EFC loan. It's a complex situation when you talk about infrastructure as the Board knows when you start talking based on large projects like this. There are several different funding opportunities out there to assist that the Town can take advantage of. Kristy's short answer is if the Town wants to start going after infrastructure money, there are historically money available on an annual basis from numerous sources that will help you but you have to do some homework getting the system analysed getting and engineering report together to identify the needs and then putting together a projected cost estimates so we can pair that up with the best source of funding to pursue to offset the costs. Per Supervisor Yerdon, our water system is like a big magnet. People outside our town, for example the Town of Ellisburg would like us to sell them water which is north of Sandy Creek. We haven't even started a conversation with the Town of Albion yet. There are about 10-12 that would like water. A few years back the Town of Albion was talking about getting water from Richland. There is nothing binding at the moment, it's just conversation. With all the talk of expansion to Albion and Ellisburg the pressures that it would put on the pumps and chlorination pumps the town has to plan for the future and possibly a whole system overhaul. It's one of those things that we have to plan for the future as far as the well fields. The Town recently signed an agreement with the Town of Orwell. They will come on line next year so we have to keep the well field accessible for future development by putting in a road and keeping the road open all year round. This is an expense that will be coming up that we have to think about. Are some of those costs rolled

over into the user fees or service fees to those districts? The majority of that would be coming out of those fees. Its Mr. Novak's impression, is that most of that funding work has been done and utilized by our engineers at Barton and Loguidice as part of district #5. We used Rural Development money and EFC money for district build outs. Most of what we are talking about is the age of our system from new to 18 years old. We are not talking about significant infrastructure issues, so you are down to a lot more operation and maintenance of the system and the lack of proper maintenance and lack of money for maintenance. The Town has 27 wells in Richland. Some wells cannot be used because of groundwater influence. Five of the 27 wells supply water to the Town of Richland and Sandy Creek. Wells 20 and 22 are projected to be utilized in future build up. The Town of Sandy Creeks uses 40-41% of the daily pumping. Mrs. LaManche told the Board that people don't like increases in fees. How often are the water rates reviewed vs operating budget projected needs? Municipalities are not getting accurate accounting of what is the cost to operate and provide these services and user fees are too low to maintain these systems and not to be profitable, but for maintenance to balance the costs vs income. User rates have been looked at not only for the Town but for all the other service contracts that the town has, then that is one way to evaluate our system and maintenance needs more than anything, whether to apply for grant funding or not. One of the things on the application is our statement of need and they will look at the user rates now vs projected cost for the project and it's over a certain threshold then it qualifies us for grant funding which some maybe familiar from previous grants that have been done, so we have to make sure the user rates are accurate and up to date and sufficient to cover the cost of the project. It's a pretty painful thing to have to do because people are used to turning on the faucet and they don't see or know where it comes from and don't understand what it takes to get the water to them. Supervisor Novak told the board that it currently costs the Town of Richland \$3.80 to make 1000 gallons of water. We are charging our largest customer that consumes 41% of the water \$2.00 per 1000. The Town has hired a financial consultant to help the Town. Councilwoman Gilson says, because we have an aging system WD#1 is almost 20 years old, things were not planned out and the Town is not prepared to do the repairs needed. Sandy Creek wants to extend their district to maybe 400 more users so what happens? It puts more stress on our system, that we have to support everyone else. We are getting stuck with the constant use of the system. Mrs. Gilson's question: is there money for smaller projects? Richlands biggest user is the Town of Sandy Creek. The contract is supposed to be evaluated every year in September. There are alot of things that haven't been done properly in the last 5-8 years that have put the Town behind the eight ball. We are in a bad position. Per Mrs. LaMance, the first thing to do is to evaluate, see where we are at and see where the real time 2022 user fee should be. Then sit down with Sandy Creek and everyone else and say we are going to implement a gradual increase to your cost to help us start making these improvements that should have been done and support it with data. You are our biggest user, this is what's happening with our system. This is what we are forecasting our needs to be to maintain and improve our system as we expand for your benefit and propose a sliding scale increase over a few years. Doing this while not hitting them all at once, but they know what to expect to get the Town caught up to where it should be.

Supervisor Novak says it's going to be tough especially with the gradual increase. The good news is that the engineer that Sandy Creek uses is the same as Richlands. Same engineer that did the analysis of cost is the same. The gradual increase in position is hard because Richland has gotten itself behind the 8 ball and it can't continue to absorb the gradual nature. Conversation turned to the Highway garage possibility. Possible funding through USDA Rural Development. Maybe look into a "Shared Services" type agreement. Fernwood Church project: Maybe build a pocket park of some kind. The NYS office of Parks and rec may have some good funding opportunities. The building may be historical. The Town needs to purchase the Church to qualify for this type of funding. Per Mrs. LaManche, the church is not historical unless it is listed on the NYS Historical Registry. With nothing more to discuss, **a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations was made by Councilman North and seconded by Councilwoman Haynes. In a roll call vote, all were in favor with a vote of "AYE".**
11:24am.

At 1:40 Councilman Goodsell made a motion to exit the Executive Session. This motion was seconded by Councilwoman Gilson. In a roll call vote, all were in favor with a vote of "AYE". No result of the Executive Session was given. Back in the regular session. Water Supervisor Novak has had 3 requests for payments on various items. 1. 100 Storz Valves at the cost of \$15,500 using ARPA funds. 2. Purchase Chemical Pumps (16 yrs old) at a cost of \$4600 for 3 of them. 3. Purchase a Truck cap for the operator's truck (Joe Sikora) at the cost of \$3911. These items were tabled until Budget Officer Tammie Whaley could be consulted on the budget. Supervisor Novak said the Storz valves would be about \$285 each once the supplier runs out. He stressed the importance of this for public safety. He was questioned on why a cap is needed and wanted to know if the other operator (Bob Hicks) had one. Supervisor Novak advised the Board that he does not have a cap on his truck. Mr. Novak showed pictures of tools that were in the back of Water Operator Sikora's truck. The value of the tools was approximately \$5000. They are exposed to all types of weather. It will take about 14 weeks for the truck cap to arrive. Contingency money could be used to pay for the cap but after a discussion, it was decided to wait for Mrs Whaley to look at the budget to see if there is enough money in the budget. Supervisor Novak also advised the Board that he is all set on stocking ductile piping but not on PVC. If they get a PVC pipe, it must be stored inside somewhere. Councilwoman Haynes suggested that maybe there is room at the Highway Barn. Water Supervisor Novak said he would like the chemical pumps to be the same as the ones they have in Fernwood because they just work better.
It appears there is \$5000 in contingency in districts ,1,2,3 and district 5 has \$10,000 in contingency but Storz are already on all of the district 5 hydrants as part of the contract, per Laird Petrie for the updated status of the budget. Chem pumps are a capital improvement. Storz Valves are public safety, and the truck cap is operational-protects the town's assets.(tools).

A motion made by Councilman Goodsell to order the cap and Storz valves after getting together with Budget Officer Tammie Whaley to see if the money's there. This motion was seconded by Councilwoman Haynes. In a roll call vote, all were in favor with a vote of "AYE". Discussion turned to water rates for the Town of Richland residents and for the entities that the Town of Richland supplies water to. **After a long discussion a motion to raise water rates across the board was made by Councilwoman Gilson and seconded by Councilman Goodsell. In a roll call vote, all board members were in favor with a vote of "AYE". The rates are as follows.**

The Town of Sandy Creek	\$4.50 per 1000 gallons
Town of Richland	\$3.80 per 1000 gallons
Fulton Companies	\$4.00 per 1000 gallons
Schoeller Technical Paper	\$4.00 per 1000 gallons

With nothing more to bring before the Board, a motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Goodsell and seconded by Councilman North. In a roll call vote, all were in favor with a vote of "AYE". Adjourned 2:10 pm.

NEXT TOWN BOARD MEETING: September 13, 2022

MEETING ADJOURNED: 2:10pm

Respectfully submitted by

Millie Newcomb
Town Clerk