

**August 10, 2022
Town of Lyme
Regular Monthly Meeting 6:30 P.M.**

Call to Order:

Supervisor Countryman called the regular monthly meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. opening the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Those present included Supervisor Countryman, Deputy Supervisor Bourquin, Councilmember Gosier, Councilmember Farrell, Councilmember Villa, Town Clerk Ariana Henderson (remote), Legislator William Johnson, William Pfaff, Tina Fahringer and Jennifer Kingsley.

Privilege of the Floor

Legislator William Johnson: There was no report.

Supervisor's Report

The Town Board did not approve the report because Bowers and Company only submitted a preliminary report.

Highway Superintendent's Report

There was no report.

Clerk's Report

Monthly Receipts were as follow: Total Local Shares Remitted: \$5,959.50; Total State County & Local Revenues: \$6,001.00 Total Non – Local Revenues: \$41.50

Audit of the Bills (Abstracts #15 & #16)

Resolution 2022-116: Councilmember Villa made the motion to approve Abstract #15 in the amount of \$42,521.12; seconded by Councilmember Gosier; all were in favor and the motion was carried.

Resolution 2022-117: Councilmember Villa made the motion to approve Abstract #16 in the amount of \$103,295.30; seconded by Councilmember Gosier; all were in favor and the motion was carried.

Approval of the Minutes

Resolution 2022-118: Councilmember Villa made a motion to approve July 13, 2022; seconded by Councilmember Gosier; all were in favor and the motion was carried.

Committee Reports

Assessor's Report:

Small Claims and Supreme Court Filings

We have one Small Claims and one Supreme Court Filing. I have not been notified of a hearing date yet for the Small Claims case. The Supreme Court filing has been forwarded to Jim Burrows and I also gave Terry Countryman the information that we had in our files.

Maintenance

Carol and I have begun working in the field updating properties starting in Three Mile Bay this week.

There were no questions on the report.

Municipal Water Board Report:

Supervisor Countryman stated that the Water Board will have an informational meeting with Gregor from Bernier and Carr on August 24, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. regarding Water District#2 extension and the Point Salubrious water study.

Planning Board:

There was no Planning Board Minutes.

Youth Commission:

There was no report.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA):

There was no minutes. The RV Law the ZBA would like to see put in place got sent to the Town Planning Board to review.

ZEO/CEO Report:

There were no comments or questions on the ZEO/CEO report.

TMB Cemetery:

Councilmember Gosier reported that she received a \$200.00 donation for the cemetery. She also received several calls complimenting how great the cemetery looked this year.

Cape Vincent Ambulance:

Supervisor Countryman discussed concerns regarding the makeup of the members of the ambulance board. Dave McIntyre and his wife have both stepped down from their positions. Jeff Call was going to fill Supervisor Countryman in on the meeting (tonight) that was happening at the same time as the Town Board meeting. Supervisor Countryman is waiting to see a copy of their bylaws. Councilmember Gosier suggested that Jeff Call should attend our next meeting.

Old Business:

Zoning Law Barton & Loguidice Analysis:

Clerk Henderson uploaded the most recent Barton and Loguidice Zoning Law Analysis on the Town website for residents to review.

BCA Point Salubrious Water Study:

Councilmember Gosier asked if we were at the point to schedule a public hearing for Point Salubrious water district. Supervisor Countryman stated that right now Bernier and Carr is changing the study to include Benson Point. This will add more users and may help the cost. Gregor hopes to get the approval of the Water Board at the August meeting and they would then come to us for September. Councilmember Gosier stated that Benson Point is in desperate need of water. They have none. She said it is crucial to have a meeting while seasonal residents are here. Councilmember Villa stated that it wouldn't be a public hearing it would be an informational meeting. They discussed putting a water tower on the Point instead of upgrading the one in the Village. There was a brief discussion on the cost of the water per user.

New Business:

Restore New York Grant:

Supervisor Countryman stated that he shared the information with the Board and the information Ed Valentine provided. It is a process that needs to happen fairly quickly. A SEQR will need to be approved by the Village Planning Board. The Chairman of that board just resigned due to a conflict that they are applying for the NY forward grant that involves their property. Supervisor Countryman has asked Robin Grovesteen to make sure we stay on track for the grant timeline.

Town of Lyme Surplus Property:

Supervisor Countryman wanted to discuss the property on Montana Shores the Town owns. Holly and Kevin Swingle would like to buy it. Ms. Swingle is willing to do whatever it takes to make it happen. Supervisor Countryman explained the Town doesn't want the property but doesn't want to pay for the expense to get rid of it. Councilmember Villa stated that the other land owners should also be able to purchase the land we own adjacent to their properties. Supervisor Countryman's concern was that there were 3 to 4 owners adjacent to other parcels the Town owns. There was further discussion on the process of selling the parcel the Town owns. The Board agreed to get moving on the process for the parcel of land that the Swingle's want to purchase.

Chaumont Volunteer Fire Department:

Supervisor Countryman asked for the Boards approval to pre-pay the Chaumont Volunteer 3rd quarter appropriation. They usually don't receive the funds until September per the annual contract. Councilmember Farrell asked what was so urgent about them receiving the payment. He also stated that they used much more fuel than Three Mile Bay Volunteer Fire Department. Councilmember Villa asked if there was an explanation for the use. Supervisor Countryman assumed it was because they have the First Responder status for the Town. Deputy Supervisor Bourquin stated the appropriation is a budgeted item and we have done it in the past so we should have no issues. It is not a regular occurring thing. Everyone agreed to approve the advance payment but would also like to see a breakdown of their fuel charges.

Sole Appointed Assessor:

Supervisor Countryman wanted to have an open discussion on moving to a sole appointed assessor from having three elected assessors. Councilmember Gosier said she feels very strongly we do and it's long overdue. She questioned whether we were the only Town left that had elected assessors. He stated that 926 Towns out of 1107 in NY have sole appointed assessors. He indicated nothing against the people we have they are both good people but then again we have an open position we are looking at going forward and we have no control over the quality of what happens there. The reason towns have gone with sole appointed assessor is it will raise the professionalism that you get in assessments. That's why this may be the best move for us at this time. Supervisor Countryman said there are certain requirements for sole appointed. Deputy Supervisor Bourquin believed that the appointed assessors have to take the same required course as elected assessors. Supervisor Countryman responded that continued education is optional for elected and required for appointed. He heard a suggestion that the Town should have Paul Warneck fill the vacant position till the end of the year. One reason he is so for this move is he sat with Marsha in early May and set up the assessment for Convergent and if Paul Warneck hadn't of been there walking her through the assessment and she had years of experience. We are dealing with more and more changes including solar farms. Roxanne Burns (Jefferson County Real Property Director) suggested the Town go this route. She stated even if we pay a sole assessor more money it will pay off in the way our properties are assessed. Councilmember Gosier said it isn't an easy job and will continue to get more complicated including solar projects and subdivisions. It will raise the level of professionalism. Supervisor Countryman said it takes it out of the realm of popularity and knowledge. Both people in the position now have a lot to offer. If we go with sole appointed one of our current assessors could fill that position and one could be the clerk. The salary of the Cape Vincent sole appointed is \$55,000.00. They discussed the different routes you can go to make this change. Deputy Supervisor Bourquin said he believes if we pass a law it should be subject to referendum so we aren't dictating the Town. Councilmember Farrell questioned what the Town would do if we don't get a qualified person to apply for the job within the next 3.5 months. Supervisor Countryman stated there are qualified assessors that do multiple towns as sole assessors. Councilmember Villa said there has been huge changes in this Town. He stated five to six years ago we wouldn't be discussing this. He is supportive of going with the sole appointed assessor. Supervisor Countryman stated that he would speak with Attorney Russell to get a law drafted for sole assessor to review at our September meeting.

Resolution 2022-119: Councilmember Gosier made the motion for Supervisor Countryman to move forward with whatever steps need to be taken to change from elected assessor to sole appointed assessor and also to schedule a tentative public hearing for the Town Board's September meeting; seconded by Councilmember Villa; Gosier, Countryman, Farrell, Villa AYE; Bourquin NAY and the motion was carried.

Swimming at Bicentennial Park:

Deputy Supervisor Bourquin stated that there was an issue with people swimming at Bicentennial Park. He said there should be three signs ordered with arrows stating what sections you can't swim in at Bicentennial Park so people don't get confused about swimming at the

Beach. It's unfortunate that one resident who doesn't follow the safety precautions and rules ruins it for everyone else.

Privilege of the Floor

William Pfaff, County Route 125: Mr. Pfaff expressed concerns about the Point Salubrious Water District study. He wasn't happy with Bernier and Carr when they were doing a water district project in Watertown. He said that the figures changed several times. He requested to see the figures from the Point Salubrious study. He also stated that even though more lots are being sold on the Point it is still not affordable for some people. Supervisor Countryman invited him to attend the August Water Board meeting. Councilmember Gosier said they are aware of both situation including people with no water and people who won't be able to pay tremendous costs for water service.

Jennifer Kingsley: Ms. Kingsley stated that she assumed the Board was going into executive session regarding her father's case. She spoke with both Town assessors and made them aware of a lot of things regarding the assessment. She offered to also explain the case to the Board if they would like to hear what she has to say. Supervisor Countryman said that they don't plan to dig too deep into the case but whatever is said will be discussed with our lawyer. Ms. Kingsley stated that she was trying to avoid going through the lawyer.

Online Privilege of the Floor

There was no privilege of the floor.

Executive Session

Resolution 2022-120: Councilmember Villa made the motion to enter Executive Session at 7:48 p.m.; seconded by Councilmember Farrell; all were in favor and the motion was carried.

Return to Open Meeting

Resolution 2022-121: Councilmember Villa made the motion to enter Open Meeting at 8:00 p.m.; seconded by Councilmember Farrell; all were in favor and the motion was carried.

Adjournment

Resolution 2022-122: Councilmember Villa a made the motion to adjourn; seconded by Councilmember Farrell; all were in favor and the motion was carried; meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ariana Henderson

Ariana Henderson
Town Clerk