

May 8, 2023

At an Adjourned Meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Dewitt, Onondaga County, New York, held at the Dewitt Town Hall, 5400 Butternut Drive, Dewitt, New York, in said town and via Zoom on the 8th day of May 2023, commencing at 6:00 p.m.:

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Michalenko, and upon the roll being called the following were:

PRESENT: Supervisor Michalenko, Councilors Chiarenza, Docter, Dooling, Klee Hood, Mannion, and Ruckdeschel

ABSENT:

ALSO

PRESENT: Town Attorney Natoli, Town Clerk Epolito, Highway Superintendent Conte, Recreation Director Clark

Town Board Minutes

Motion by Councilor Docter, seconded by Councilor Chiarenza.

RESOLVED, to accept the minutes of the April 24, 2023 Town Board Meeting.

Adopted 7 Ayes

Authorization to Hire Motor Equipment Operator (MEO)

Motion by Councilor Docter, seconded by Councilor Chiarenza.

RESOLVED, at 6:04 pm to authorize the Highway Superintendent Conte to hire Joshua Riley as a Motor Equipment Operator (MEO) at a starting salary of step six, \$24.07/hour with a start date of May 22, 2023.

Adopted 7 Ayes

Authorization to Hire Motor Equipment Operator (MEO)

Motion by Councilor Dooling, seconded by Councilor Klee Hood.

RESOLVED, at 6:06 pm to authorize the Highway Superintendent Conte to hire Spencer Woodruff as a Motor Equipment Operator (MEO) at a starting salary of step eight, \$25.65/hour with a start date of May 22, 2023.

Adopted 7 Ayes

Public Hearing – Local Waterfront

Supervisor Michalenko recessed the meeting and called to order a public hearing at 6:05 p.m., to consider the Draft Local Waterfront Revitalization Program for the Town of DeWitt as complete and

ready to submit to the New York State Department of State for its review by state, federal and regional agencies pursuant to the provisions of Article 42 of the New York State Executive Law.

Proof of publication in the Syracuse Post-Standard dated April 27, 2023.

Supervisor Michalenko presented the Draft Local Waterfront Revitalization Program.

With no further questions, comments or concerns, Supervisor Michalenko closed the Public Hearing.

Motion by Councilor Docter, seconded by Councilor Chiarenza.

Resolution Accepting the Town of DeWitt's Draft Local Waterfront Revitalization Program as Complete and Ready for Public Review and Authorizing its submission to the New York State Department of State

WHEREAS, the Town of DeWitt initiated preparation of a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program in cooperation with the New York State Department of State in accordance with the provisions of Executive Law, Article 42; and

WHEREAS, the Draft Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) has been prepared under the guidance of the Town of DeWitt, with consultant planning services provided by Environmental Design & Research.

WHEREAS, the Town of DeWitt's Board, as lead agency, has prepared and evaluated an Environmental Assessment Form concerning the action of adopting the LWRP in accordance with the requirements of the State Environmental Quality Review Act and Part 617 of the implementing regulations of Article 8 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law, and determined that there will be no anticipated adverse impacts upon natural, institutional, economic, developmental, and declarations of the Town, and have, therefore, prepared and filed a Negative Declaration;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Draft Local Waterfront Revitalization Program for the Town of DeWitt is accepted by the Board as complete and ready for public review and shall be submitted to the New York State Department of State for its review by State, federal, and regional agencies pursuant to the provisions of Article 42 of the NYS Executive Law.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that a public hearing on the Town's Draft LWRP was held on May 8, 2023 at 6:30 pm, at the Town of DeWitt Offices. Copies of the Draft LWRP are available for public examination at the Town Office, 5400 Butternut Drive, East Syracuse, New York.

Adopted 7 Ayes

Hydrogen Project Presentation

Paul Mutolo, CEO of Standard Hydrogen Corp., Bill Dailey, VP of Standard Hydrogen Corp., and Gary Stottler, Director of Eng. of Standard Hydrogen Corp. gave a presentation regarding a proposed hydrogen project called Emissions Free Everything which will be a pilot program with National Grid to create a hydrogen facility. It will allow for renewable integration, non-wire alternatives, fuel for clean vehicles, etc. There would be no cost to the town. A short discussion ensued regarding build time, water sources, consumer fees or savings, point of return, and security risks.

Assessment Discussion

The Board had a lengthy discussion regarding the recent assessment increases. Councilors Mannion and Dooling were against the increases for 2024 and asked for the assessments to be rescinded or rolled back. Supervisor Michalenko explained the Town Board can only control the equalization rate and the appointment of the Assessor. Assessments can only be set by the Assessor and the assessments would be the same whether the Board decided to stay at the 100% equalization rate or reduce it. By reducing the equalization rate, it would only increase the tax rates, but not change the total amount of taxes collected. Residents expressed concern over their assessments rising but not their salaries, substantial increases in assessment each year, that the assessments are inflated, residents are and will move, that the grievance process is unequal, that seniors do not have the resources necessary to grieve or go online, lack of understanding exemptions, making the information on the website more noticeable and to consider sending a letter to all residents, allowing voters to vote on the assessments to be increased, requested the Board to reduce the budget, and assess properties on a three year or rotating schedule. The Board provided the website www.tax.ny.gov for the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance, provided resources for seniors: Peace, Inc. and CODFish, and committed to considering the 3-year assessment schedule.

2022 Recreation Annual Report

Recreation Director Peter Clark presented the 2022 Recreation Annual Report. Topics included staff, canal days, day camp, seniors, and Carrier Park upcoming tournament.

New York State Town Clerk Association Conference Update

Town Clerk Epolito submitted a brief update on the 2023 New York State Town Clerk Association (NYSTCA) Conference.

Executive Session

Motion by Councilor Dooling, seconded by Councilor Ruckdeschel.

RESOLVED, to enter into Executive Session at 8:54 p.m. under Section 104(1) of the Public Officers Law, to discuss contract negotiations.

Adopted 7 Ayes

Motion by Councilor Ruckdeschel, seconded by Councilor Docter.

RESOLVED, to adjourn the Executive Session and return to the Regular Session at 9:20 p.m.

Adopted 7 Ayes

Court Security Contract

Motion by Councilor Dooling, seconded by Councilor Mannion.
RESOLVED, to authorize the Supervisor to sign the Court Security Contract for January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023.

Adopted 7 Ayes

Assessment Discussion - Continued

Councilor Dooling made a motion to rescind assessments for 2023. The motion was not seconded. Councilor Mannion made a motion to have no residential increases next year. The motion was not seconded.

Councilor Ruckdeschel made a motion to evaluate not assessing all residential properties each year. The motion was not seconded.

Councilor Chiarenza expressed dissatisfaction over the increase of assessments and budget. There was a consensus, with no vote, to evaluate not assessing all residential properties each year. The Board also discussed a letter being mailed to all residents. The Board will discuss potential assessment schedules and other possible alternatives with the Assessor and Town Attorney.

Adjournment

Motion by Councilor Docter, seconded by Councilor Chiarenza.
RESOLVED, to adjourn the meeting at 9:42 p.m.

Adopted 7 Ayes

Angela Epolito, Town Clerk