

TOWN OF CONSTANTIA
MINUTES – SUPERVISOR’S MEETING – March 2, 2020
9:00 am Constantia Town Hall

Present: Kenneth Mosley - Supervisor
Richard Colesante, John Metzger, Thomas Moran– Council Members
Clare Haynes – Town Clerk
Roy Reehil – County Legislator
Absent: Frank Tomaino – Town Councilman

CALL TO ORDER:

At 9:00 am Mr. Mosley called the meeting to order with the pledge of allegiance.

COUNTY LEGISLATOR:

Mr. Reehil, County Legislator came to the meeting to discuss some issues that Town has with the County tax auction. Property owners will start getting letters about delinquent taxes nine months before the County starts the process. For example if a property owner owes taxes for 2018, in March of 2019 they will get a letter informing them if they do not pay before a specified date, an additional \$300 fee will be added to their back tax amount and the foreclosure clock starts ticking. Mr. Reehil believes the date is sometime in May.

This year 2020 Oswego County has 300 properties up for foreclosure with the auction being May 1st and 2nd, this is double the amount in previous years. Mr. Reehil believes there are so many on the list because the County went to the 2 year foreclosure process.

In the past there was an exemption process for hardships, this process was very difficult. It was thought that some residents took advantage of exemptions, because of this, the hardship exemptions were taken off the table, County Legislators no longer have the ability to ask for hardships for their residents.

When asked about the foreclosure process before this meeting, Mr. Reehil found out that it is a NYS law that property owners must pay the newest taxes first. Mr. Reehil stated that this keeps people from always being a year behind on their taxes. Another question was the cutoff date to pay all back taxes on the property by the owner always so early in the year? Mr. Gardner, County Treasurer told Mr. Reehil that the cutoff date has always been January 31st, the County has just moved up the auction date.

Mr. Colesante believes this law is good for vacant land, but not for occupied properties. Occupied properties are difficult, especially seeing the hardship exemptions were taken away. Mr. Reehil believes the law needs a little improvement. Mr. Colesante encouraged Mr. Reehil to contact other Counties to see how owner occupied properties that are being foreclosed upon are handled. The reason for these questions, is the Town has two properties that are both owner occupied that are up for foreclosure, after contact with both owners there was confusion and neither one were aware of the foreclosure. One is an elderly resident another could be a case of fraud, both are very upsetting to the members of the town board. One of the owners of a property on the foreclosure list was in to pay her taxes, when Mrs. Haynes told her the property was on the auction list, she was surprised as she thought she had another year.

Mr. Reehil will talk to Mr. Gardner to ask if he could put together a timeline of the foreclosure process along with the letters that are sent to residents. Mrs. Haynes believes this would help when people come in with questions. Not all Town’s get a list of properties that are up for foreclosure, Mr. Reehil shared them with the Town and Village in case any properties could of interest to the land bank. If the Town believes a parcel would be a good fit for the land bank, now is the time to make them aware. Mr. Mosley did contact the land bank for one of the properties, hopefully they will be interested.

FRANCHISE AGREEMENT:

Mrs. Haynes has discussed the franchise agreement with the board and Mr. Reehil. Oswego County in the past has made the Town “whole” as it comes to taxes that were not paid. All utility payments are handled at the Treasurer’s office, this includes all cell towers, Niagara Mohawk, Verizon and Time Warner. This year the Town received a letter from the County notifying the Town that they will not reimburse the Town for exempted tax monies because of the franchise agreement. For Constantia this amount is \$2,025.77, Mrs. Haynes has spoken to Mr. Gardner about this new ruling as the Town was blindsided with this charge. If the County was going to make this type of change, they should had made the Town aware during the budget process. The Town has not set up any budget line to offset this charge. Mr. Reehil told the board members that the County has a new computer system and Mr. Gardner has been using the new system to look for monies for the County. Mrs. Haynes did send the information to Mr. Langey from Costello, Cooney and Fearon for review as our franchise agreement has no mention of the right to apply franchise fees paid as a credit against special franchise assessments. Mr. Langey will review and respond to the Town.

*At 10:30 am Mr. Reehil left the meeting.

RECREATIONAL CAMPING VEHICLES:

Next meeting on the recreational camping vehicles addition to the Land Development Law will be Tuesday, March 10th at 9am. Mr. Mosley spoke to Mr. Macari, Board of Appeals Chair he will be attending the meeting.

Mr. Moran told the board members that Williamstown has a legal notice in the Queen Central for an appeal to their RV law, Mr. Moran is thinking about attending the meeting.

SEWER:

G&G Municipal Consulting and Grant Writing sent a proposal for additional door to door canvass for USDA-RD to help with the eligibility for a lower interest loan. The Town is currently just above the median income level to qualify for the lower interest, Mr. Grasso is hopeful he can hit more owner occupied houses to help with the numbers. Mr. Moran made the motion to authorize Mr. Mosley to sign the agreement for \$975.00, seconded by Mr. Colesante.

Carried: Moran – Yes Colesante – Yes Metzger – Yes Mosley - Yes

ADJOURN:

At 10:55 am the meeting adjourned.