

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING OF THE TOWN OF THURMAN HELD SEPTEMBER 16, 2008 AT THE TOWN HALL, 311 ATHOL ROAD, ATHOL NEW YORK, COMMENCING AT 7:00P.M.**

PRESENT: **MRS. RUTH KELLER**

**MR. LEON GALUSHA**

**MR. CHARLES BILLS**

**MR. JAMES LIGON**

**MR. JOHN HASKELL**

Recording Secretary: **Cynthia R. Hyde**, Town Clerk

The meeting was called to order by **John Haskell, Supervisor**

Roll call of Town Board members by the Town Clerk

Pledge of allegiance to the flag of the **United States of America**

A moment of silence for our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:**

On a motion by **Councilman Galusha** seconded by **Councilwomen Keller**, that the minutes of the August Regular and Fiscal Town Board meetings be approved.

**MOTION CARRIED:** 5 AYES ~ KELLER, GALUSHA, BILLS, LIGON, HASKELL

**CORRECTIONS ON JULY MINUTES:** On a motion by **Councilman Galusha** seconded by **Councilwomen Keller**, that corrections on the July 22, 2008 Regular Town Board meeting minutes be approved.

**MOTION CARRIED:** 5 AYES ~ KELLER, GALUSHA, BILLS, LIGON, HASKELL

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**CLAIMS CONTINUED:**

General Fund #. **585-603** [except for # **586** from the **Clements firm**] also # **605-618**, [except for # **608** Robin Croissant] and # **638** in the amount of **\$8025.95** abstract # 67. Highway fund # **620-637** in the amount of **\$6,640.96** abstract # 33. **[\$6,640.96 should be \$15,312.50]**

**CONCERNS REGARDING CLAIMS:**

**Councilwoman Keller** questions **weather** [**weather should be whether**] the board is seeing all the bills that come through.

**LOCAL LAW #2 2006:**

**Councilman Ligon** has received questions about Local Law #2 2006 pertaining to the 3 acre minimum subdivision rule. **Ligon** consulted the Town Attorney; they both read the entire law and found there is no **grandfather provision**. For subdivisions of less than 3 acres a variance request must be submitted to the Town Board. The Board is the **soul** [**soul should be sole**] body having the authority to grant a variance through that law.

**END OF CORRECTIONS**

**PAYMENT OF CLAIMS:**

On a motion by **Councilwoman Keller**, seconded by **Councilman Bills**, it was moved that the claims be paid on abstract # 86 general fund and abstract # 37 highway fund.

**MOTION CARRIED:** 5 AYES ~ KELLER, GALUSHA, BILLS, LIGON, HASKELL

**REPORT FROM COUNCILMAN BILLS:**

**Councilman Bills** reported that the bulldozer would be brought up to the cemetery and work will begin.

**REPORT FROM COUNCILWOMAN KELLER:**

**Councilwoman Keller** reports that the railroad ties at the Thurman dump will be buried. **Supervisor Haskell** said that Warren County is willing to lend the Town of Thurman a loader with forks to move the ties.

**LETTER FROM WARRENSBURG SCHOOL:**

**Supervisor Haskell** read a letter from Warrensburg School pertaining to increase payment to bus drivers for the youth commission which will be reflected in the 2009 budget.

**2009 BUDGET:**

**Supervisor Haskell** will present the tentative budget to the board Tuesday.

**OCTOBER BOARD MEETINGS:**

There will be a budget workshop before the Fiscal meeting on October 20, 2008. The Regular Town Board meeting will be held Tuesday October 21, 2008.

**OLD BUSSINESS:**

The railroad ties at the landfill will be buried. Improvements need to be made at the Harris House; the Board has agreed to hire an architect to look at the Harris house to be sure the minimum court house standards are met.

**THRIFT SHOP:**

**Councilwoman Keller** brought up the subject of a community thrift shop. It was decided that donations would be accepted at the Town Hall. The **Board** asks that only items clean and in good shape be brought in. Volunteers will be needed to help put the thrift shop together.

**GRANT UPDATE:**

The Board was presented with a grant update sheet from **Mr. Lakatos**. **Supervisor Haskell** said that the nature trail looks nice, the CD tour markers are up and some of the nature trail benches are in place. The GPS maps done by Warren County Soil and Water will be available next Tuesday, September 23, 2008.

**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

**Loran Eddy** spoke about his concern with rising school taxes. **Eddy** reiterated that **Mr. Birdsall** asked at the March meeting for the board to approve **Mr. Ed Binder** to fill the third assessor position. **Eddy** said that the money was already appropriated in the budget for the third assessor. **Eddy** felt that the Town lost money because of the three negative votes that were cast against approving **Ed Binder**.

**Councilwoman Keller** suggested looking at the ORPS website. We have

maintained 100% since 2000 a couple of years before we were put in the 6 year program. **Mr. Swan** from ORP's believes the number of parcels in our town could be handled by one assessor. **Keller** said she voted against the local law to abolish 3 elected assessors and appoint one sole assessor for one reason only. That was because it went out for vote in November, the people voted it down and she wasn't about to say I'm going to take your voice away and I'm going to go ahead and appoint a sole appointed. **Keller** said that her personal opinion was to go with sole appointed. **Councilwoman Keller** also said that she felt that with the market dropping we could have maintained 100% without doing a thing with peoples assessed values, our two assessors chose not to do that, but it could have been done.

**Supervisor Haskell** replied that **Tucker** came to us two or three times to say he couldn't do it without the third assessor. **Haskell** said our property values haven't dropped; He brought in Forbes magazine which shows this area has a 7% increase in sales. **Haskell** said He thinks that it's because our area is running out of land.

**Councilman Galusha** asked if the third seat needed to be filled.

**Councilwoman Keller** answered that it will be on the ballot as an unexpired seat.

**Mr. Brian Hall** said that in the beginning he thought we needed a third assessor. He heard **Ed Binder** wouldn't put his name on the ballot because of religious beliefs. Hall suggested that if **Ed Binder** wanted the job so bad why wasn't his name on the ballot.

**Supervisor Haskell** said he couldn't speak for Ed. **Councilman Ligon** said that he talked to **Tuck Birdsall** a couple of weeks ago about not

being at 100%, **Birdsall's** explanation was that there haven't been enough sales to compare because the market has dropped. **Ligon** said that The 6 year program that **Mr. Eddy** referred to has expired and that this board was not asked to renew it. **Ligon** also noted that **Mr. Birdsall** had the opportunity to hire a clerk which he didn't do.

**Mr. Loren Eddy** asked that if **Ed Binder** is a help why deny **Mr. Birdsall**.

**Councilman Ligon** said that if a single assessor could do the job why have three. **Supervisor Haskell** didn't remember **Mr. Swan** saying one assessor would be enough. **Councilwoman Keller** remembered that **Swan** said one part time assessor could handle the number of parcels in Thurman, although he didn't specify how many part time hours. **Keller** talked about being at 100% back in 2000 when the town wasn't in the 6 year program. **Keller** differed about why the town was not at 100%. **Keller** said that she didn't know how the market could be viewed as good when there were for sale signs all over the place; she also said that she knew an individual who sold and took a loss.

**Supervisor Haskell** asked **Councilwoman Keller** to go to the assessor's office to see what homes have sold for and compare those prices to the assessments.

**Councilwoman Keller** replied that many people maintain their assessment while other's [newbes] have hefty increases.

**Supervisor Haskell** felt that **Keller** was bashing the assessors who were not there to defend themselves. **Keller** didn't feel that she was bashing the assessors.

Discussion ensued regarding other assessment options, such as the county taking over.

**Joyce Eddy** rebuttled what **Councilwoman Keller** said about being a local person verses someone who has moved in. **Mrs. Eddy** said that they [the Eddy's have been local for generations] built a cabin on Bear pond road which was then assessed for more than most homes in Thurman, They [**Eddy's**] went to court to have the taxes lowered; the taxes were lowered but were raised again the next year. **Mrs. Eddy** said that then they went to the board of assessment review; got the taxes lowered only to find that they were raised again the following year. **Joyce Eddy** felt this disarmed what **Councilwoman Keller** said about newcomers verses locals. **Mrs. Eddy** said that the house that was built by them on Bowen Hill road has sold 3 times for over \$200,000.00 but is assessed at \$176,000.00. **Mrs. Eddy** said that this sounds reasonable but knows this 2 bedroom house is now a 4 bedroom house. She feels the lack of a third assessor is hindering the ability of the two assessors to get the work done to keep things fair for everyone.

**Councilman Ligon** and **Supervisor Haskell** discussed School Taxes and property taxes.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further business, a motion was made by **Councilman Galusha**, seconded by **Councilwoman Keller**, to adjourn at 7:28 P.M...

MOTION CARRIED: 5 AYES ~ Keller, Galusha, Bills, Ligon, Haskell

Respectfully Submitted:

Cynthia R. Hyde, Town Clerk

**ATTACHED ON FOLLOWING PAGES:**

Abstract approval signatures~ Letter from Warrensburg School~ Grant update ~ Secretary's report