

TOWN OF BINGHAMTON
TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION
April 3, 2018

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MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION OF THE TOWN OF BINGHAMTON TOWN BOARD HELD ON TUESDAY, APRIL 3, 2018, 5:00 P.M., TOWN OF BINGHAMTON TOWN HALL, 279 PARK AVENUE, BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK.

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Whitesell at 5:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

T. Whitesell, Supervisor	Present	N. Yezzi, Deputy Supervisor	Present
N. Cline, Councilperson	Present	E. Rounds, Councilperson	Present
V. Xlander, Councilperson	Absent		

OTHERS PRESENT:

V. Conklin, Town Clerk	N. Pappas, Building Administrator
A. Pope, Town Attorney	M. Donahue, Highway Superintendent
R. Pope, Deputy Town Attorney	3 Guests

Supervisor Whitesell made the following statement: A motion may be made to go into an executive session to discuss a legal matter and/or a personnel matter regarding a particular employee after the meeting is convened.

APPROVAL OF AUDITED CLAIMS:

Councilperson Cline made the motion to approve the following claims as audited:

Lighting	Claim No. 242	\$ 742.54
Sewer	Claim No. 243	\$ 77,462.00
Water	Claim No. 244-248	\$ 1,093.38
Highway Fund	Claim No. 249-260	\$ 16,310.32
General Fund	Claim No. 261-181	\$ 12,118.84

The motion was duly seconded by Councilperson Yezzi. All those present voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

TOB Volunteer Fire Department – Open House, Saturday, April 28, 2018, Noon to 3 p.m. at Station 1 (Hawleyton Road)

17th Annual TOB Easter Egg Hunt – Supervisor Whitesell stated that this year’s annual Easter Egg Hunt was a huge success.

OFFICIALS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Planning Board – The next regularly scheduled quarterly meeting will be held on April 24, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

Zoning Board of Appeals – There is one case pending.

Youth Commission – Background checks have begun. There have been 18 applicants out of the 31 coaching positions. All applicants passed their background checks.

Code Enforcement – Mr. Pappas met with Dan Griffiths today at 2339 Oswego Street. Mr. Pappas had a meeting with the Land Bank who recommended that the Town push to take the property over even if the owner wants to demolish it on his own. Mr. Pappas stated that if the Land Bank puts the property in for approval to be torn down, and the owner does not want to tear it down, then the Land Bank is stuck. Supervisor Whitesell inquired where the Town stands on listing 2339 Oswego Street as a dangerous structure. Town Attorney Pope stated that the Board would have to have a Resolution to hold a public hearing to go through the process, and that Mr. Pappas and Mr. Griffiths will have to testify to their report, and then the owner has the opportunity to come in and contest it. Councilperson Rounds made the motion to set a public hearing on Tuesday, May 1, 2018 at 5:01 p.m. for determination as to whether the structure located at 2339 Oswego Street be declared an unsafe structure, and the motion was duly seconded by Councilperson Yezzi. A roll call vote resulted in the following:

Ayes: Rounds, Yezzi, Cline, Whitesell Absent: Xlander

Nays: None

Whereupon the motion was declared adopted.

(Resolution Appended)

Highway Department – The Highway Department is working on equipment to get it ready for Spring cleanup. Deputy Highway Superintendent Rolston has finished up his C and D license for water. Mr. Donahue is looking at plans to replace various fire hydrants in the Town. Mr. Donahue requested that he receive a copy of the Joint Sewage Treatment Plant's billing to the Town for his review. Mr. Donahue stated that the Town's rates continue to increase.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT:

Broome County Association of Towns and Villages – Monthly Meeting – The Broome County Association of Towns and Villages held a monthly meeting in March. New officers were elected. A meeting will be held on April 26, 2018.

Legislative Agenda - Supervisor Whitesell stated that he is in receipt of the Legislative Agenda from the Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce. His areas of concern on the Agenda are as follows: Making the property tax cap permanent, and advocating for mandate relief to make it more efficient; the encouragement of local governments' efficiencies, and exploring avenues to lower the average rate in Broome County, including efficiencies and consolidations in local government and schools.

Internet, Broadband and Cellular Service - Supervisor Whitesell had a telephone conversation with a resident/business owner in the Town who will be working with Plexicom as an internet provider for internet service. The resident informed Mr. Whitesell that Spectrum informed him that any continued growth in the Town of Binghamton is not, and will not be planned for in the near future. Mr. Whitesell stated that he heard today that Spectrum is expanding service in the Town, and questions why Spectrum told the resident that there would not be any continued growth in the Town. The Town will be working with Plexicom and Senator Schumer's office for broadband funds that are being touted at the Federal level for outlying areas that lack internet service, broadband service, and cellular service.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

TOB Hance Road Property – Logging Timber Harvesting – Update – Mr. Donahue stated that one of the forestry services was at the property on Hance Road, and told him that someone had cut quite a bit of timber 15-20 years ago, which will reduce the funds from the logging timber harvesting.

Highway Department – 2009 Jeep Patriot - Policy - The policy is being drafted by Town Attorney Pope.

Thoma Development – Update – Councilpersons Rounds and Cline will contact Rich Cunningham to set up a meeting to see what timeframe the Town needs to start the surveys, etc.

Code Enforcement – Amendment of Local Law – Building Permit Application – The building permit application is currently being worked on by Town Attorney Pope and Mr. Pappas. A local law is not needed to put additional information on the application.

Audits – Justice Court and Booster Club – The Audit Committee has tentatively scheduled the Justice Court audit for Monday, April 9, 2018. The Booster Club audit will be performed after the baseball season ends and prior to the football season.

SV School District – Need to Utilize Office at TOB Town Hall – Agreement – Town Attorney Pope is reviewing the Agreement.

There was no further unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Proposed Changes to Employee Handbook, Section 708 – Medical Insurance for Retirees – Councilperson Rounds and Supervisor Whitesell has been working on this issue. The best choice would be to retain a broker for the insurance. However, they cannot find one that will take just one group of employees. Instead the broker wants to insure employees, current and retired. Supervisor Whitesell reached out to Tom Augustini who works for the insurance company Haylor, Freyer & Coon and has a plan that will take into consideration just the GAP employees. He will also speak to him about the retirees on Medicare. Instead of retirees being required to find their own insurance, they would be covered under an Excellus plan with all

billing coming from Excellus directly to the Town instead of individual reimbursement. One retiree is currently on a similar plan, another will be retiring soon and will be a GAP retiree for approximately 10 years, and five to six more employees will be retiring and facing the GAP situation within the next few years. Supervisor Whitesell would like to see the Board put something in place to cover all of these retirees.

Supervisor Whitesell provided the Board with a copy of the language to be changed in the Employee Handbook for the medical insurance for retirees, and also provided the current language that is in Section 708. He asked the Board for their consideration so as to be able to have the new language in the Employee Handbook prior to May 15, 2018 as the quoted proposed rates will be in place until the end of June 2018. If the Town Board is able to agree, then the May 15, 2018 filing deadline can be met and we will be able to take advantage of the rates that are being proposed. With the proposed plan, if an individual were to go out on the market and get the same coverage, the cost would be higher. As a consortium through Excellus, the rates are less expensive, and the Excellus annual rate increase will be less (6%-8% increase). Supervisor Whitesell stated that with some of the changes in the Employee Handbook, the language is changed to ensure that the Town will pay the cost of the medical insurance premiums, where it currently is not stated in the Employee Handbook. Supervisor Whitesell wants to make sure that it is structured that the Town will pay the premiums for the retirees, and remove the eligibility for dependents and spouses unless the retiree themselves agree to pay the difference. It would be less expensive for the retiree to find an insurance plan for their spouse and/or dependents.

Supervisor Whitesell also asked the Board to consider the verbiage for the pre-65 GAP employees will be provided with a comparable health insurance policy. It may not be exactly what they are currently receiving as employees. There is a \$7,200 deductible for current employees. There is no deductible in the proposed plan. The Town will not have to pay the \$7,200 deductible in another program. Supervisor Whitesell recommends that the retiree will be obligated to contribute the co-pays. Supervisor Whitesell also asked the Board's consideration to, in addition to providing a comparable health plan, provide a health reimbursement account of \$1,000 to offset some of the co-pays not covered under the retiree plan. Moving forward Supervisor Whitesell is making a recommendation that any employee hired after January 1, 2018, will be required to contribute 10% of the retirees' health insurance premiums. The last area of concern will deal with Medicare reimbursements. The current policy states that the Town will reimburse the eligible retiree for the cost of the Medicare Part B premium. Part B has been removed, and inserted the language Medicare payments. This language will be verified. For Medicare employees, the Town will provide an insurance card. They will not have to find their own plan, and all payments will come directly to the Town. An out-of-state retiree will be obligated to find their own plan. Supervisor Whitesell and Councilperson Rounds will discuss all of this information so as to help meet the May 15, 2018 deadline.

There was no further new business.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilperson Cline made the motion to adjourn the meeting, and the motion was duly seconded by Councilperson Rounds. There being no further discussion, all those present voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

The next meeting of the Town of Binghamton Town Board will be a regular Town Board meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 17, 2018 at 7:00 p.m., at the Town of Binghamton Town Hall, 279 Park Avenue, Binghamton, NY.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vickie A. Conklin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Vickie A. Conklin
Town Clerk