

At a regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Cambridge, duly called and held the 13<sup>th</sup> day of July 2009, 7:30 PM at the Town Hall, the following were present:

Supervisor JoAnn Trinkle  
Councilwoman Carol Imhof  
Councilman Frank Ziehm  
Councilman Ted Berndt  
Councilman Joel Nichols

Others present: Town Clerk Sally Eddy, Code Enforcement Officer LaVerne Davis, Assessor Mary Ellen Hill-Pierce, Lou Imhof, Ashleigh Farrell, Bob Hamilton, William Watkins, Cassie Fedler, Dick Battistoni, Gerald Skiff, Henry Peabody, Robert McIntosh, Rani Bass, Alex Bass, Dan Thomas

Supervisor Trinkle called the meeting to order and immediately led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

#### Minutes

Councilwoman Carol Imhof motioned, seconded by Councilman Frank Ziehm, to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the June 8, 2009 meeting and approve them as mailed by the Town Clerk with no additions or corrections.

Vote: 5 – Ayes      0 – Noes

#### Items to be Added to Agenda

Under New Business – b) Budget Transfer

#### Supervisor's Report

1. The monthly financial reports and a quarterly budget report were reviewed and commented upon. Councilman Joel Nichols motioned, seconded by Councilman Frank Ziehm, to accept the May 2009 General and Highway Financial Reports as well as the Quarterly Budget Report.

Vote: 5 – Ayes      0 – Noes

#### Town Board Report

1. Councilman Ted Berndt stated that on June 14 he attended the dedication ceremony of the Performance Pavilion at the Avenue B Park in the Village of Cambridge. The pavilion was dedicated to the late Robert Durrin, a former Mayor given the charge to oversee the construction of the structure. In addition, the town was presented a Certificate of Appreciation for their contribution to the construction of the pavilion.
2. On June 22, Mr Berndt attended a forum addressing Agricultural issues with Congressman Scott Murphy.
3. Had a recent conversation with Sharon Henderson, aide to Senator Little, and learned that funding for DSL implementation is not coming forth. It's currently tied up in committee. Mr. Berndt said he will keep trying.

#### Planning Board.

Planning Board met July 2 and addressed one item of business:

1. Held a public hearing and granted Final Approval to Gerald Moppert for a .78 acre minor subdivision located on Cobble Road. The subdivision contains an existing house, shed and barn which will be sold to the current renter. The remainder of the parcel, approximately 6.72 acres of mostly wetlands, will be merged with Mr. Moppert's adjacent property.

#### Highway Superintendent's Report

In Mr. Shaw's absence, Supervisor Trinkle read aloud his report.

1. All roads have been graded and calcium chloride has been applied.
2. Patching was done where needed.
3. The shoulders were completed on King Road and Turnpike Road following the recent paving.
4. Gravel was drawn on Tingue Road and Doctor Brown Lane.
5. Mowing of roadsides continues throughout the summer.
6. The cemeteries were mowed and downed trees cleaned up.
7. We helped the Village pave their municipal parking lot and with the reclamation project in Jerome Drive.

#### Code Enforcement Report

Officer LaVerne Davis stated that the building department is quiet, therefore, there was no report.

#### No Communications

#### Unfinished Business

##### **Annual or Triennial Reassessments**

Last month the Board discussed annual reassessments vs. triennial reassessments with Assessor Mary Ellen Hill-Pierce. The Board had a month to think it over before deciding which direction to go. Assessor Hill-Pierce returned to the Board awaiting their decision. In the meantime she put together some information for the Board to consider to apply to either a triennial or annual reassessment plan:

- 1) The first year of either plan would be May 1, 2010.
- 2) Start time would be immediate.
- 3) Cost, over and above the current Assessor's salary is estimated as follows:
  - a. Mailing of impact notices and data mailers approximately \$1,000.
  - b. Production of Impact notices by Washington County \$700
  - c. Land Schedule/Comparable Schedule assistance no more than \$5,000
  - d. Total of \$6,700

Thereafter, the costs for either triennial or annual would be \$1700 - \$2000 to cover the cost of postage and printing of mailers and impact notices. Annual reassessments maintain a more consistent equity in the tax roll and prevents the large spikes in property values that are apt to occur with a triennial plan. In the last three years, there have been 12 residential sales in the village and 12 in the town. The village sales have been 12% higher than their assessed value and the town properties have sold at a 6% higher.

Councilman Ziehm asked the Assessor if we do annual reassessments would we be able to keep the roll between 90% - 100%? Ms. Hill-Pierce responded that it depends upon the future. The values are market driven. If they go haywire or drop then the rates move all around.

Supervisor Trinkle asked Ms. Hill-Pierce if the three year plan is more popular in Washington County? The Assessor replied that very few assessors will do an annual in house reassessment so the three year plan is more popular. Ms. Hill-Pierce stated that if you choose to do an annual now you can always switch back to triennial later rather than the other way around. She said the state likes the towns to do annual reassessments. Ms. Hill-Pierce added that when the equalization rate falls below 100%, tax payers do not receive the full value for certain exemptions such as STAR, Veterans, Agricultural. It also affects the CHIPS money the town receives for road paving.

After all discussion was considered, the following resolution was enacted:

Resolution by Councilman Nichols  
Seconded by Councilwoman Imhof

Resolution No. 3, July 13, 2009

**TITLE: Annual Assessment**

WHEREAS, the Town of Cambridge did a total reevaluation of real property in 2007, and  
WHEREAS, the town's State Equalization Rate was at 100% in 2007 and 2008, and  
WHEREAS, the 2009 State Equalization Rate has dropped to 91.30%, and

WHEREAS, the Town Board hired Mary Ellen Hill-Pierce as Sole Assessor in 2009, the desire of the Town Board was to do at least triennial assessments to avoid large spikes in property values, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Cambridge Town Board does hereby authorizes the town assessor to do an annual reassessment starting in 2010 for the following tax year.

Was duly put to vote and resulted as follows:

Supervisor Trinkle – No (favored Triennial)	Councilman Berndt - Aye
Councilwoman Imhof – Aye	Councilman Nichols – Aye
Councilman Ziehm – Aye	

**Village Property Cards**

In another matter, Assessor Hill-Pierce stated she has talked with Village Assessor William McCarty concerning obtaining a copy of the actual village property cards that were used in the 2007 revaluation project. The information has been keyed to the computer but she does not have hard copies for her files. Mr. McCarty is checking on the legality of handing over the information.

**Cold War Veterans Exemptions**

Assessor Hill-Pierce stated there are currently 10 Cold War Veterans on the assessment roll for county purposes resulting in the shift of \$467.15 of county taxes to other tax payers in the Town of Cambridge. If the town adopted the exemption it would equate to \$238.66 of tax dollars being shifted to other taxpayers in the town based on the 10 veterans. There is no way of knowing if there are others who would qualify until they apply.

Councilman Joel Nichols motioned, seconded by Councilwoman Imhof, to proceed with the process of adopting the Cold War Veterans Exemption for the Town of Cambridge.

Vote: 5 – Ayes                      0 – Noes

A copy of the wording of the exemption will be presented at the August meeting.

Assessor Mary Ellen Hill- Pierce stated there were 13 grievances before the Board of Assessment Review in June and one has filed a small claims. It's the foreclosing mortgagee for Woodcock Estates, Inc.(former Mary McClellan Hospital).

New Business

**Court Room Software**

Supervisor Trinkle stated Judge Tom Armet gave her a copy of a letter he received from Service Education, Inc.(SEi), a company that supplies court room soft ware. Over 1100 courts in the state are already using the program. To the 150 courts that not customers, the company is offering to waive the purchase price of \$2,695.00 thru December 31, 2009. The town would be responsible for a yearly maintenance/license fee of \$800.00 and training expenses ranging from \$150 for remote method and \$1036 for personal on-site.

Supervisor Trinkle went back 7 years and found the court generated an income averaging \$2000 per year.

Judge Armet said he is fine with the way things are and doesn't mind doing the paper work by hand.

The board decided not to act on it at his time.

Councilman Ted Berndt remarked, "Are we going to wait until it's an unfunded mandate?"

**Budget Transfer**

Councilwoman Imhof motioned, seconded by Councilman Nichols, to transfer \$149.00 from Contingent A1990.4 to Assessor's Equipment A1355.2 to pay for the assessor's new laptop computer.

Vote: 5 – Ayes 0 – Noes

**County Report**

Supervisor Trinkle stated the county finance committee continues to meet to work on the 2010 budget and has realized that \$2,000,000 has to be cut. They are examining various ways and means to accomplish it.

Beginning August 4, 2009 the county transfer stations will be operating under reduced hours. The Jackson and Whitehall stations will be open Wednesday, Friday, Saturday from 6:30 AM – 4:30 PM. Kingsbury, Greenwich, Granville centers will be open Tuesday, Friday, Saturday 6:30 AM – 4:30 PM.

**Privilege of the Floor**

Assessor Mary Ellen Hill-Pierce fielded many comments and questions from residents Cassie Fedler, William Watkins, Dan Schmitt, Alex Bass, Rani Bass, Gerald skiff and Dan Thomas regarding the area of assessments, how they are arrived at and what methods are used to determine property values.

Assessor Hill-Pierce asked the residents if they would like her to set up a meeting with Steve Peluso from NYS Office of Real Property Services to answer any further questions? Alex Bass, William Watkins and Dan Schmitt volunteered to participate in the meeting.

Dan Schmitt asked if any of the board members had taken a look at the paper he presented last month? It was an opinion page issued by Attorney Thomas Griffen which agreed with Mr. Schmitt that the methodology used to evaluate farm land in the Town of Cambridge is problematic.

After much discussion, Mr. Schmitt ended the public comment section by urging the Town Board to take a stand and do what it can to support and protect open spaces and the agricultural community.

**Audit Bills**

The following bills were presented for audit and approved for payment:

General #107 – 124	\$ 8,713.50
Highway #77- -91	\$11,884.20

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was moved and carried to adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,

*Sally B. Eddy*  
Sally B. Eddy, Town Clerk