

At a Regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Cambridge, duly called and held the 8th day of December 2008, 7:30 PM at the Town Hall, the following were present:

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

Others present: Town Clerk Sally Eddy, Highway Supt. Eric Shaw, Reporter Meaghan Wilkins, Reporter Evan Lawrence, and approximately thirty members of the public.

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 Joel Nichols, to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the November 10, 2008 meeting and approve them as mailed by the Town Clerk with one correction. Correction being that Eric Shaw was not present at the meeting as recorded.

Vote: 4 – Ayes 0 - Noes

Supervisor's Report

1. The monthly financial report was reviewed and commented upon.
Councilman Nichols motioned, seconded by Councilwoman Imhof, to accept the general and highway financial reports for the month of November 2008.
Vote: 4 – Ayes 0 - Noes
2. Supervisor Trinkle commented that, as a budget cut, the Board of Supervisors has elected to no longer fund the two county owned and operated parks. One is located at Lake Lauderdale and the other at Hulett's Landing. On December 1, she attended a meeting in the Town of Jackson about the parks and heard a large number of testimonials from individuals and organizations who use the facilities. The people urged the funding be restored so the could parks could remain open. She stated that the parks will be addressed again at the county level.

Town Board Report

Councilman Joel Nichols stated that he has received several complaints from citizens about the potential closing of the parks.

Planning Board

Secretary Sally Eddy reported the Planning Board met December 4 and addressed the following:

1. The Frog Way two parcel subdivision was reviewed. Chairman Pearson has contacted the Department of State for an opinion as to who has the authority to grant easements to the two proposed lots. Is it the current owner of the parcel being subdivided or is it the owner of Frog Way who originally granted all the easements on the private road. The Planning Board wants to be certain that the lots have access to Frog Way before approving them.
2. Eric Pearson was elected to continue as Chairman, and Earl Horton as Vice-Chairman for 2009.
3. There was, again, a discussion about making updates and changes to the subdivision regulations. The wording is being worked on for the term "boundary line adjustment."

Supervisor Trinkle stated that Mark Roger's term on the Planning Board expires December 31, 2008. She asked Secretary Eddy to ask him if he wanted to serve another seven year term.

Highway Superintendent 's Report

1. We performed regular maintenance on the trucks and equipment.
2. Patching was done where needed around the Town.
3. A new 24' x 40' pole barn was built with all donated materials behind the shop. It will house the tractor and excavator with a 16' x 24' woodshed included.
4. The circuit board on the 1994 truck needs to be replaced at the cost of \$716. Chuck Watkins will do the work.

No Code Enforcement Report

Assessor's Report

Sole Assessor Jeffry Jackson submitted his resignation via fax, effective December 31, 2008, due to recent medical issues. The Town Board will advertise the position in the newspaper.

No Communications

Unfinished Business

Fuel Bids – G. A. Bove & Sons, Inc. submitted the only fuel bid. John Ray & Sons was notified but did not deliver a bid. G. A. Bove & Sons, Inc. quoted a delivered price for all products based on the Albany Rack Price for the day of delivery plus a markup of \$.35 per gallon per product.

There was a discussion. Some members from the public thought the bid should be rejected because there was no mention of a per gallon price and, therefore, urged the board to re-advertise. Also, they thought that more fuel companies should be notified about the bid. Bids should be received in time to be opened at the Year-End meeting.

Councilman Ted Berndt motioned, seconded by Supervisor Trinkle, to accept the bid submitted by G.A.Bove & Sons, Inc. to supply the town's fuel for 2009 for a mark up of \$.35 per gallon per product above the Albany Rack price for the day of delivery.

Councilman Nichols motioned to put the fuel out to bid again.

Supervisor Trinkle withdrew her second to the original motion.

Motion by Councilman Nichols, Seconded by Councilwoman Imhof, to reject the fuel bid submitted by G. A. Bove, Inc. and advertise the 2009 fuel supply for the town one more time contacting several suppliers about the bid.

Vote: 4 – Ayes 0 – Noes

Alternate Veterans' Exemptions

Supervisor Trinkle received information from Bill McCarty concerning the tax dollar shift if different veterans' exemption levels were adopted. The exemption can be increased at \$20,000 increments. The town is currently at \$80,000. Supervisor Trinkle stated the county just increased the veterans' exemption from \$180,000 to \$200,000. The Town of Cambridge and two other towns are the lowest in the county. Councilwoman Imhof recommended the town go from \$80,000 to \$180,000 to correspond with seven other towns in the county. The \$180,000 level would shift \$9626.00.

Councilman Nichols suggested raising the veterans' exemption to \$100,000 (half the county amount) because a higher level may adversely effect low or fixed income tax payers. The \$100,000 level would shift \$6133.

Councilwoman Imhof still wanted the \$180,000. Discussion continued.

Resolution by Councilman Ted Berndt

Seconded by Councilman Joel Nichols

Be it Resolved and Determined, that the Town Board of the Town of Cambridge does hereby increase the alternate veterans' exemption from \$80,000 to \$120,000.

Supervisor Trinkle - Aye

Councilman Berndt - Aye

Councilwoman Imhof - No

Councilman Nichols - Aye

Senior/Low Income

Currently the town authorizes the sliding scale option with a base income of \$12,000 (50% reduction) up to \$17,700 (20% reduction) for senior citizens 65 and over.

Washington County was at a sliding scale of \$16,000(50%) to \$24,400 (5%). Nine other towns in the county are at that level also. However, the county just increased the senior exemption to \$18,000 (50%) up to \$26,400 (5%). A brief discussion took place.

Councilman Nichols motioned, seconded by Councilman Imhof, to increase the Senior Citizen /Low Income Exemption levels on a sliding scale with a base of \$16,000 (50% reduction) up to \$24,000 (5% reduction), effective for the 2010 property taxes.

Vote: 4 - Ayes 0 - Noes

DSL

Councilman Ted Berndt stated he has had conversations with Verizon's engineering office and office of operations and was told that if Senator Lyttle can secure \$50,000 in funding then then both the engineering and operations departments will sign off authorizing DSL to be implemented in the 677 telephone exchange. Mr. Berndt said that it was the high speed internet committee's goal to bring DSL to 692 and 686 exchanges as well.

Dick Battistoni, a retired Verizon employee, commented that there are two Light Span Systems in the town that need to be upgraded in order to make DSL available; one located near the Cambridge side of Gannon Road and the other near the South Cambridge Grange Hall. He added that 692 numbers come out of the Greenwich area and will have to be dealt with from that direction.

SWEAT

Councilman Berndt commented that SWEAT, a community action team aimed at improving the economic and business climate of southern Washington County, met recently. The team is working on bringing to the Cambridge area items such as Jr. Achievement, an internship program with businesses, training local business employees in customer service and encouraging the Local Development Corporation Micro Enterprise Program to hold their training classes in the southern part of the county once a year. The LDC Micro Enterprise Program assissts in the start up of small businesses and/or helps businesses develop a business plan for those that don't have one.

Councilman Berndt remarked that during the recent debate about the Comprehensive Plan, many residents complained that the Town informational postings through the official newspaper, The Eagle, and Main Street News, were insufficient and unreliable as

methods of communications for a large number of citizens. Mr. Berndt suggested forming an ad hoc public informational committee to increase communications and transparency between the Town Board and the citizens. Suggestions included posting pertinent information on a town web site, bulletin boards at Town Hall and sites around the town and village. However, since the Village already has a web site and has made it available to the town to use, it was suggested that the agenda and minutes of Town Board meetings be posted on the site.

Councilman Nichols remarked that he didn't think the town needed to form an ad hoc committee to research ways to increase communications and transparency between the Town Board and the citizens. Let's start by posting the minutes and agenda.

Councilman Ted Berndt commented that at the October 27 budget meeting sources of renewable energy were discussed. He stated it would cost the town about \$200 more a year to subscribe to a renewable energy supplier and Mr. Berndt offered to pay the extra amount himself.

Councilman Nichols stated that since there are several suppliers of "green" energy the town might have to go out to bid. Supervisor Trinkle said she would investigate about the bid. The matter was tabled.

New Business

Budget Amendment

Councilman Nichols motioned, seconded by Councilman Berndt, to amend the budget in order to transfer \$955.00 from B599 Appropriated Fund Balance to B960 Appropriations, specifically B8025.4 Comprehensive Plan Contractual to cover the final bill from Chazen Engineering.

Vote: 4 – Ayes 0 – Noes

Lane Name Change

Dr. & Mrs. George F. Heinrich, owners of the former Carl and Gabriella Kottler property, have requested Kottler Lane be removed from the town highway map so that it becomes a private way. They have requested the way to be renamed as "23 Heinrich Way".

Councilman Berndt asked Highway Supt. Eric Shaw to inquire if the Heinrichs would be agreeable to name the way "Kottler-Heinrich Way" as a means of honoring Gabriella Kottler, a World War II concentration camp survivor.

Year-End Meeting

The Year-End meeting was set for December 31, 2008, 1:00 PM.

Privilege of the Floor

Resident Heidi Record expressed her sadness over the closing of Lake Lauderdale Park by the county as a budget reducing measure. She stated she goes there with her child and meets people from all over. It's a safe, quiet place used by several groups including the school. She said she would be willing to pay a fee to use the facility. She urged the Board of Supervisors to reconsider their decision.

Supervisor Trinkle responded that there is a meeting at the County on Thursday, December 11 at 1:00 PM to review the budget and said the parks, Lake Lauderdale and Hulett's Landing, will probably be looked at again.

Resident William Watkins brought up again the subject of a small piece of property on Brownell Road that was created when the road (West Cambridge Road known now as Brownell Road) was rerouted in 1939. He said the town owned the land between the old road bed and the new road. He said there is a deed on file documenting the town bought

the property in 1939 from Leo O'Donnell for \$75.00 for the purpose of rerouting the road. He accused the board of allowing a publicly owned piece of property being sold at a private sale because the town signed a Quit Claim Deed September 8, 2008, releasing any interest in the property which, therefore, granted title to the land to abutting property owner Audrey B. Hall. Ms. Hall has since sold the property for \$9000.00 and Mr. Watkins claims the town should have sold it and received the money. "You gave it away," he said.

Supervisor Trinkle said she was advised by Town Attorney Alan Wrigley to sign the Quit Claim Deed to clear the title. The town was led to believe that Audrey Hall owned it and the town had no interest in it. She stated the matter is currently being researched by Town Assessor Jeffry Jackson and the County Office of Real Property Tax Services. She will report the findings when it has been resolved. She stated she will ask Attorney Wrigley to attend the January 12, 2009 board meeting to explain the matter.

County Report

The county received a grant to study the efficiency of county wide assessing by eliminating local town assessors and shifting the process of real property assessing to a county wide office. Most of the town assessors in the county attended the meeting to hear the findings of the report and they did not agree with the results. However, the assessors did agree that a county wide reval was a good idea.

Supervisor Trinkle reported that a request for bid has been posted for a company to buy recyclables from the county and market them. One bid was received from Springer Waste Management. However, because it was so low it was not considered a serious bid. She stated the county is losing \$800,000 annually on recyclables.

Supervisor Trinkle informed the board that she will be stepping down as Chairwoman of the Board of Supervisors in 2009. Supervisors Don Wilbur and John LaPoint are running for the position.

Audit Bills

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

General #195 - 231 \$17,673.25

Highway #145 - 149 \$ 933.72

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