

MINUTES BOOKTOWN OF COEYMANS
March 18, 2014 – Town Board Workshop – 6:00pm**

A Town Board Workshop was held Tuesday, March 18, 2014, at 6:00pm at Town Hall, 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena, New York

PRESENT: Stephen D. Flach, Supervisor
Peter E. Masti, Councilman
Thomas E. Dolan, Councilman
George E. Langdon, IV, Councilman
Kenneth A. Burns, Sr., Councilman

ALSO PRESENT: Diane L. Millious, Town Clerk
George Dardani, Justice
Tammy Eissing, Justice Clerk
Matthew Weidman, Bookkeeper
Greg Darlington, Chief of Police
Dawn LaMountain, Senior Telecommunicator/ Secretary to Chief

Supervisor Flach opened the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

OPENING COMMENT

Supervisor Flach stated that the records should reflect the presence of a full Town Board.

AGENDA

- Presentations
 - Apex Solar Power
 - Blue Rock Energy
- Income Survey for the Hamlet, EFC Grant
- Annual Audit
 - Justice Court
 - Supervisor
 - Police Department
 - Town Clerk

PRESENTATIONS

Blue Rock Energy

Supervisor Flach stated that there were two presentations on the agenda and continued by inviting Deborah Fairchild from Blue Rock Energy to the microphone.

Key points of the presentation were:

- The vast majority of people have little or no understanding of the energy industry.
- Energy is a commodity, which is bought and sold every five minutes on the NY Stock Exchange.
- Blue Rock Energy has brokers on the trading floor who buy and sell energy throughout the day.
- Public utilities, i.e., National Grid, Central Hudson, by Federal Law are not allowed to make a profit on the commodity, which is the actual gas or electric but have associated fees that are on your bill and that is their way to make money on the commodity without breaking the law.
- Because they make no profit on the commodity, they have no incentive to shop on the customer's behalf and they buy it whenever they need it no matter what the price is.

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- There is an organization called the NY ISO, which is like a large bank where energy is literally deposited and it is a Corporation of people who oversee it.
- All energy, whether it is created by Niagara Falls, solar, hydro or nuclear is all deposited and where they all go to buy energy, which is a central bank for energy in New York State.
- The NY ISO is the governing body that sets the prices of energy, which is global and everything that happens globally affects the price of energy and electric bills for the last couple of months have doubled and in some cases tripled because of the weather and there is a lot more involved in creating, sustaining, delivering, transporting and transmitting than just the energy itself.
- Electricity has to be consumed the moment it is generated, it can't be stored like gas and there has to be the ability to generate electricity very fast and in looking at the country and the weather pattern over the past few months, because of supply and demand, the demand goes up and the supply goes down. The demand for all that energy has risen so greatly that as a nation they can't meet the supply and they are struggling because the infrastructure in the country is horrible in the energy industry, which makes it difficult in a lot of ways to supply enough energy.
- All of these factors contribute to the significant rise in prices and for these reasons you can't blame the public utilities because it is global.
- Energy has to be brought from the ISO to city gates, which is any one of the public utilities and there are fees associated with getting the energy there, which are not delivery charges on your bill. The delivery fees are what the public utility charges to bring energy to you because they own the pipes and lines and are the only ones allowed to work on those things and the only one allowed to bring energy to you, no one else can, they have the monopoly on it.
- Someone has to get the energy from the ISO or the source to the public utilities and there are fees associated with that as well such as line lost charges, capacity charges, transmission charges and most people don't realize or know what it takes and the jobs that are involved.

Ms. Fairchild stated that she had given them a crash course on the energy industry as a whole, what affects prices, where energy comes from and how it is bought and sold and would continue by giving them some reasons why she feels as though they should entertain using Blue Rock Energy.

- Blue Rock Energy has a wonderful reputation with the Public Service Commission, which is their governing agency as well as with the Better Business Bureau.
- They are a company that is 100% on the customer's side in the sense that they go above and beyond for their clients to help them out and they partner with their accounts and don't sell them energy.
- They participate in their clients events and participate in them to the best of their ability as often as they can.
- They have great prices and are proud of the fact that they are one of the lowest priced ESCO (Energy Supply Company) in the state because of how they buy and sell energy.
- There are well over 200 ESCO's licensed to do business in New York State, which does not mean that they are in New York State and approximately 85% of them are telemarketers doing cold calling.
- Blue Rock Energy is a local, small business located in New York based out of Syracuse and they don't want tax dollars to support another state's economy, they want to keep it within our state to help keep business here and hold taxes down.
- They are known for having very good customer service and credibility.
- Their CEO, Mr. Van Horn was the CEO for National Grid for approximately 35 years and knows the industry inside and out.
- She is local and this would be her territory and knows she is good at what she does, her customers like her because she cares about them and is always there when she is called and if they need to see her to come and see them, no matter how far away they are she goes.
- Blue Rock offers many types of products and her professional recommendation, because she does it all the time and she gets a sense for things, would be a 100% custom program because she does not feel that any one product would be sufficient to meet their needs,

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which would mean that certain months of the year they would get the benefit of a variable rate and variable is where you always save money.

Discussion ensued amongst the Town Board and Ms. Fairchild relative to how the process of transition would start, how they would determine an approximate savings and what kind of program would benefit the Town.

Ms. Fairchild concluded by saying that they have her business card and they can call or e-mail her with any questions that they may have.

Supervisor Flach stated that they would discuss it as a Board and added that they can e-mail to her the information necessary to determine the savings and thanked Ms. Fairchild.

Supervisor Flach stated that there was no one present from Apex Solar to give their presentation and added that they would continue on with the next item on the agenda.

DISCUSSIONS

Income Survey for the Hamlet – EFC Grant

Supervisor Flach stated that for the EFC Grant they have to do an income survey because at this point they are at a rate where they can get the loan at 2% but if they do the survey, it could be considered a hardship and they can get a loan at 0%. He added that they found only one person that could do it for them and the cost is \$6,200.00 and Confidential Secretary Cirillo is looking to see if she can come up with more. He continued by saying that it has to be done by June and if they get the grant it will be rolled into the H41 Project and then asked that the Board look it over so they can discuss it at the next meeting.

Discussion ensued between Supervisor Flach and the Town Board relative to the estimate, what the requirements for the grant are and what they are proposing to be done, what has been done, the approximate cost in addition to on-going problems and negotiations with the Village.

ANNUAL AUDIT OF DEPARTMENTS

Supervisor Flach stated that the objective of the audit is to complete the requirements of an Annual Audit of certain Town Officials in accordance with Section 123 of Town Law and added that there is a check list of questions that they ask each department representative.

Audits were conducted by the Town Board for the Justice Court, Town Clerk, Police Department and Supervisor's Bookkeeping. Judge Dardani, and Court Clerk Tammy Eissing represented the Justice Court, Town Clerk Millious represented her office, Chief Greg Darlington represented the Police Department and Bookkeeper Matthew Weidman represented the Supervisor's Office.

Upon conclusion of the Court and Police audits Supervisor Flach stated that they would continue with a presentation for Apex Solar Power because a representative had just arrived.

PRESENTATION

Apex Solar Power

Mr. Gordon Cochran introduced himself and added that he offers solar energy to residents, businesses, municipalities and schools and he has been going to all of the municipalities in Greene County and has proposals in place.

Key points of the presentation were:

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- There are new programs with three choices, you can buy it, lease it or have a Power Purchase Agreement and if you buy it you get roughly 35% off the whole cost and then you get a 30% tax credit, which municipalities and schools cannot use so they go with a lease or Power Purchase Agreement where an investor buys, installs and takes care of the equipment and the municipality gets a discount on their utility, which is usually anywhere from 10-25% depending on how easy or hard the installation and connection is.
- There is remote net metering where it does not have to be at the property where you use the power and for example you can have it at a landfill or vacant property.
- Prospective buyers would give him their usage information or would sign a release for him to get the information and in turn he would do a proposal outlining what the savings would be and a layout over 20 years.
- Because the cost of electric goes up every year, you would actually save more every year.
- Small users such as Jewett or Durham who use a 50 kilo watt system, saves 25% the first year and a little more each year after that and with a Lease Agreement for 20 years, at the end of 20 years you would save approximately 40-50%.
- Investors have done their due diligence and scrutinize the system to make sure that it works properly and everything is inspected.
- He has approached installers on municipality's behalf and made an agreement that they don't have to send a sales person out to collect data, usage, meter locations or properties and they will hire him as their sales person so he will be like a broker on the Town's behalf.
- He can arrange bids for the Town if that is what the Board desires.
- It has been done all over New York State.

He added that people are deceived about their electric bill and cost per watt because of the delivery and demand charges.

Discussion ensued between Mr. Cochran and the Town Board relative to price per kilo watt, estimates from installers, investors, delivery and connect charges, concern with panels producing less over time, monitoring the equipment and costs.

Supervisor Flach stated that the next step would be for the Town Board to discuss it and in turn give Mr. Cochran a letter of intent to audit.

POLICE BUSINESS (Not on the agenda)

Chief Darlington stated that he was present for three topics and added that he had been authorized to canvas for part-time Telecommunicators and he initially asked for 3 but Senior Telecommunicator Dawn LaMountain expressed some concern with them being behind on the number of people that they have. He continued by saying that he asked Senior Telecommunicator LaMountain to help explain what is going on, what the requests are and to see what the Board would be willing to approve.

Senior Telecommunicator LaMountain stated that they are currently down three part-time dispatchers and she anticipates that in the next month or two they will be losing at least two more and she is requesting that they hire three now, canvas for two extra, which would be five all together so they can get the trained and would be ready to go when she gets the resignations from the other two dispatchers. She continued by saying that this way everyone will be trained and ready to go in a two month time frame and it will put them back up where they need to be, which will keep the overtime down and in case of emergencies they will have enough people.

Discussion ensued amongst Chief Darlington, Senior Telecommunicator LaMountain and the Town Board relative to their request for two additional part-time Telecommunicators, the interview process, candidates residing in the Town of Coeymans, availability of existing part-time communicators because of full-time positions elsewhere, cutting down on overtime, the budget and salary.

Supervisor Flach asked the Board how they felt about it.

Collectively the Board agreed that it is warranted.

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Supervisor Flach asked if they are ready to hire.

Senior Telecommunicator LaMountain stated that they are.

Chief Darlington stated that they can provide the Board a list of the candidates they are recommending for review and hopefully at the next Town Board Meeting they can decide how many.

Supervisor Flach stated that they should decide now and then asked how the Board feels about it.

Collectively the Town Board agreed to the additional.

Senior Telecommunicator LaMountain stated that they had discussed the consoles in the past and there was a problem with one of the mother boards, which was fixed but if it continues, it will probably have to be shipped back to the factory, which will put them down one console. She continued by saying that she would like to put some feelers out there to find out how much they cost because the consoles are 15 years old and they are getting harder to repair.

Chief Darlington stated that the advantage that they have is that they have two consoles and if one breaks you are still up and running but if the broken one gets shipped out, which can take weeks, if the other console goes down, they cannot dispatch any police, fire companies or rescue squad and there is no real backup after that.

Discussion ensued amongst Chief Darlington, Senior Telecommunicator LaMountain and the Board relative to the cost of a new console, the need to expand to include Highway, possibly purchasing one for now and one later, using funds from the communications tower, upgrading the communications bus and possible grants.

Collectively the Town Board agreed that they can start to look at some prices for a console as well as appointing the Telecommunicators.

Chief Darlington stated that they have previously talked about canvassing Police Officers and they didn't decide whether it should be part-time or full-time.

Discussion ensued amongst Chief Darlington and the Town Board relative to full-time pay vs. part-time pay, retirement contributions, overtime, availability, resignations, dedication, productivity, possible candidates, and hours per shift 8 vs. 12.

Officer Ryan Johnson gave his input on 8 vs. 12 hour shifts.

Collectively the Town Board agreed that they should look at the numbers presented and have it on the agenda for the next Town Board Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Supervisor Flach asked for a motion to adjourn the Workshop.

MOTION

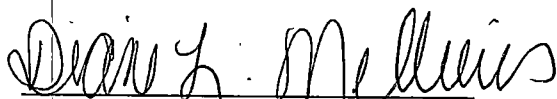
On motion of Councilman Dolan, seconded by Councilman Masti, the Town Board Workshop was adjourned.

VOTE – AYES 5 – NAYS 0 – SO MOVED

Time – 8:21pm

Respectfully Submitted,

APPROVED As read March 24, 2014


Diane L. Millious, Town Clerk