

January 26, 2022

MINUTES

**WORK SESSION – EDEN TOWN BOARD
2795 East Church Street
Eden, NY 14057
January 26, 2022, 7:00 P.M.**

**This meeting was held in person and virtually through GoToMeeting.com. The meeting link was made available to the public prior to the meeting.

TOWN BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

MELISSA HARTMAN	-	SUPERVISOR
RICHARD VENTRY	-	COUNCILPERSON
SUSAN WILHELM	-	COUNCILPERSON
MICHAEL BYRNES	-	COUNCILPERSON
GARY SAM	-	COUNCILPERSON

DEPARTMENT HEADS PRESENT:

Susan Johnson	-	Assessor
Dave Rice	-	Code Enforcement Officer

OTHERS PRESENT:

Emily Hawkins	-	Town Clerk
Marlene Grunder	-	Administrative Assistant
Jen Crowe	-	Administrative Assistant
Lisa Winter	-	Bookkeeper (virtual)
Nick Miller	-	Information Technology (virtual)
Randy Glenn	-	Evans Agency (virtual)

Call to Order:

Supervisor Hartman called the Regular Meeting of the Eden Town Board to order at 7:00 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance

New and Unfinished Business:

1. Appoint Samantha Zitnik as Part Time Police Clerk:

#19-2022: **MOTION** was made by Supervisor Hartman to appoint Samantha Zitnik as part time police clerk at a rate of pay of \$17.03 per hour; seconded by Councilperson Wilhelm; Ayes: All; Opposed: None; Abstain: None; Motion carried.

Work Session:

1. IT Security/Cyber Insurance:

Supervisor Hartman stated that the Town's cyber insurance carrier requires dual authentication when reviewing emails on personal devices. Nick Miller, IT, explained that multiform authentication (MFA) is not yet available through our current email provider, Digital Tow Path, and that in order for the Board to receive emails they will need to be issued a device that can enable MFA.

The Board had further discussions on Town issued devices to receive emails, cost effectiveness, and plans for the future.

Randy Glenn, cybersecurity advisor at Evans Agency, further explained MFA as one of the controls insurance agencies use to limit the chance of a claim, as 90% of cybersecurity claims are caused by ransomware attacks by accessing emails. He advised that the current insurance carrier will still offer insurance without the MFA, but would increase the deductible from \$2,500 to \$5,000 and then require coinsurance which is at 50% of the claim with a million-dollar limit for coverage. He stated an average claim usually costs a town between \$100,000 to \$200,000.

Supervisor Hartman stated that she is not in favor of exposing the town to a potential \$100,000 to \$200,000 payout for a lack of convenience for checking emails. Nick will send additional information as to the cost of the iPads and the service provided with each.

2. Part-Time Assessor Clerk:

Sue Johnson, presented a detailed overview of the job of the assessor and the need for adding a part time clerical position.

Job of the Assessor: Published by State Board of RPS

The assessor maintains the assessment roll, which is the document that contains every property's assessment and is used in the computation of real property tax bills. The assessment is **ONE** component in this process. Other components include the following:

- Inventory / improvements must be kept up to date to properly calculate the assessment. Therefore new construction, demolitions, improvements (with or without a permit) must be documented and inspected. **Clerical: building permits entered into system, pull file & document permit in parcel file & computer software, do the same again when CO's is issued. Send COA letter to resident.**
- The special district codes are also a major part of the tax bills and must be maintained whenever a change is made to the parcel. **Clerical: send letter for prorated garbage fee to resident & town clerk. Also document parcels with dumpsters and annual contracts.**
- Exemptions & penalties must be calculated and maintained for new or renewed exemptions. **Requires clerical tasks to print/mail renewals application, lease, when returned make copies of tax returns, driver license, etc. Reminder notice in penny saver & web site.**
- Transfers of real property must be processed. Ownership and addresses of property must be accurate. **Clerical: download transfers from county website, print them out, process the transfer, file the deeds and at the end of the year pack up and send to storage. Run sales reports and send to state.**
- Splits & merges of properties (approximately 25 a year), new sub divisions. Paxon/Sandrock: 7 parcels, Evergreen acres Phase 3: 30 parcels. **Clerical: Download County map patch and tape to large town wide county map to maintain accuracy since county only sends us new maps every couple of years. Check off list so we know what ones are missing. County is about 6 months behind town schedule.**
- NYS law requires reporting on all assessments changes during a roll year for statistical analysis & determination of an equalization rate for next roll year.
- Annual rate tables for STAR values, equalization rates, rates for the different soil types, etc. must be entered/updated for the new roll year as they are published.
- **Clerical: Record retention laws and destruction of confidential paperwork must be followed.**
- The Real Property System computer software must be maintained, updated and backed up.
- Must be present at all public hearings of the BAR – required by law.
- Annual Re calculations of special franchise values, 520's, and gas wells.
- **Clerical: Annual removal of all sewer charges and addition of new sewer charges from Erie County.**
- NYS monthly tasks, reporting, procedures and deadlines must be followed.
- Must be aware of constant changes to assessment laws & requirements.
- Determine department budget requirements.
- Answer many questions of the Eden residents and explain what their options are. **Both assessor & assistant**
- Answer many calls from realtors, appraisers, and lawyers. **Both assessor & assistant**
- Work closely with building inspector, town clerk, supervisor's office, town attorney & residents' attorneys. Keep town board members informed. **Both assessor & assistant.**
- Weekly contact with Erie County Mapping, Erie County Soil & Water Conservation, NYS Legal, NYS ORPS. **Both assessor & assistant.**
- Make sure inventory errors on edit report (see enclosed edit report) are corrected. Data collection and correct coding is very important. **Both assessor & assistant.**
- Random custom reports for projects: auditors, MWIA, conversion to garbage totes, etc.

Sue also gave examples of problems/issues that arise weekly outside of normal job duties and gave an average time of dealing with those issues at 12 hours per week. She further outlined the financial aspects of hiring a part time clerk and moving to one appointed assessor showing a yearly savings of \$7,347.

Councilperson Ventry asked if the proposal was to add an additional 10 hours per week to what the office had previously with three assessors. Sue responded that with three assessors they worked a total of 30 hours a week, she currently does 19 hours and the clerical position would be for 19 hours.

Dave Rice reviewed day to day operations in the building department and explained that Jen Crowe works between both departments as well as maintaining the senior car transportation and some additional work for the bookkeeper.

Jen Crowe gave an overview of her perspective on the amount of work she is doing for different departments and explained that additional help is warranted.

Supervisor Hartman stated that she is in favor of adding the part time position as there was an understanding that there was such a need for the hire. She further explained that the funding is already in place and she does not want to cut services.

Councilperson Sam added that he was in favor of the part time clerical position and while interviewing Sue she explained that this was something she needed in order to run the office which was part of the discussion while moving to sole assessor.

Councilperson Ventry asked that they make a decision at the next board meeting and discuss adding 10-19 hours of clerical to the assessor's office.

Councilperson Wilhelm stated that the board had a discussion but did not plan out details and should have been more methodical in the process.

Councilperson Byrnes stated he would like to take two weeks to review all of the information and make a decision at the next board meeting.

3. Discussion on Part-Time Senior Coordinator Position:

Supervisor Hartman outlined goal of the senior programming position:

- Senior Transportation
- Stay-Fit dining program 2-3 days per week
- General Senior Programming
 - Informational and Educational Programs
 - Weekly Activities
 - Parties and Events
 - Education, Historical, and entertaining trips
- Senior Housing Assistance
- HEAP Applications
- Voting Registrations
- Hometown Heroes

Supervisor Hartman stated that Eden is the only town in Erie County without a senior coordinator and a designated senior/community center. The need was also identified in the updated Master Plan as the town is lacking resources for seniors. She added that a coordinator would make an approximate yearly stipend of \$13,000-\$16,000 and work 15-19 hours per week. The town currently has a privately run senior group that meets two times per month and the group has expressed that they would like something a little more coordinated.

Jen Crowe outlined her current duties coordinating senior transportation which can account for up to 5 hours a week; finding volunteers to drive, coordinating appointment times with seniors, and ensuring the senior card is cleaned and maintained. She stated she has also assisted with basic needs of seniors, delivering food, helping them sign up for social service programs, etc. When Jen is not available Marlene has been assisting with senior transport coordination.

Councilperson Wilhelm stated that St. John's is still running a stay fit dining program two days a week. She asked that this item be tabled and that the board first addresses the need in the assessor's office. She stated that Amy Porter may have some senior programming available and that the town should think creatively while focusing on one thing.

Councilperson Byrnes stated the town offers little to seniors and he is looking forward to considering this position.

Councilperson Ventry discussed removing the senior car transportation from Jen's duties and having the Police Clerk's handle coordination, thus giving Jen more time in the Assessor's office. Supervisor Hartman advised that this is an option however there is a question of lack of consistency by not having one dedicated contact.

4. Zoning Code Updates:

Dave Rice reviewed in detail the zoning code updates that a committee of volunteers along with the town planners have been working on. He provided the board with multiple maps that cover current zoning and future zoning updates which outline the zoning needs discussed as part of the master plan.

Councilperson Ventry stated he is against the growing and selling of cannabis in town and questioned if the town can limit where it can be sold. Dave replied that we can allow it under a "Special Use Permit" in zoning of Mixed-Use 1 and that he is still waiting on more information from the State regarding sales.

5. Building Department Updates:

Dave Rice gave the following updates the Building Department:

- Barricades dividing two businesses on Main Street; the town does not have a right to not allow a fence but it has to be to the standard of the Mixed-Use 1 zoning code.
- Discussion on south entrance to Swartz Field, abandon or enter lease agreement with property owners for access.
- Building Department is working on going paperless, scanning archived files into a computer database and transitioning to submitting building permit applications online.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Emily Hawkins, Town Clerk