

**MINUTES OF THE MAY 12, 2020 MEETING OF THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF POUND RIDGE HELD VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, COMMENCING AT 8:00 PM**

**PRESENT: SUPERVISOR KEVIN HANSAN, COUNCILPERSON ALISON BOAK, COUNCILPERSON CARLA BRAND, COUNCILPERSON DIANE BRIGGS, COUNCILPERSON DANIEL PASCHKES**

**ALSO PRESENT: DEPUTY SUPERVISOR LES MARON  
TOWN ATTORNEY WILLIAM P. HARRINGTON  
TOWN CLERK ERIN TROSTLE**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Supervisor Hansan called the meeting to order at 8:07 pm.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- The Bedford Central School District staged a parade of over a hundred cars, fire trucks, ambulances, and other vehicles to honor PRES teachers.
- Paving of Route 137 has been delayed by one week due to cold weather.
- Pound Ridge continues to have a very low number of COVID-19 cases as reported by the county, with the total number of positive diagnoses still in the twenties and only one reported active case.
- Testing for active cases of COVID-19 is available to all residents at the Bedford Hills train station, and antibody testing will soon be available to first responders.
- Residents are encouraged to sign up for the Supervisor's Newsletter to stay informed about developments related to COVID-19.
- Hudsonia, which previously surveyed animal habitats in 52% of the town, will soon be seeking permission to field-check habitats in the remaining 48%.
- The Pound Ridge Partnership has extended the deadline for its \$1,000 scholarship, which is open to high school seniors residing in Pound Ridge who have volunteered in the community.

**MINUTES: Acknowledge/correct/accept minutes of Town Board meeting of May 5, 2020.**

**Board Action:** Motion by Councilperson Paschkes, seconded by Councilperson Briggs, all voting aye, to accept the minutes of the Town Board meeting of May 5, 2020.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. Supervisor – 7 Old Pound Road Discussion**

To facilitate public comment regarding the Board's announced intent to acquire 7 Old Pound Road, Supervisor Hansan had encouraged residents with questions to submit them

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via email prior to the meeting. He read residents' questions aloud and provided responses.

Alex Goldfarb, of 21 Patterson Road, observed that the purchase will be a wash in the sense that the taxes on the property would be approximately equivalent to the anticipated rental income. He expressed concern that the town would lose money once capital expenses and vacancy downtime were factored in.

Supervisor Hansan agreed that rental income might be less than the expenses Mr. Goldfarb mentioned. He also noted that there has been a great deal of interest in the property from prospective tenants and announced that the Fire Department is very interested in signing a three- to five-year lease, which would mitigate vacancy concerns. Councilperson Paschkes noted that having a stable local organization as a tenant would be advantageous.

Mr. Goldfarb stated that it appears that the property will be used for a sewage treatment plant which the town will not be able to afford and which the state and federal government are unlikely to fund. He suggested that the town should abandon such plans and instead live within its means.

Supervisor Hansan responded that no one has considered putting a sewage treatment plant on the property; it has been considered only as one of several possible sites for dispersal of treated water via a septic field. He noted that there are no plans to propose that Pound Ridge taxpayers pay for a wastewater project. He also pointed out that there is no harm in seeking outside funding for local projects, and that such funding could pay for projects that would benefit residents, perhaps even a community center like the one that was proposed some years back for the Town Park. One aspect of that project that was problematic was that the cost was to be borne entirely by local taxpayers.

Mr. Goldfarb asserted that the Town's goal should be to keep taxes flat and asked why the Board considers it a good idea to buy a house or raise taxes at this time.

Supervisor Hansan agreed that Mr. Goldfarb's observation regarding taxes is a fair point. However, he noted that it is possible that this may be the Town's only opportunity to purchase this property, that the price is very attractive, and that while this decision compels the Board to find creative ways to absorb the expense into the budget, efforts to do so are likely to be worthwhile in the long term. Supervisor Hansan noted that the Board has consistently held the budget under the tax cap and said that he does not anticipate exceeding the tax cap in the coming years. Finance Director Steven Conti noted that the Board has budgeted responsibly, that interest rates are very low, and that first-quarter revenue has been strong. Supervisor Hansan also noted that the Town has

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already made adjustments in response to uncertainty about 2020 revenue and that the Board will continue to be cautious about expenditures going forward.

Doreen Wray, of 84 Dann Farm Road, asked if it is wise to incur \$1.25M in debt at this time and also asked how much debt the Town has.

Finance Director Conti responded that the town has one bond anticipation note with a balance just under \$2M (for roads, vehicles, and TEP) and a five-year installment bond that ends in 2023. When the installment bond payments end, approximately \$128K of annual expenditures will fall off the books, and additional funds will become available to underwrite costs associated with the Old Pound Road purchase, though it seems very unlikely that the costs would be as high as \$128K.

Ms. Wray also asked what liabilities might be associated with the purchase, who would manage the rental property, and whether new employees would need to be hired.

Supervisor Hansan acknowledged that there would of course be expenses such as insurance. He noted that the Town, which has a building inspector and a maintenance department and which currently maintains properties including the Town House and Conant Hall, already has the expertise needed to maintain the Old Pound Road property and that no additional hiring would be necessary.

Ms. Wray asserted that a town of Pound Ridge's size should have a small government that practices fiscal restraint.

Supervisor Hansan said that the Board does balance the need for services carefully against our resources and will continue to do so.

Harold Mendelson, of 68 Hack Green Road, stated that the relationship between wastewater management and this purchase is unclear to him and wondered what will happen to the property if a wastewater project is not successful.

Supervisor Hansan responded that the purchase is not tied to a wastewater project, though that is one possible future use. The rationale for the purchase is for the Town to be able to control how the property is used. Having control is important because the property is centrally located between the Town Park and the business district and because it is not necessarily a good location for dense multifamily development.

Mr. Mendelson expressed concern that as much as two hundred thousand dollars in tax revenue from up to eight potential lots would be forfeited as a result of the purchase.

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Supervisor Hansan responded that if the town doesn't control the property, it's hard to say whether it may end up as eight housing units or thirty. Either type of development on the Old Pound Road property would be likely to impact traffic significantly and to change the character of the town.

Katherine Biagiarelli, of 315 Salem Road, inquired about the discrepancy between the purchase price of the property and the amount of the bond.

Supervisor Hansan responded that the bond amount is slightly larger to account for closing costs, legal fees, and other incidental costs associated with the purchase.

Ms. Biagiarelli expressed concern about increased traffic resulting from the purchase and asked how traffic congestion will be handled.

Supervisor Hansan replied that the purchase is not expected to increase traffic congestion; on the contrary, it is expected to minimize traffic problems.

Ms. Biagiarelli asked who would be responsible for upkeep, how long the rental term would be, and whether there would be additional costs related to identifying a tenant. She also expressed concerns about possible legal costs associated with ownership of the property.

Supervisor Hansan answered that the town would be responsible for upkeep, that the length of the rental agreements is yet to be determined, that it is not anticipated that there will be any difficulty identifying tenants, and that our town attorney is available to address legal issues.

Ms. Biagiarelli asked whether it was correct that the purchase would result in lost tax revenue of \$500K.

Finance Director Conti explained that the lot with the residence would remain on the tax rolls. Rental income from the property would offset taxes owed.

Ms. Biagiarelli asked whether the TEP bond and the bond for this purchase would overlap.

Finance Director Conti indicated that we are still awaiting some TEP reimbursements and that there would likely be some overlap.

Councilperson Boak reiterated her statement from the May 5 meeting that the property has tremendous value as a means to extend the walking trail.

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Supervisor Hansan noted that although many of the questions submitted to the board focused on possible negative aspects of the purchase, the overall response from residents to the purchase has been positive.

Supervisor Hansan then offered meeting attendees the opportunity to ask additional questions.

Richard Mendes asked whether the purchase could trigger problems related to the fair housing lawsuit. Town Attorney William Harrington responded that it would not since the lawsuit in question is over.

Mark Gjelij stated that the 7 Old Pound Road is a beautiful property and that he views the purchase as an excellent decision.

Mr. Goldfarb asked how many members of the Fire Department don't have their own homes and wondered whether the cost of taxes should be included in the rent.

Supervisor Hansan explained that the Fire Department already has several properties that it offers as rentals to incentivize volunteers to move to town and that this property would serve a similar function. Rental housing is necessary to attract volunteers. Negotiations with the Fire Department have not progressed to specifics regarding rent.

Mr. Goldfarb expressed concerns about the potential cost of a wastewater project and about whether asking the state to fund such a project could be justified.

Supervisor Hansan noted that an earlier proposal for a 30-unit development on the property made it clear that there is a demand for housing of this type but also raised awareness that Scotts Corners would be a more suitable location for this kind of development. A water/wastewater solution for Scotts Corners would facilitate residential development that would make the business district more vibrant.

Max Mosolino stated that the Old Pound Ridge property is a wonderful open space that could have a variety of recreational uses. He also said he is aware that a townhouse developer is interested in the property, and that we should remember that if the town doesn't buy the property, someone else will.

James Best stated that the purchase is worthwhile because it will help create a corridor connecting the school, the park, and the business district.

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Ellen Ivens noted that aside from her interest in the property as part of a possible wastewater solution, she too feels that creating a pedestrian corridor is a valuable project and favors the purchase.

Supervisor Hansan invited residents to email the board with any additional questions related to the 7 Old Pound Road purchase.

**B. Energy Action Committee – Approval of EV Charging Station Bids**

Energy Action Committee Chair Michele Rudolph described the process of obtaining bids for the EV charging station. She also announced that the Pound Ridge Partnership is contributing \$3,500.00 toward the cost of the project.

**RESOLUTION: #106-20**

**Board Action:** Motion by Councilperson Boak, seconded by Councilperson Brand, all voting aye, on the following:

RESOLVED, that the Town Board hereby accepts the bid from TriCat Electric to install the Electric Vehicle charging station.

**C. Highway Department: Permission to Hire Part-Time Temporary Flaggers**

**RESOLUTION: #107-20**

**Board Action:** Motion by Councilperson Paschkes, seconded by Councilperson Briggs, all voting aye, on the following:

RESOLVED, that the Highway Department is hereby authorized to hire two part-time temporary flaggers.

**D. Liaison Reports**

Councilperson Briggs reported that our census response rate is now 68%. She encourages residents to respond online in order to avoid field data collection.

Councilperson Briggs also thanked Highway Department for cleaning up the roads in preparation for paving and for observing social distancing protocols.

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Councilperson Boak reported that the Recreation Commission is awaiting recommendations about camp and asks for residents' patience.

**FINANCIAL MATTERS: Pay Bills**

**RESOLUTION: #108-20**

**Board Action:** Motion by Councilperson Paschkes, seconded by Councilperson Briggs, the motion passing 4-0 with Councilperson Brand abstaining:

RESOLVED, that the Supervisor is hereby authorized to pay the claims listed below AND BE IT

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board hereby approves the advance-of-audit payments listed below.

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Claims</b>	<b>Total Amount</b>
General Fund	20200287–20200316 20200321 20200325–20200326 20200328–20200347 20200355–20200371 20200382–20200384 20200388 20200393 20200396–20200404	\$810,371.65
Highway Fund	20200324 20200327 20200348–20200352 20200372–20200381 20200385–20200387 20200394–20200395	\$30,953.35
Trusts & Agency	20200286 20200318–20200320 20200389–20200391	\$220,944.82

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<b>Fund</b>	<b>Advance Payments</b>	<b>Total Amount</b>
General Fund	20200247–20200248 20200250 20200253–20200270 20200273–20200281 20200284–20200285	\$27,607.32
Highway Fund	20200252 20200271–20200272 20200282–20200283	\$2,344.18
Trusts & Agency	20200251	\$413.60

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business to come before the Board, Supervisor Hansan adjourned the meeting at 9:08 pm.

**RECONVENE AS PARKING DISTRICT:** Supervisor Hansan called the meeting to order at 9:09 pm.

**PAY BILLS:**

**RESOLUTION: #109-20**

**Board Action:** Motion by Councilperson Briggs, seconded by Councilperson Boak, the motion passing 4-0 with Councilperson Brand abstaining:

RESOLVED, that the Board hereby approves the following advance-of-audit payment:

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Advance Payment</b>	<b>Total Amount</b>
Parking District	20200249	\$114.01



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**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business to come before the Board,  
Supervisor Hansan adjourned the meeting at 9:10 pm.

Erin Trostle, Town Clerk  
Dated at Pound Ridge, New York  
May 28, 2020