

**TOWN OF STUYVESANT  
TOWN BOARD MEETING  
July 13, 2023**

The Town Board of the Town of Stuyvesant held a Public Hearing on Thursday, July 13, 2023. The purpose of the Hearing was to take public comment regarding proposed Local Law #2 “Establishing Income Levels for Senior Citizen Real Property Tax Exemption” and proposed Local Law #3 “Establishing Income Levels for Disabled and Low Income Real Property Tax Exemption”. In attendance were Supervisor Ron Knott; Councilmembers Tom Burrall, Brian Chittenden and David Quinn; Town Clerk Melissa Naegeli; Highway Superintendent Joe Scrum; and Attorney-for-the-Town Tal Rappleyea. Councilmember Kelley Williams was not in attendance.

Supervisor Knott opened the Public Hearing at 7:00pm and asked Town Clerk Melissa Naegeli to read the notice as it was published in the Register Star.

Supervisor Knott explained that the exemptions already exist and these local laws just change the sliding scales for income levels.

Were:	\$29,000 -> \$37,400
New:	\$34,000 -> \$42,400

Supervisor Knott asked Assessor Clerk Cathy Knott to talk about the need for the exemptions. Mrs. Knott discussed the number of residents who use the exemptions.

Supervisor Knott asked if there were any questions from the Board or anyone in the audience. With no comments or questions, a motion as made by David Quinn to close the Public Hearing. The motion as seconded by Brian Chittenden and was approved by unanimous vote.

The Public Hearing closed at 7:15pm.

The Town Board of the Town of Stuyvesant held their monthly meeting on Thursday, July 13, 2023. In attendance were Supervisor Ron Knott; Councilmembers Tom Burrall, Brian Chittenden and David Quinn; Town Clerk Melissa Naegeli; Highway Superintendent Joe Scrum; and Attorney-for-the-Town Tal Rappleyea. Councilmember Kelley Williams was not in attendance.

Supervisor Knott called the meeting to order at 7:15pm following the Public Hearing and opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Supervisor Knott asked for the June minutes to be corrected regarding the submission of the Grant Application. It will be submitted at the end of July, not the end of June. A motion to accept the minutes of the previous meeting ,with the correction, was made by Tom Burrall. The motion was seconded by David Quinn and was approved by unanimous vote.

A motion to pay the vouchers as submitted was made by Tom Burrall. The motion was seconded by Brian Chittenden and was approved by unanimous vote.

### **Correspondence**

*Spectrum* – there will be significant price increase coming

*Columbia Land Conservancy* – Completed annual visit to Hummel Park and everything is okay.

### **Old Business**

*Stuyvesant Falls Bridge*: Supervisor Knott reported that NYS DOT has authorized the project to move forward. The County will be setting up a kick-off meeting with the Engineers. The County was awarded funds to redo the Stockport bridge and the plan is to complete that work first so there is a detour available during the work on the Stuyvesant Falls Bridge. The County is looking at temporary fixes to have the weight limit increased.

*HVAC* – Supervisor Knott reported that the RFPs are out and there is a bid opening scheduled for August 1<sup>st</sup>.

*Storm Damage* – Supervisor Knott asked Bill Vick, Emergency Management Coordinator, to give a report on the storm damage from the previous storms. Mr. Vick credited the fire companies and highway department (as well as the departments from other Towns) for their quick response. He also thanked

National Grid for their fast response. He said the timing of the storms made it so the roads had to be closed.

NYS DOT representatives who came to look at the damage said they had never seen anything like it before.

Supervisor Knott added commendations to the Highway Department.

Tracy Seeberger asked what number should be called for trees down or other emergencies. Mr. Vick told her to always call 911.

Charles Stiffler asked if someone could reach out to Verizon about their wires still being down.

Supervisor Knott told the audience that there are masks available for anyone who would like them, following the announcement by the Governor that the smoke from the wildfires would be returning.

### **Special Guest**

Town Judge Carrie O'Hare made a presentation to the Board and asked them to pass a Resolution in opposition to S00139B & A1358B Mandating that the Top 100 Courts have lawyer judges and also creating district courts.

After a discussion, a motion to adopt the following Resolution was made by David Quinn. The motion as seconded by Tom Burrall and was approved by unanimous vote.

#### **RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF STUYVESANT**

##### **In Opposition to New York Senate Bill S-00139B and Assembly Bill A-1358B**

**WHEREAS**, *New York Senate Bill number S-00139B has been passed which, if adopted by the NYS Assembly (A 1358-B) and signed by the Governor, would require all Judges presiding in the 100 largest Town and Village Courts to be licensed to practice law in the State and to have been admitted to the NYS Bar for at least five years; and*

**WHEREAS**, *The Town and Village Courts in Columbia County are among the nearly 1,200 Justice Courts in the State of New York that collectively handle close to 1 million cases each year; and*

**WHEREAS**, *The Town and Village Courts are known as the "Courts Closest to the People" and have broad jurisdiction, presiding over civil and criminal matters, thereby performing a vital role in the New York State Unified Court System; and*

**WHEREAS**, *The Town Court of Stuyvesant is a vital service to our residents and the Columbia County community as a whole; and*

**WHEREAS**, The Justices in Columbia County's Town and Village Courts have pledged to be ever mindful of their neutrality and impartiality, and render equal justice to all, while continually adhering to judicial rules of ethics and pronouncements of the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct; and

**WHEREAS**, The Justices are required to be on-call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to review/ sign arrest and search warrants, perform arraignments, and issue orders of protection; and

**WHEREAS**, The Justices of Town and Village Courts ensure that the rights afforded to defendants by the Constitutions of the United States and the State of New York are provided and protected; and

**WHEREAS**, The Justices of Town and Village Courts preside over trials involving misdemeanor and violation level offenses, thereby ensuring that the victims of those offenses can be heard; and

**WHEREAS**, The Town and Village Courts provide a venue for Citizens to pursue a low- cost and efficient procedure for individuals to resolve civil disputes and landlord/tenant matters; and

**WHEREAS**, the Justices also preside nightly and on weekends and holidays, ensuring that arrested citizens are promptly afforded legal representation, the opportunity to plead to alleged charges, and to be considered for release, bail, or incarceration; and

**WHEREAS**, The Justices continually strive to improve the administration of justice through participation in mandatory education programs, seminars, meetings of the Columbia County Magistrates Association and the New York State Magistrates Association; and

**WHEREAS**, The New York State Office of Court Administration must certify all as having successfully completed mandatory training both following election and in each subsequent year; and

**WHEREAS**, The New York State's Commission on Judicial Conduct's most recent annual report (2023) identifies that only 13% of the complaints filed against the judiciary were against Town and Village judges while the remaining complaints were against either "State-paid" judges, (constituting approximately 40% of the judiciary) who accounted for approximately 67% of the complaints received, or against non-judicial entities (20%); and

**WHEREAS**, This Bill attempts to usurp the right of voters to elect those in their communities that they believe to be fair and impartial, and who would best serve that community, whether they be attorneys or non-attorneys; and

**WHEREAS**, This Bill implicitly suggests that members of a community are incapable of making informed decisions about who should sit in judgment of matters from the straight- forward to the highly complex as may arise in their local courts; and

**WHEREAS**, this legislative body views the intention of this Bill is not to actually improve the courts, but a blatant and unconscionable attempt by the New York State Bar Association, an organization that represents approximately only fifteen percent (15%) of the State's attorneys, to generate increased opportunities

for its members, and to dictate who voters may choose to serve in our local governments;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Governing board of the Town of Stuyvesant strongly, and in unequivocal terms, calls on both the leadership in the Senate and Assembly, and the Governor to reject this poorly conceived and hastily fashioned seizure of voters' rights to determine, for themselves, who they would choose to sit as their judges as has been the case for almost two hundred years.

**Adopted by unanimous consent this 13<sup>th</sup> day of July 2023.**

<u>Town Board Members</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Ron Knott	X		
Tom Burrall	X		
Brian Chittenden	X		
David Quinn	X		
Kelley Williams			X

Resolution Certified by  
Melissa A. Naegeli, RMC  
Town Clerk

## **Reports**

*Town Clerk/Tax Collector:* Reports on file.

*Recreation Committee:* Melissa Naegeli reported that she had been asked about kids being able to attend the Village of Kinderhook playground program. Supervisor Knott said he would talk to the Mayor of Kinderhook.

*Environmental Management Council:* No report

*Dog Control Officer:* No report

*Kinderhook Memorial Library:* No report

*Climate Smart Committee:* Hannah Shephard reported:

- Everyone signed the letter in support of the grant application to redo the Comprehensive Plan;
- Thanked Supervisor Ron Knott and Town Clerk Melissa Naegeli for their help with the research for benchmarking energy usage;
- Attended a heat pump information meeting was very interesting. The Committee is looking into having one in Town for residents;
- They are interested in working with the Garden Club; and
- They will have a table at the September 16<sup>th</sup> event.

*Highway Department:* Highway Superintendent Joe Scrum reported the Department:

- Is still cleaning up after the storms; and
- Hollow Road has been paved. There are no speed limit signs on the road and he is researching what the speed limit is supposed to be.

*Assessor's Office:* Cathy Knott reported that its been quiet. The Final Roll has been filed in the Town Clerk's Office and is available online.

*Planning Board/Zoning Board of Appeals –* The Zoning Board of Appeals held a Public Hearing on July 12th.

*Historian:* Cathy Knott reported that the Bicentennial picnic was another good event with perfect weather. There were 2 full tables of food that people brought, there was a good turnout and the overall sales of items for the day was over \$800. She thanked the Highway Department for moving the tables and thanked Supervisor Knott and Chuck Stiffler for cooking. T-Shirts and bags are available for sale in the Town Clerk's Office. The next event will be September 16<sup>th</sup> at the Stuyvesant Landing Playground.

Supervisor Knott reported that had had a contract for fireworks for the September 16<sup>th</sup> event and asked the Board's permission to sign. A motion to approve the contract was made by Brian Chittenden. The motion was seconded by David Quinn and was approved by unanimous vote.

Supervisor Knott will coordinate all emergency services for traffic and crowd control, Riverview Street will be closed to vehicle traffic. Melissa Naegeli is working on getting vendors for the event earlier in the evening.

*Cemetery:* David Quinn asked Joe Scrum about trees in the cemetery following the storms. Joe reported one tree was down and the highway department will get it cleaned up.

*Building Department:* Report is on file.

*Railroad Station Restoration Committee:* Richard Moran reported that there will be a blueberry waffle brunch on July 16<sup>th</sup> 11am – 12pm at the Station.

## **County Government**

*Food Scrap Program:* Supervisor Knott reported that the County had purchased a digester last year and they are expanding the program to include commercial food waste – starting with the jail and Office for the Aging kitchen.

*Hazardous Waste Day:* There will be another County Hazardous Waste day on October 29<sup>th</sup>.

*Energy Projects:* Supervisor Knott reported that the next large energy project will be replace mechanicals at the DSS building. Solar panels will be installed on the roof and will cover 25% of the use of the building.

*Full Board of Supervisors:* A resolution as presented to the Full Board of Supervisors asking the Governor to veto the bill to change local elections to even numbered years.

There was a presentation from Fitchen & Associations hired to audit emergency services from rescue squads.

### ***New Business***

*Local Laws #2 & 3* – A motion to adopt the Local Laws was made by Brian Chittenden. The motion was seconded by David Quinn and was approved by unanimous vote.

*Planning Grant* – Supervisor Knott has collected all of the backup information and the application will be submitted by July 26<sup>th</sup>.

*Accountant* – Supervisor Knott explained to the Board that due to difficulties in having a bookkeeper available and the lack of availability of the current accountant, he would like to hire Bob Patterson as a bookkeeper and auditor. Mr. Patterson used to work for our current Accountant and is familiar with municipal accounts and has worked on our business in the past. Supervisor Knott asked for permission to sign an engagement letter. Tom Burrall made a motion to allow Supervisor Knott to sign an engagement letter with Robert Patterson for Auditor and Bookkeepers responsibilities. The motion as seconded by Brian Chittenden and was approved by unanimous vote. Mr. Patterson will begin on August 1<sup>st</sup>.

### ***Board Comments***

No comments or questions

### ***Public Comments***

Tracy Seeberger asked where to take items for hazardous waste day. Supervisor Knott explained it takes place in the Commerce Park area.



With no further questions or comments a motion to adjourn was made by Brian Chittenden. The motion was seconded by David Quinn and was approved by unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:11pm.

The abstract of Vouchers presented for payment at the July 13, 2023 meeting:

<i>July 2023</i>				<b>LIGHTS</b>	
<b>CLAIM #</b>	<b>PAYEE</b>	<b>A/C#</b>	<b>GENERAL</b>	<b>LND/FALLS</b>	<b>HIGHWAY</b>
23-246	Lisa's Silkscreen Printing	7550.4	971.25		
<u>23-247</u>	CDPHP Universal Benefits	9060.8	697.37		2,092.11
23-248	National Grid (\$1410.62)	5182.4		686.77	
				723.85	
23-249	Paychex of NY, LLC	1320.4	294.95		
23-250	Charter Communications	1620.4	399.93		
23-251	Charter Communications	5132.4	310.72		
23-252	NYS Office of State Comptroller	A2610	146.00		
23-253	Quadient Leasing USA, Inc.	1620.41	203.79		
23-254	Gabbit, LLC (\$943.86)	1620.41	619.93		
		5132.4	323.93		
23-255	Johnson Newspaper Corp. (\$225.47)	8020.4	172.97		
		1010.4	52.50		
23-256	SL Empire Solar I, LLC	1620.4	205.81		
23-257	National Grid	1620.4	28.15		
23-258	National Grid	1620.4	22.70		
23-259	National Grid	5132.4	152.87		
23-260	Marlin Leasing Servicing (\$230.43)	1410.4	75.87		
		1620.41	154.56		
23-261	Repeat Business Systems (\$76.69)	1410.4	34.78		
		5132.4	7.12		
		1620.41	34.79		
23-262	Rainbow Distributing Co., Inc.	5132.4	21.49		
23-263	Verizon Wireless	5010.4	62.51		
23-264	AramSCO, Inc.	5132.4	68.56		
23-265	Susan Brignull	7550.4	104.08		
23-266	Ron Knott	7550.4	330.50		
23-267	Columbia County Treasurer (Sheriff's Office)	1110.4	184.29		
23-268	Tal G. Rappleyea, Esq.	1420.4	625.00		
23-269	Barbara Cin	1110.4	100.00		
23-270	Richard Moran	7550.4	40.85		
23-271	Carrie A. O'Hare	1110.4	78.00		



23-272	CCAofTSofH	5010.4	100.00		
23-273	Air Gas USA, LLC	5130.4	127.00		
23-274	Visa	5130.4			202.01
23-275	ACP Power Equipment, Inc.	5130.4			210.47
23-276	Bob Boll Excavating	5142.4			1,381.18
23-277	Stuyvesant Fire Company #1	5110.4			94.30
	<i>6-Jul-23</i>		6752.27	1410.62	3,980.07
23-278	CPL	TA62			
23-279	Tal G. Rappleyea, Esq.	TA62			
23-280	Staples, Inc. (\$76.93)	1110.4	48.46		
		3620.4	28.47		
23-281	SL Empire Solar I, LLC	1620.4	255.66		
23-282	Redishred Acquisition, Inc.	1410.4	30.00		
23-283	Paychex of New York, LLC	1320.4	358.45		
23-284	Santore's World Famous Fireworks, LLC	7550.4	7,500.00		
23-285	Visa	5110.4			306.12
23-286	Visa	1320.4	1,300.55		
23-287	Main Care Energy	7110.4	111.49		
23-288	Carols Araoz	1110.4	70.00		
23-289	Columbia County Treasurer (Sheriff's Dept)	1110.4	184.29		
23-290	Mario's Home Center	5132.4	42.72		
23-291	County Waste	5132.4	220.02		
23-292	Tal G. Rappleyea, Esq.	1420.4	562.50		
23-293	NYS Town Clerk's Association	1410.4	85.00		
23-294	The CDL School, LLC	5110.4			3,100.00
23-295	Lowe's	5110.4			196.97
23-296	Car Quest of Valatie	5110.4			16.48
23-297	Gig's Wrench	5130.4			48.75
23-298	Valley Paving & Construction, Inc.	5112.2			240,142.85
23-299	NYS Office of State Comptroller	A2610	210.00		
	<i>13-Jul-23</i>		11,007.61	-	243,811.17
	<i>July Totals</i>		17,759.88	1,410.62	247,791.24