

April 9, 2025

The Town Board of the Town of Harpersfield held a Board meeting on March 9, 2025

Present were: Lisa M. Driscoll, Supervisor  
Patrick F. Funk, Councilmember  
Erik Reeve, Councilmember  
Donna VanSickell, Councilmember  
Dwayne Hill, Councilmember

Also Present: Russell Hatch, Supt. of Highways  
Heidi R. Stevens, Town Clerk  
Thomas Giaguzzi, Deputy Town Clerk

Others Present: Arthur Sprague, Vice Commander of the American Legion of  
Stamford  
Ken Cole, Commander of the American Legion of  
Stamford

Henry L. Browning  
Betty J. Jones  
Thomas VanSickell  
Ted Dziewit  
Russell Kassner  
Gary Hara  
Andrea Frisch-Hara  
Carolyn Sloan  
Andrew Shaffer  
Amanda Shaffer  
Susan Fortier  
Liz Page, Editor of The Mountain Eagle

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Lisa M. Driscoll. Supervisor Driscoll led the Board and those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Supervisor Driscoll reminded the public that they are allowed to be at the meeting. If they are not on the agenda there will be no comments from anyone unless they are addressed.

Supervisor Driscoll asked the Board if there were any questions, comments or concerns regarding the minutes from March 12<sup>th</sup>. The Board had no questions, comments or concerns.

A motion to accept the minutes from March 12, 2025, was made by Patrick F. Funk and seconded by Donna VanSickell.

Supervisor Lisa M. Driscoll asked if there was any correspondence. There was no correspondence.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is the Permissive Referendum petitions and the court date. The Town had received a petition from concerned citizens on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March for the electricity that would go to the Verizon tower. That did go to Court on March 8<sup>th</sup>. The court has given until April 22<sup>nd</sup> for the concerned citizens who provided the petition to provide information on the invalid signatures proving primary residency. This information needs to be given to the Town's attorney which will at that time provide it to the Judge. The Town with their attorney have until April 29<sup>th</sup> to respond back to the Judge on the information provided by the petitioners. At that time the Judge will decide if this would go to a special election.

Supervisor Lisa M. Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is the VA Building Deed. Ken Cole the Commander of The American Legion of Stamford and Arthur Sprague, Vice Commander of the American Legion of Stamford are here to explain to the Board what exactly The American Legion is asking from the Town of Harpersfield. Ken Cole explained that they have come to the Town Board to ask if something can be done with the deed for the VA building which resides in the Town of Harpersfield. The deed has the Town of Harpersfield listed on it along with The American Legion. The Veteran's Club was formed in 1947 by the V.F.W. A few years later The American Legion came to the building. As of today, The American Legion is the only organization left. When the deed was made the V.F.W put on the deed that if and when all organizations were to leave, the building and property it resides on would go back to the Town of Harpersfield. The American Legion would like the Town Board to agree to take the Town of Harpersfield off the deed. The reason for this is if The American Legion owns the property clear it would open a lot of funds for them. Right now, they are not eligible for a lot of grants because the Town of Harpersfield shares ownership.

Supervisor Driscoll asked Ken Cole is the reason The American Legion needs the grants because the building is falling down and in bad disrepair? Would they like the grants for the repairs that the building would need?

Mr. Cole answered that the building is well over 100 years old. It would be beneficial for The American Legion to get the Town of Harpersfield off the deed so they could try to get the grants that they would need to repair the building and make it safe for them and the community.

Arthur Sprague Vice Commander of the American Legion told the Board that their expenses are greatly exceeding the funds that they take in. The building is not safe. The most valuable thing

on the property is the water shed put in a new septic system for them last fall that cost about \$50,000.

Patrick F. Funk asked if the Town of Harpersfield was to come off the deed, what happens if the Legion folds?

Mr. Cole answered that the weapons and belongings would go to the National Department of the Legion. He is unsure about the property.

Patrick F. Funk responded that he doesn't think that would make sense that they would be able to get local grants for a property that would go to the National Legion and not a local town or municipality. If Harpersfield takes their name off the deed and the Veterans Association decides to sell it would there be stipulations for that? Mr. Funk stressed that he is not against it, he just wants to make sure all the questions are asked so that the Board is aware of the process.

Erik Reeve asked if The American Legion is looking into federal grants?

Mr. Cole answered yes. The discussion continued.

Supervisor Driscoll has spoken with the Town's attorney regarding this, and the attorney would need the title to be clear before we could turn over ownership or remove the Town of Harpersfield off the deed. She went on to say that on the other hand the Board would need to think about would be if the building was to go back to the Town, the building is in such bad disrepair that it would end up costing the Town money to either fix it or bulldoze it. The shape that the building is in would make it hard to sell. The discussion continued.

The American Legion is going speak with their attorney to write down a proposal to show exactly what they are looking to do and how exactly the process will proceed when and if the Town agrees to sign over the deed.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is the IWork vs City Reporter software. IWork seems to be the better of the two for what the Town is looking for. This software has dog permits as well. When the Town spoke with IWork they were willing to include the dog permits and brought down their costs for the Town as well. With IWork we will not be on the internet at this point once we get everything in the system we can then make the change to include the web. That will be an additional charge. The total for this software would be \$2900.00 a year. For the City Reporter the total is \$4325.00.

A motion was made to accept the IWork proposal by Patrick F. Funk and seconded by Dwayne C. Hill. All voting Aye.

Supervisor Lisa M. Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is the closing of the Certificate of Need with Headwaters. Supervisor Driscoll explained to the Board that the process is presented in front of them. There are still a few things that need to be done to get this closed. Ms. Driscoll is working to get this done. The Towns Certificate of Need is closed but Headwaters is still open. Supervisor Driscoll is trying to set up a meeting so that they can get an audit done. Headwaters will let her know when they are available.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is the SUI tax refund. Last year the Town was charged SUI tax. SUI is State Unemployment Insurance; the Town is not supposed to have SUI tax. She has been working on getting this refund to the Town for a year now. Ms. Driscoll has sent more paperwork they have requested to receive the refund. Hopefully that is the last part of the information that they need from her. The amount that is owed to the Town is a little less than \$5000.00.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is the budget adjustments and annual financial reports. The Town spent for general A \$607,000.00 the budget was \$613,000.00. For general B the Town spent \$77,761.00 the budget was \$77,795.00. For DA the Town spent \$303,000.00 the budget was \$304,000.00. For DB the Town spent \$657,000.00 the budget was \$808,000.00. Keep in mind that it is with the CHIPS money that the Town got, which was \$192,000.00. The Town was very close to the budget.

A motion was made to accept the movement of the money for the 2024 budget by Patrick F. Funk and seconded by Dwayne C. Hill. All voting Aye.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is the grants for the new cameras and panic buttons. The Town did receive a grant from JCAP. The remaining that the Town would need to pay would be about \$2500.00. Supervisor Driscoll had written a request for a grant in the amount of \$500 from Core Values and one to O'Conner for about \$2000.00. Which together would be the remaining amount on the cameras. They have both been submitted. She is just waiting to hear back from them.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is Aflac insurance. Aflac has a supplemental insurance that the Town's employees could be eligible to receive. The requirements would be that only three people from the Town would need to buy into the insurance for the Town to receive the discount that they are offering. Whoever takes Aflac as supplemental insurance would need to pay for it. This is not going to be provided by the Town. The employees would receive a discount for the insurance because the Town would be a sponsor for it. Supervisor Driscoll will schedule a date for Aflac to come to the Town in May to do an overview to whoever is interested and explain what they would provide. Anybody who works for the Town would be eligible.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is the Shared Service agreements. Jefferson has provided theirs to us. The agreement we have for the Village of Stamford is out of date. They are going over theirs and will provide us with a new one after their next Board meeting.

Patrick F. Funk asked if anyone has heard anything about the bridge that the Village of Stamford would like the Town of Harpersfield to sign the easement for?

Russ answered that the bridge is closed right now. The Village is trying to push things ahead but still sounds like it is a year or so out.

Supervisor Driscoll told the Board that there is still some work that needs to be done by the attorneys on both sides before the Town can provide the easement for the bridge.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is the annual financial report for the Transfer Station. That has been submitted to the Board for them to review. The Town has asked for an extension on the Town's annual report. As soon as that is done the Board will be presented that as well. Once the Town has both reports it will be published in the paper that they are available at the Town Hall to review.

Dwayne Hill asked how Paint Care was going at the Transfer Station? Supervisor Driscoll answered that paint care is going well. They have come to pick up already. Supervisor Driscoll went on to say that the one thing that really needs to get out there is for the public to make sure they are bringing the paint that it is acceptable and that there needs to be an attendant available at the Transfer Station to receive the paint from the person recycling it. There has been a couple of times that the paint is just left when an attendant wasn't available.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is the proposal from MTC. The Town hall has contacted MTC because of the phone lines in the Town Hall. There is one line that is coming into the downstairs of the building. This is making it very difficult for the Supervisor and the Town Clerk to complete phone calls. We also have call waiting which means that there are a lot of missed phone calls. MTC has made a proposal which will give the Town two lines downstairs, which includes a line for the Supervisor, the Town Clerk and a fax line. With this proposal there will be voicemail so that the calls will roll over instead of going unanswered. Right now, the Town is paying \$56.17, the proposal is for \$136.80. That is about a \$80 increase. The proposal includes the phones and fax machine that MTC would provide.

A motion was made to accept the MTC proposal by Dwayne C. Hill and seconded by Donna VanSickell. All voting Aye.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is the list of items that need to be discussed before they are either thrown away or sold at auction. Heidi Stevens went over the items listed from the Town Hall. Which included old Dell computers, an old vacuum, fax machine, timecard reporter, cannon printer. All items are very outdated. Russ also has a list of items from the Highway Garage that he would like to go over. This list included a Volvo 10-wheeler that they would put a wing on before it is sold to possibly get a bit more money for it. There are also 4 chainsaws that will try to be sold. There are a couple copiers that Russ has tried to get to work, they just need to be thrown out. A 35-millimeter camera that is going to be put at auction with the trucks. Pressure washer, ditch pump, 14ft plow, wings and sanders that the Highway department made, a couple weedwhacker's all going to scrap or be thrown out.

A motion was made to get rid of or sell those items by Patrick F. Funk and seconded by Donna VanSickell. All voting Aye.

Supervisor Driscoll asked the councilmembers if there was anything that they would like to discuss with the Board.

Councilmember Funk had a couple of things that he would like to discuss. Patrick Funk informed the Board that he will be away in May. He also asked if Russ could have a discussion with the Sheriff regarding the traffic on Gunhouse Hill Road? He would like to see if there could be more patrols on the road. There have been 2 incidents in the last couple of weeks that he is aware of

personally. Mr. Funks fiancée had somebody driving behind them erratically and then pass them going down the hill on the Harpersfield side. After passing them they swerved in front of her and came to a complete stop forcing her off the road. Another person had a driver coming straight at them on their side of the road, forcing these people to have to go to the left-hand side of the road so they were not hit. This was posted on Facebook as the person had a dash cam. The speed limit is 45 mph on Gunhouse Hill Road, some drivers are doing more like 70 mph. Mr. Funk thinks someone is going to get hurt.

Russ told councilmember Patrick Funk that he is going to be dealing with the Sheriff tomorrow because of some vandalism that had happened behind the Town Hall. Russ will bring up the concern that Patrick Funk has mentioned to the Sheriff.

Supervisor Driscoll asked if Russ has put up posted signs? Russ answered yes. The Town does not want people up there.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that unless you work for the Town you are not allowed to be up there unless they have spoken with Russ. This includes contractors. The Town cannot have what occurred happen again. Someone could get hurt.

Russ informed the Board that there is no update on the truck this month. He will speak with them before the meeting in May. Councilmember Funk brought up the truck warranty again as the warranty from the truck company will already be voided based upon the time that the company that is retrofitting it has had it. Russ answered that he planned to talk to them about the warranty during his phone call.

Tax collector Heidi Stevens presented the Monthly Tax Collectors report to the Board. The Town received \$64.47 in bank interest and \$1830.88 in penalties for the month of March.

The Town Clerks report for the month of March was issued to the Board. The amount that the Town received was \$2432.86.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is the Abstract and Vouchers for March 2025. The Town paid the fire departments. Supervisor Driscoll asked the Board to give approval to pay the NYSEG bill that has not arrived yet. This bill is for the North Harpersfield lights.

A motion to pay the NYSEG bill when it arrives was made by Patrick F. Funk second by Dwayne C. Hill. All voting Aye.

A motion was made to pay the bills that have been presented to the Board was made by Patrick F. Funk and seconded by Dwayne C. Hill. All voting Aye.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is the Profit and Losses. The retirement needs to be split out still. The ambulance was paid. Joe's time needs to be moved back to DA right now its showing in DB. The Fire districts were just paid.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that in their folders is the equalization rate packet. The Towns Assessor is looking at how much it would cost the Town to bring this up to 100% for

everybody. When she has all of the information, she will come to a Board meeting and explain more about the equalization rates.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 8:20 PM by Patrick F. Funk seconded by Dwayne C. Hill. All voting Aye.

The next regular meeting of the Town Board will be held on Wednesday May 14, 2025, at 7:00 PM.