

TOWN OF OTEGO

APRIL 18, 2012

The Town Board of the Town of Otego held a regular board meeting on Wednesday, April 18, 2012 at 6:30 pm at the Municipal Building, 3526 State

Highway 7, Otego, New York. The purpose of the meeting was to audit the bills and any other business coming before the Board.

The following members were present:

Joseph Hurlburt Supervisor
Maryalice Brown Town Clerk
Terry Brown Councilperson
George Dolezel Councilperson
Barbara Stanton Councilperson
David Sheldon Councilperson
JR Hurlburt Highway Supt

The board was scheduled to hold a public hearing on the amended zoning ordinance at this time. However, neighboring towns have to be notified about hearings for zoning ordinances at least 10 days before a hearing. This was not done so the hearing will be held in May.

Gas Drilling

The following persons spoke about gas drilling:

Rod Gould gave a powerpoint presentation about the positive impact of gas drilling. He has spoken to experts in the field and is of the opinion that drilling is improving and getting safer. He also spoke about the ad valorem tax which is site based and the gas companies pay taxes on the drilling sites which should decrease the taxes of all property owners.

Nathan Posner spoke about taxes from the drill sites. He does not feel that they would benefit the town and they are usually smaller than anticipated. There are unanticipated fiscal consequences to drilling. He supports a moratorium.

Bob Birkett read a letter from Jean Seroka. She is of the opinion that farmers, especially organic farmers, may be affected by drilling. She supports a moratorium in order to have time to examine the facts.

Charles Pierce feels that taxes will not save our schools. The gas will be exported out of the country. He also is concerned about the cancer causing chemicals that may be in the fracking fluid. Our best defense is home rule. He supports a moratorium.

Irmabelle Sheldon knows that everyone wants clean water. She has spoken to Mike Zagata, a former DEC official, to get more information. She feels that we have to consider the economic opportunity that would come with drilling.

Katie Higgins claims that fracking poses serious risks for residents, citing the decision of Bassett Healthcare to come out in opposition to hydrofracking. She is also concerned with the possible damage to roads. She does not think that the town can safely support gas drilling. She supports a moratorium.

Kim More recently attended a jobs fair in Binghamton and people are traveling far in search of a job. She has gone to Dimmock, PA and finds the roads in good condition and spoke to people about the training programs in PA schools for students. She feels that the ad valorem tax would benefit the town.

Dennis Higgins cited the Cornell study saying that gas drilling jobs are given to transient workers who move from job to job. Gas drilling does not promote more industry and there is a negative impact on farming and tourism. The demands on government rise but government is poorer. He doesn't believe that the DEC can protect us, and industry won't protect us. He supports a moratorium.

Janet Glantz says that the DEC is understaffed and can't protect us from water problems. There has been no public health impact analysis. She supports a moratorium.

Bob Birch, an attorney from Middlefield with land in Otego, feels that a moratorium is not necessary. It duplicates what the state already has in place. There may also be some legalities that our town attorney may want to check before a moratorium is considered. He also stated that the Farm Bureau supports gas drilling.

Stephen Baldwin stated that a moratorium does not hurt landowners who favor gas drilling. It just gives a pause to have time to investigate the issue to reach a calm, rational decision.

Carol O'Hara has been to Dimmock, PA, and spoken to a resident living near one of the well sites. He has been bothered by noise, traffic, and the workers at the site. Drillers from out of town are there for the money and don't care about the area. A moratorium is needed.

Stuart Anderson's parents live in Chataugua County where there is drilling of vertical wells. There have been water complaints and the area hasn't seen great gains from gas drilling. He supports a moratorium.

Dick Downey stated that protocols that were put in place in 1988 have improved the safety of gas drilling. 90% of all wells today are fracked, whether vertical or horizontal. The anti drilling movement wants drilling banned. The leadership knows that cheap gas will set back heavily subsidized renewable energy. The town should not pass a moratorium.

Kathy Holmstrom said that disposing of fracking waste water is still a concern. She supports a moratorium.

Nelson DuBois spoke about the volatility of land values in gas drilling areas. Studies show that the population decreases in these areas and some banks don't provide mortgages.

Roberto Romano, planning board member, said that the surveys are being tabulated and may result in changes to the comprehensive plan. If a moratorium is benign, as some speakers say, why not go forward and put one in place.

Mother Raphaela believes that we must care for God's creation. There are too many risks and unknowns about drilling, including the chemicals used. The technology exists for alternative renewable energy. We must get educated.

Mark Dye said that we need good planning. We have been studying the issue. He is against a moratorium.

Survey

Kate Lawrence, planning board member, gave the board an update on the survey. She gave the board preliminary information for question 10 about gas drilling. It comes in at 46% against drilling, 38% in favor, and 13% undecided. The information hasn't been checked for duplicates so the final figure may change a little.

The board has started entering the entire survey information in the computer but it will take a few months to tabulate all the information.

Minutes

A motion was made by George Dolezel, seconded by David Sheldon, to accept the minutes of the March 14 meeting. Motion: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

A motion was made by Barbara Stanton, seconded by Terry Brown, to accept the minutes of the March 21 meeting. Motion: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

Supervisor's Report

Mr. Hurlburt gave the supervisor's report for March:

General Fund townwide beginning balance: \$383,990.29
Receipts: 22,995.17
Disbursements: 35,012.29
Ending Balance: \$371,973.17

General Fund outside village beginning balance: \$ 54,340.36
Receipts: 275.93
Disbursements: 2 174.36 Ending Balance: \$ 52,441.93

Highway Fund townwide beginning balance: \$442,082.62
Receipts: 414,90

Disbursements: 52,420.65
Ending Balance: \$390,076.87
Highway Fund outside village beginning balance: \$442,353.17
Receipts: 54.81
Disbursements: 855.40
Ending Balance: \$441,446.94

A motion was made by Barbara Stanton, seconded by David Sheldon, to accept this report as read. Motion: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays

Dog Control Report

Ellen Dwyer gave her dog report: 6 reports of loose/stray dogs, 2 warnings given, 3 dogs taken to the shelter.

Code Officer

Mr. Bruni attended a forum on wind energy. It was very informative.

Zoning Board of Appeals

A motion was made by Barbara Stanton, seconded by David Sheldon, to appoint Stanley Rusin to the zoning board appeals to fill the unexpired term of Roger Sullivan. Motion: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

Energy Assessment for Lighting

The town received an proposal to have more efficient lighting installed in the municipal building and highway garage. The board will be given copies of the proposals and will consider them at the May meeting.

MEGA Energy

The town clerk has contacted other towns to see if they were satisfied with the change to MEGA energy. They have seen savings. NYSEG was also contacted and would not change their rates to match what was offered by MEGA.

A motion was made by David Sheldon, seconded by Terry Brown, to change the electric supplier to MEGA Energy, also known as Integrys. Motion: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

Parking Lot

The town clerk will contact some companies to get prices to have the parking lot striped.

Time Warner

Mr. Hurlburt has spoken to Mr. Whalen from Time Warner. Mr. Whalen will have someone come and survey the town roads to see if there is a possibility of extending cable in the area. He also wants Time Warner to extend cable to the highway department.

Zoning Law

A motion was made by George Dolezel, seconded by Terry Brown, to hold a public hearing on Local Law #2 of 2012, amending the zoning ordinance of the Town of Otego. This hearing will be held on Wednesday, May 9, 2012 at 6:30 pm.

Motion: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

A motion was made by Barbara Stanton, seconded by David Sheldon, to declare the Town Board as lead agency for Local Law #2 of 2012.
Motion: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays.

Copier

The town clerk has gotten prices for a new copier (around \$3400) and also one that was leased for three years (\$1400). Our current copier is 13 years old. Any new copier would have the capability of faxing and scanning. The board tabled any decision until May.

Clean Up Days

The board scheduled Saturday, May 12 from 8 am to 1 pm, for white goods and tire drop off.

County Representative

Kathy Clark reported that the county will not be using fracking brine on the roads.

She has met with MOSA officials, negotiating to get out of the landfill authority.

Ms. Clark also reported that the county prescription drug card has been a savings to the county.

Moratorium

Mr. Hurlburt asked the town board to consider all the information before them and be prepared to make a decision on pursuing a gas drilling moratorium at the next meeting.

Warrant 4

A motion was made by George Dolezel, seconded by David Sheldon, to pay the warrant in the following amounts: General Fund vouchers #__67-78__ in the amount of \$__20,240.00__. Highway Fund vouchers #__56-73__ in the amount of \$__35,892.39__.

Motion: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 pm.

Maryalice Brown
Town Clerk