



Town of Oneonta TOWN BOARD

Regular Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2022
07:00pm

The regular meeting of the Oneonta Town Board was held on September 14, 2022 @07:00PM, with the following members present:

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|--------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Town Board Member: | Kim Fierke | (KF) |
| Town Board Member: | Skylar J. Thompson | (SJT) |
| Town Board Member: | Patricia Riddell Kent | (PRK) |
| Town Board Member: | Brett Holleran | (BH) |
| Supervisor: | Randal I. Mowers | (RM) |
| Town Clerk: | Ryan F. Pereira | (RFP) |
| Town Attorney: | Robert Panasci | (RP) |

Others present: Dale Webster; David Webster; Walt Schmitt; Michael Schmitt; Jason Ballard; David Leahy; Bridgette Shepardson; Gary Maffei; Charlie Maffei; Kathy Yager; Greg Dibble; Theresa Cyzeski; David Cyzeski; Michelle Catan; Steve Kent.

Petitioners:

Theresa Cyzeski informed the Board of land surveying taking place on the property adjacent, Supervisor Mowers reminded her that, to date, permits are not required for land surveying, and Town Hall has no knowledge of any such activity.

David Leahy spoke in favor of the town pursuing a study to provide water and/or sewer for West Oneonta, and the neighboring areas adjacent, while also speaking of the responsibilities and duties Town Hall has to provide its inhabitants with basic services.

Oneonta Fire Department Chief, Brian Knapp, presented to the Board a need for funding to establish a remote flood gauge, which would report river levels in real-time. The Susquehanna River, which runs through Oneonta; is prone to flooding in certain areas, and a remote flood gauge indicator would provide valuable information, and an early warning system to aid Emergency Response crews, according to Mr. Knapp. The Board agreed with the need for such a device; and stated as flooding does impact many communities along the river, they would be interested in hearing more from Mr. Knapp in the future regarding the project and the required funding sources.

Public Hearing:

RESOLUTION 2022-77 Motion made by Riddell Kent, seconded by Fierke to *OPEN* the Public Hearing for an Adjustment to the allowed uses within the Industrial Development District, aka Oneonta Business Park/Pony Farm Industrial Park, to allow wedding/event venues within the district.

VOTE – Ayes 5, Nays 0

PRK BH Motion Carried

Discussion followed with some agreeing that any business, such as an event venue within the district would be welcome; however, while the Board believes that such a development is a worthwhile endeavor to be encouraged, they also noted that the Oneonta Business Park was built using federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) funds to promote the development of manufacturing and distribution firms. Concurrently, the County of Otsego Industrial Development Agency (IDA), manager and administrator of funds for the district, states the mission in forming such a district, is to attract and retain business investment from established and growing firms that will bring high-paying skilled jobs to the area.

THE COUNTY OF OTSEGO INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (THE "AGENCY")

MISSION STATEMENT:

*Assist in the enhancement and diversity of the economy of the County of Otsego (the "County")
by acting in support of projects in the County that create and/or retain jobs and/or promote
private sector investment utilizing the statutory powers of the Agency as set forth under the
provisions of the laws of the State of New York.*

The IDA do not believe an event venue meets these criteria, and the Board decided to not take action to change the district.

RESOLUTION 2022-78 Motion made by Thompson, seconded by Kim Fierke to CLOSE the Public Hearing for an Adjustment to the allowed uses within the Industrial Development District, aka Oneonta Business Park/Pony Farm Industrial Park, to allow wedding/event venues within the district.

VOTE – Ayes 5, Nays 0 SJT KE Motion Carried

Presentation made by Barton & Loguidice to provide consulting services for the Town Of Oneonta, to evaluate existing and proposed water and sewer systems for the East End along NY Route 7, from the City/Town line towards Emmons.

PRK noted the Town recently funded a study done by Delaware Engineering to explore this.

RESOLUTION 2022-79 Motion made by Riddell Kent, seconded by Thompson to set the second and final Public Hearing for the Southside Water Project 848PW39-14.

VOTE – Ayes 5, Nays 0 PRK SJT Motion Carried

Discussion resumed regarding a survey conducted by the Town Board to address Public Water/Sewer interest in the West Oneonta area, and results were reported as such:

- 06, interested in knowing more about water*
- 07, interested in knowing more about sewer*
- 41, interested in knowing more about both services*
- 46, No to both services*

Over 200 survey letters were mailed out, as well as, postings on the town website, the Town Facebook page, and at the Town Hall, including word of mouth.

PRK stated records show, that in 2013, about 185 surveys were sent. About 63 responded with about 34 of those saying no to both water and sewer.

PRK spoke to some of those in the audience who vehemently oppose any such development, and while actual figures for such a project are not immediately available; estimated costs range from \$30-80K for the preparation of a map plan and report, also of note is the all-out likelihood of a mandatory connection to the system.

PRK went on to express her opinion for the need to focus on the Southside Water District which is nearing completion, and fears the project has run over budget.

West Oneonta Fire Chief, Walter Schmitt, has been a vocal proponent of establishing a new water/sewer district in the West Oneonta area adjacent; and has reminded Board Members that recommendations for the formation of such areas for water/sewer improvements has been in the Comprehensive Plan since 1965.

**The survey will be made available at the end of this document.*

***Excerpts from the 1998 Compressive Plan regarding water/sewer, will be at the end of this document.*

RESOLUTION 2022-80 Motion was made by Riddell Kent, seconded by Thompson to set the mileage reimbursement rate to scale with the IRS rate, the current rate of 56¢ will increase to 62.5¢.

VOTE - Ayes 5, Nays 0 PRK SJT Motion Carried

RESOLUTION 2022-81 Motion was made by Fierke, seconded by Thompson to approve of the JCAP Grant Application by the Oneonta Town Court for the purchase/upgrade of the security system, a body cam for the Constable, as well as, painting the assembly/courtroom.

VOTE - Ayes 5, Nays 0 KE SJT Motion Carried

RESOLUTION 2022-82 Motion was made by Riddell Kent, seconded by Thompson to approve the purchase of LOW FLO water conserving toilets for the Town Hall with a portion of the grant money the Town was awarded through the Climate Smart Communities Task Force, purchase for which shall not exceed \$3000.00.

VOTE - Ayes 5, Nays 0 PRK SJT Motion Carried

RESOLUTION 2022-83 Motion was made by Riddell Kent, seconded by Fierke to pay the bills.

VOTE - Ayes 5, Nays 0 PRK KE Motion Carried

RESOLUTION 2022-84 Motion was made by Riddell Kent, seconded by Thompson to accept the August 17, 2022 minutes.

VOTE - Ayes 5, Nays 0 PRK SJT Motion Carried

RESOLUTION 2022-85 Motion was made by Thompson, seconded by Riddell Kent to adjourn.

❖ Meeting adjourned 08:45pm. SJT PRK Motion Carried

Respectfully submitted,



Ryan F. Pereira
Town Clerk

Statements for the record:

September 12, 2022
Randal I. Mowers
Supervisor, Town of Oneonta
3966 State Hwy 23
PO Box A
West Oneonta, NY 13861

Dear Supervisor Mowers,
I am pleased to see that the Town Board has taken the initiative to explore a first step feasibility of a water and sewer district for the hamlet of West Oneonta and nearby areas. As a resident of West Oneonta, I support and encourage the Board to continue all necessary and required steps to make this a reality.

This project is obvious for many reasons, the least of which is the environmental safety of our drinking water coupled with contamination of properties due to aging septic systems. These concerns alone are enough to encourage the Board and hopefully the citizens of West Oneonta hamlet and environs to support this investment for the future.

If you look at greater Oneonta the West Oneonta area in particular holds extensive land for growth, both residential and much needed commercial growth. This new development is inevitable, particularly with the growth that the area has already experienced in the most recent past. The Town Board cannot ignore this growth and must plan responsibly to accommodate it.

A project of this scope does not happen overnight but your current investigation of need is a step in securing the support required to continue to move forward. While pros and cons exist in all such projects, I believe that once the positive reasons for moving forward are put forth the electorate will be ready to make a common sense decision to move forward.

Robert Bard
228 Highland Terr.
West Oneonta, NY 13861

*2022 West Oneonta Area Water/Sewer Survey
Dear West Oneonta Property Owner,

The Oneonta Town Board is currently in *Phase 1* of researching if there is a need and/or desire for the residents in West Oneonta to have a public water and/or sewer system. As you probably know, the Town is in the process of completing a water project on Southside, and are currently examining the feasibility of a similar project in the West Oneonta area. Should there be sufficient interest in this project, the Town will then move onto *Phase 2* and prepare a Map, Plan, and Report that could be used for creating a public water and/or sewer district and obtaining funds to help pay for the construction of the systems.

It is important to know that this survey does not commit you to the district or the construction of the systems. This is simply a general interest survey to determine if we as the Town Board should proceed or not. If a majority of the residents indicate that they are interested, the town would hire an engineer firm to prepare the Map, Plan, and Report. From there, the information would be presented to the residents. The information provided in *Phase 2* would include the preliminary cost projections for the system or systems, whichever is chosen, as well as the anticipated costs to the residents.

Please indicate below whether or not you would be interested in the Town continuing on in this project for water and/or sewer in the West Oneonta area.

Email: wtrswr@townofoneonta.org

Mail: send the bottom portion of this page to:

Highway Water and Sewer Dept.
PO Box A
West Oneonta, NY 13861

**SCAN HERE
ONLINE FORM
Just point your
mobile phone's
camera and
follow link.**



***It is important to note that there will be an additional cost for these services, as well as, possible mandatory connection to the system.**

(Circle one option)

1. **Yes;** I am interested in a public **water** supply, but not sewer
2. **Yes;** I am interested in public **sewer** system, but not water
3. **Yes;** I am interested in **both** public water and sewer
4. **No;** I am **not interested** in either, public water or sewer

Property address _____

Name _____

Contact Info _____

****1998 Comprehensive Plan (Excerpts)**

The Committee has identified certain needs which it feels will be necessary to safeguard the interests of the Townspeople, maintain infrastructure, and promote a healthy rate of growth. In general, a growing population at the edges of the City of Oneonta is in need of a safe and secure water supply. Development near the Interstate has strained the highway system's ability to efficiently move traffic. Recreation, an essential factor in the quality of life, must be addressed. Safeguarding the environment must be an important consideration, especially with regard to water supplies, but environmental concerns must be combined with a strategy for attracting

business and industry to provide jobs so people can afford a good standard of living.

Based on the Comprehensive Planning Committee's research and discussions on these topics, the overall goals of this Comprehensive Plan are as follows:

1. To provide mechanisms, wherever possible, for a moderate rate of population growth, while maintaining the current Arcadian character of the Town.
2. To improve the employment atmosphere by encouraging modest commercial and industrial development.
3. To correct, when possible, problems caused by development and growth in the past.
4. To project the Townspeople's needs approximately 10 years into the future and recommend changes in the physical, political, or legal structure of the Town to accommodate those needs.

3. Recommendations

The 1965 Master Plan made recommendations as to areas which were expected to be in need of public utilities. In part, systems currently in place were as a result of those recommendations. However, several other areas were targeted as likely to need public utilities due to their population and soil characteristics, including the East End and West Oneonta. These needs have, to date, not been addressed.

The local official overseeing the Town of Oneonta with the New York State Department of Health recommended setting up public water and sewer systems in the East End, farther south on Oneida Street than they currently exist, and also in West Oneonta. In addition, he recommended a water district for the Southside area due to the high population and likelihood of a truck accident spilling toxic chemicals which would leach into the aquifer used by the local wells.

The Survey showed that one of the highest concerns of citizens was the quality of drinking water. Public water systems are the best means for guaranteeing safe drinking water, so this Plan recommends the following public utility construction in priority order:

Public Water Recommendations

A. The highest priority is for a system in the East End from the City of Oneonta line along East Main Street to County Route 47, with future expansion eastward to the Town line. This system could be created by extending the City of Oneonta water lines or by drilling a new community well. The latter option would involve a new Water District. This recommendation is based on the current density of houses and business uses and the potential for significant growth in the near future (already begun with the Price Chopper Plaza). Also, there is currently no public sewer in that area. A recent, informal survey by the Town Supervisor's office asked if local East End residents wanted the Town to build new sewer lines along East Main Street. The residents rejected the idea. With small lots having individual septic systems, drinking water is at risk for contamination.

B. Develop a new water system in the hamlet of West Oneonta. Public comment as to significant odor and taste problems with well water in this area indicate that supplies may already be polluted from private sewage systems. Drainage in the Otego Creek Valley is rapid in porous soils from glacial deposits, so leachate from septic systems can intersect with the same water-bearing strata used by the private wells. With a number of small lots in close proximity to each other, there can be insufficient room for wells to be located at safe distances from leach fields. Due to its distance from the West End system, the most feasible plan may be to drill a community well and set up a West Oneonta water system, similar to the Woodland Water District.

C. Set up a new system along Southside Drive and SR 23. During the recent building surge, notably the Wal-Mart and the BJ's stores, the existence of two aquifers in that area was stressed by the engineering firms planning wells for the commercial uses. This was consistent with previous research summarized earlier and shown in cross section 1. The large businesses now obtain their water from the deeper aquifer, but small businesses and most homes use the shallow aquifer. Since Route 23 has become a well traveled road frequented by many large trucks, there is a strong likelihood of a vehicle accident spilling gasoline or some other toxic liquid. This eventuality is the rationale for a public water system using the deep aquifer to replace the residential and small commercial wells using the shallow one.

D. The Town should request the City of Oneonta to consider extending their municipal water system in the West End north along lower Winney Hill Road where favorable zoning has encouraged a number of new houses with the potential for many more, especially near the Greater Plains School. That is a marshy area, although not a state or federally designated wetland. However, it is zoned R-20 (moderate density), so potentially there could be 50-55 single family homes between the school and Winney Hill Road. Private wells and septic tanks with a high water table should not coexist, so public water (and public sewer) should be required of any developer for that area.

Public Sewer Recommendations

A. Build a system in the West Oneonta area. The need for a public sewer system in West Oneonta is based on the rapidly draining soils in the area and the need to protect the Otego Creek from pollution. Extending the West End sewer lines that far may be a significant impediment, however and if a public water system is built in West Oneonta, as proposed above, this expensive alternative may be unnecessary.

B. In the Southside area, the sewer lines should be extended to allow residents on Southside Drive to connect to the system.

C. Extend the West Street sewer line northward to the Town line. The Town of Laurens is encouraging development near the common border. Furthermore, in the Town of Oneonta, a number of homes have been built along West Street north of Blend Hill Road.

D. Extend the West End Sewer District north to handle the increased needs along lower Winney Hill Road.