

Town of St. Armand
Regular Board Meeting – 6:30 pm
Wednesday, February 21, 2024

These Regular Board Meeting Minutes were approved by the St. Armand Town Board on April 16, 2024.

A Regular Board Meeting of the Town of St. Armand was held on the above date and time via webinar and in person at the Town Hall, Bloomingdale, NY. The meeting was advertised and made available to the public.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Town Supervisor Davina Thurston, Deputy Supervisor Karl Law, Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer, and Councilperson Donna Whitelaw were present at the meeting.

A quorum of the Board was in attendance.

TOWN EMPLOYEES PRESENT: Highway Superintendent Douglas Snickles, Water Superintendent Jonathan Nielsen, Wastewater Superintendent Joshua Woodruff, and Town Clerk Barbara Darrah

GUEST SPEAKER: Rob Wick, Essex County Office of Planning

GUESTS FROM THE COMMUNITY: William Bailey, Cheri Fisher, Joe Fisher, Nancy Hurteau, Ed Lewis, and Kate Lynch Lewis. Donald Amell attended on-line.

Supervisor Thurston opened the Board Meeting at 6:30 p.m. and asked all to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Supervisor Thurston introduced Rob Wick, Essex County Office of Planning to discuss the steps in the Bonding process for the Disinfection Project and the West Main Street Sewer Districting Project.

Rob stated he wanted to give the Town a little background on the Wastewater Treatment Plant Disinfection and Phosphorus projects and the other collection system upgrades, repairs, with the Town's infrastructure improvements. Last year the scoring sheet was updated with EFC which was going to be able to provide 50% of the grant value for the total project, however the scoring fell a little short. The governor is trying to make more funds available specifically to the Adirondacks and rural communities. There is more money available through the Water Improvement Infrastructure Act (WIIA) grant. The WIIA grant usually does not become available until May and closes in June, however this year it is currently open right now. But, there are a lot of things that have to happen in order to be eligible for the WIIA grant program. And, for our communities, they've opened up an opportunity to go from the standard 25% grant value and added another potential 25% for small communities that are demonstrating hardships and have a population threshold. The Town of St. Armand qualifies for both. So, we have the ability right now to apply for a grant that would add five million to this project, and then we could also apply for a different grant program this summer; which is basically an application of the NYS DEC's Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP). The WQIP handles disinfection and a lot of the other upgrades for the Wastewater Treatment Facility.

With these grant opportunities coming our way this season, the Essex County Office of Planning wants to try and help the town take advantage of them. In order to do that, the Town does have to go through bonding. There's obviously a lot of concern with trying to commit to spending 14.7-ish million dollars on all three projects put together and it is a time consuming process. There are a lot of public meetings and a lot of public notices that need to go out. They can take between 30 to 45 days even on a streamlined kind of process if there's not a lot of say, public questioning or contention for moving ahead with the project. But this is a reminder. The bonding process is not at this stage the commitment to actually spend the projected costs for the project. It is what we like to try to present to folks to look at it as is essentially like credit card application. The Bonding merely establishes the maximum potential cost that the town is willing to spend on a project provided.

Of course that along the way, enough grant money is received, so that when we are looking at the end of the project(s), the costs that the district will eventually incur is determined. That's the bottom line number we want to keep in mind as we're going forward, as we get enough grant funds brought into the project, and the Board and the district is accepting of that cost increase to get these projects done. That's when you would move ahead with the permission to move the project forward. Just at a really high level, what we would have to do moving forward is within the next month or two, we would have to begin to get the bonding proceeding:

It is recommended going through a Bond Counsel. Bonding has worked for a number of Essex County communities, and they always do exceptional work. They work with EFC also to help make sure that communities Bonds, and their base financials goes forward without a hitch. As we go through those bonding proceedings, as I mentioned, any of the public hearings are advertised, and the public hearings that takes 30 to 45 days. Once the bonding is done, we will have most of what we need to be able to apply for the WIIA grant. That would be the first one we want to apply for. Then, once we have that, we would also once again, go into EFC's scoring system, and update the project and hopefully increase the score so that we might be eligible for additional grant funds that could be available. Then the other grant program that is going to be available this summer, the other WQIP Grant, you want to apply for that, as well, too. There's essentially, three opportunities to try and get grant funding for the first half of the year; that we would be trying to go after before the community receives any documents from EFC that is seeking to have any final commitments; does the public accept the loan or any of that other stuff? So we want to try and go after these three different grant opportunities first so that what comes back in and what the total project budget would be once those grants are received. Then, we would present that before the Board and the district, and give an idea of what an updated user rate would be based upon the additional money.

Along the way, sometimes project cost change. So, while we're looking to try and drive the cost down, we also have to have realistic expectation that some of these costs might fluctuate along the way too because, you know, commodities, their values change, sometimes the labor values go up. So we want to make sure that the engineers are engaged as well, too, along the way to make sure that we have accurate cost estimates. Then we will be able to take another look at the budgets and the Town could decide at that time, whether you want to move forward with spending the money on this project or if we need to, if there's going to be any other grant programs, we have to go after before the Town Board says yes, OK, this new budget is acceptable and then the grant agreements can be executed and loan agreements with EFC and the commission of the project moves ahead.

Davina Thurston thanked Rob Wick for all of the information he presented and asked if anyone present had any questions. There were no questions presented from the audience.

Davina Thurston then asked if Douglas Goodfriend would be the Bond Counsel?

Rob Wick responded that Douglas would be the attorney working as the Bond counsel.

Davina Thurston stated the other thing she wanted was to let the Board and the folks present at this meeting know that the Town has been collecting what is called Capital Reserve Funds through the Sewer bills specifically for the purpose to be used for our matching grant funds for this Disinfection project. Thurston stated the last time she checked the amount of Capital Reserve Funds collected was \$112,000.00. Further, the CHIPS money for paving West Main Street is put aside for this project as well, which is allowed.

Rob Wick stated it's actually very important that the Town has been acquiring those extra funds because there are reasons for that, not just for trying to cover the matching bonds that some of these grants require, for example, WQIP is one of those programs that will only cover a percentage of construction costs, but its important due to construction costs, meaning they do not provide money for engineering or soft costs, like bond counsel and those other kinds of things. They expect that you're going to have either some base financing in place, or you've got your match available in your capital funds, per cash flow, and also to pay for all the other non- construction activity. There's that part of it, but talking about cash flow, in the past, it was a bit more expedient about being able to provide bonds from the time the finalized finance application was submitted to going through their own loan committee.

Approval processes to the time that you actually have the ability to remit claims and start getting this cycle going; "look here's all of our bills", to the allocation of the grant money and then we pay the bills process are experiencing 12 to 18 months for lots of different reasons. So having that capital reserve funds to help deal with your cash flow is going to be really critical. That will help you from hopefully having to go out and get a ban. We're trying to encourage communities to the extent possible to slowly step up the rates for whatever the project is for water or sewer districts either in each quarter or biannually or at an annual rate, because along the way you're able to take that extra that is not already being used for your operations and maintenance for your debt and build that capital reserve fund to have that set aside for your cash flows to deal with those costs as they're coming in along the way. That's extremely important, and I hope you continue to do that.

Davina Thurston stated that's definitely something the Town does not want to incur, but pointed out that it is really discouraging that they're taking that long for payments. (To process the grant payments).

Rob Wick replied that that's just on the front end. Once the grant and loan agreements are executed and everything else is in place, then that cycle begins, and then it's the biweekly feedback cycle where we're able to remit claims on the behalf of the community and EFC to put our money directly into our account.

Davina Thurston stated the bottom line here is in our Order of Consent for Disinfection. She reported that Rob and she attended a meeting a couple of weeks ago with the NYS DEC and they haven't responded at all. The last comment that we submitted regarding the additional year we wanted to be able to get this disinfection completed, as well as the comments on the report that was completed for the plant. She has not seen any correspondence on either two. She stated we (Town) needs to move forward with this. There is a lot of grant money out there for us to get. We just have to get it. The West Main Street project, what we're talking about there, is from the four corners up to the "Y". When the I&I (Inflow and Infiltration) study was done a couple of years ago, they actually weren't even able to get the camera up that sewer line because it is collapsed, and it is root infiltrated, and it's in very, very bad shape. That is why the sidewalks have not been redone up there because the whole thing would have to be torn up put in new infrastructure there. We are not investing a lot of money fixing those sidewalks because we know they're going to be torn up.

Supervisor Thurston asked Rob Wick to explain what the next step is. She asked if it would be a Public Hearing?

Rob Wick replied that there would be a public hearing but before that, we have to do to move forward with the bonding process. That's the next biggest milestone but we're going to need to do a couple of things before we get to that point. We need AES to just take another look at some of the cost estimates just to make sure that nothing else has been missed or are there other things that may have increased in cost since a year has gone by? Maybe there's been other bids that have gone out, and they know some item costs have gone up.

The other item over here has increased and cost, or whatever room there may be to account for it, and make any updates to the project budget. Then, we also need to get ahold of Douglas Goodfriend and make sure that they are on retainer with the Town and then if there are any changes that have to occur to any new report for this project, we do those very quickly.

So that if the Goodfriend team can have that report, then they will generate the 202 B bonding proceeding based off of

that. There will be two phases of that and they are usually quite good with providing those documents in very plain language, step by step format. What we have to do, is go through the step one and step two pieces, and then we'll also be helping out with the making sure that all the documents that go forward, are kept in an archive of those so that when we go to the EFC loan and grant agreement execution, that we have all of those documents to provide to EFC so that all of that is squared away.

Supervisor Thurston asked Rob if it would make sense to do an RFQ for engineering?

Rob Wick replied that would be up to the Town Board, but at this point, just to get through the finance proceedings, he would recommend staying with AES, just because of their familiarity, and using these base documents to get through that process. If the town wants to hire another engineer, once the design phase is underway. then, once the grant and loan agreements are closed, that would be probably the next opportune time to put out an engineering RFQ/ RFP.

Supervisor Thurston asked, "Then the Town would stick with AES, just for the initial documents and then we would definitely have to go out to bid for engineering for both of those projects, but it would be as one, we would bid it as one."

Rob Wick responded, "If you needed, if you elected because you already set up an RFQ RFP, I'll just say that so in terms of trying to make sure that is covered for procurement compliance, you're good in that regard; that box is checked, so to speak." Supervisor Thurston stated she did want to acquire another project engineer once the loans are in hand to create the actual design document. Rob Wick responded, "Once you close on your grant and loan agreements, then we could do another RFQ RFP. Supervisor Thurston asked if we needed to go out for bidding. Rob Wick responded that he didn't think the Town would need to bid for bonding because they are usually below the threshold. As opposed to bidding, he believes we could just get three quotes per the procurement policy.

Supervisor Thurston asked Rob Wick, "I think I am speaking for all the board members now, can you do just like the little memo or something that outlines the steps that we need to take or maybe you already have this somewhere that we can follow the checklist?"

Rob Wick responded that he could redo some of the project schedule that we've put together in the past and since he is going over this kind of plain text, a kind of step by step of what the Town would experience over the course of the next year. Rob Wick added that Phase 1 and 2, I think those are the ones that are the most critical for the community if he's not mistaken; definitely phase one that is the disinfection activated sludge at the wastewater plant. He thinks in order to address that one, the Town will be more than able to get that if successful with the WQIP Award. Rob will also submit all the documentation needed to get an EFC based financing package, but again, we won't have to execute on any of that until we get positive feedback from the other grant programs on what award we might do.

Supervisor Thurston asked those in the audience if anyone had any questions? There were none. Supervisor Thurston pointed out that Rob was attending this meeting while on vacation and she thanked Rob Wick for his time, information and attention.

ST. ARMAND VETERANS MEMORIAL TASK FORCE

The St. Armand Veterans Memorial Task Force presented a request for a \$30,000.00 donation for the final purchase of the Memorial stones for the Veterans Park. The Veterans Task Force has already raised \$88,660.45 since 2021. With the Town's donation of \$30,000, the Task Force will be able to make the final payment of \$31,797.67. The representatives of the St. Armand Veterans Task Force requested the Town Board to pass an official Resolution in support of the Veterans Memorial Park.

ROOST FUNDS PRESENTATION

Supervisor Thurston distributed a handout pertaining to ROOST funds, discussing the amount of past ROOST funds and what the Town has used those funds for. Then Supervisor Thurston discussed future items that she would like to request, using this year's ROOST funds:

Supervisor Thurston presented an idea of building a stage on the Youth Field to be used for summer concerts, plays and other events. Supervisor Thurston explained Melissa Kline created the stage design. The request for ROOST funds would be in the amount of \$22,000.00 for the construction of the stage. She explained the Highway crew, Jonathan Neilson, Josh Woodruff, and Lance Kipling would be involved in the actual construction of the stage. Supervisor Thurston continued that another request for ROOST funds would be in the amount of \$7,000.00 for the purchase of one "Welcome to Bloomingdale" sign, which would be installed on Route 3 as you entered Bloomingdale across from the Bloomingdale Volunteer Firehouse. The Solar Eclipse is occurring on April 8th, and Supervisor Thurston is requesting \$515.00 for three porta-potty rentals for visitors who will be viewing the Eclipse in our town. The St. Armand Youth Task Force has requested \$10,000.00 for the annual Bloomingdale Block Party to be held on Saturday, August 3, 2024, and lastly, \$555.00 for the Halloween Decorating Contest prizes and \$555.00 for the Holiday Decorating Contest prizes. Therefore, the total amount of 2024 ROOST Funds requested at this time is \$70,625.00.

The Town Board agreed that the ideas presented were good ideas for the use of ROOST funds.

Supervisor Thurston requested a Motion to approve the fund requests for the Welcome to Bloomingdale sign in the amount of \$7,000.00, \$515.00 for the porta-potty rental, \$555.00 for the Halloween Decorating Contest and \$555.00 for the Holiday Decorating Contest respectively. The other requests would be presented once a new Town Board member is

appointed to replace Stephanie Mikesell, since Davina and Donna could not vote due to their affiliations with the St. Armand Youth Task Force and the St. Armand Veterans Memorial Task Force.

Councilperson Donna Whitelaw presented a Motion for the above. The Motion was seconded by Deputy Supervisor Karl Law. All in favor. A Roll Call vote was conducted:

Supervisor Davina Thurston	AYE
Deputy Supervisor Karl Law	AYE
Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer	AYE
Councilperson Donna Whitelaw	AYE
Councilperson (Vacant)	VACANT

Motion carried and passed by Roll Call Vote.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT

Town of St. Armand Highway Report for the February 21, 2024 Board Meeting
Submitted by Highway Superintendent Douglas Snickles

1. We have been plowing or sanding pretty much every day.
2. The loader was brought to Rockledge to scrape the spots of ice that give us issues every year.
3. We had to replace brakes on the 2015 International.
4. The 2015 International had to have some pretty pricey exhaust work done, otherwise it would not run.
5. All the sidewalks are cleaned up again.
6. The cracks in the breakroom sheetrock were repaired and then the room was painted.
Another room was started.
7. I am changing my Deputy at the Highway Garage.

Highway Superintendent Douglas Snickles requested to change the Deputy Superintendent from Cory Skiff to Christopher Willette. This appointment would be retroactive February 22, 2024. A Motion by the Town Board was requested.

**** Motion ****

Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer made a Motion to accept the appointment of Christopher Willette as the Deputy Highway Superintendent per Highway Superintendent Douglas Snickles. The Motion was seconded by Deputy Supervisor Karl Law. All in favor. A Roll Call Vote followed:

Town Supervisor Davina Thurston	AYE
Deputy Supervisor Karl Law	AYE
Councilperson (Vacancy)	VACANT
Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer	AYE
Councilperson Donna Whitelaw	AYE

Motion carried. A formal Resolution will follow at the Regular Town Board Meeting on March 19, 2024.

There were no questions regarding the Highway Report.

WATER DEPARTMENT/GENERAL MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

WATER REPORT/GENERAL MAINTENANCE REPORT
FOR THE February 21, 2024 Town of St Armand Board Meeting
Presented by Water Superintendent Jonathan Nielsen

Water Report

1. Daily cl2 testing, Meter reading.
2. Monthly Lab results sent to Endyne Lab
3. On 1/24, Arvid came and restored the Scada system to run remotely, Pressure transmitter was also replaced and a backup transmitter was ordered.
4. Revisiting Diamond Maps, Updating the town mapping system for water distribution and other departments. A lot of the mapping is very outdated to include water Shut-offs, Mains and Hydrants. Equipment needed would be a Tablet and Phone line (\$1150.00 tablet cost and \$40.00 a mo. for the phone line) to run this for in the field operation. The cost of The program will be \$240.00 per year. The mandated costs for this program should be split across the three departments to include Water, Wastewater, and Highway. Discussion ensued regarding the splitting of the cost, and it was determined the entire cost would be funded by the General A fund. A Motion to approve was requested.

**** Motion ****

Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer made a Motion to approve the purchase of the Diamond Maps program, along with

a compatible tablet, and necessary phone data line for an updated mapping system for water distribution and the cost would be funded entirely by the General A Fund. The Motion was seconded by Councilperson Donna Whitelaw. All in favor. A Roll Call Vote was conducted as follows:

Town Supervisor Davina Thurston	AYE
Deputy Supervisor Karl Law	AYE
Councilperson (Vacancy)	VACANT
Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer	AYE
Councilperson Donna Whitelaw	AYE

Motion carried.

5. On 2/17 at 9:30 pm across from the Transfer station a Fire hydrant was hit (Near 107 River Road). I have submitted for a quote for a new hydrant from VP supply in Plattsburgh.

General Maintenance Report

1. Prepped main Hallway walls for paint at the town hall
2. Painted the main hallway
3. Hung Drop Boxes for offices/Departments
4. Installed shelves, coat hangers, TV (board room), clocks
5. Cleared and cleaned old flooring from the records room.

Supervisor Thurston sked if there were any questions regarding the Water report or the General Maintenance Report? There were none.

WASTEWATER DEPARTMENT REPORT

Wastewater Report for the February 21, 2024 Town Board Meeting
Submitted by Wastewater Superintendent Joshua Woodruff

1. Daily INF/EFF samples.
2. Monthly labs to Endyne (Plattsburg NY) Labs go out second Tuesday of the month.
3. Insulated pipe in attic of WWTP (fire System)
4. Blower Maintenance: Changed oil, belts, and air filters.
5. NYRWA's Annual Technical Training Workshop @Exhibition May 20-22
6. Town truck Inspection

CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT

The Code Enforcement Report for the February 21st Town Board Meeting
Submitted by Rodger Tompkins – Report completed on February 20, 2024

New Residential Building Permits Issued Since Last Report: 0
New Sewer Line Permits Issued Since Last Report: 0
Extension of Residential Building Permits Issued Since Last Report: 0
Commercial Building Permits Issued Since Last Report: 0
Certificates of Completion Issued Since Last Report: 0
Stop Work Orders Issued Since Last Report: 0
Demolition Permits Issued Since Last Report: 0
Solar PVS Permits Issued Since Last Report: 0
Code Violations Issued Since Last Report Issued: 0
Sewer Code Violations Issued Since Last Report: 0
Total number of Residential Building permits issued for the year 2024:0
Total number of Residential Certificates of Completion issued for the year 2024: 0
Total number of Commercial Building permits issued for the year 2024: 0
Total number of Commercial Certificates of Completion issued for the year 2024: 2
Total number of Demolition permits issued for the year 2024: 0
Total number of Demolition Certificates of Completion issued for the year 2024: 0
Total number of Solar permits issued for the year 2024: 0
Total number of Solar Certificates of Completion issued for the year 2024: 0
Total number of Code Violations issued for the year 2024:0
Total number of Code Violation Certificates of Completion issued for the year 2024: 0
Total number of Sewer Code Violations issued for the year 2024: 0
Total number of Sewer Code Violation Certificates of Completion issued for the year 2024: 0
Amount of fees collected for Code Office since last report: \$0
Amount of fees collected for Water Department since last report: \$0

Amount of fees collected for Sewer Department since last report: \$0
Total amount of fees collected via Code Office since last report: \$0
Total amount of fees collected via Code Office for the year 2024: \$0

TOWN JUSTICE REPORT

St. Armand Town Court Report for the February 21, 2024 Town Board Meeting
Submitted by Hon. Francis Whitelaw

St. Armand Town Court Report for January 2024

Total fines and surcharges collected for the month of February 2024: \$782.00
Total collected year-to-date: \$1509.00
Total parking fines for February 2024: \$0.00
Total parking fines year-to-date: \$0.00

An official dedication ceremony for the Russell G. Slingerland Courtroom has been scheduled for Friday, April 19th at 12:00 pm.

There were no questions regarding the Town Justice Court Report.

TOWN HISTORIAN REPORT

Town of St. Armand, Historian Report for 2023 (written January 2024)
Submitted by Town Historian, Edward Kanze

The year was a fairly calm one in St. Armand. A mild, late-arriving winter was followed by a sunny spring. This in turn gave way to heavy rains in early summer, followed by several dry weeks. During an unusually warm December, days of having rain led to the opening of the Lake Flower dam and the flooding of Moose Pond Lane for several days. Flooding of this sort is common in spring, but this was astonishing for December. Especially notable in the Town in 2024 was the completion of renovations by owner/contractor Clyde Rabideau of Saranac Lake of the old Cohen Hardware Store complex, the completion of two new residential buildings on the property, and the arrival of tenants.

In 2023 my efforts included:

1. Speaking with a woman from California who wanted to know if any members of the Vermont-based Youngman family settled in St. Armand in the 1830s. A survey of cemetery records did not turn up any Youngman's, but I continue to explore the possibility.
2. I visited the Brookside Cemetery in October to photograph headstones old and new.
3. Dr. Curt Stager and I met for a walk around Moody Pond to discuss his research into early African American settlers in St. Armand. Curt shared a multi-page summation of his findings, which I have added to our files. Curt also agreed to speak briefly during a three-cemetery tour I led for the Saranac Village at Will Rogers Outings Club on Halloween Day.
4. On Halloween, I led an all-day tour (with a stop for lunch at Nona Fina's) of three cemeteries: the historic cemetery at St. John in the Wilderness, Paul Smith's, where the notable graves visited included those of Paul Smith, Lydia Martin Smith, Ben Muncil, Ursula Trudeau, William Chapman White, and William Avery Rockefeller; the Brookside Cemetery in Bloomingdale, St. Armand, where Dr. Curt Stager spoke to us about members of the Hazzard family, who were successful farmers and respected community members in the late 19th century, and where we visited the graves of other early St. Armand settlers; and the St. Agnes Cemetery in Lake Placid, where we visited the graves of Vernon Lamb, several members of the Reiss family of Santa's Workshop fame, and the mausoleum holding the remains of Kate Smith. We ended the day by discussing Kate's distinguished career as an entertainer and by singing "God Bless America" to her. Thirty-three members of the public participated in the tour, plus Will Rogers staff and me.
5. I returned to the Brookside Cemetery to photograph Hazzard memorials in detail.
6. I exchanged emails with Stacey Flanagan, researching a forebear of her husband's, William Harrison Wolfe, who at age 14 was killed in a sawmill accident at Franklin Falls and buried in the Basin Cemetery there. I had not heard of the Basin Cemetery, and tucked in the woods up an unmarked dirt road, it was not easy to find. It's a beautiful spot, a small, quiet

cemetery dating before the Civil War. I photographed William Harrison Wolfe's headstone and others and shared the images with Mrs. Flanagan.

7. I corresponded with Thelma Niederbuhl about an error she'd caught in my 2022 Historian Report, accidentally referring to Thelma as Norma, who was the wife of the late Art Niederbuhl. Norma was mother of Thelma's husband, Artie Niederbuhl. I corrected the error and thanked Thelma for catching it. After checking, I was relieved to find that I had

gotten the name right in the historical exhibit I completed in 2022 to showcase an old Bloomingdale baseball uniform once worn by Pat Finnegan and donated to the Town by Artie and Thelma.

8. A young man named Garrett Fairbarn, recently move to Wilmington, wrote seeking involvement in historical projects. I responded, suggesting we be in touch this spring about possible ways he could help.

9. Sandy Hayes and I spoke at the Post Office one day about my interest in recording interviews with St. Armand seniors for the historical record. Sandy volunteered to go first. We agreed to set up an interview time in the new year.

10. I continue to shoot photographs of present-day St. Armand as opportunities arise. In 2024 a key goal is to create a digital archive and appropriate back-ups where scanned historical photos and newly created modern day photos can be archived safely and printed as needed.

The Town Historian would like to thank the Town Council, Town Supervisor, Town Clerk, Highway Superintendent, and all others who contributed to making this year for St. Armand a generally safe and productive one.

Respectfully submitted, January 23, 2024,

Ed Kanze
St. Armand Historian

SUPERVISOR’S YEAR-END REPORT

Supervisor Thurston requested an extension for the completion of the Supervisor’s Year-end Report.

RESOLUTIONS # 10, and # 27 - # 31 OF 2024

***** RESOLUTION # 10 OF 2024 REMAINS TABLED FROM JANUARY 17, 2024 *****

RESOLUTION # 10 OF 2024

**TOWN OF ST. ARMAND’S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF
AUDIT CONDUCTED ON TOWN SUPERVISOR’S
ANNUAL YEAR-END REPORT FOR 2023**

, who moved its adoption, offered the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, The Office of the State Comptroller requires that the town and village supervisors annually provide their year-end report to their respective town and village auditing Board, and that such report be examined or audited and that fact be entered into the minutes of the Board’s proceedings, and

WHEREAS, the Supervisors Report includes initiatives to improve accountability and controls over all Town finances and records, and

WHEREAS, among the initiatives is increased monitoring of town and village board compliance with the NYS Comptroller’s direction,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board acknowledges an audit of the Town Supervisor’s report for the Town of St. Armand for 2023 was completed during the month of January 2024, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that no issues or discrepancies were found.

This Resolution was duly seconded by _____, and adopted by Roll Call Vote as follows:

Town Supervisor Davina Thurston	AYE
Deputy Supervisor Karl Law	AYE
Councilperson (Vacancy)	VACANT
Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer	AYE
Councilperson Donna Whitelaw	AYE

Dated: January 17, 2024

Barbara J. Darrah
St. Armand Town Clerk

Deputy Supervisor Karl Law, who moved its adoption, offered the following Resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of St. Armand Town Board hereby adopts proposed Local Law NO. 1 of 2024 entitled “Local Law To Provide A Property Tax Exemption To Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Workers” reading and provided as follows:

TOWN OF ST. ARMAND LOCAL LAW NO. 1 OF 2024

LOCAL LAW TO PROVIDE A PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION TO VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE WORKERS

Section 1 - Purpose

The purpose of this Local law is to implement the authority granted to local taxing jurisdictions by Real Property Tax Law Section 466-a – Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Workers. The Town Board of the Town of St. Armand finds and hereby determines that New York Real Property Tax Law Section 466-a makes available a tax exemption for volunteer firefighters at the option of the local municipality. The Town Board further finds and determines that the Town of St. Armand should exercise said option and implement said tax exemption because it would enhance the ability to recruit and retain the volunteers that are the lifeblood of the volunteer fire organization currently serving the residents of St. Armand.

Section 2 - Authority

This local law is proposed pursuant to NY RPTL §466-a and NY Municipal Home Rule Law §10, all as the same may be amended from time to time.

Section 3 – Real Property Tax Exemption

Real property owned by an enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service, or such enrolled member and spouse residing in the Town of St. Armand shall be exempt from taxation to the extent of ten percent of the assessed value of such property for Town purposes, Town special district purposes, and exclusive of special assessments.

Section 4. Eligibility Requirements.

Such exemption shall be granted to an enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service provided that:

- a. The volunteer firefighter or volunteer ambulance worker resides in the Town of St. Armand which is served by such incorporated volunteer fire company or fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service;
- b. The property is the primary residence of the volunteer firefighter or volunteer ambulance worker;
- c. The property is used exclusively for residential purposes; provided however, that in the event any portion of such property is not used exclusively for the applicant’s residence but is used for other purposes, such portion shall be subject to taxation and the remaining portion only shall be entitled to the exemption provided by Section 3;
- d. The volunteer firefighter or volunteer ambulance worker is certified by the authority having jurisdiction for the volunteer fire company, fire department, or voluntary ambulance service as an active enrolled member of such incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, or voluntary ambulance service;
- e. The volunteer firefighter or volunteer ambulance worker meets the minimum service requirement established by the Town of St. Armand for exemption from Town tax which is hereby established as two (2) years of volunteer service.

Section 5. Grant of Lifetime Exemption.

Any enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service located in Essex County who accrues more than 20 years of active volunteer service and is so certified by the authority having jurisdiction for the incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service, shall be granted the 10% exemption as authorized by this local law for the remainder of his or her life as long as his or her primary residence is located within the St. Armand, New York.

Section 6. Surviving, Un-remarried Spouse of Enrolled Member Killed in the Line of Duty.

The property tax exemption authorized by this local law shall be continued for the un-remarried spouse of a deceased volunteer firefighter or volunteer ambulance worker killed in the line of duty provided that:

- a. Such un-remarried spouse is certified by the authority having jurisdiction for the incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated volunteer ambulance service as an un-remarried spouse of an enrolled member of such incorporated fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service who was killed in the line of duty;
- b. Such deceased volunteer had been an enrolled member for at least two (2) years; and
- c. Such deceased volunteer had been receiving the exemption prior to his or her death.

Section 7. Surviving, Un-remarried Spousal Exemption for Deceased Volunteer Firefighter or Volunteer Ambulance Workers with Twenty Years of Enrolled Member Service.

The property tax exemption authorized by this local law shall be continued for the un-remarried spouse of a deceased volunteer firefighter or volunteer ambulance worker provided that:

- a. Such un-remarried spouse is certified by the authority having jurisdiction for the incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service as an un-remarried spouse of an enrolled member of such incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service; and
- b. such deceased volunteer had been an enrolled member for at least twenty (20) years; and

c. such deceased volunteer and un-remarried spouse had been receiving the exemption for such property prior to the death of such volunteer.

Section 8. Application

An application for the exemption described in this local law shall be filed on a form prescribed by the New York State Board of Real Property Services with the assessor or other appropriate agency, department, or office of the assessing unit in which the real property is located on or before the taxable status date.

Section 9. Effective Date

This local law shall take effect upon its being duly filed with the Secretary of State as provided by the Municipal Home Rule Law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Board of the Town of St. Armand held and conducted a public hearing on the foregoing proposed local law on:

The 14th day of November, 2023, at 6:15 pm, to hear any and all persons concerning the same.

This Resolution was duly seconded by Councilperson Donna Whitelaw, and adopted by Roll Call Vote as follows with the exception of Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer, who recused himself due to his affiliation with the Bloomingdale Volunteer Fire Department:

Town Supervisor Davina Thurston	AYE
Deputy Supervisor Karl Law	AYE
Councilperson (Vacant Position)	VACANT
Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer	RECUSED
Councilperson Donna Whitelaw	AYE

Dated: February 21, 2024

Barbara J. Darrah
St. Armand Town Clerk

RESOLUTION # 28 of 2024

RESOLUTION URGING CONGRESS TO CONTINUE TO FUND THE AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM THROUGH THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION BEYOND APRIL 2024

Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer, who moved its adoption, offered the following Resolution:

WHEREAS on December 27, 2020, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 became law and established an Emergency Broadband Connectivity Fund of \$3.2 billion in the United States Treasury to help Americans afford internet service during the pandemic; and

WHEREAS the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB Program) afforded eligible low-income households to receive a discount off the cost of broadband service and certain connected devices with participating providers being able to receive a reimbursement for such discounts; and

WHEREAS on May 12, 2021, the EBB Program launched and consumers could apply for the program through the National Verifier and service providers began enrolling consumers; and

WHEREAS on November 21, 2021 Congress created the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, a new long-term, \$14 billion program, to replace the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program which helped to ensure eligible households could afford the connections needed for work, school, health care and more for a long time; and

WHEREAS as of January 2024, over 22 million households nationwide are enrolled and receiving the ACP monthly benefit; and

WHEREAS as of November 2023, 58,982 residents spanning 11 North Country counties of New York State are receiving a monthly benefit at a total amount of \$1,871,697 with total subsidies to households of \$31,041,738 (January 2022 – November 2023); and

WHEREAS February 7, 2024 was the last day that the ACP could accept new applications and enrollments with no more enrollments into the ACP beginning February 8, 2024; and

WHEREAS without additional funding from Congress, the allotted \$14.2 billion to fund the ACP is projected to run out in April 2024; and

WHEREAS with the ACP monthly benefit concluding in April 2024, the 22 million households nationwide (of which 58,982 are located in the North Country) currently enrolled in this subsidy shall be forced to make unnecessarily difficult decisions on how to cover the additional fees of essential internet service previously covered by ACP.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the North Country Broadband Alliance, a grassroots organization comprised of local and State elected officials, national and regional broadband providers, Congressional representation, non-profit organizations and concerned citizens living in the North Country of New York State urges Congress to continue funding the ACP so that tens of thousands of North Country residents can continue to enjoy affordable broadband services for their personal, professional, educational and health care needs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the North Country Broadband Alliance urges local Town and County governments to support this resolution to demonstrate to Congress that North Country governments show solidarity for the need to assist our most vulnerable constituents in affording essential broadband access.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to congressional representatives of the 20th, 21st, 22nd and 24th Congressional districts who represent North Country counties and municipalities as well as to Senator Schumer’s and Senator Gillibrand’s offices for their consideration of support.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Board of the Town of St. Armand hereby supports this Resolution. This Resolution was duly seconded by Councilperson Donna Whitelaw, and was adopted by Roll Call Vote as follows:

Supervisor Davina Thurston	AYE
Deputy Supervisor Karl Law	AYE
Councilperson (Vacant Position)	VACANT
Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer	AYE
Councilperson Donna Whitelaw	AYE

Dated: February 21, 2024

Barbara J. Darrah
St. Armand Town Clerk

***** RESOLUTION # 29 OF 2024 WAS TABLED UNTIL THE MARCH 19TH BOARD MEETING DUE TO VACANT BOARD MEMBER POSITION AND NEEDING QUORUM *****

RESOLUTION # 29 OF 2024	TOWN OF ST. ARMAND TOWN BOARD AUTHORIZATION TO HOST THE ANNUAL BLOOMINGDALE BLOCK PARTY SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 2024, AND APPROVAL FOR THE USE OF ROOST FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$10,000.00 IN FUNDING THE BLOOMINGDALE BLOCK PARTY
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Deputy Supervisor Karl Law, who moved its adoption, offered the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, the St. Armand Youth Task Force has scheduled Saturday, August 3, 2024 to host the Bloomingdale Block Party to be held at the Town of St. Armand Youth Field, to be approved by the St. Armand Town Board, and

WHEREAS, the St. Armand Youth Task Force is requesting ROOST funds in the amount of \$10,000.00 to fund the Block Party, to include games of chance and the sale of beer.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Town Board of the Town of St. Armand hereby approves by Resolution, the use of the Youth Field on Saturday, August 3, 2024, to host the Bloomingdale Block Party, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Town Board of the Town of St. Armand approves the expenditure of ROOST Funds in the amount of \$10,000.00 for this event. Town Supervisor Davina Thurston and Councilperson Donna Whitelaw recuse themselves from the Roll Call Vote due to serving as members of the St. Armand Youth Task Force.

This Resolution was duly seconded by Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer, and adopted by Roll Call Vote as follows:

Supervisor Davina Thurston	RECUSED
Deputy Supervisor Karl Law	TABLED
Councilperson (Vacancy)	VACANT
Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer	TABLED
Councilperson Donna Whitelaw	RECUSED

Dated: February 21, 2024

Barbara J. Darrah
St. Armand Town Clerk

***** RESOLUTION # 30 OF 2024 WAS TABLED UNTIL THE MARCH 19TH BOARD MEETING DUE TO VACANT BOARD MEMBER POSITION AND NEEDING QUORUM *****

RESOLUTION # 30 OF 2024

TOWN OF ST. ARMAND TOWN BOARD AUTHORIZATION AND APPROVAL FOR THE ST. ARMAND YOUTH TASK FORCE TO SELL BEER, WINE, AND CIDER AT THE BLOOMINGDALE BLOCK PARTY SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 2024.

Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer, who moved its adoption, offered the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, the St. Armand Youth Task Force has scheduled Saturday, August 3, 2024 to host the Bloomingdale Block Party to be held at the Town of St. Armand Youth Field, approved by the St. Armand Town Board, and

WHEREAS, the St. Armand Youth Task Force is requesting Town Board authorization to sell beer, wine, and cider at the 2024 Block Party, for fundraising purposes.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Town Board of the Town of St. Armand hereby approves by Resolution, authorization for the Youth Task Force to sell beer, wine, and cider at the 2024 Bloomingdale Block Party to be held at the Bloomingdale Youth Field on Saturday, August 3, 2024. Town Supervisor Davina Thurston and Councilperson Donna Whitelaw recuse themselves from the Roll Call Vote due to serving as members of the St. Armand Youth Task Force.

This Resolution was duly seconded by Councilperson JP O’Neil, and adopted by Roll Call Vote as follows:

Supervisor Davina Thurston	RECUSED
Deputy Supervisor Karl Law	TABLED
Councilperson (Vacancy)	VACANT
Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer	TABLED
Councilperson Donna Whitelaw	RECUSED

Dated: February 21, 2024

Barbara J. Darrah
St. Armand Town Clerk

***** RESOLUTION # 31 OF 2024 WAS TABLED UNTIL THE MARCH 19TH BOARD MEETING DUE TO VACANT BOARD MEMBER POSITION AND NEEDING QUORUM *****

RESOLUTION # 31 OF 2024

TOWN OF ST. ARMAND TOWN BOARD AUTHORIZATION AND APPROVAL FOR THE ST. ARMAND YOUTH TASK FORCE TO PROVIDE GAMES OF CHANCE AT THE BLOOMINGDALE BLOCK PARTY SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 2024.

Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer, who moved its adoption, offered the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, the St. Armand Youth Task Force has scheduled Saturday, August 3, 2024 to host the Bloomingdale Block Party to be held at the Town of St. Armand Youth Field, approved by the St. Armand Town Board, and

WHEREAS, the St. Armand Youth Task Force is requesting Town Board authorization to provide Games of Chance at the 2024 Block Party, for fundraising purposes.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Town Board of the Town of St. Armand hereby approves by Resolution, authorization for the Youth Task Force to provide Games of Chance at the 2024 Bloomingdale Block Party to be held at the Youth Field on Saturday, August 3, 2024. Town Supervisor Davina Thurston and Councilperson Donna Whitelaw recuse themselves from the Roll Call Vote due to serving as members of the St. Armand Youth Task Force.

This Resolution was duly seconded by Councilperson JP O’Neil and adopted by Roll Call Vote as follows:

Supervisor Davina Thurston	RECUSED
Deputy Supervisor Karl Law	TABLED
Councilperson (Vacancy)	VACANT
Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer	TABLED
Councilperson Donna Whitelaw	RECUSED

Dated: February 21, 2024

Barbara J. Darrah
St. Armand Town Clerk

MOTION TO PAY MONTHLY BILLS

The payment vouchers for February’s bills were presented for the Board’s approval as follows:

- General Vouchers # 42 - # 77 in the amount of \$ 44,154.81
- Trust and Agency Voucher # 4 in the amount of \$ 187.00
- Highway Vouchers # 16 - # 28 in the amount of \$ 19,578.82
- Water and Sewer Vouchers # 11 - # 28 in the amount of \$ 17,859.70
- B Fund Vouchers # 1 - # 2 in the amount of \$ 1,143.46
- Fire Protection Vouchers # 1 - #4 in the amount of \$ 5,654.04
- Highway Outside Voucher # 1 – in the amount of \$ 23,560.12
- HT Voucher # 6 – in the amount of \$ 56,806.64

Councilperson Donna Whitelaw made the Motion to approve payment of February’s bills. The Motion was seconded by Deputy Supervisor Karl Law. A Roll Call Vote was as follows:

Supervisor Davina Thurston	AYE
Deputy Supervisor Karl Law	AYE
Councilperson (Vacancy)	VACANT
Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer	AYE
Councilperson Donna Whitelaw	AYE

All in favor. Motion carried.

Dated: February 21, 2024

Barbara J. Darrah,
St. Armand Town Clerk

MONTHLY REPORT FROM THE SUPERVISOR

Supervisor Thurston requested an extension for the Supervisor’s Reports for January 2024. Deputy Supervisor Karl Law made the Motion to approve the extension. The Motion was seconded by Councilperson Donna Whitelaw. All in favor. Motion carried.

MOTION TO APPROVE REQUEST FOR EXTENSION IN MEETING MINUTES

Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer made the Motion to approve the request for an extension for the Organizational and Regular Board meeting minutes held on January 17, 2024. The Motion was seconded by Councilperson Donna Whitelaw. All in Favor. Motion carried.

TOWN CLERK’S MONTHLY REPORT

Town Clerk Barbara Darrah reported the following Town Clerk revenue collected for the Month of January 2024:

Dog Licenses (3): 1 FS 2 MN	\$ 21.00
Certified Death Certificates (3)	<u>\$ 30.00</u>
Total Revenue:	\$ 51.00

Total Checks Written: Town Supervisor: A \$ 18.00 B \$ 30.00 NYS Dept. A&M \$ 3.00

WATER AND SEWER BILLING MONTHLY REPORT:

Water and Sewer Clerk Barbara Darrah reported that as of today, the Water and Sewer receivables amount was \$51,074.71. The due date for payments for the 1st quarter balances is February 27, 2024. Late fees will be applied On February 28, 2024.

Water and Sewer Clerk Barbara Darrah and Town Supervisor Davina Thurston presented more information on the ALLPAID Electronic payment program. The Essex County Water and Sewer Programmer, Luisa Towne has integrated the ALLPAID format into the County Water and Sewer Program. Sample payment entries are being worked on by the ALLPAID programmer for entering test payments. An agreement is being prepared by ALLPAID for the Town’s approval.

OLD BUSINESS

Supervisor Thurston reported on attending the Lil’ Tykes Day Care Open House held on Saturday, February 17, 2024 from 5:00 – 8:00 pm. Thurston stated the building renovations were amazing and complimented Lil’ Tykes owner, Lindsey Murray, on the opening of the Day Care.

Bloomington Sign Project – Supervisor Thurston reported the project is moving forward. This is the plan where “Welcome to Bloomington” signs will be designed and placed at all of the entries into Bloomington. The approximate cost is estimated to be \$7,000.00 per sign. This will be funded through ROOST funds.

The Comprehensive Plan – Supervisor Thurston reported the Comprehensive Plan is moving forward and is currently waiting on the survey to be finalized. Once completed, the surveys and ROBO-call forms will be mailed out to all residents.

Source Water Protection Fund – The Source Water Protection Fund is intended to be used for the purchase of the well fields and other water infrastructure improvements. The grant documents are near completion and will be submitted to the State when completed.

Town Hall Project – Supervisor Thurston reported the Town Hall renovations are completed. Judge Whitelaw had previously requested an Open House for the dedication of the new courtroom. Supervisor Thurston would also like to combine an Open House for the rest of the Town Hall. In reviewing the available dates, the Open House was scheduled for Friday, April 19, 2024, beginning at noon. Refreshments will be served and everyone is welcome to attend.

NEW BUSINESS

Supervisor Thurston reported to the Board that there are dozens of old Minutes Books located in the safe on the 1st floor that are rapidly deteriorating and should be protected in permanent minute books. She requested that funds in the amount of \$1500.00 from the A-fund be used to have the books preserved by KoFile, the company the Town has used in the past. Supervisor Thurston asked for a Motion to approve this restoration and associated costs.

** MOTION **

Deputy Supervisor Karl Law made a Motion to approve the funds of \$1500.00 for the restoration of the old Minute books. The Motion was seconded by Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer. All in favor. A Roll Call Vote followed:

Town Supervisor Davina Thurston	AYE
Deputy Supervisor Karl Law	AYE
Councilperson (Vacancy)	VACANT
Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer	AYE
Councilperson Donna Whitelaw	AYE

Motion carried.

Essex County Board of Supervisors Deer Herd Resolution - The Essex County Board of Supervisors adopted RESOLUTION # 5 of 2024, Resolution Ordering the Confinement Of Dogs to Protect the Deer Herd. This Resolution was adopted on January 8, 2024 and distributed to all Towns in Essex County.

Public Hearing for CDBG Grant – Part of the requirement for finalizing the CDBG Town Hall Grant is conducting a Public Hearing to go over the project funds. The Public Hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, March 19th at 6:15 pm, with the Regular Town Board meeting immediately following.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR CONCERNS FROM GUESTS AND STAFF:

Supervisor Thurston asked if there were any comments, questions or concerns from the Board or the audience? There were no further questions, comments or concerns.

MOTION TO MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Supervisor Thurston requested to move into Executive Session for the purpose of a Personnel matter (Appointing a new Town Board member to fill the current vacancy). Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer made a Motion to move into Executive Session. The Motion was seconded by Deputy Supervisor Karl Law. The Executive Session began at 8:31 pm.

MOTION TO ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilperson Donna Whitelaw made a Motion to adjourn the Executive Session. The Motion was seconded by Deputy Supervisor Karl Law. The Executive Session ended at 10:10 pm.

MOTION TO ADJOURN REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Councilperson Donna Whitelaw made a Motion to adjourn the Regular Board Meeting. The Motion was seconded by Deputy Supervisor Karl Law. The Regular Board Meeting was adjourned at 10:11 pm.

I, Barbara J. Darrah, Town Clerk for the Town of St. Armand, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct transcript of the Regular Board Meeting minutes held on the above-referenced date.

Dated: February 21, 2024

Barbara J. Darrah
St. Armand Town Clerk