

**TOWN OF WESTERLO
REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING
OF
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2024**

The Town of Westerlo Town Board held a regular meeting on Tuesday, December 17, 2024, at 6:00 PM at the Town Hall 933 CR 401, Westerlo, NY. Supervisor Kryzak opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ATTENDING WERE: Supervisor Matthew Kryzak
Councilman Peter Mahan
Councilman Joshua Beers
Councilwoman Lorraine Pecylak
Councilwoman Amie Burnside

Also attending were: Acting Highway Superintendent David Pecylak, Town Justices Kenneth Mackey and Joshua Ostrander, Library Trustee Laura Tenney, Confidential Administrator Lisa DeGroff, Westerlo Volunteer Fire Co. President Adam Alvarez, Museum Director Mary Jane Araldi & Member Betty Filkins, PB/ZBA Chairman Bill Hall, Deputy Town Clerk's Jaimee Motschmann & Michelle Rose, and Town Clerk Karla Weaver and approximately six interested residents.

OPEN MEETING

Supervisor Kryzak made a motion to open the regular Town Board meeting of Tuesday, December 17, 2024. Councilwoman Pecylak seconded; all in favor motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Supervisor Kryzak made a motion to approve the November 19, 2024, meeting minutes. Councilwoman Pecylak seconded; all in favor motion carried.

TOWN CLERK REPORT – NOVEMBER 2024

Town Clerk Weaver reviewed the Town Clerk report for November 2024. Supervisor Kryzak made a motion to approve the Town Clerk report for November. Councilwoman Burnside seconded; all in favor motion carried.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT – NOVEMBER 2024

Mr. Kryzak reviewed the Supervisor's report for November 2024. He indicated that the budget versus actual was looking well through all departments. The month end bank balance through November was \$3,201,633.19. He indicated he received the M&T statement, and the Town is collateralized for \$3,200,804.34 at the end of November. Year to date interest on all accounts with BOGC is \$86,609.39. BOGC interest for November was \$4,884.37. Supervisor Kryzak made a motion to approve the Supervisor's report for November. Councilwoman Burnside seconded; all in favor motion carried.

INVESTMENT REPORT – OCTOBER 2024

Supervisor Kryzak reported on the investment report. Mr. Kryzak indicated that the Town only earned \$21.95 in interest with NYCLASS for the year and \$1.85 in interest for November. The total amount with NYCLASS is \$460.32. Supervisor Kryzak made a motion to approve the investment report for November. Councilwoman Burnside seconded; all in favor motion carried.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Supervisor Kryzak read and made a motion to adopt the following budget transfer:

WHEREAS: the Town of Westerlo has had unforeseen expense in the following account; and

WHEREAS: the Chief Fiscal Officer has determined that in order to maintain proper balances within various accounts, a budget amendment is necessary; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the Town Board of the Town of Westerlo does hereby authorize Town Supervisor Matthew Kryzak to make the following transfers.

General Fund (2024)

<u>Amount</u>	<u>From Account</u>	<u>To Account</u>
\$14, 296.35	(A) 200.1 Fund Balance	(A) 1420.41 Law – Attorney Fees

Highway Fund (2024)

<u>Amount</u>	<u>From Account</u>	<u>To Account</u>
\$18,192.00	(DA) 200.2 Fund Balance	(A) 7110.43 Parks – Parts, Repair, Supplies

Councilwoman Pecylak seconded; a vote resulted as follows:

AYES: Supervisor Kryzak, Councilwoman Pecylak, Councilwoman Burnside, Councilman Mahan, Councilman Beers

NAYS: None

RESOLUTION # 132 - 2024 was thereby duly adopted.

PAYMENT OF MONTHLY BILLS – DECEMBER 2024

Councilman Beers questioned voucher # 703 regarding a charge for Hometown Heroes. He wondered why the taxpayer is paying for it. Councilwoman Burnside indicated it's paid out of their money. Supervisor Kryzak mentioned it's a voucher in/voucher out. Supervisor Kryzak then made a motion to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS: the Town Board has audited the December 2024 bills, be it hereby

RESOLVED: the following bills be paid Voucher # 660 through Voucher # 714 in the amount of \$186,689.51.

Councilwoman Pecylak seconded; a vote resulted as follows:

AYES: Supervisor Kryzak, Councilwoman Burnside, Councilwoman Pecylak,
Councilman Beers, Councilman Mahan

NAYS: None

RESOLUTION # 133 – 2024 was thereby duly adopted.

COMMITTEE AND DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Mr. Kryzak mentioned he has received written reports from the Justice Court, Assessor, and CEO.

JUSTICE COURT

Supervisor Kryzak indicated the Court received \$1,611.00 in fines for November.

ASSESSOR

ASSESSOR'S MONTHLY DEPARTMENTAL REPORT

To: Westerlo Town Board
From: Melanie Bunzey, Assessor
Date: December 12, 2024
Re: Monthly Report

After sending out the exemption renewals out earlier than usual this year, we have received many back so we are ahead of the game for the March 1st exemption deadline.

The property tax roll will be run later this month after school relevies are entered. The water district fees have been added to the system so they will be included on the tax bills.

There is currently one request to merge two parcels. I will take care of the necessary paperwork and submit it to the County.

As of last year, we are required to send a 2nd notification to all property owners (excluding vacant and commercial parcels). We sent postcards through Applied Business Systems, Inc. ("ABS") and will again this year. They will need to be mailed by the end of January so I will send in the required information to ABS and get the process started. The cost is .52 per postcard. They will be mailed to approximately 1,200 parcels at a cost of approximately over \$625.

A "New Sales Transmittal Report" was submitted to the State with 21 sales since last submittal.

The following 2024 STAR reports have been received from New York State and processed (nothing new on this report):

*Report #1 – Enhanced STAR Eligibility Report
Report #2 – Income Greater than \$250,000 Report
Report #3 – Voluntary Exemption Removal Report – Initial
Report #4 – Tentative Roll Corrections Report
Report #5 – STAR Delinquency Report
Report #6 – Voluntary Exemption Removal Report*

*Report # 7 – Final Roll Corrections Report
Report #8 – STAR Credit Markers Report
Report #9 – Senior Income Level Report
Report #10 – NYS Tax Return Deceased Report
Report #11- STAR Credit Issued*

Address changes are made on a regular basis as well as bank escrow information. Routine calls and emails are received and answered on nearly a daily basis.

The system is checked for property owners listed on death notices received, exemptions are then removed if necessary and notifications of exemption change mailed.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Bunzey

Melanie Bunzey, Assessor

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Report - Building/ Zoning -Jeffry Pine BI/CEO – for November/ 2024

Applications processed or pending before the boards

Special use – 1 / Variance request- 2 / Sub- divisions – 1

Building permits issued – 4

New houses – 0 / Swimming Pools – 0 / Additions, renovations - 1

Accessory structures – 1 Solar Pv – 2/ Other – 0 Cell tower / commercial - 0

Construction inspections- 23

Site visits – 14 / Fire calls – 1 / Fire safety inspections and follow ups - 2

0 - In-service Training hours. 26 hrs. YTD (24 hours required to maintain certification) Training is now completed for the year 2025

PLANNING/ZONING BOARD (PB/ZBA)

PB/ZBA Chairman Bill Hall reported that the Board received one application for an area variance.

LOCAL LAW REVIEW COMMITTEE (LLRC)

Chairman Bill Hall reported that the LLRC did not meet in December. They will pick up in January.

LIBRARY

Library Trustee Laura Tenney reported the following for the library.

- Storytime is usually on Wednesday mornings, but attendance hasn't been great so ~~switching~~ adding to Saturday mornings. ***This was corrected at the Town Board Meeting of 1/21/25.**
- Saturday, January 11th at 10 am there will be a stuffed animal picnic story time.
- Adult game night is the second Friday of the month starting January 10th

- Ancestry is available. On February 11th at 6 pm Gayle Hannay will be there to explain how to use Ancestry.com. Registration is required.
- The library is expanding its purpose to a library of things.
- They will be putting in an application with BOGC for pickleball rackets and balls so people can sign them out when the Town does the courts at the park.

MUSEUM

Museum Director, Mary Jane Araldi thanked those who supported the chance auction at the Town's Christmas event. She mentioned that the fall wreaths on the signs around town are down, and the Christmas wreaths are up. She thanked resident Ding Boomhower and Councilman Josh Beers for their help with that. Wreaths Across America was this past Saturday. Approx 220 wreaths were placed on veterans' graves across three cemeteries. She thanked Councilman Josh Beers, resident Ding Boomhower, NY Patriot Guard Riders, the American Heritage Girls and trailblazers from the So. Westerlo Congregational Church, the Highway Dept., and Fire Dept. Members Konrad May and Nick Tambasco who helped with traffic control.

HIGHWAY

Acting Highway Superintendent David Pecylak reported that the highway department has been busy with snow the last few weeks and had to go out to get more sand. They've done some minor repairs. Councilman Beers asked who plows the Town Hall and wondered if they could please shovel the walkways as well.

HOMETOWN HEROES

Hometown Heroes Member Lisa DeGross mentioned they have not met but she wanted to remind everyone that they are accepting applications for the 2025 banners. Applications are available at the Town Hall and on the website. The cost is \$225 per banner and the deadline is April 1st. They are looking for sponsors.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE AND DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORTS

Supervisor Kryzak made a motion to approve the Committee and Department reports as read or submitted. Councilwoman Burnside seconded; all in favor motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

Mr. Kryzak thanked everyone for putting on the Tree Lighting Ceremony. Town Clerk Weaver reported that thanks to Home Depot, they donated a lot of the decorations. She is grateful to them as we will now have nice decorations moving forward.

ADOPT A FAMILY

The Town Clerk mentioned that the Town was able to help many people this year thanks to the people who donated money and or gifts. She appreciates the large donors this year.

NEW BUSINESS

PETTY CASH FOR TAX COLLECTOR

Supervisor Kryzak indicated a resolution needs to be passed to provide the Tax Collector with petty cash for the collection period. Supervisor Kryzak made a motion to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS: Tax Collector's office needs petty cash in order to make change for the 2025 tax collection, be it hereby

RESOLVED: the Town Board authorizes \$200 to be paid to the Tax Collector for petty cash to make change during the 2025 tax collection period.

Councilwoman Pecylak seconded; a vote resulted as follows:

AYES: Supervisor Kryzak, Councilwoman Pecylak, Councilwoman Burnside, Councilman Beers, Councilman Mahan

NAYS: None

RESOLUTION # 134 - 2024 was thereby duly adopted.

GRANT APPLICATIONS

Mr. Kryzak mentioned that if the Park Improvement Committee, Museum, Hometown Heroes or Independence Day parade for July 4th needed grants they should see the Confidential Administrator for her to submit an application with BOGC. Supervisor Kryzak made a motion to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS: The Bank of Greene County is accepting grants, be it hereby

RESOLVED: the Town Board authorizes the Grant Writer/Confidential Administrator to submit applications for a grant on behalf of the Park Improvement Committee, Museum, Hometown Heroes committee or Independence Day Parade for the 4th of July if they wish.

Councilwoman Burnside seconded; a vote resulted as follows:

AYES: Supervisor Kryzak, Councilwoman Pecylak, Councilwoman Burnside, Councilman Beers, Councilman Mahan

NAYS: None

RESOLUTION # 135 - 2024 was thereby duly adopted.

PROPOSED ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT LAW (ADU)

Supervisor Kryzak indicated he sent the Town Board notes from LLRC Chair Bill Hall regarding the accessory dwelling unit and zoning law changes proposed by the committee. Mr. Hall's draft is currently with the Town Attorney. Mr. Kryzak proposes it will be Local Law 1 of 2025. He will have a fresh draft of the proposed Local Law available at the January meeting. Once it is completed, he will send it to the Code Enforcement Officer and Mr. Hall to make sure nothing needs to be added. The ADU law will give folks the ability to have detached accessory dwelling units.

Mr. Kryzak also mentioned that the Town Board does not need to make all the recommendations from the LLRC on the other items but can do them as a group or standalone.

DOG CARE ATTENDANT

The Town currently has a contract with Daisy's Doggy Retreat. If the Town picks up a dog, they will be housed there but they do not provide the feeding or care of the animal meaning the Town needs to send someone to feed, water and walk and do a welfare check on any dog staying there. He proposed a per diem rate of \$100/day which would cover 4 hours of an individual's time to care for an animal a day and would only be if there are animals there. The Dog Control Officer advised it takes roughly 2 hours twice a day which is how they came up to the 4 hours. He would like this to be approved tonight. Supervisor Kryzak made a motion to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS: The Town Board needs to be able to care for any animal staying at Daisy's Doggy Retreat, be it hereby

RESOLVED: The Town Board authorizes a per diem rate of \$100/day for a total of two visits a day to feed, water, walk and do a welfare check on any animal brought to Daisy's Doggy Retreat.

Councilwoman Burnside seconded; a vote resulted as follows:

AYES: Supervisor Kryzak, Councilwoman Pecylak, Councilwoman Burnside, Councilman Beers, Councilman Mahan

NAYS: None

RESOLUTION # 136 - 2024 was thereby duly adopted.

It will either be Dog Control Officer Justin Case or his Deputy Konrad May who will be going to care for any dogs, but the Town is looking to allow others who work for the Town and are covered under the Town's insurance to be able to help as well if needed.

SALARIED CLERK POSITIONS

Starting in 2025, Supervisor Kryzak proposed making all clerks salaried positions. A few reasons that would be a benefit would be for budget purposes. The department heads know approximately how many hours per year these folks are working so he believes he can make those positions salaried to allow them to know what to budget every year. He advised that Claire Marshall works in several different positions and her position is salaried and it provides a lot of clarity in how she gets paid. It also allows people who work in different departments not to have to keep track of their time every 15 minutes when they must do something for each department. Can split it as needed. It's easier for everyone. No objections were heard by the Town Board.

RAISES FOR 2025

Originally, the Town discussed doing a 6% raise for highway employees and 4% for everyone else. Supervisor Kryzak read about equal opportunity employment and since this is a cost-of-living raise, he believed 6% raises need to be extended to the entire staff. Merit based raises may be different. Moving forward, there needs to be an understanding that cost of living raises need to be the same for everyone to be equal. Councilman Beers wondered about the Town Board. Mr. Kryzak indicated he wouldn't take it but if the Town Board wanted 6%, they could take it.

A resident indicated if the Town Board gives 6% to everyone, the highway department is still behind, and they will never catch up to where they should be. Mr. Beers and Mrs. Burnside indicated the highway department is the highest paid in the hilltowns and they were not behind. Mr. Kryzak indicated there will be lots of changes when under contract with UPSEU. Everyone under that contract will get the same with union representation. A 6% raise versus 4% is not moving the budget needle much. It makes sense to have employees that want to stay here. There is currently no system for merit raises in place.

EDMUNDS GOVTECH

Edmunds Govtech is currently used in the Assessor's office and in Code Enforcement. Supervisor Kryzak is being pressured from the accounting firm and the state comptroller to modernize the Town's financial software from QuickBooks. QuickBooks will stop sending updates eventually. Supervisor Kryzak mentioned he set aside \$20,000 for IT services in the Capital Improvement Plan for town hall. The cost for the upgraded software is \$21,250 for the year but he will apply the \$20,000 from the Capital Improvement Plan and will need to take \$1,250 from the general fund to be able to fund this. The cost for the second year will be \$10,000. It is a slow roll out. Online bill pay will be available as a benefit and it is a secure system. He wants to implement this in January. Confidential Administrator Lisa DeGroff advised that the utility billing is already done by Edmunds, but it is an upgrade to that. She indicated by switching to the financial portion it makes the reporting better for the Town Board and Supervisor as the reports are integrated into the software. The roll out is designed such that even though it may start in January, it doesn't start with the tax collector. Govtech has great support and will handle the SSL certificate and applying and renewing that to take payments online. There is room to grow down the road as well.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Supervisor Kryzak indicated that the highway department will be purchasing some new vehicles. There is \$50,000 set aside for pickups and \$350,000 set aside for either a plow truck or a combination thereof in the Capital Improvement Plan account. Not all money needs to be used at once. There is \$200,000 set aside for the justice court for improvements and \$225,000 available for the transfer station. His office is working on writing some grants to modernize the transfer station; modernization would include beefing up the recycling program, reinventing the facility so everything is under cover, divert waste from landfills, and the purchase of new containers. There is also money set aside for the Town Hall. Not all the \$50,000 was spent on the roof so that money is still set aside. Mr. Kryzak mentioned that if the court needs matching money for a grant, they have up to \$200,000 that could be used.

UPCOMING TOWN BOARD MEETINGS

The next Town Board meeting is December 30th at 6 pm to pay bills and to swear in the highway supervisor. January 2nd at 6 pm is the organizational meeting.

Councilwoman Burnside asked if Museum Director Mary Jane Araldi needed assistance moving the chairs for auction out of the hallway at the Town Hall. Mrs. Araldi responded; she planned on doing it tomorrow.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A resident is having an issue with Verizon and Mid-Hudson Cable. They wrote the town Board an email explaining the issue. They need a new pole installed. Mid-Hudson will not run a new wire because the pole is hanging. The issue is the wire has come down three times. They no longer have a phone or cable at their home. They are wondering if the Town Board could help. Supervisor Kryzak indicated he has a Verizon contact in NY, and he will reach out to them. Discussion continued.

Betty Filkins discussed longevity pay. Mr. Kryzak indicated Mr. Pecylak could bring up longevity pay to the Town Board, but it can't be cost of living or all it will need to include all employees. Discussion ensued regarding the union. As soon as the union is recognized through PERB, they can go to the negotiating table where raises would be discussed.

Samantha Mackey, a resident and wife of a highway employee commented that taking money out of it, she doesn't think the highway employees feel appreciated. They are the ones going out on holidays, leaving their families in bad weather, she knows they sign up for that, but she thinks it comes down to appreciation. Everyone else got to stay home on Thanksgiving with their families. Supervisor Kryzak understands, but the only way he can show appreciation as the Chief Financial Officer is with money. Another resident asked Mrs. Mackey if she could provide an example of what she believed would show them they are appreciated. Mrs. Mackey indicated, acknowledging that they were out and not home with their families on Thanksgiving. Collectively, she believed the town needs to do better. The highway employees are the reason why people can get to work and school buses can go to school. Councilwoman Burnside mentioned that back when Supervisor Kryzak first took office he was doing lunches for them although it didn't seem like it helped. Mrs. DeGroff mentioned that the highway department is acknowledged every month at these meetings. They don't hear it all the time since they are not always here, but she hopes the highway supervisor and Town Board pass the appreciation along. It needs to be communicated. Discussion continued.

Councilman Beers mentioned it's part of their job to work on holidays. No one thanked him for working on holidays when he was working corrections. They are thanked with their paycheck and their 6% raise. A few years ago, the highway department was getting \$150 a year for boots and he and Councilman Mahan thought that was ridiculous, so they agreed to bring it to \$350. That's appreciation.

Town Justice Mackey thanked Highway Employees John Hunter and Philip Mackey for putting up the reindeer this year. The reindeer were painted at the expense of himself and Councilman Beers and was completed by previous Highway Employee Rick Rupeka. Not sure when they will be taken down as he is laid up a few weeks for spinal surgery. He hopes to have them for years

to come. Mrs. DeGroff asked if he received the money that was donated by the family for that. He responded that Councilman Beers and himself wanted to pay for it out of their own pockets. They did know about the money and did use some of it for the new cable. They have decided to do new stabilizer poles next year and that cost will come out of the money the Town Clerk has for donations. Donations for the deer upkeep came from the Telfer family who donated it years ago. Mr. Mackey advised there is a certain way to store the deer, and he wants to make sure when they are taken down it goes smoothly.

Justice Mackey mentioned that during the last rainstorm, he noticed his clerk's office had water on the floor. The roof will need to be investigated. Mr. Kryzak will investigate getting quotes.

Betty Filkins wondered where Daisy's Doggy Daycare is in Voorheesville. Only one dog has gone there recently.

A resident wondered what the status was of the Town water. Mr. Kryzak mentioned that \$230,000 of the ARPA money was given to the Water District to revamp the system. The battle with Albany continues but the pressure has not been taken off them and Mr. Kryzak believed they will be paying the Town more. Mrs. DeGroff advised that Water Chairman Bill Bichteman is compiling a list of engineers. There are things that need to be replaced and upgraded. There were bromomethane issues, but water testing results are posted in the meeting room for anyone wanting to see them.

Councilman Mahan wanted to know when the Town plans to work on the handbook. Mr. Kryzak put the handbook on hold since there will be contract negotiations with UPSEU. It will be worked on when the union contract is finished.

A resident wondered if the Town will be hiring a new maintenance guy. Mr. Kryzak mentioned there is funding for it and he would like to advertise that in the new year. It would be for the light handyman items. Other larger items are better off going out to bid so they get warranties. If they hire someone, they will still need a helper periodically which can be pulled from the highway department.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

With there being no further comments or questions from the public, Supervisor Kryzak made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Councilwoman Pecylak; all in favor motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karla J. Weaver, Town Clerk