

Town of Lewis

Board Meeting

June 12, 2018

Lewis Town Hall

**Present:** Supervisor James Monty, Councilors Lanita Canavan, Jeff Scott, Dave Blades

**Absent:** Councilor Steve Denton

Pledge of Allegiance

**Guest:** Scott Osborne, Elizabethtown/Lewis Central School Superintendent

Christy Barber, NYSDEC

Sean Reynolds, NYSDEC

Scott Osborne gave an update on the proposed merger of Elizabethtown/Lewis Central School and Westport Central School.

Mr. Osborne acknowledged Supervisor Monty for being on the Merger Advisory Committee.

Mr. Osborne reviewed the timeline of how the study came to be:

The first meeting was held on May 21, 2014 at Westport Central School. After many meetings and a feasibility study the consultants came up with a final report on April 25, 2018.

A joint Board of Education meeting will be scheduled for the School Boards to receive the final report of the Merger Study in a joint public session.

The question Mr. Osborn stated he gets asked the most is – What happens if the schools do not merge. He said the projected budget for the next 4 years is already in the hole. If the budgets keep getting cut they will be unable to offer the students as much as they do now.

A meeting will be held June 27 with both School Boards to present the study. In September the School Boards will discuss if they should put the study out to the community. On October 9, 2018 a special vote would be held at school to decide if they should merge or not. December 4, 2018 would be the final vote in each school district. In January 2019 a new School Board would be elected and they would work on the merge.

Mr. Osborne stated if anyone would like more information to please go to the school and see him.

Supervisor Monty thanked Mr. Osborne, and stated the Committee is not pushing for the merger they were just there to listen to the information given.

Ms. Christy Barber of NYSDEC gave an overview of the Real Property Tax Law 480a.

The intent of the 480a Law is to provide a financial incentive to private forest landowners in return for their commitment to have their forest supervised by a qualified Forester. The incentive provides a reduction in assessed value of eligible forest land. In Lewis there are 17,728.72 acres of land that receive the reduction. The landowners must adhere to a forest management plan. The land must produce a commercial timber crop within 30 years of the date of enrollment.

What this means to local Government is a loss in tax revenue. What it means to NYS is a consistent flow of timber, jobs, slow rate of forest conversion/fragmentation.

Dave Blades asked how many of the properties have been found out of compliance. Ms. Barber stated presently none have been found out of compliance.

Mr. Reynolds stated usually land close to lakes and second homes are more trouble areas. Historically landowners in Lewis have been very good.

Ms. Barber stated that the landowner is responsible to pay the stumpage tax to the County Treasurer. Mr. Monty asked who holds them accountable to pay the correct stumpage tax. Ms. Barber stated she compares the stumpage to see if it meets reasonable standards. Supervisor Monty asked if someone has property in 480a and cut and do not notify DEC what happens. Ms. Barber stated the County Treasurer has the responsibility to collect the penalty and they have 30 days to pay the stumpage fee.

Dave Blades asked if a 480a property changes hands does the 480a go with the property. Mr. Reynolds stated it does, but they can withdraw out of the program with a penalty.

A motion was made to approve the May 8, 2018 meeting minutes by Dave Blades and seconded by Jeff Scott – 0 opposed – motion carried.

A motion was made to accept the Supervisors Financial Report by Lanita Canavan and seconded by Dave Blades – 0 opposed – motion carried.

A motion was made for a budget transfer of \$50.00 out of Contingency to cover increase to Charter by Jeff Scott and seconded by Lanita Canavan – 0 opposed – motion carried.

**Public Commentary:**

Kathy Linker stated the Town Wide Yard Sale went well. They plan on continuing with the Farmers Market. A little Lewis Library – take one – give one has been started at Denton's Store.

Supervisor Monty thanked Kathy for all her efforts.

**DPW/Water Report:**

Supervisor Monty stated that rents have been coming in and a new meter will be installed at the Public Safety Building soon.

Kevin Denton stated an engineering firm came and hydro tested and a copper/lead test will be done next month. He has not heard anything on the Salt Shed grant. Paving is scheduled for mid August. On July 20<sup>th</sup> the new Loader should be in. The antenna that blew off the highway garage during the storm has been put back on.

Jeff Scott asked if the pine logs at Milholland Park could be cut up for firewood. Supervisor Monty stated Dave Reckahn from Soil and Water may want them, he will contact him to see if he wants them.

Dave Blades stated a stone under the swings at the playground needs to be removed.

Supervisor Monty stated the Salt Shed Grant is partnered with Newcomb, and we are waiting for their geo tech testing, hopefully in the next couple weeks they can go out to bid.

Lanita Canavan stated flowers were removed from the Cemetery and a rose bush was torn out, and other towns have reported cemetery theft also.

Lanita Canavan asked what the CHIPS grant money will be used for next year. Kevin Denton stated he would like to replace some culverts on Brainard Forge Road.

Supervisor Monty stated the issue of the town taking over Hemlock lane is now in the owners attorneys hands.

**Correspondence:**

- a. County Expense Report – in packet
- b. County Calendar – in packet
- c. Landfill Report – Supervisor Monty stated the tonnage is going down and we are still waiting on numbers from Elizabethtown.  
A motion was made to accept the landfill report by Dave Blades and seconded by Lanita Canavan – 0 opposed – motion carried.
- d. Stop Domestic Violence minutes – in packet
- e. APA June meeting agenda – in packet
- f. DEC and APA Review High Peaks Wilderness and Vanderwhacker Mountain wild Forest – in packet
- g. NYSDOT Grant Program – For larger communities – in packet
- h. 2019 STAR income verification program – in packet
- i. ACAP Community Assessment – in packet
- j. Lewis Veterans Park minutes, May 10, 2018 and 30, 2018 – in packet Dave Blades stated a dedication of the Veterans Park will be held November 11, 2018 and he has requested a fly over, but has not heard yet.
- k. Office for the Aging meeting minutes (Welcome Donna Crowningshield to the Advisory Committee)
- l. APA approval of removal of fuel storage tank from missile silo in July
- m. NYSEG grant program for local farms to be more efficient – in packet
- n. NYSEG Municipal Energy Program – will cover up to 70% of a project cost and will do a free energy audit of Municipal Buildings.  
A motion was made by Jeff Scott to request an energy audit and seconded by Lanita Canavan -0 opposed – motion carried

- o. APA Single Track Bicycle Trails – in packet
- p. January – May property sales – Lewis in packet
- q. Stumpage – Town received \$6.58 and it will go into the equipment fund.
- r. 2018 State equalization report – Lewis is 100% equalization rate
- s. APA Public Commentary – Grasse River – in packet
- t. APA Public Commentary – Saranac Lake Wild Forest – in packet

**Old Business:**

1. Playground – Town has received 3 calls complementing on the porta potty – The porta potty is cleaned every Friday.
2. Speed limit Petition – Jeff Scott stated the State DOT said the aerial views show the State road is a straight shot, and they do not think it is necessary to lower the speed limit from 45 to 35 mph. Dave Blades suggested that someone contact the Sheriff's Department and State Police to get the number of accidents (go back 10 years ) and attach that to the proposal for the State. Dave Blades also suggested getting a resolution from the county and the town to put in the proposal to the State DOT.  
Jeff Scott made a motion that the Town of Lewis support the lowering of the speed limit, the motion was seconded by Lanita Canavan – 0 opposed – motion carried.  
Supervisor Monty suggested the petition be put at the Farmers Market, Dentons, Truck Stop, Town Hall and Board members get signatures.
3. Animal Control Letter – Supervisor Monty stated a Draft of the Animal Control Letter is done. Supervisor Monty also stated another dog charged a resident and she fell and hurt her shoulder. Dave Blades made a motion to send the Animal Control Letter as written, the motion was seconded by Lanita Canavan – 0 opposed – motion carried
4. Thrall Dam Update – Jeff Scott stated the permit process has been started for the Bridge, a rough draft has been made of the map and they need to decide on names for the trails. Dave Blades suggested the trails be named the C & B. Supervisor Monty suggested the trails be the full names of Charlie Martin and Bill Aubin. The kiosk for Thrall has not been started yet. Supervisor Monty suggested the history of Thrall Dam be placed in the kiosk.
5. Freon based appliances – Supervisor Monty stated he did up a policy for a charge of \$50.00 for refrigerators, air conditioners, dehumidifiers and freezers, if the Freon has been removed and tagged there will be no charge.

A motion was made by Dave Blades and seconded by Lanita Canavan to offer a \$50.00 punch card for Freon based appliances to be available at the Town Hall and Landfill – 0 opposed – motion carried.

**New Business:**

1. Codes Report – No report
2. Animal Control Report – No report
3. Youth Commission Report – Jeff Scott stated the people hired to be the Summer Recreation Director and Assistant Director missed the RTE training offered by the County. Jeff stated they will have to obtain the training elsewhere and the cost will be deducted from their pay.  
A motion was made by Lanita Canavan and seconded by Dave Blades to accept the Youth Commission Report – 0 opposed – motion carried.

4. Essex County Solid waste proposal – Supervisor Monty stated the current rate is \$62.00 per ton. Starting January 1 a \$25.50 increase will be added for a total of \$87.50. Supervisor Monty stated Noel Merrihew suggested we raise dump stickers from \$1.00 and \$2.00 to \$2.00 and \$4.00  
A motion was made to increase the dump sticker price to \$2.00 and \$4.00 as of September 1, 2018 pending Elizabethtown approval by Lanita Canavan and seconded by Jeff Scott- 0 opposed – motion carried.  
Lanita Canavan suggested a letter go to residents on the back of the Animal Control letter about the increase in dump sticker prices.
5. Air Conditioners available to HEAP qualified individuals – Contact Essex County Heating Assistance
6. Crosswalk approval from NYSDOT – Approval has been received and Kevin Denton can start the crosswalk and have it completed next month. The crosswalk is paid for by a grant, signs will go up approaching the crosswalk, a blacktop landing pad will be up to the crosswalk. The State will do the striping for a donation.
7. Understanding Medicaid Transports – The cost has increased from \$350,000.00 in 2012 to 3.4 million in 2017 and the number of transports has gone down. A report is available for the public to view from Dan Palmer, Essex County Manager.

Lanita Canavan suggested a photo of the Farmers Market go on the Town website.

Kevin Denton stated there was an issue with the generator at the water plant. A tech came from Cummins and billed the town \$5700.00 and stated a staater board was needed at a cost of \$18,000 to \$20,000. Todd Hodgson from Essex County came and looked at the generator and after trouble shooting determined it was a thermostat and temperature sending unit for ECM, and fixed it for a total of \$29.00. Supervisor Monty contacted Commins and they waived the \$5700. Charge

A motion was made that the following vouchers be audited and approved for payment by Lanita Canavan and seconded by Jeff Scott – 0 opposed – motion carried.

Reconciliation Summary \$185,088.49

Water Fund SW Abstract of Audited vouchers \$347.84

Abstract of Audited Vouchers Highway DA - \$13,390.15

General Fund A \$4713.94

Abstract Audited Vouchers Highway Fund \$2418.51

Abstract Audited Vouchers Water Fund \$521.57

Town of Lewis General Fund \$7281.98

Town of Lewis Abstract of Audited Vouchers Youth Commission - \$718.10

Town of Lewis Abstract and Agency TA \$30,002.83

Meeting adjourned 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Vanessa Cross

Lewis Town Clerk