

**WESTERLO TOWN BOARD
WORKSHOP OF
TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2013**

The Westerlo Town Board held a workshop on Tuesday July 9, 2013 in the Westerlo Town Hall Located at 933 CR 401, Westerlo at 7:07 PM. The workshop was opened by Supervisor Richard H. Rapp with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT WERE: Supervisor Richard H. Rapp
Councilman Anthony W. Sherman
Councilman William F. Bichteman

ABSENT WERE: Councilman Alfred L. Field
Councilman Theodore S. Lounsbury III

Also attending were Planning Board Chairwoman Dorothy Verch, Zoning Board of Appeals member John Sefcik, Town Clerk Kathleen Spinnato and three residents.

The Town Board and Planning Board Chairwoman Dorothy Verch reviewed the current draft of the Comprehensive Plan which has not been accepted by the Town Board. The document had been submitted to Albany County Planning. Leslie Lombardo from Albany County Planning returned the draft of the Comprehensive Plan with their suggestions. Dorothy advised the Town Board the mission statement came from the original first draft of the comprehensive plan. On the second paragraph she explained the agricultural/ farmland should read crucial, not critical, this was kept in because there was a public hearing and the people wanted it.

Councilman Bichteman commented that he had asked several persons their opinions about the attributes they like about the community, some comments were open space, close knit community, proximity to shopping, not over regulated, etc. Dorothy suggested changing the wording from agricultural to rural.

Planning Chairwoman Dorothy Verch then asked resident Leonard Laub, a former Planning Board Chairman, if he had been involved in the beginnings of the development of a comprehensive plan. He explained he had and explained his input. He advised when he was Chairman, the Planning Board focused on preserving open space and rural character and looked into transfer development rights in drafting a comprehensive plan. Dorothy asked if he would provide her with information on the transfer development rights. Other issues that were previously focused on were: the hamlets and local businesses and defining & supporting zones suited to larger scale business.

Councilman Bichteman considers a comprehensive plan an important tool for the Town. It becomes a legal basis for Zoning. Discussion followed on the topic of the development /revisions of a Comprehensive Plan. Dorothy Verch advised she is the fourth Planning Board Chairperson to work on the development of the comprehensive plan and would like residents input. Councilman Sherman informed she could advertise and hold Comprehensive Plan meetings to get residents comments on a Comprehensive Plan.

Councilman Bichteman commented on preexisting conditions like lots on Lake Onderdonk. Councilman Sherman commented on Special Use Permits and Commercial Zones. Discussion followed on these concerns.

Dorothy Verch will seek public input and recommendations to help assist the Planning Board with a more current guide for the development of a draft Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Westerlo. August 27th at 7:30 pm was discussed as a potential Comprehensive Plan public comment meeting date. Councilman Sherman suggested since this falls on a regular Planning Board meeting date she may want to advertise the regular meeting as being canceled and hold the Public comment meeting in its place. Dorothy also suggested placing the Planning Board minutes on the Town website.

The next topic was the Hydrofracking Report. Councilman Bichteman indicated that Councilman Alfred Field gave him the impression he would no longer be interested in participating as Chairman of the committee that drafted the first Hydrofracking Report, that report was not accepted by the Town Board. He was also unsure if Larry Verch was still interested in continuing to serve on the same committee, he will contact Mr. Verch. The Hydrofracking Report needs to be revised and modified. After the revisions are made and when the Hydrofracking Report is accepted by the Town Board, the report will need to be sent to a printer to be rebound or it can just be put in another format.

The next topic was a review of the current Town of Westerlo Employee Handbook (6/3/1997) and a draft revision prepared on 9/10/2007 that was never adopted. With the absence of two Board members there was a discussion of potential changes to the Employee Handbook. Predetermined were changes to the policies regarding new employees, new employees will contribute 20% of premium for medical coverage. Councilman Bichteman, Councilman Sherman and Supervisor Rapp made the following recommendations based on the Handbook of 6/3/1997:

- Skipping the Introduction and Welcome message from the Supervisor for the time being and revisit it later.
- Pg. 14 Probationary Period – leave the same.
- Pg. 15 Rules of Conduct – unauthorized use of equipment, **a separate sheet needs to be added.
- Add: Computer Usage – Inappropriate use, passwords, etc.
- Pg. 17 Code of Ethics – Is currently handed to Employees and they sign for it. - OK.
- Pg. 18 Penalties for Offenses –OK.
- Pg. 19 Unauthorized Work - **Needs Clarification-Disciplinary Action Section 407 & Section 408, Competitive & Non-Competitive class. This may have been addressed in Draft Handbook dated 9/10/2007.
- Pg.20 & 21 – Already covered in Draft Employee Handbook of 9/10/2007.
- Pg. 22 Personnel File – OK.
- Pg. 23 – OK
- Pg. 24 – Hours of Operation.
Applies to all employees except Town Clerk. Councilman Bichteman suggested keeping summer compressed work week for highway. Suggested changing the day off (currently Fridays) with a rotating schedule divided among crew, minimum of 2 persons to cover on off day.
Comp. Time - Specified number of 240 accumulated hours. Need to schedule a reasonable amount of time 1-3 yr. time period to reduce the hours for those that predate rule and are above this total.
- Pg. 25, Section 503 Meals and Rest Breaks - Change other Departments from 60 to 30 minutes, and paid to unpaid, otherwise OK.
- Pg. 26 Time Records – OK.

**On a separate issue ID Badges for Water District Operator- Doug Story

- Vehicle Usage Policy, Section # 506 – OK
- Supplies, Tools, Equipment & Fuel Usage, Section #507 – Remove whole paragraph, the rest of page is OK.
- Pg. 30 Personal Appearance Policy, Section # 509– Leave discretionary to Town Supervisor and Department Head.
- Maintenance of Work Area – This is mentioned in Draft dated 9/10/2007, section 1000 & 1001 Safety Procedure.

- Pg. 31 Tardy Employees, and Pgs. 32 through 36 – OK.
- Pg. 37 Benefits, Section 606 – Pay a portion of benefit package when employee is on sick leave for an extended period of time. This needs to be addressed.
- Pg. 38 is a continuation – OK.
- Pg. 39 Step Increments , Section 701 – For Highway Dept employees can be eliminated, no longer used.
- Pg. 39, Overtime Pay, Section # 702 - ** Adopt section from Draft of 9/10/2007
- Pg. 40 – OK.
- Pg. 41 Holidays – Remove Big Game Season Holiday – no longer needed opening of Deer season starts on a Saturday, give Highway Dept. back Veterans Day. Remove Lincoln & Washington Birthdays, give Presidents Day instead.
- Vacation Leave Policy – Change the wording to at no time accumulate more than 240 hours vacation time ever. Remove the 5 year step or will that have any effect on any current employees, Councilman Bichtemnan will check. Leave in the paragraph about hires prior to 1997.
- Pg. 42 and 43 date credited - worded incorrectly needs to be corrected for Sick and Vacation credits. Vacation Policy should read: Newly hired employees will be credited with 48 hours paid vacation leave upon the completion of six months of service. The remainder of the sentence should be removed. Sick Policy should read: Newly hired employees will be credited with 24 hours paid sick time leave upon the completion of six months of service. The remainder of the sentence should be removed. As far as the schedules: sick leave time give 40 hours after 3 years, and removing 5 years 56 hours.
- Pg. 45, Section 804 Personal Leave – 5 years of service, receive 48 hours. Leave this in for now.

The Town Board members that were present decided to stop at this point. Councilman Bichteman suggested the Town Board take the time to look into the draft Employee Handbook and glean information from that and incorporate into a revised draft handbook. He will also check with Larry Verch about his participation with the committee on revising the Hyrdofracking Report.

Supervisor Rapp made a motion to adjourn the workshop, seconded by Councilman Sherman and carried all present in favor. The workshop adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Kathleen Spinnato

