

April 10, 2024

The Town Board of the Town of Harpersfield held a regular meeting on April 10, 2024.

Present were: Lisa M. Driscoll, Supervisor
Patrick F. Funk, Councilmember
Erik R. Reeve, Councilmember
Dwayne C. Hill, Councilmember
Donna M. VanSickell, Councilmember

Also present: Russell Hatch, Supt. Of Highways
Linda E. Goss, Town Clerk
Thomas Little, Code Enforcement Officer
Laurel (Laurie) Bedford, Assessor

Others present: Henry L. Browning
Elizabeth Page, Editor of The Mountain Eagle
Rhonda Slicer
Thomas VanSickell
Matt Moyse
Gabby Leach
Kitty L. Ballard
Gloria Anderson

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Supervisor Lisa M. Driscoll.

Supervisor Driscoll led the Board and those in attendance in the Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda was the bid opening for one (1) new 2025 model year 6x4 tandem plow/dump truck with a minimum GVW rating of 66,000 lbs. with a complete plow package and dump body. One bid packet was received for the cab and chassis from Burr Truck and one bid packet was received for plow package and dump body from Binghamton Truck Body. The bid for the cab and chassis was \$160,777.92. The bid for the plow package and dump body was \$144,701.00. The total cost was \$305,478.92. Councilmember Funk asked are these all the bids we've got? Supervisor Driscoll answered yes these are all that we've got. The Town Board and Russell Hatch went over both bid packages. Councilmember Reeve asked are these prices similar across all truck companies for example International verses Volvo? Supervisor Driscoll stated that the price was a little higher than we thought.

We were thinking \$280,000.00. Russell informed Supervisor Driscoll that he needs to go over the bid to find out what is different. Councilmember Reeve stated it is close to \$300,000.00. Supervisor Driscoll answered \$305,000.00. Russell continued that the cost of the cab and chassis is the same as what was estimated. The body is up a little bit. So, we were thinking approximately \$300,000.00 because we were going to take the \$75,000.00 grant funds from the Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation, CHIPs funds and the Extreme Winter Recovery funds. We were going to have about \$15,000.00 left over from the money that he has for this purchase. Russell thought that the cost would be just over \$300,000.00. It has come in a little bit more than what he was figuring. Councilmember Funk asked Russell is it just a couple of thousand more than what you were figuring? Councilmember Hill answered about \$3,000.00 more. Councilmember Funk continued that we have been working on this purchase for quite a while and everything is going up. Russell continued that one thing he will look into is the warrantee. There is something about an extended warrantee on the cab and chassis. He can call about that tomorrow. He just wants to check on that warrantee to see what it covers. Supervisor Driscoll said OK. Councilmember Reeve asked Russell is any of this stuff galvanized? Russell answered that the truck is going to have a lot of stainless steel on it. There was supposed to be an option in the bid for the dump box to make it all stainless steel. It was going to be an upgrade. Supervisor Driscoll asked is that why the cost is over the \$300,000.00 we were expecting? Councilmember Funk added that the warrantee is right about the same as the price difference also. Councilmember Reeve continued that you must have a warrantee. With the check engine lights, DAF, etc. Russell asked that the Town Board go on with the meeting as he would like to make a telephone call to the vendor to check something out on the bid. Supervisor Driscoll agreed.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda were the minutes for the December 2023, January 2024 and February 2024. The March minutes are not yet complete. They should be complete for next months meeting. A motion was made to accept the December 2023 and the January and February 2024 meeting minutes as presented by Patrick F. Funk seconded by Donna VanSickell. All voting Aye.

Linda E. Goss read a thank you note addressed to the Board for the addition of employee Louis Ortiz to the Harpersfield Transfer Station.

Supervisor Driscoll recognized Matt Moyle resident of the Town of Harpersfield. Supervisor Driscoll reminded the Town Board that the Town Attorney has advised them not to comment as there is current litigation with NY Safety Track. She informed Mr. Moyle that the Town Board can take his comments under advisement but will not be able to comment. Mr. Moyle informed the Board that he has looked at the draft incomplete March minutes and in error he sent a letter to the Board that was geared for Enforcement. He had also included letters that were addressed to the Planning Board. Supervisor Driscoll informed Mr. Moyle that Board was not sure which letter to read. Mr. Moyle apologized for the error and continued that what he wanted to bring to the Boards attention was that he and his father-in-law are the owners of the properties which border the north end of NY Safety Track. One of his concerns is the camping that goes on at the track. He has been told that they have installed a dump tank. When the campers leave, they are dumping in the dump tank. Then someone comes up and removes the waste out the tank. Mr. Moyle has not found anybody that can tell him who over saw the actual installation of the dump tank. What kind of inspections are being done? It obviously did not go to the Planning Board. He does not know if there is a dump tank or if it is a dry well. He thinks this is a big concern. Mr. Moyle

knows that if he decided to put forty campers on his property there would be a lot of oversight and inspections. He would expect the same for NY Safety Track. All the ground water goes in their direction. Mr. Moyle and his family's properties are on the lower side of the track. Another of Mr. Moyle's concerns is the gun range. On the 2024 Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) register, David Lubinitsky is a registered Federal Firearms License (FFL) holder. Mr. Lubinitsky has two certifications that allows him to rent and sell guns and ammunition. He uses the 396 Zimmerman Road address, not his home address, because the business is being done at the track. The gun range faces toward Mr. Moyle's and his family's properties. It faces directly toward Mr. Moyle's in-laws-house, 294 Johnson Road, which has been a day care unit for the last thirty years. The only thing stopping any bullets is an approximately four-foot-high berm of tires. Shooting into rubber is one of the worst things you can do. Mr. Moyle's father-in-law will not take his children up on the hill anytime that they are shooting. Which is generally every night that they have an event. Mr. Moyle issued the Board a pamphlet from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on best management practices for a gun range. It contains a lot of information about lead reclamation and recycling. Part of what the EPA wants to see is that you have a best management practice in place for how you are going to handle all those bullets. All that lead goes into the soil. Lead is something that takes a long time to seep out. Mr. Moyle and his family own a lot of property that they hope to pass on to their children one day. Forty years from now what will be the damage of tens of hundreds of thousands of lead bullets into the earth? All that water supply, all headed down hill, all headed towards us. Mr. Moyle continued that the EPA pamphlet contains information about human health and the environment. There is also a plan on how to reclaim and recycling bullets. The pamphlet also contains information on "...ranges should retain records of shipments of lead from the range, and the facilities to which they were sent, in order to demonstrate that the lead was recycled." It then goes on to how they can be held responsible in a court for not doing those things. Mr. Moyle continued that a lot of business is being done at the gun range. Mr. Moyle would like to know how many 1099's have been filed out of that property. Are we getting our fair share? At the very least should we as a Town and a County make sure that we are at least getting our fair share of sales tax for those 1099's being filed. This is something that he does not know how to or where to get this information. He thinks this is very important. The gun range is a matter of feet from Mr. Moyle's property line where they fire into. He knows that the gun range has not been brought before the Town Planning Board. Mr. Moyle discussed the original SWPPP Plan. The western retainage pond has not worked in about five years. It is supposed to go out an overflow and then it runs through a series of drainage to disperse the water properly. It is creating massive gullies down our property line. It needs to be fixed with a bulldozer. Mr. Moyle's father-in-law has approached the manager of NY Safety Track and offered to help him because all that water is damaging our property. He tried for years and then gave up trying. On the eastern end of the property borders our location at 420 Johnson Road which operates as an Airbnb. We did a gross income of almost \$30,000.00 last year. That is real money that goes back into the County sales tax. Mr. Moyle has heard the manager of NY Safety Track claim that they have brought a lot of business into his Airbnb. We have been operating for two years. There have been three weekends people using the track have stayed at his Airbnb. The house that is his Airbnb is spring fed. Now he has to be concerned about the water runoff from the track. What is in it? If the SWPPP is working, then it should be ok. But if you take twenty five motorcycles with two tires, then take twenty five cars with at least two times the rubber on the track

probably three or four if you look at width of some of those cars he can't imagine that the SWPPP plan would hold up to that level of use. That concerns Mr. Moyses. He is looking to build another home on Johnson Road. He is hesitant to do that at this point because he does not know what is happening to that land underneath us. Is it being poisoned by all of these things. Mr. Moyses continued that he understands the constraints that the local Town Board has. He understands the monetary constraints. He believes there are agencies that can help the Town. The EPA, the ATF, the DEC and the DEP could help the Town. These agencies have a lot of power, a lot of money and a lot of people on staff. Mr. Moyses urged the Board to consider bringing in help. That is what they are there for is to help smaller Towns. Mr. Moyses thanked the Board for their time and consideration. Supervisor Driscoll informed Mr. Moyses that along with the information that was given to him the older minutes are not posted on the website. If he would like copies of those minutes Linda E. Goss will make him copies.

Supervisor Driscoll recognized Gabby Leach resident of the Town of Harpersfield. Ms. Leach informed the Board that she has been involved with the track since 2011. She continued that they lost \$100,000.00 suing the racetrack in court. We won every court battle, but we lost because NY Safety Track does what they want to do. They have camping up there. She contacted the people who qualify campgrounds. You need to have a slab underneath the trailer. There needs to be electric at the site. It has never been done. The Town has been losing money for the last ten years. The manager of NY Safety Track has been strafing our homes with his airplane everyday now because there are these issues going on. He flies just over the treetops by our homes by everybody that lives up on the hill. The discussion continued. Ms. Leach feels that we are fighting a losing battle. She feels that the agencies listed above have been called in before. They charge for things to be done. Everyone is shorthanded. It is even worse now than it was before. The manager of NY Safety Track told the court that he had told all the motorcycle riders that they needed to take out one spark plug from their motorcycles. This was to make the motorcycles quieter. The discussion continued. Supervisor Driscoll thanked Mr. Moyses and Ms. Leach for their comments. The Board will take all the comments under advisement. Kitty Ballard asked will there be a notice in the newspaper when this litigation goes to court? Supervisor Driscoll suggested that Ms. Ballard ask this question to the Planning Board as the Town Attorney will be there to give Ms. Ballard an answer.

Supervisor Driscoll reported to the Board that she has received an email from Alex from Franklin Energy asking if the Town was interested in having an EV charging station. She had emailed this information out to the Board. Supervisor Driscoll emailed Alex back and stated that she was not sure where they could put an EV Station in Town. She was unsure that someone charging their vehicle would want to stand around in a field for hours. Councilmember Funk commented that the municipality has no need for an EV charging station. Councilmember Reeve asked is there any type of income that the Town could make putting in an EV charging station? Supervisor Driscoll answered no it is going to cost us money. A discussion was had. The Board agreed at this time not to pursue an EV charging station.

Russell Hatch updated the Board on the bid for a new truck. Initially the numbers he was looking at was \$300,000.00. He was figuring to pay for the truck he would use the grant funds from Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation, CHIPs and Extreme Winter Recovery funds. In using those funds, he would have \$18,000.00 left over. The truck is up \$5,000.00 from what he had figured originally. That will leave \$13,640.00 left over. The body of the truck has stainless steel sides but just steel underneath. To go to a

completely stainless-steel body it would be an upgrade of just over \$27,000.00. Supervisor Driscoll asked if we go to a full stainless-steel body what does that buy us in longevity of the truck? Russell answered that under the body is where the most damage is. All the salt is under there. If the Board were to agree to the upgrade there is the Highway Capitol Project line in the budget with \$26,000.00 in it. He is still to the plus side of \$13,000.00 along with the \$26,000.00 in the Highway Capitol Project line. We could still do the upgrade and have enough money to go with a completely stainless-steel body. Or we could go with the stainless-steel sides and regular steel underbody and still have \$13,000.00 left over and the Highway Capitol Project line will not be used. Councilmember Funk added that if the underbody is what rusts out then why upgrade the sides to stainless if you are not going to upgrade the bottom. Russell continued that he wanted to bring all the options to the Board, stainless-steel doors regular steel body, or complete stainless-steel doors and body, because he knew that he was going over what was estimated. He wanted to be able to show that with the complete stainless-steel body the Town could pay for it. Councilmember Funk asked even though we can pay for it do you think it is worth it? Russell answered I do. Councilmember Reeve asked is that the cross members underneath, the frame brackets, all that stuff? Russell answered everything would be stainless-steel. Russell continued that this body is one of the tip bodies. It sands in front of the duels of the truck. The body inside tips up because the conveyer is on one side. The body has a lot of moving parts. When you have that many moving parts, he would rather see the Town go with a complete stainless-steel body. Supervisor Driscoll suggested that the Board accept the bids as is without the upgrade and that she and Russell meet and go over the budget one more time. Then at next months Board meeting talk about the stainless-steel upgrade. Russell agreed. Councilmember Funk moved that the Board accept the bid from Burr Truck in the amount of \$160,777.92 for a 2025 cab and chassis and accept the bid from Binghamton Truck Body in the amount of \$144,701.00 for a Plow Truck Equipment Build with the stainless-steel body upgrade to be discussed at next months Town Board meeting seconded by Dwayne C. Hill. All voting Aye.

Supervisor Driscoll asked the Board for a motion to cut a check and pay for the 2025 cab and chassis in the amount of \$160,777.92. The Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation needs proof that the grant funds of \$75,000.00 from 2023 have been spent on the purchase of the new truck. A copy of the check and photos of the new cab and chassis will need to be sent to the Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation. Supervisor Driscoll has been notified that without proof that the \$75,000.00 in grant funds from 2023 have been spent on the new cab and chassis the grant that was written for 2024 will not be awarded. Russell informed the Board that on Friday he and Joseph Seeley will go to Binghamton to check over the new cab and chassis. Councilmember Reeve asked Russell how long, in years, does the Town hold on to their trucks? Russell answered between 20 and 25 years. The discussion continued. Russell issued Supervisor Driscoll a voucher for the new cab and chassis.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is to readopt the resolution for the Verizon cell tower. This resolution was passed a couple of months ago. We need to get the notice for a permissive referendum in the newspaper. We did not get that in the newspaper at the right time. Also, the SEQRA Part 2 has been completed. On the SEQRA Part 3 more information has been added in the explanation.

RESOLUTION NO. 011 OF THE YEAR 2024

Councilmember Dwayne C. Hill offered the following resolution and moved its adoption:

TITLE: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF HARPERSFIELD TOWN BOARD TO AUTHORIZE THE LEASE OF REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 797 COLONEL HARPER ROAD AND ISSUING A NEGATIVE DECLARATION PURSUANT TO THE NEW YORK STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW ACT ("SEQRA").

WHEREAS, the Town was presented with an offer from Cellico Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless ("Lessee") to enter into a Land Lease Agreement ("Lease") for a portion of the real property located at 797 Colonel Harper Road in the Town of Harpersfield, Delaware County, New York, Tax Map No. 28.-2-31.1 the ("Property") owned by the Town of Harpersfield for the installation, maintenance, replacement, addition and operation of the communications equipment and related utilities and appurtenances for Lessee's use; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board has confirmed that the portion of the Property proposed to be leased by Verizon Wireless (defined in the Lease as the "Premises") is not currently used by the Town and there are no plans to use such Property for Town purposes in the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board has determined to lease a portion of the Property for adequate consideration of no less than fair market value without the services of a real estate broker; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board and its representatives have negotiated the terms of the Lease with Lessee; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board believes that leasing the Premises to Lessee is in the public interest of the residents of the Town, particularly since the end result will be more efficient and reliable cellular telephone communications within the Town; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board preliminary classifies this action (i.e., execution of the Lease) as an unlisted action under SEQRA, and determines that it will act as the Lead Agency with respect to the environmental review of the proposed lease of the Premises in accordance with SEQRA and Part 167 of the regulations implementing SEQRA; and

WHEREAS, the execution of the Lease for the Premises is: (1) an action under SEQRA, which requires the Town Board to issue a determination of significance prior to authorizing the execution of the Lease; and (2) subject to a permissive referendum pursuant to Section 90 et.al. of the New York State Town Law; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board has reviewed the Short Form Environmental Assessment Form ("EAF") prepared for this action.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Harpersfield determines that the project is an unlisted action pursuant to Part 617 of the regulations implementing SEQRA and that the Town Board shall act as Lead Agency for the required environmental review related to the execution of the Lease; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the portion of Property proposed to be leased by Lessee is surplus property that is not currently used for Town purposes, nor are there any plans to use such Property for Town purposes in the foreseeable future; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Board determines that entering into the Lease with Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless will have no significant adverse impacts on the environment, and hereby issues a negative declaration for the proposed lease and authorizes the Supervisor of the Town of Harpersfield to execute Pages 3 and 4 of the EAF; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that pursuant to the provisions of Section 64, Subdivision 2 of the Town Law of the State of New York, the Town Board agrees to enter into the Lease with Lessee for a portion of the Property for not less than its fair market value; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Supervisor is authorized to execute all documents required to complete the leasing of the Premises to Lessee, including the Lease, a Memorandum of Lease, and all other related customary forms and documents; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution is adopted subject to a permissive referendum and that the Town Clerk is directed to publish and post the notice of adoption of this Resolution in accordance with Article 7 of the Town Law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that subsequent to complete execution of the Lease and prior to the installation and operation of its communications facility, Lessee shall be required to obtain all necessary local land use approvals required under the Town's local laws including site plan approval from the Town of Harpersfield Planning Board.

Seconded by Councilmember Erik R. Reeve whereupon the Resolution was put to a vote and recorded as follows:

Supervisor	Lisa M. Driscoll	Aye.
Councilmember	Patrick F. Funk	Aye.
Councilmember	Erik R. Reeve	Aye.
Councilmember	Dwayne C. Hill	Aye.
Councilmember	Donna M. VanSickell	Aye.

THE RESOLUTION WAS THEREUPON DECLARED DULY ADOPTED.

TOWN OF HARPERSFIELD
NOTICE OF RESOLUTION ADOPTION

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Town Board of the Town of Harpersfield Adopted a Resolution entitled "A Resolution Authorizing the Town of Harpersfield Town Board to Authorize the Lease of Real Property at 797 colonel Harper Road and Issuing a Negative Declaration Pursuant to New York Environmental Quality

Review Act ("SEQRA") at their regular meeting on April 10, 2024. This Resolution is regarding the lease of property owned by the Town of Harpersfield for the installation of communication equipment, including related utilities and appurtenances for Lessee's ("Verizon Wireless") use.

This Resolution was adopted subject to permissive referendum. Said Resolution will not take effect until thirty (30) days after its adoption by the Town Board pursuant to Article 7 of the Town Law of the State of New York.

A copy of said Adopted Resolution is available for inspection at the Town Clerk's Office, 25399 NY-23, Harpersfield, NY 13786 during normal business hours and will be posted on the Town's official website.

BY ORDER OF THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF HARPERSFIELD

DATED: APRIL 10, 2024

HARPERSFIELD, NEW YORK

LINDA GOSS, TOWN CLERK

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is the JCAP grant. This grant is for the Harpersfield court. The funds are to be used to replace the flooring in the Town Justice's office and for a new audio system to help with the recordings. The company that is going to install the new audio system needs half of the payment up front. There is a voucher on the abstract to Sound Solutions for \$3,450.00. The Justice Court has gotten the JCAP grant but the Town will need to add \$686.00 to pay for both projects. The Town Justice Equipment line has \$150.00 that will go toward the \$686.00. A discussion was had. Patrick F. Funk made a motion to pay Sound Solutions ½ of the total costs, \$3,450.00, to install a new audio system for the Justice Court seconded by Donna VanSickell. All voting Aye.

Supervisor Driscoll recognized Laurel (Laurie) Bedford, Town Assessor. Supervisor Driscoll and Ms. Bedford thought it would be a good idea to discuss with the Town Board the issue of taxes and the equalization rate. Ms. Bedford began with there are three types of Assessors. She is a Sole Assessor for the Town of Harpersfield. Part of an Assessor's job is to locate properties and update any changes. The Assessor's also keep a property record card on each parcel in the Town. These property record cards are kept on file here at the Town Hall in the Assessors office. The assessing year or taxable status date runs from March 1st to the last day in February. Coming up is the Tentative Assessment Roll that will be published by May 1st. Then in the month of May there are four open book days. The Assessor is available to the public to discuss their assessment. Each session is four hours long. On the fourth Tuesday in May is Grievance Day. Anyone who would like to grieve their assessment can come in on Grievance Day and submit their complaint to the Board of Assessment Review. Ms. Bedford continued that there are different ways that the Assessor comes up with an assessment. Some properties are income based such as an apartment house. How many apartments there are and what income is generated can determine an assessment. Some properties have exemptions. The exemptions are Veterans, Low Income Senior Citizens and STAR. Ms. Bedford is taking a six-hour class for Agricultural and Farm Building exemptions. The Town of Harpersfield has a number of Agricultural exemptions. The Board of Assessment Review (BAR) can reduce someone's assessment, but they can not reduce it more than what the property owner

has asked for. The BAR cannot raise someone's assessment. The reasons that someone can grieve their assessment are unequal assessments, excessive assessment, illegal assessment or unclassified assessment. What the Assessor cannot do are taxes. The Town Board adopts a budget which determines the taxes. The Final Assessment Roll is published on July 1st. Changes to the Tentative Roll can be made from May into June. If someone is not satisfied with the Board of Assessment Review's decision they can bring their claim to small claims court. On your tax bills you have your taxable assessed value or units multiplied by the tax rate per \$1,000.00 or per unit. Ms. Bedford continued by reading "If the taxable assessed value stays relatively the same and the budget increases then the tax rate increases. If the taxable value increases and the budget stays the same, then the tax rate will go down." Ms. Bedford went on to explain the equalization rate. The State equalization rate equals the sum of the assessed values our local rates and the sum of the full market value that the State thinks your property is worth. The equalization rate is the total assessed value divided by the total market value. The State has come around in 2022 and did some spot checks on some properties. The State also includes the sales of properties which were high in 2022. An equalization rate of 100 means that the municipality is assessing property at 100 percent of the market value. Supervisor Driscoll stated that if her house was assessed for \$100,000.00 and the State said it was \$100,000.00, we would be at 100 percent equalization rate. Right now, we are at \$25,000.00 and the State is at \$100,000.00 which is why our equalization rate is so low. Ms. Bedford agreed. Councilmember Funk asked how does the State come up with their value? Ms. Bedford answered they look at the sales and they come and compare properties. They did a sampling of properties in the Town. They asked Ms. Bedford for her information. Mostly they look at the sales of properties. The reason that the State looks at equalization is for school districts taxes. The Stamford school district is approximately 62% in the Town of Harpersfield. Because every Town Assessor has a different rate, the full market value house that sits here or sits on the other side of the Headwaters of the Delaware River, they need to be taxed equally but they are not necessarily assessed equally. Every property is a little bit different. When the equalization rate is so low there is a wider range as to like houses. For example, if the Town was at 100% equalization rate your assessment would change a little bit if you had a fireplace and someone else did not have a fireplace. The discussion continued. Ms. Bedford went on to say that the Town's equalization rate for this year is 16.8%. Ms. Bedford asked the Board if they would like to spend the money and bring the Town's equalization rate back to 100%? Linda E. Goss added that the equalization rate will not stay at 100%. A year later the equalization rate drops. Ms. Bedford added that the Town would need to do a reevaluation every three years to keep the rate up toward 100%. The Town would also have to hire in a third party to do the reevaluation. Especially this first time there would be a lot of data collection. Ms. Bedford is trying her best to get things entered into the computer. There are a lot of properties where people have built houses in the last five years. It has been updated on the property card but did not get entered into the computer. Ms. Bedford just received the capability of being able to enter the information onto the computer last summer. She is working on it. Supervisor Driscoll asked Ms. Bedford how much would it cost for the Town to do a reevaluation? Ms. Bedford answered that she would have to research that. The discussion continued. Councilmember Reeve asked it is not a good thing for homeowners to get back to a 100% equalization rate is it? Ms. Bedford answered no other than it would show more accuracy. Councilmember Reeve continued that they would be paying more. Ms. Bedford continued no because your tax rate would go down. If your

assessment was at 100%, say your house is worth \$125,000.00, but it is assessed for \$30,000.00, you pay a higher tax rate per 1000 than you would if it was at 100%. You should not have to pay anymore taxes if the budget does not go up. The discussion continued. Councilmember Funk ask Ms. Bedford about the STAR exemption. He has switched over because everyone told him that it was better to go to the STAR exemption where they send you the check back verses the other one. Can you talk about that just a little bit? Ms. Bedford answered that anyone that purchased a property after 2016 must go on the credit check program. You also have the option to go on the credit check program if you have purchased a property before 2016. The negative part is if you are depending on that money to pay your school tax bill and the check gets held up and does not get to you by September 30th when your school tax bill is due you are paying the penalty. The good part is that the State says they will increase that amount a little bit each year. If you stay on the program that reduces your school tax bill that figure is going to stay the same. Councilmember Funk continued that you are better off, like someone in my position, my mortgage company pays my school taxes, so it doesn't matter, I get a bonus check now basically. Ms. Bedford asked Councilmember Funk guess who pays the mortgage company every month? You do. You are getting your own money back. Councilmember Funk continued but I am getting that check and then it goes up every year, so it is better to get on that program than it is to stay on the program that reduces the amount of your school tax bill, and my mortgage company just doesn't pay as much. The discussion continued. Linda E. Goss asked Councilmember Funk what happens when you do not get that check. Councilmember Funk answered nothing. I call them and say where is my check? Ms. Goss continued, and the State says we will get to you. Or they say to you we sent out checks to individuals with last names A through J and we have run out of funds. Supervisor Driscoll asked can they do that to you? Ms. Goss and Ms. Bedford answered yes, they can. Ms. Goss continued she knows a young couple that purchased a house and applied for the STAR credit check program. They have lived in their house for three years and have not received a STAR credit check for any of those three years. They have called and gone online and have gotten nowhere. When you call that number, you can be on the phone for three to four hours trying to get someone to talk to you. The discussion continued.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that she did not have the 2023 final budget reconciliation. The Board agreed to it last month. She just wanted to show the Board that report. Hopefully she will get that in the next day or two and she will email it out to the Board.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is The Mountain Eagle and The Daily Star for the Towns official newspaper. Linda was working on getting an apples-to-apples comparison on the cost. Supervisor Driscoll has a definite concern about The Mountain Eagle being only published once a week and The Daily Star being published five days a week. It gives us more opportunity to be able to get in postings for legal notices for both the Planning Board and the Town Board and meet the windows of time that we need to meet. Notices have to be posted within ten days. It gives us more flexibility to be able to post notices and bids on time and appropriately based off the law. Ms. Goss added that her concern is getting the public hearing notices published with all of the litigation that is going on. The discussion went on. Councilmember Funk added that there are work arounds. What are the savings on the cost? Ms. Goss answered that is a problem. The Daily Star charges \$.20 per word. The Mountain Eagle has a cost per line or inch. Ms. Goss does not know how many words are allowed per line. With the

print size being different between a page on the computer and the newspaper how do you determine the cost of a notice by the inch? Ms. Goss wanted to send the last public hearing notice to the representative from The Mountain Eagle and ask for the cost per word to compare it to The Daily Star. Councilmember Funk continued that he does not have a problem holding off on making a decision. He suggested taking a couple of notices that we have already paid for and sending into the representative from The Mountain Eagle and asking what will be the cost of these three or four things? That way we would know the cost difference between the two newspapers. Councilmember Funk continued that there is a work around about the ten day time period. As was in his email the ten days is what they want, but if you can't make the ten days. Ms. Goss stated that the work around is for a public meeting notice not a public hearing notice they are two different things. The discussion continued. Supervisor Driscoll added that we could save some money but the problem she has is The Mountain Eagle is only published once a week which really limits us as to when we can post things. The discussion continued. The matter was tabled until next month's meeting so more information can be gathered.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that next on the agenda is Heartland payroll. For the hourly employees their time off has been entered and corrected in the software. A discussion was had about signing Russell up to access Heartlands software. Supervisor Driscoll continued that the tablets have been placed in the Highway garage and Transfer Station. The employees are now clocking in on the tablets and on timecards. This way Supervisor Driscoll can make sure that the tablets are working. So far so good.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that the Transfer Station has a new employee. They started last Saturday. Both the Transfer Station employees and Highway employees will be receiving training next Wednesday.

Councilmember Funk informed the Board that he had sent Supervisor Driscoll the information for the Adopt-A-Highway from the State. He had contacted the State by telephone and asked if the State pays for the Adopt-A-Highway signs. The answer was no. In the future if there is a group that wants to Adopt-A-Highway in the Town the State has a list of rules that must be followed. For example, the road must be two miles long and it has to be cleaned four times a year. A young person can help clean the roadsides if a parent or guardian accompanies them.

Councilmember Funk reported to the Board that he has seen in the County Supervisors minutes that they are doing a PILOT program for Junior hunters. Supervisor Driscoll added that will be twelve and thirteen year olds. Councilmember Funk agrees with this program 100%. Everywhere else that they let younger kids go hunting they have nothing but success with the program. It's been long overdue. Supervisor Driscoll informed Councilmember Funk that there is going to be a public hearing to change the age of Junior hunters and then it can be passed by local law.

Russell Hatch informed the Board that the Highway crew has started cleaning the roads. They are also getting ready for the spring work. A discussion was had on surplus equipment.

Linda E. Goss reported to the Board on the March 2024 Tax Collector report. The Town has received penalties in the amount of \$1,207.12 and bank interest in the amount of \$159.55. She has sent the County \$66,388.34 in taxes and \$159.54 in bank interest.

Linda E. Goss reported to the Board on the March 2024 Town Clerk report. The amount the Town has received is \$2,578.10.

The March abstract and vouchers were presented to the Board. Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that on the abstract is the Town's insurance including cyber insurance. That does not include pollution insurance. The insurance company is still working on getting that information to Supervisor Driscoll. The Town's insurance coverage goes from April to April. Supervisor Driscoll continued that there was a bill from Young/Sommers LLC for the legal fees for representing the Town of Harpersfield in setting up Headwaters EMS. The total bill for the three towns was \$22,648.14. The Town of Harpersfield's portion of the bill was \$7,549.38. A discussion was had. Councilmember Funk asked Supervisor Driscoll on the General Abstract, #1132, under Account, it reads Ask Karen what does that mean? Supervisor Driscoll answered that if she is unsure of how to put something in QuickBooks, that is how she asks Bookkeeper Karen Kropp to help her. When Ms. Kropp sees those words on the abstract, she looks it over and finds what account needs to be used. A motion to pay the bills as presented was made by Patrick F. Funk seconded by Dwayne C. Hill. All voting Aye.

Supervisor Driscoll informed the Board that she has spoken to George Haynes from Bloomville Disposal. Mr. Haynes told her that he has less people coming and dumping in the Transfer Station. They used to have a truck come in on Monday. They do not do that anymore. The garbage that we are getting from them is down. Supervisor Driscoll informed Mr. Haynes that the garbage is also down because of the new Transfer Station stickers. Mr. Haynes continued that the County looks at the overall garbage that is taken to Walton. They use that information to give you the cost for the C & D. If your overall garbage is down the cost of C & D might go up. He just wanted Supervisor Driscoll to be aware of this. Supervisor Driscoll will speak to Tyson Robb to check in to this. A discussion was had. Supervisor Driscoll continued that she has received from Mr. Robb a report on how much garbage went to the landfill for 2023. She would like to see what he has for 2024 so far.

The Supervisor report for the month of March was issued to the Board.

The Code Enforcement Officer's report from December 7, 2023 to April 9, 2024 was issued to the Board.

A discussion was had on building maintenance.

A motion at 8:40 PM to adjourn the meeting was made by Patrick F. Funk seconded by Donna M. VanSickell. All voting Aye.

Linda E. Goss

Town Clerk

