



## Minutes

Town of Cairo

Wednesday February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Town Board Meeting @ 7:00pm

Location: Town Hall Meeting Room

### **DRAFT**

The Town Board of the Town of Cairo met for a Town Board Meeting on Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at the Town Hall, Main Street, Cairo, New York. Supervisor Watts called the meeting to order @ 7:00PM and asked the attendees to Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.

Attendance: Supervisor Watts, Council Member Bogins, Council Member Cords, Council Member Powers.

Absent: Council Member Flaherty

#### **New Business:**

- Public Hearing for Local Law #2 of 2023 (Local Law is Below)

#### **TOWN OF CAIRO LOCAL LAW # 2 OF 2023**

#### **A LOCAL LAW OF THE TOWN OF CAIRO PROVIDING REAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND AMBULANCE WORKERS PURSUANT TO SECTION 466-A OF THE REAL PROPERTY TAX LAW**

BE IT ENACTED by the Town Board of the Town of Cairo as follows:

#### **SECTION I. Legislative intent and purpose**

a. The Town of Cairo finds and determines that attracting and retaining quality volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel is one of the most critical problems facing a number of communities in the Town of Cairo and that maintaining effective emergency protection depends on the ability to train and retain volunteers.

b. The Town Board finds and determines that it is essential for the town to provide real property tax exemptions as an incentive to attract new volunteers and help combat a persistent and alarming decline in the number of volunteers serving as active responders to fire and medical emergencies and unless recruits are found to replace retiring volunteers and seasoned members are encouraged to continue their volunteer service, the health and safety of citizens served by the volunteer firefighter and emergency medical personnel corps may be jeopardized.

c. The Town Board further finds and determines that real property tax exemptions are an appropriate way to recognize the personal sacrifices and dedication of these community-spirited men and women who unselfishly give their time and risk their safety to protect their neighbors without compensation.

d. The purpose of this Local Law is to adopt the real property tax exemptions provided for volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel in accordance with Section 466-a of the Real Property Tax Law to read as follows.

Section 1. 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 Cairo shall be exempt from taxation to the extent of 10 percent of the assessed value of such property for county and town purposes, exclusive of special assessments.

Section 2. Qualifications.

Such exemption shall only be granted to an enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance services if:

(a) The applicant resides in the Town of Cairo and is a member of an incorporated volunteer fire company or fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service which provides service within the town or school district.

(b) The real property which is the subject of such exemption is the primary residence of the applicant.

(c) The real 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 this Local Law.

(d) the applicant has obtained and displayed a certificate issued by the authority having jurisdiction for the incorporated volunteer fire company or fire department indicating that the applicant has been an enrolled member of such incorporated volunteer fire company or fire department for at least two years or the applicant has been certified by the authority having jurisdiction for the incorporated voluntary ambulance service as an enrolled member of such incorporated voluntary ambulance service for at least two years.

Section 3. Continuation of eligibility requirements.

The applicant shall maintain continual eligibility for the exemption by being a continuously active member of the incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, fire district, or incorporated voluntary ambulance service. An active member shall meet the requirements for active service as defined by each company, department or corporation. Annual attestation by such company, district or corporation is required to maintain this exemption.

Section 4. Twenty-year active members.

Any enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service who accrues more than twenty years of active service, as defined in Section 3 hereof, 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 ten percent exemption as authorized by this section for the remainder of his or her life as long as his or her primary residence is located within the Town of Cairo.

Section 5. Un-remarried Surviving Spouses of Volunteers killed in the line of duty.

An un-remarried spouse of a volunteer firefighters or volunteer ambulance workers killed in the line of duty may receive the real property tax exemption if:

1. 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 volunteer ambulance service who was killed in the line of duty; and.

2. Such deceased volunteer had been an enrolled member for at least five years; and.

3. Such deceased volunteer had been receiving the exemption prior to his or her death.

Section 6. Un-remarried Surviving Spouses of Volunteers with at least Twenty Years of Service.

An un-remarried spouse of a volunteer firefighters or volunteer ambulance workers with twenty years of service may receive the real property tax exemption if:

1. 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 volunteer ambulance service.
2. Such deceased volunteer had been an enrolled member for at least twenty years.
3. Such deceased volunteer and un-remarried spouse had been receiving the exemption of such property prior to the death of such volunteer.

Section 7. Application process.

1. Applications for such exemption shall be filed with the assessor of the town on or before the taxable status date on a form as prescribed by the New York State Commissioner for the Office of Real Property Tax Services.

2. The assessor of the town shall have the duty and responsibility of procuring and filing a copy of such certification prior to granting the exemption provided for by this Local Law.

Section 8. No diminution of current benefits.

No applicant who is a volunteer firefighter or volunteer ambulance worker who by reason of such status is receiving any benefit under the provisions of law on the effective date of this Local Law shall suffer any diminution of such benefit because of the provisions of this Local Law.

SECTION II. Effective Date.

This local law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State

○ **Open Public Hearing @ 7:01pm**

- Offered by Council Member Bogins and seconded by Supervisor Watts.

*Supervisor Watts – Aye, Council Member Bogins – Aye, Council Member Cords – Aye, Council Member Flaherty – Absent, Council Member Powers – Aye. Motion Carried.*

- Supervisor Watts states that the Board was waiting for the County and whatever they did with this law, they would follow. Since the County has approved it, the Town will most likely adopt this tonight; this would give all volunteer fire fighters and volunteer ambulance a 10% break/exemption on Town taxes after being a volunteer for a minimum of 2 years & can get a lifetime exemption after being a volunteer for 20 years. This does not go up every year and will only be a 10% across the board each year, it is not progressive will not go up 10% each year.
- Billy from the Highway Dept. asks where the 10% is being made up for the multiple people who qualify for this discount.
- Supervisor Watts states that this is to hopefully give more people an incentive to volunteer for these departments since there are not many volunteers and the average age of these volunteer are 55+.
- Council Member Cords states that if the Town did not have enough volunteer firefighters the Town would then have to have a paid squad and that would cost a lot more than just a 10% discount on taxes.
- Round Top Fire has about 35 firemen, Cairo has about 30 firemen; possibly a \$15,000 discount between both fire dept. for just residential properties. Ambulance is not a volunteered dept. so they would not qualify for this. Residents already pay fire taxes, but these taxes are for the up keep and maintenance of the buildings.

- Taxes will not go up due to this. Taxes next year should not go up due to what happen this year; possibly down. The Town has to vote on this and then the school if they plan to do the same for school taxes.
- **Close Public Hearing @ 7:32pm**
  - Offered by Council Member Cords and seconded by Council Member Bogins.  
*Supervisor Watts – Aye, Council Member Bogins – Aye, Council Member Cords – Aye, Council Member Flaherty – Absent, Council Member Powers – Aye. Motion Carried.*
- SOL Source Power Proposal to Option & Lease Town Property – Glenn Land; based out of Troy, New York and Veteran owned.
  - The Process
    - Prospecting, how is a site chosen?
      - Interconnection capacity on substation and feeder
      - Cursory wetland review / Topographic review / Neighbors and screening
      - Deep dive into town bylaws regarding solar
      - Designing array based on town bylaws
        - Setbacks / Size limitation
        - Soils – types of soil samples
    - Connect with Parcel Owner to discuss proposal and cash flow
      - Cash flow forecasts payments over time with the yearly escalation
      - Engage in a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) program with the taxing districts – about 7-8 thousand per site for payment
      - Based on Mega Watts versus acreage
    - From preliminary meeting to project completion
      - Time frame varies; estimate 18 months on average – dependent on wildlife checks, archeological studies, and environmental impacts. All can delay the process dependent on the results.
      - Once process is discussed, and basic terms agreed upon, engage in signing the Letter of Intent
        - LOI is non-binding, it simply starts to process and enables the developer to:
          - Submit the project to the local utility to get in the queue
          - Enable the site developer to start doing further research on the parcel
        - From signing of the LOI it takes about three months for the utility to have the first interconnection scoping call – Central Hudson
        - If said call is favorable, and the other due diligence items are as well, then we can move into signing a lease on the parcel
    - The Lease – first milestone payment (10K)
      - Developer will only lease the portion of the parcel where the array is located
      - Once the lease is signed, the first bonus check is issued to the landowner (in this case, 10K) – decommissioned plan put in place for landowners
      - Basic term is 25 years with four options to extend an additional 5 years. It could go 45 years. – Panels could/would/should also last 45 years; operator would pay for any maintenance, upkeep, repairs and weather related needs, along with any technological updates that may be needed.

- If company did go belly up, they would sell the project out to another company that does the same. SOL is still technically a startup of about 16 months, but the 2 people in charge have about a decade of experience each in this field, along with many references.
- How does the company determine the amount of money it would take to take down the project? This would be calculated after, but possibly around \$250,000, but this money has already been put the side in an escrow. The company has other projects like this. When breakdown happens there is no hazardous waste leftover, nor are they hazardous if they break or crack.
- Any money made from this deal is to go into a general fund in hopes to lower the taxes or stop them from going up to much. The locals are the first to try this out and sign up for it, a 10% discount for these people, while also selling the power back to Central Hudson.
- SOL gets there money through a bank called SunWell out of Boston. The annual lease payment to the Town has an annual escalator of 2% with \$6,000 per MW payment on 18 acres.
- Any work that needs to be done they would like to look for local businesses and create for jobs.
- Survey of land / Wetlands Delineation / Natural Heritage
  - There will still be a large amount of land that will still be vacant, but the project is using a good amount of land. The whole dump is about 34-35 acres and the project is limited to 50% of the land.
- Engineering
  - Exact size and capacity of array
  - Exact equipment detailed
  - Location of access road
  - Screening / Perimeter fence – 8 foot wildlife fence; there really shouldn't be too much of a visual of this, dependent on how close you are.
- Once we have the above, we then will go through the Special Use Permit process with the Town
- Once permitting is approved with town and county, construction can begin
- At construction, the second bonus payment is made to landowner
- Once array is interconnected, that established the “anniversary date” which will trigger the yearly rental payment
  - The Proposal for Town to consider
  - Discussion on current solar capacity in Town
  - Reference and Examples of Projects
- When this company leases property they have actually been paying more compared to other companies due to supply and demand
- This is the only deal at the moment between this company and the Town
- Council Member Powers would like a comparison sheet of possible rates from other companies compared to SOL, just want to actually see how competitive they really are
  - There was also mention if SOL cannot not do this, what is stopping a board member from calling asking these companies for rates

- No restriction for firearms, if there was damaged caused by them by any chance
- State and federal incentives would go to the company and factors into NYSERDA and how much they pay per kilowatt
- They pay taxes on the property on top of the lease payment
- If the Town wanted to reenroll or continue after the 25 or the 45 years could they do that? SOL states that someone or another company would most likely be interested in doing if the current company walked away after the current lease was up, would have to get more info.
- If SOL walked away before the lease was up, they would sell the lease to another company for the Town to finish it out and everything would stay that same, rights and all. Lease is for the Town for their protection of payments and other details.

**Correspondence:**

- Notice or Retirement – Roderick Stanfield
  - ‘I, Roderick Stanfield, am informing you that as of March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, I am retiring from the Town of Cairo Ambulance after 25 years of service to the Town of Cairo residents. I have a total of 46 years working in EMS in various capacities. It is time to retire and no I won’t miss it, some calls still give me nightmares. It has truly been a pleasure to work here. Thank You.’

**Resolution No. 2023-068 “Cancel Town Workshop Meeting for March”**

Offered by Supervisor Watts and seconded by Council Member Cords.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Cairo Town Workshop Meeting scheduled to be held on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 shall be cancelled.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Town Board hereby approves the cancellation of the March 15<sup>th</sup> Workshop meeting.

*Supervisor Watts – Aye, Council Member Bogins – Aye, Council Member Cords – Aye, Council Member Flaherty – Absent, Council Member Powers – Aye. Motion Carried.*

**Resolution No. 2023-069 “Approve the Adoption of Local Law #2 of 2023, Providing Real Property Tax Exemptions for Volunteer Firefighters and Ambulance Workers”**

Offered by Council Member Cords and seconded by Council Member Bogins.

**WHEREAS**, the Town Board of the Town of Cairo, County of Greene hereby enacts a new Local Law #2 of 2023 pursuant to section 466-A of the Real Property Tax Law.

**WHEREAS**, it is the intent of this local law to provide real property tax exemptions for volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers pursuant to section 466-A of the Real Property Tax Law.

**WHEREAS**, that on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 7:00pm, at the Cairo Town Hall, the Town Board held a Public Hearing. Therefore;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, the Town Board of the Town of Cairo approves to adopt Local Law #2 of 2023 providing Real Property Tax Exemptions for volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers residing in the Town of Cairo per the guidelines set forth in the Local Law.

*Supervisor Watts – Abstain, Council Member Bogins – Aye, Council Member Cords – Aye, Council Member Flaherty – Absent, Council Member Powers – Aye. Motion Carried.*

**Resolution No. 2023-070 “Approval of Naming Private Road”**

Offered by Council Member Powers and seconded by Supervisor Watts.

**WHEREAS**, a road naming application has been submitted for a private road off of Bailey Road on parcel IDs #99.00-2-59 and 2 surrounding lots, and

**WHEREAS**, road name is requested in order to obtain 911 signs for the development as required by state law. Therefore;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Town Board of the Town of Cairo does hereby approve the name Demarest Ridge Road as the name for the private road located at parcel #99.00-2-59 and 2 surrounding lots so 911 signs may be obtained.

*Supervisor Watts – Aye, Council Member Bogins – Aye, Council Member Cords – Aye, Council Member Flaherty – Absent, Council Member Powers – Aye. Motion Carried.*

**Resolution No. 2023-071 “Hiring Full Time Highway Laborer”**

Offered by Supervisor Watts and seconded by Council Member Powers.

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Cairo Highway Department has a vacancy and is in need of a Laborer.

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Cairo Highway Department has hired Michael Risch at an hourly rate of \$19.35 per hour effective February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Michael Risch has a class B CDL Air Brake license. Therefore;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that Cairo Town Board does hereby approve the hiring of Michael Risch.

*Supervisor Watts – Aye, Council Member Bogins – Aye, Council Member Cords – Aye, Council Member Flaherty – Absent, Council Member Powers – Aye. Motion Carried.*

**Resolution No. 2023-072 “Authorize Use of Route 32 Building”**

Offered by Supervisor Watts and seconded by Council Member Cords.

**WHEREAS**, the Friends of the Cairo Library have requested use of the Cairo Route 32 building for a Nickel Social to benefit the Town of Cairo Library.

**WHEREAS**, the event would be held on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The Friends of the Cairo Library are requesting use of the Route 32 building on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 for set up purposes as well. Therefore;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, the Town Board does hereby authorize the request for the use of the Route 32 building on April 28-29, 2023 for a nickel social to benefit the Town of Cairo Library.

*Supervisor Watts – Aye, Council Member Bogins – Aye, Council Member Cords – Aye, Council Member Flaherty – Absent, Council Member Powers – Aye. Motion Carried.*

**Resolution No. 2023-073 “Approve Hiring Part Time Highway Laborer”**

Offered by Council Member Bogins and seconded by Council Member Cords.

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Cairo Highway Department has a vacancy and is in need of a Laborer.

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Cairo Highway Department has hired Matthew Beatty at an hourly rate of \$18.11 per hour effective February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Therefore;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that Cairo Town Board does hereby approve the hiring of Matthew Beatty effective immediately.

*Supervisor Watts – Aye, Council Member Bogins – Aye, Council Member Cords – Aye, Council Member Flaherty – Absent, Council Member Powers – Aye. Motion Carried.*

**Resolution No. 2023-074 “Approve Pay Rate Increase for Part Time Highway Employee”**

Offered by Council Member Bogins and seconded by Supervisor Watts.

**WHEREAS**, the Highway Superintendent, recognizes that in order to recruit and retain part time employees, both new hires and existing employees, need to be distinguished by experience/credential and paid a fair and equitable pay rate.

**WHEREAS**, the highway Superintendent will differentiate pay rates from \$17.00- \$22.00 according to employee skills (equipment operation, CDL, mechanic, welding, carpentry, etc.). Therefore;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, the Cairo Town Board approves the pay rate increase for Walter Harasemovech effective February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to a pay rate of \$18.11 per hour.

*Supervisor Watts – Aye, Council Member Bogins – Aye, Council Member Cords – Aye, Council Member Flaherty – Absent, Council Member Powers – Aye. Motion Carried.*

**Resolution No. 2023-075 “Accept Water Penalties”**

Offered by Council Member Cords and seconded by Council Member Bogins.

**WHEREAS**, it is necessary for the Water Penalties be authorized by the Town Board and documented in the minutes; Therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Town Board does hereby accept the Water Penalties from the Water Administrator in the amount of \$1,223.46 dated February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

*Supervisor Watts – Aye, Council Member Bogins – Aye, Council Member Cords – Aye, Council Member Flaherty – Absent, Council Member Powers – Aye. Motion Carried.*

**Resolution No. 2023-076 “Authorize Supervisor to Accept/Sign Agreement with Kaaterskill Associates to Renovate the Senior Center/Ambulance Building”**

Offered by Council Member Cords and seconded by Council Member Bogins.

**WHEREAS**, there is a need to hire an Engineering Firm for consulting services related to the conversion of an existing building into a Senior Center and Ambulance Service building

**WHEREAS**, Kaaterskill Associates has provided the Town of Cairo with an agreement of Project Descriptions, Scope of Services, Fees and Special Conditions.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, the Cairo Town Board does hereby authorize the Supervisor to sign the agreement proposed by Kaaterskill Associates to proceed with the renovations to the Senior Center and Ambulance Service Building not to exceed \$60,000.00.

*Supervisor Watts – Abstain, Council Member Bogins – Aye, Council Member Cords – Aye, Council Member Flaherty – Absent, Council Member Powers – Abstain. Motion Defeated.*

\*\*After Council Member Powers and Supervisor Watts discussed their thoughts about the above resolution they then agreed to hear from Barton & Loguidice what their plans are and to explain themselves at the next meeting and then the Town will then decide who they would like to use for the Senior Center/Ambulance Building.

**Public Comment:**

- Supervisor Watts addresses how the Bank of Greene County gave the Town of Cairo a 5 million dollar low interest loan that is reserved for property from Stewarts all the way to Toads and some of Jerome Avenue for anybody who falls within these parameter to help them with updates and renovations of buildings and homes and businesses.
- Marc Gorelic addresses the recycling center and compliments it along with another lady that mentioned that she knew the first person that used it.
- Supervisor Watts mentions that he noticed 5 cent returnable at the recycling center and what the Town can do with that if people don't want their money back. Also mentioned that Council Member Flaherty donated security cameras for the recycling center; they are now up and running.
- Council Member Cords mentioned that the notice for the recycling center does not mention that glass is accepted.



**Adjourn Town Board Meeting @ 9:11PM**

Offered by Supervisor Watts and seconded by Council Member Cords.

*Supervisor Watts – Aye, Council Member Bogins – Aye, Council Member Cords – Aye, Council Member Flaherty – Absent, Council Member Powers – Aye. Motion Carried.*

Respectfully Submitted

Kayla L. McAlister  
Cairo Town Clerk