

**Town Board Meeting**

**December 18, 2023**

**5:30 p.m.**

**Zoom:** Meeting Id: 838 9125 9425 Passcode: 668744

On a motion of Councilor Alexander, seconded by Councilor Legg and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board the meeting was adjourned to attorney advice at 5:30 p.m.

On a motion of Councilor Alexander, seconded by Councilor Dove and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board the meeting returned to open session at 6:25 p.m.

**Present:** Supervisor Aaron, Councilor Alexander, Councilor Tucker, Councilor Legg, Councilor Dove, Attorney Smith.

**Also, Present (via Zoom):** Brian Buff, Karen Barkdull, Jason Gabak (Skaneateles Press), Robert Herrmann, Miranda Robinson, Lori Milne, Paula Powell, Aimie Case.

**Also, Present (In Person):** Keri Fey, Sue Murphy, Karen Barkdull, Dessa Bergan, Patrick Scott, Finn Tate .

Supervisor Aaron thanked everyone for her retirement party. She also thanked the Parks Department for the use of the Austin Pavilion for the Town employee Christmas luncheon. The pavilion was a great location and thanked the Parks Department and all the employees that attended.

**Boy Scout Conservation Area Project Presentation:** Councilor Alexander introduced Scouts Patrick Scott and Finn Tate.

Councilor Alexander stated the bridge at the Conservation Area was originally done as an Eagle Scout project a few years ago. It was called the “ Troop 61 Bridge”. Finn Tate and Patrick Scott worked with boy scout troop 61 to repair this bridge and add an observation deck at the Town of Skaneateles Conservation Area for their Eagle Scout project.

Patrick and Finn reviewed their project and showed pictures of the bridge and observation deck. They stated the bridge was over the water in one section of the project and they worked with one of the Scout parents that helped them with the structure of the bridge over the section of water. This father also helped with the design throughout the project.

Councilor Alexander stated parents, members of the conservation committee and other scouts helped with this project but, Finn and Patrick were in charge and did a great job.

The Board thanked Finn Tate and Patrick Scott for all their work.

**Conservation Area Updates:** Councilor Alexander reported on the new steps that were installed at Guppy Falls. She reviewed the different options the committee had considered for this area. And stated they had decided on the aluminum stairs that were driven into the ground to go up the hill. The aluminum would withstand the weather and was the safest and most cost- effective solution. There are treads on the steps that would drain the snow and rain. The wood was not sustainable and rather slippery. These aluminum steps and decking are used on the lake for docks and steps. There is a handrail for safety.

The committee will continue to make upgrades in the spring, including a new railing in this section of trail at Guppy Falls.

Councilor Alexander stated the conservation committee decided on the aluminum steps rather than wood due to the sustainability and safety of the material. The aluminum will last many years.

**Town Wide Sign Update:** Councilor Alexander reported the new signs were installed at the Transfer Station, Austin Park and at the Mandana Parking Lot. She displayed pictures of the new signs.

Councilor Alexander stated they had worked with Chase Design & Fast Signs. She displayed the Austin Park entrance sign, the Mandana Boat Launch Parking sign and the sign at the entrance to the Transfer Station. This is the first round of signs. There would be new signs installed at other Town of Skaneateles locations. These signs are graffiti and weatherproof and should last for many years to come.

**Minutes of December 4, 2023:** On a motion of Councilor Legg, seconded by Councilor Tucker and with a (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board, the minutes of December 4, 2023, were accepted as presented.

**Budget Amendments:** On a motion of Councilor Dove, seconded by Councilor Alexander, and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board the following budget amendments for abstract #23-22:

<b><u>General Fund</u></b>			
\$20.00	Increase	11104.01.004.00	Justices CE
\$20.00	Decrease	11101.01.001.00	Justices PS
CE Cleanup			
\$402.00	Increase	13304.01.004.00	Tax Collector CE
\$402.00	Decrease	13404.01.004.00	Budget CE
CE Cleanup			
\$3,500.00	Increase	14401.01.001.00	Engineer PS
\$3,500.00	Decrease	19904.01.004.00	Contingency Acct
CE Cleanup			

\$42,000.00	Increase	14404.01.004.00	Engineer CE
\$42,000.00	Decrease	19904.01.004.00	Contingency Acct
CE Cleanup			
\$1,500.00	Increase	14504.01.004.00	Election CE
\$1,500.00	Decrease	19904.01.004.00	Contingency Acct
Special Election			
\$150.00	Increase	16804.01.004.00	Central Data Processing
CE			
\$150.00	Decrease	31201.01.001.00	Constable PS
CE Cleanup			
\$3,500.00	Increase	19104.01.004.00	Unallocated Insurance
\$3,500.00	Decrease	90508.01.008.00	Unemployment
Insurance			
CE Cleanup			
\$1,200.00	Increase	35104.01.004.00	Animal Control CE
\$1,200.00	Decrease	31201.01.001.00	Constable PS
CE Cleanup			
\$345.00	Increase	50104.01.004.00	HWY Supt CE
\$345.00	Decrease	13404.01.004.00	Budget CE
CE Cleanup			
\$6,000.00	Increase	51321.01.001.00	Garage PS
\$6,000.00	Decrease	71401.01.001.00	Winter Rec PS
CE Cleanup			
\$1,300.00	Increase	51824.01.004.00	Street Lighting CE
\$1,300.00	Decrease	71404.01.004.00	Winter Rec CE
CE Cleanup			

**Highway Town Wide**

\$23,000.00	Increase	51304.03.004.00	Machinery CE
\$23,000.00	Decrease	51421.03.001.00	Snow Removal PS
CE Cleanup			
\$300.00	Increase	90458.03.008.00	Life Insurance
\$300.00	Decrease	90608.03.008.00	Medical Insurance
CE Cleanup			
\$30.00	Increase	90558.03.008.00	Disability Insurance

\$30.00	Decrease	90608.03.008.00	Medical Insurance
CE Cleanup			
<b><u>Highway Part Town</u></b>			

\$650.00	Increase	90308.04.008.00	Social Security
\$650.00	Decrease	90608.04.008.00	Medical Insurance
CE Cleanup			

**Water**

\$11,000.00	Increase	83104.08.004.00	Water CE
\$11,000.00	Decrease	90608.08.008.00	Medical Insurance
CE Cleanup			

**Abstract #23-22: Councilor** Alexander asked if the invoice for the installation of the stairs at Guppy Falls was entered in abstract #23-22. Supervisor Aaron stated no, but the Board could amend the abstract to add the invoice, the Board agreed.

On a motion of Councilor Alexander, seconded by Councilor Tucker and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board vouchers #23-1547 - #23-1644 were authorized from the following funds and the abstract was amended to add invoice #23-1643 from Allied Enterprises for the amount of \$7,950.

General:	\$ 51,168.50	Highway:	\$ 7,730.49
Part Town:	\$ 4,785.52	Water:	\$ 31,413.11
Hwy Part Tw	\$ 2,737.65	T&A	\$ 21,476.94
Sewer:	\$ 714.39		

Total: \$119,426.60

**Tax Collector Election Results:** Supervisor Aaron and the Board gave the following statement:

“The Skaneateles Town Board appreciates the residents taking the time to vote at our special election on December 13<sup>th</sup> where, by a large margin, residents voted to eliminate the Tax Collector position and transfer those duties to the Town Clerk. Since 1994, Lori Milne has been our Tax Collector providing excellent service to our residents. This year, Lori decided to run for Town Board. She will assume the elected Town Councilor position on January 1, 2024. With the support of Lori and Julie Stenger, Town Clerk, the Town Board voted to transfer the Tax Collector duties to the Town Clerk’s Office. Our decision required that the Board hold a mandatory referendum. The consolidation of these two departments not only will save tax dollars, but it will allow more hours that residents can pay taxes in person. The Town Clerk will begin collecting your 2024 Town and County Taxes on December 27, 2023, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.”

Supervisor Aaron stated the Tax Collection would now transition to the Town Clerk’s office starting with the 2024 Town and County property tax.

**Water Reserve Fund Transfer - \$35,000 for purchase of a Water Department Vehicle:** Supervisor Aaron stated the water department is in need of another truck and had requested the Town Board approve the transfer of \$35,000 from the Water Department Reserve Fund.

On a motion of Councilor Dove, seconded by Councilor Legg and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board, the Clerk was instructed to advertise to transfer from the following fund subject to the permissive referendum requirements of Town Law: water reserve fund not to exceed \$35,000 for the purchase of a truck.

**Schedule Town Board Special Meeting December 18, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.:** On a motion of Councilor Alexander, seconded by Councilor Legg and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board, the Town Board scheduled a special meeting for December 18, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.

**Announcements/Correspondence/Updates**

▪ *Town Departments Holiday Hours:* Supervisor Aaron announced the following Holiday department hours:

**Town of Skaneateles Department Holiday Hours**

December 25, 2023 – Christmas                                      All Departments Closed  
Transfer Station Open December 23<sup>rd</sup> and December 26<sup>th</sup> normal hours

January 1, 2024 – New Years    All Department Closed  
Transfer Station Open December 30<sup>th</sup> and January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

- *2024 Transfer Station Permits now available at the Town Hall*
- *Reminder for all Rental properties to register with the Town Clerk before Jan.1st 2024.*

**Public Comment:** Dessa Bergan thanked Janet Aaron for her years of service to the Town.

**Town Board Presentation in Honor of Supervisor Janet Aaron:** Councilor Alexander stated the Town Board honored Supervisor Aaron as she headed into retirement from her 35-year career in local government.

Councilor Alexander and the Board thanked Janet for all she had done as a Town Clerk and as the Town of Skaneateles Supervisor. She stated Janet had been her mentor and an inspiration to many. She showed kindness and compassion for our Town and our residents, and the Town will be forever grateful.

Councilor Tucker stated Supervisor Aaron had been the driving force to accomplish many things and he thanked her for all her years of service.

Councilor Dove thanked Janet Aaron for her years of service. She stated, Janet had dealt with some tough issues and never “kicked the can down the road” . She works with great integrity, and it had been an honor to work with her.

Councilor Legg thanked Janet Aaron for all she done for the Town in her roles. Janet had been a babysitter for himself and the other Legg children many years ago. Babysitter Janet Evans survived the 7 Legg children! Councilor Legg stated he only agreed to run for Town Supervisor with Janet's encouragement.

Attorney Smith stated he had worked with the Town Boards, Cities and Counties and had never met a public servant that was better prepared and suited to do the job than Janet Aaron.

Councilor Alexander presented the following proclamation to Supervisor Aaron:

### **Town of Skaneateles Proclamation**

- Whereas:** Janet Aaron is the 4th generation of the Evans family to be born and raised in Skaneateles.
- Where as:** Janet Aaron was hired as a part-time Clerk for the Village of Skaneateles in 1983. In 1988 she was hired by Juanita Newell, as Deputy Town Clerk. Juanita retired in 1994 and Janet was elected as Town Clerk.
- Where as:** Janet Aaron, Town Clerk brought new technology upgrades to the Town Clerk's office and to all of the Town Hall. Over the years she was successful in obtaining \$59,000 in grants that provided financial support for organizing records into electronic format.
- Where as:** In 2017 Janet Aaron ran a successful campaign and was elected by an overwhelming margin of votes to become the 19<sup>th</sup> Town of Skaneateles Town Supervisor.
- Where as:** Supervisor Janet Aaron completed the building of the new Sims Building at Austin Park.
- Where as:** Supervisor Janet Aaron established a Municipal Watershed Partnership bringing all government agencies including all municipalities on the Lake together to work together for the benefit of the lake. From this group a website was developed called [skanlakeinfo.org](http://skanlakeinfo.org) that encompasses the collaboration of information that all communities can refer to.
- Where as:** Supervisor Janet Aaron with the Town Board, our State Senator and the Village of Skaneateles was successful in obtaining joint legislation to allow our municipalities to have zoning authority on Skaneateles Lake.
- Where as:** Supervisor Janet Aaron was successful in obtaining the largest grant the Town of Skaneateles had ever received for \$4.4 Million for the Town of Skaneateles Water District.
- Where as:** Supervisor Janet Arron always acted with respect and dedication with the Skaneateles Town Board and the Skaneateles Community.

**Where as:** Town Clerk Janet Aaron and Town Supervisor Janet Aaron always worked hand - in hand with all Town of Skaneateles employees consulting with them and giving words of advice when necessary.

**Where as:** Town Clerk and Town Supervisor Janet Aaron during her 40-year career with the Town of Skaneateles worked effectively with 7 Supervisors, 26 Town Councilors and 7 Town Attorneys.

**Be it Resolved,** on this the last meeting of the Skaneateles Town Board with Supervisor Aaron as Town Supervisor, that the Skaneateles Town Board hereby gratefully recognizes the outstanding accomplishments that Supervisor Aaron has made during her 30 years as Town Clerk and her 6 years as Town Supervisor and do hereby present her with this Proclamation on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of December 2023.

Supervisor Aaron thanked the Board and read the following statement:

*“First, I want to thank everyone for a wonderful Retirement Party. It was very emotional, and very overwhelming and I am still recovering from all the recognition. Thank you all.*

*I have been so truly fortunate to have had the opportunity to work for 40 years in my community with our local government, beginning in 1983 with Sally Sheehan hiring me in the Village, and in 1988 moving to the Town when Johnnie Newell offered me a position as her Deputy Town Clerk. In 1988 the Town government was only on the first floor of this building. The Historical Society occupied the second floor, and the restored Creamery became their permanent home in 1992. In 1988 Charlie Major was Supervisor, Jack Bryant, attorney, we had three elected assessors, Bob Brown, Dave Sheppard and Cathy Dove; John Manilla; Codes Enforcement; Marion Lear, Tax Collector/Clerk to Assessors; Peg Brown, Bookkeeper; Russ Masters Highway Superintendent; Ron Patrick, Water Superintendent; and of course, Johnnie Newell, Town Clerk.*

*I have had the pleasure of working with 7 attorneys, 7 Town Supervisors, and 26 Board Members. Every Town Board faces challenges and over the years some have stood out as memorable.*

*I cannot even imagine all the Town Board went through in finding a location for a landfill, aka, the dump, then adding an incinerator and finally having to cap the landfill and changing the operation to a transfer station? Still often referred to as the dump, this department has gone through so many changes and challenges to be the efficient operation it is today.*

*Over 30 years later, the Roger Scott challenge is still being talked about. On December 3, 1991, after 7 years of court battles Roger Scott’s house was torn down under court order; In January 1994 I had to testify before a jury where Roger representing himself was being charged with forging two bid documents for the demolition of his home. I had been the one to issue the bid packets. He was found guilty of a felony and lost his right to practice law in NYS. \*an interesting side note on those six years prior to this on December 2, 1985, Roger Scott appeared before the Town Board asking if they would be interested in selling the town landfill to him and have Joseph Brillo operate it. That request was tabled, it looks like, forever;*

*When Allan Storch wanted to build a shopping center on the east side of the Village, the Citizens to Protect the Character of Skaneateles, CPCS was formed, and is still active today. They fought*

*hard against this project that was eventually denied. From this began years of working with Joel Russell to develop a comprehensive plan along with completely restructuring our zoning ordinance. Both were adopted in 1996. Zoning and Comprehensive updates have continued to take a significant amount of time over the years for the Town Board and the Planning and Zoning Boards to review and consider.*

*In 1996 An organized group known as Citizens to Save Sandy Beach submitted over 1,000 signatures to urge the Town Board to purchase Sandy Beach for public access to the lake. The group secured over \$800,000 in a matching grant, but the Town was outbid, and the property was sold to the Country Club and Robert Congel.*

*In 1997 the Town Board worked jointly with the School District to locate their bus garage and our highway department to property that was housing Lakeside Printing Company. Everything is contentious to begin with, but like so many things, this one ended in something that has been a very successful partnership.*

*In 2007 the Town and Village agreed to jointly own and build a new Fire Department. It required special legislation for joint ownership and three special referendum elections for our residents to agree on the amount being bonded to build it. In 2010 another hard and controversial decision was made. With an Onondaga County 911 Center in place, the Town and Village jointly agreed to close our Dispatch Center to eliminate duplicate services and to save tax dollars.*

*In 1999, informational meetings were packed with residents opposed to building the Community Center. Now, everyone wonders what we would do without it. In trying to make improvements to Austin Pavilion, I often reflect on the challenges the Community Center faced. In 2000 the Center was built and almost totally funded by the generous support of the Allyn Family with some additional community donations. The Town ran the center for 10 years and I have to admit that it was hard. Sue Murphy was office manager, and the Center became her 2<sup>nd</sup> home, sometimes her first home for those 10 years, and I know in the Town Clerk's Office, Julie and I had our workload tripled processing all the employees, vouchers, meetings, and all the operational needs. The Town Board had a lot to oversee with this added responsibility, both running and ending our operation of the Community Center. Looking back, I have to say that we did an incredible job running this large facility along with the operation of all our other departments.*

*In 1994 Johnnie retired and I was appointed and subsequently elected 6 times as Town Clerk. I was very lucky at this time that Jim Murphy was appointed Town Attorney. Jim, set up his law office in the Skaneateles and provided guidance and support in my new position as Town Clerk that has helped me throughout my career. I am forever grateful for his support and friendship.*

*In 2017, I was elected Town Supervisor. It has been the greatest honor of my life to hold these two elected positions and to have the trust and faith of our residents that I could do the job. I am so very proud of our many accomplishments. It takes a team working together to get things done. And the team of elected and non-elected officials and staff do just that. I thank you all for the support you have shown me and the many times you have answered my many questions, guided me, and educated me, for the decisions we had to make. I am so impressed with our staff, who go above and beyond what we ask and are incredibly patient and respectful when working with our constituents. I cannot thank them enough for all that they do.*



*For this Board, it would have been so easy to just kick the can down the road to another Board for so many of the hard things we tackled. But not this Board. Oh no, it was their work and that of our department heads, elected officials, our attorneys, engineers, and our staff that allowed us to achieve so much. I cannot even begin to thank every single one of you for all the work you do for the community we live in and making sure that our residents are provided the best services and support from their Town Government. It's a team effort, and it makes me proud to have been part of it all.*

*While there are so many people over the years to thank, I want to highlight one. Julie Stenger. Julie and I have worked together for 27 years. She has been my rock and my friend. She has been with me through the toughest times of my life, and the best times, taking on extra work when I couldn't or as needed. I cannot even imagine my daily routine not starting with a stop at her office to check in for the day. Thank you, Julie.*

*Over the years I have developed close friendships with so many of you. Our friendship won't end but, I will definitely miss working with you. Know that I will always be there cheering you all on from the sidelines.*

*I will end with a quote that I think is appropriate for the Town Board and for many who work for the Town. I am sure you know it well.*

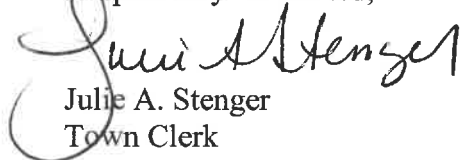
*It is a quote from Franklin D. Roosevelt entitled, the Man in the Ring, that I think in today's world should be The Men and Women in the Ring.....*

*It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."*

*Thank you.....every single one of you... who, everyday are the men and women "in the ring".*

On a motion of Councilor Dove, seconded by Councilor Alexander and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Julie A. Stenger  
Town Clerk

Town Board 12.18.2023