

State of New York
County of Fulton
Town of Caroga

Minutes of a Caroga Town Board work session held Wednesday May 27, 2015, at the municipal building located at 1840 State Highway #10 at 7:00 pm with the following persons in attendance by Roll Call:

Supervisor Ralph Ottuso - Here
Council Member Robert Sullivan - Here
Council Member Greta Frasier – Absent
Council Member Anthony Sturchio - Here
Council Member John Glenn – arrived at 7:02 pm

Other town department representatives in attendance were Steve Putman, Highway Superintendent; Planning Board Members – Karl Ziemann, Scott Horton, Jim Selmser, Shirley Holliday, and Donald Travis – Building maintenance. There were approximately 40 people in attendance.

The meeting this evening is to talk with Ben Syden of Laberge Group. He thanked everyone for coming out tonight. He has never had this many people come out for a grant workshop before. He reached out to the town a few months ago about a CFA Consolidated Funding Application. Four years ago the governor thought it was a better way to do grants in New York State. All of the Community Development Programs were put in to one funding application it would be easier for communities to access the resources. It is an annual competition in 10 regions. Each region was pitted against each other. He challenged each region to come up with a regional strategic plan and further challenged each town to craft their own plan to come up with a regional vision. The application is due July 31st. An application would be developed on line. Once it is in it goes to two places. Our project is reviewed against other projects in the Mohawk Valley Region – and up to 20 points are awarded. In addition state agencies will review the application and award up to 80 points. Together you get a ranking.

He reached out because of Sherman's Park – there is a particular grant called the Environmental Protection Fund Grant. We are eligible to receive up to \$350, 000.00 normally there is a 50% match. There is a rule that if you are donated property the appraised value could be your match for one year. This could be used for the Hamlet 3 Plan to put in a beach, and improve the restrooms. He noted towns are limited for funds because of the 2% tax cap. So you get one year to use the value of the property as your match. “The town has one shot and one shot only for a free grant.” We have one shot to apply. We have to develop a plan as to what you want to do with the property phase 1, 2, and 3. One of the stipulations that if it is funded the land becomes parkland. “Which is what the intent is anyway.” You want to make a beachfront you want to make the improvements.

Who is Laberge group? Mr. Syden explained -they are a municipal consulting company. They have been around since 1964. They began as a civil engineering company primarily water and sewer and grew to a full service municipal consulting company.

For the past 16 years Mr. Syden was the director of Planning and Community Development. His job was to help communities figure out what they wanted to be in the future and help get there. He noted that last year through consolidated funding applications he wrote 11 of 14 awarded. His job is to shape our project like play doh. His job is to take the Sherman's project and understand exactly what we want to do with it and then shape it the way they want to see the project. They want to see it as a regional economic development project – a potential for tourism and jobs, a better quality of life and access to the waterfront. He has to mold the project to what the regional office wants to see. This year they are funding lots of various projects.

He spoke about the Main Street New York Program, to upgrade the storefronts and the second stories and the downtown anchor which is the focus of your downtown, has a 25% match. Or there are technical assistant grants. He noted there are sewer grants but that nothing is free. He noted the need for preliminary surveys. The State Revolving Loan funding is 80% funded with 20% in kind. There is 2 million set aside for this year. He does not know what there will be next year. Work would need to be done with various state agencies.

Council Member Glenn discussed the Smart Waters Program going on in the county. This is to help bring water and sewer to new business coming into the area.

Supervisor Ottuso noted where we would need sewers is in the cluster areas in the avenues. You need an engineer to decide the centralized areas and the options available to you. They provide the cost estimates and the funding streams so you can move forward. The drinking water/clean water program creates an intended use plan. Year by year they provide low interest or zero interest or hardship grant based on income. To get on that you have to have consent orders etc. For the last two years they have had two million dollars. Mr. Syden thought if there was an opportunity to apply for a matching \$30,000.00 grant in kind that it was a strong prospect.

The term in kind was described. It means your committee, town force, town board are the ones that are working on a project that goes toward the actual project. He has a whole list of what can be used for in kind services back at the office so you don't have to pay cash. Supervisor Ottuso noted that was similar to the boat washing stations we are getting because we spent so much money on the Invasive Species Program and Lake Steward Program. Mr. Syden noted it is creative finance. It was noted that some grants require cash match – plain and simple, like a community development block grant technical assistance grant engineering study 95% is funded by the state but 5% is cash.

He is not here to push the town on a grant – he apologized for pushing the Town Clerk with his phone calls, but he didn't want the town to waste an opportunity because we did not know about it. Supervisor Ottuso noted we are in a window of a year to use the donation toward the money that is available.

Mr. Syden will clarify by reviewing the rules just how much money is available. He also noted that the town is part of the MV500 and they are looking for regional project priorities. Supervisor Ottuso spoke to Jim Mraz today they are giving 3 regions 500 million dollars. "We developed a team, the MV500 and they are getting everything together and like Sherman's is part of that." "All the other towns we are getting all their stuff together and putting it in there so when it is

presented we have everything in place so it is ready to go when they decide to dole out that type of money.” Mr. Syden noted the challenge with this is that it is a 5 to 1 match requirement on the Upstate Revitalization Initiative. He is not sure how our region is doing that. He stated the town may be eligible for the waterfront fund. He noted you have to look at your property rate, using census, and the zip code. If the rate is over 10% you would only pay 25% match instead of 50%. Mr. Syden stated he would ask the DPW to help out with some in kind.

Supervisor Ottuso asked where do we go from here. It is obviously something that we are looking; we want to get involved in. Mr. Syden stated if they are selected to work with the town then they would start on the application. There would be a project meeting with our group project team identify project, create the budget, write the narrative, create the support, do the short form SEQR for the application, not for the actual project. He is not a fan of doing SEQR on a plan that may never happen. They draft letters of support from the people to support the project along with a letter from the board requesting that support. They would draft the resolutions that need to be made as part of it, take photographs and create the passage. It used to be a three ring binder application now it is all online. It is due by July 31st. The Clean Waters Revolving Loan engineering Grant is done the same way basically. They like to get applications in by July 29th. Computer systems are not infallible.

The cost to the town for Mr. Syden’s fee is \$3,500.00 usually he gets \$5,400.00. It is a project he believes in. The other project would cost \$2,500.00 for the \$30,000.00.

Since the year 2000 Labarge has secured 135 million. Last year they were awarded 11 of the 14 grants they wrote. He reviewed the projects he got funding for.

Supervisor Ottuso asked if you could do anything you want with the grant money. Mr. Syden noted as long as it is on the project. Usually there is a 5 – 10% cap on administration fees. You have to show boundaries on a survey in yellow, they require a deed, title and liber paid to show ownership or conveyance. You have to have the appraisal. We would be doing park development. We have to decide which part of the project the \$350,000.00 will be used for. It is not going to do the entire project. We have to figure out what is the most pressing part that we need to get done as phase one, sketch that out along with the cost estimates and put it in the application. The narrative has to explain a litany of things, the history, the significance the environmental issues, the recreation issues. How it relates to the outdoor recreation plan. How it relates to the New York State Plans and the Comprehensive Plan. He has to find all the documents to support this kind of a project.

A member of the public stated to get the grant you have to have some kind of dialed in specific project plan. Mr. Syden responded “yes.” The speaker was not sure the town has done that yet. Mr. Syden said he would sit down with us to sketch out what we want to do for phase one – the application. Once you win quite frankly you have flexibility. You can tell the state that over the past 6 months our project has changed. There is only so much flexibility. The historic carousel would have to go on a historic preservation grant next year. It has to be on the state and national historic registry. It is not currently on and there are lots of requirements it was noted. Mr. Syden did not recommend putting it on as it would cost more money to maintain it. He suggested sticking with economic tourism.

Council Member Sturchio noted we only have one year to apply and this was donated in December. That is why Mr. Syden has been knocking on our door so hard. ‘You have one opportunity whether you do it with me or do it on your own...’”

Mr. Ziemann stated this was the adaptive reuse plan – Mr. Syden stated it is a separate piece. You can apply for it but that is for commercial enterprise not in a Parks and Recreation Grant. It was noted that we have the Comprehensive Plan and the Hamlets 3 Plan. So you can pick one of those as the foundation for the application.

There is enough time to apply it was noted. They have 16 applications now we can use another vendor. But he suggested having 4 – 6 weeks to do a grant.

Public -

Has the town acquired an appraisal of this property? At this time the town does not have clear title to this property. The property is still waiting the approval of an illegal subdivision by the APA and by the Town Planning Board. Can the application be made? Mr. Syden noted the approval of the owner of the property would have to be obtained. Upon successful completion of the application if you secure the money. An appraisal of the property has to be done.

Barbara Lee noted that there is a resolution that states if the subdivision is not approved then the land has to be given back. Mr. Syden stated that the town doesn’t have to take the grant. Many towns turn down the funds. You can withdrawal. Supervisor Ottuso noted that the APA is coming in on the 15th.

Would the town get a better shot at a grant if it could state exactly what they want to do in the plan? Mr. Syden responded there are two documents that identify this project the Comprehensive Plan and the Hamlet 3 Project. If the Comprehensive Plan does not mention that we hope to acquire it then it should be amended prior to the grant being obtained.

Who would work with Laberge on this? They take the information we have now to make the application. Based on the information Mr. Syden has we are ready to move forward. He noted the town could work with a planner to map out some concepts. Will his company let us know where they think we should start? Yes they will do that.

A resident asked if the plan is to have a park there. Mr. Selmsen noted that we have to trade off property for that type of grant funding. Mr. Syden stated when you apply for Parks and Recreation you say that is part of whatever you are talking about is going to be a park so you are looking for a beach and the amenities that go along with that is what you are applying for out of that. The beach is 120 feet. A strategic planning meeting is needed. They will work with whomever the town wants them to.

Normally he comes back in with his grant writer or project person and they work with the town to plan that project. They need the framework. Prior to that the town would have their own planning session as to what the options were and what the board wants to see.

You need to show in the application how the project is being supported by a local or regionally adopted plan.

A resident asked if there would be study on the impact to the lake on this. Mr. Syden had no idea; he noted the need for SEQR.

If a park is developed can the town charge for its use. Mr. Syden noted everyone has to be charge the same.

If the use of the property were to change it would have to go through the alienation process. That would hold true if we wanted to sell it too.

A restaurant could be developed there. Niagara Falls is a State Park and they lease it to someone else. The project can be subdivided out.

Mr. Scott Horton of the Planning Board stated we have a blank canvas. We are missing a lot of the details but this takes us another step forward. We are not obligated to do anything. If we were lucky enough to get a grant we would have to make it comply with the general scope of the grant. He supports going through with the grant.

Mr. Manning asked how the public could be involved with this process. Supervisor Ottuso didn't want to reinvent the wheel. We'd just do it how other towns have done it. Mr. Syden noted most have already decided before you make the application of what you want to apply for. Once you win the grant you work on it more. You work with the State to refine their scope; it takes 3 –4 months. Right now Mr. Syden did not have a clear direction from the board as to what you want to apply for. That needs to be worked out quickly so they can do the application. If the board wanted to assign 1 or 2 people to work with them they could. You could apply for a pre-planning grant. Council Member Glenn noted the town has been working on this for several years with the Planning Board. Mr. Selmsen noted that the Hamlet 3 Plan came about through the vision of the architects who amongst themselves and the students looked at the possibilities.

Mr. Syden stated he couldn't frame a house without having some structure.

Barbara Lee wondered how the town's people were going to have transparency in this. Last month there were 120 people at our board meeting. This is a very important issue with the people. It was noted that the public has not had a voice at the Planning Board meetings. A citizens planning committee to work with the Planning Board and the Town Board was suggested. It would provide oversight and direction. Supervisor Ottuso replied that anything is a possibility.

The reason Ben is here tonight is because we are on a limited time frame. Supervisor Ottuso would "like to have a decision for him to say we are in on this." How does the group feel here? Mr. Manning stated he didn't think anyone wanted to rush this decision. Mr. Selmsen did not want to miss this opportunity.

Mr. Syden stated that 750 million dollars would be given out on December 7th.

Supervisor Ottuso wants to apply for the \$350,000.00. People have concerns of where the money is going to come from for Sherman's. This is what Mr. Syden has been talking to Karl and other people about. He noted the cost to submit (write) the grant cannot be reimbursed.

A resident wanted the timeline reviewed. Mr. Syden stated if we don't put in this year – we have to come up with the match. We have one shot because of the appraised value to use as the match. It was again noted that we don't have an appraisal. Mr. Syden stated we could use the assessed value until the appraisal is done.

Barbara Lee stated that the town does not have clear title has not been transferred so this date. Mr. Syden noted there could be an agreement with the owner stating the value. There could be a legal argument as to the date of acquisition. Maybe this could be done next year was her point.

The Planning Board is going to meet next week let's bring the public in to talk about it at that time. Mr. Toskas wanted the public to have some input on this project. It was noted that the town board would ultimately sign off for the financial commitment on this.

Mr. Horton and Mr. Selmser were not aware of an application (Sherman's/Town of Caroga) to come before the Planning Board. Mr. Horton noted their only review of the project has to do with the subdivision. It was noted that the Code Officer has the application paperwork.

It was noted by Planning Board Member Holliday that if the Planning Board does not approve the subdivision that the land goes back to Mr. Abdella.

Council Member Sullivan agreed that some people should be represented from the Planning Board on this as well as some from the public to be on that same plan to meet with Laberge to give them direction. Supervisor Ottuso noted if the whole public were involved he wasn't sure anything would ever get done. Mr. Syden noted the risk is an application is made and \$3,500.00 expended and time spent. Mrs. Holliday asked where the money was in the budget for this.

RESOLUTION#2015-051 to hire Laberge Group to write a Grant was offered by Supervisor Ottuso at the May 27th 2015 work session held at Caroga Town Hall, **WHEREAS**, the town was contacted by Benjamin Syden of Laberge Group a Municipal Consulting Company to let the town know about grant funding that was available, and **WHEREAS**, a meeting took place this evening to review the grant application process, Now therefore be it **RESOLVED**, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to hire Laberge Group for a cost of \$3,500.00 to move ahead with this grant application for the Town of Caroga for the Sherman's property using the appraised value. Council Member Glenn seconded the motion.

Discussion: Council Member Sullivan noted that a committee needed to get together that is not just the board and the Planning Board it has to involve the public. He stated 5 – 7 people. If that is the case then I will....

Adopted by a vote of 4 Ayes by roll call vote:
Council Member Sturchio – Aye
Council Member Glenn – Aye
Supervisor Ottuso – Yes
Council Member Sullivan – Yes

Supervisor Ottuso stated that he “will get together with the Planning and figure out, look for a group, if people want to put their name in and what we will do is have them sign up in the clerk’s office and go through” It will be a handful of people. If too many people are involved there will be too many ideas. Mr. Syden noted it should take a couple of hours. Only part of the property is going to be discussed. If the piece is a park it will be a park forever. The clean water will be discussed at a later date.

A resident asked who would pick the people on the committee. Supervisor Ottuso replied the Planning Board. He has to put his faith in the people we have in those positions. Mr. Toskas noted they would pick people who are favorable to whatever they want. He suggested next week at the meeting have the public pick who is on the committee. Supervisor Ottuso did not agree with that. The resident was asked to put a resume together if you want to be on a committee. Mr. Horton thought it was wrong not to have a diverse opinion.

Other business this evening - The highway Superintendent Steve Putman brought in information on a new truck. An International truck is being bid in Onondaga County contract so we don’t have to go out to bid. It is on state contract. The complete 4 Wheel Drive Freightliner truck minus the sander is \$167,450.00 with a plow. Along with this is a bid from FAB 3 for a sander for it. That is under state contract price. The cost is \$12,186.00 it is the same price we bought one for last year. The freightliner we purchased was in the high \$170’s. The specs on this have the heavier front end. He talked to other Highway Superintendents about this truck the minimum front axle on this is 18,000 lbs. Our Freightliner truck is 14,000 – 16,000 on the 2006, which we have also had problems with. He is looking at a retardation of the front end. What they do when they build an all-wheel drive truck is the rear end is spun around and put in the front. It runs in reverse. The retardation makes it run the way the axel is supposed to. The frame would be a single and pre-dipped - heavier. He looked into heavier rims for another upgrade still staying in our price range.

Mr. Putman has taken two trucks off the road the 1995 and the 1998. He won’t waste any more money on these trucks. The 1998 has two cracks in the frame it is here for the board to examine. The board went outside to look at the truck. (Back in the building at 8:27 pm)

The board will reviewing financing and make a decision on the truck at the June Town Board meeting. Supervisor Ottuso suggested putting the two trucks on Auctions International to sell.

Supervisor Ottuso discussed the two bids to do the work at the end of the building. One quote was \$17,000.00 another was \$13,880.00 from Dan Costello.

RESOLUTION 2015-052 to hire Dan Costello to secure the south end of the building was offered by Supervisor Ottuso at the May 27, 2015 work session held at Caroga Town hall, and

WHEREAS, the board has called numerous vendors for a quote to secure the south end of the municipal building and **WHEREAS**, two quotes were received one from Mr. Lucas for \$17,000.00 another from Dan Costello for \$13,880.00, now therefore be it **RESOLVED**, that Mr. Costello be contacted to do the work within 30 days of being notified. Council Member Sullivan seconded the motion.

Adopted by a vote of 4 Ayes: Ottuso, Sullivan, Sturchio, Glenn

Council Member Sturchio noted that Jean Centi would like to be considered to oversee Sherman's. He has had a family company in NJ since 1951. They do everything from environmental services to cleaning and maintenance services to (celebrity) estate management. They do all of the care for these properties, painting, HVAC, lawn. He feels he is qualified to do something of this nature. Depending on the type of work sometimes he would hire certified specialists. He is retiring out of the company this year. He will put together a letter of interest. He would have to discuss the cost with the board. Mr. Centi was asked if he wanted to help with BLIGHT. He was not interested in that.

It was noted that the tree removal project on S. Shore Road was completed by the Highway Department. Mr. Centi stated it looks good and he publicly thanked Mr. Putman.

At 8:35 pm Supervisor Ottuso made a motion to adjourn. All board members were in favor of the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda M. Gilbert, RMC, CMC
Town Clerk