

State of New York
County of Fulton
Town of Caroga

Minutes of the regular monthly Caroga Town Board meeting held Wednesday February 12th 2025 at the municipal building located at 1840 State Highway #10 at 6:30 pm with the following persons in attendance by roll call.

Supervisor Ralph J. Palcovic – Here
Council Member John Glenn – Here
Council Member Barbara DeLuca – Arrived at 6:37 pm
Council Member Richard Sturgess – Here
Council Member Matthew Cooper – Here

Department representatives in attendance were: Steve Stedman – Golf Course Greenskeeper. Jeremy Manning – Wheelerville Bike Trail Manager, John Byrnes – Zoning Board of Appeals Member, Karen Dutcher – Planning Board Member, Richard Nilsen – Historian and six members of the public.

Supervisor Palcovic called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

A moment of silence was held for Thomas Gilbert. He served ten years as a Planning Board Member, fourteen years on the Board of Assessment Review and six years as Deputy Town Clerk taking deposits to the bank. He also served as President of the West Caroga Lake Association from 1993 to 1998. Condolences were given to the Town Clerk.

A motion was made by Council Member Sturgess to waive the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Glenn. All board members were in favor of the motion: Palcovic, Glenn, Sturgess, Cooper.

Department Reports:

Wheelerville Bike Trail – Mr. Manning thanked Mr. Stock and the highway department for taking care of the parking lot. He thanked Syracuse Bike and Bret Fielding for putting on a Fat Bike Demo during the winter carnival. Mr. Manning worked with the bookkeeper – Joanne Young to submit the DEC grant finalized. It was submitted two days ago for reimbursement. The town received a check for \$61,417.88 from New York State.. Mr. Manning is again looking forward to planning what they are going to do as far as the Smart Growth Grant. This year the Bike Festival will be August 24 – 25, 2025.

BTI – Supervisor Palcovic noted they are in preparation (on snowshoes) to begin the season.

Sole Assessor – Leigh Anne Loucks submitted a written report. Supervisor Palcovic read that she is preparing second notices. Exemptions will be taken until March 1st, 2025 since that is a Saturday paperwork will be accepted until March 3rd, 2025. ***(date corrected see 2/26/25 minutes)*** If property owners need assistance turning in their paperwork, they can call the Assessor and she will go to their homes.

The annual notice of inventory review will be published in the newspaper on March 1st & 8th. The assessor is updating parcels using imagery and reviewing permits for the past 18 – 24 months, and following up with field review. The assessor is answering calls and processing Senior Exemptions and any new exemptions. Biweekly sales are picked up from the county.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector/Registrar/RMO – The clerk submitted the monthly report to the Town Supervisor. Last month the Town Clerk books were presented for audit. The board still needs to review them.

Tax Collection to date \$2,918,419.08 has been collected with \$857,779.36 uncollected. There is one correction of errors in the amount of \$1,048.46 this was due to the demolition of a structure two years ago but the assessment wasn't changed.

In reading the Association of Towns (AOT) magazine there is a change in the Freedom of Information Law. Legislation mandates that boards have to adopt a policy to notify town employees when the Town responds to a FOIL request concerning their disciplinary record per Public Officers Law §87. The clerk asked the Committee on Open Government for a sample policy but they had not created one yet. This will be followed up on.

After the organizational meeting the clerk emailed AOT with a couple of questions. One was on changing the salary of an elected official after the budget was passed and the second was about having two deputy supervisors. The response back to do both of these questions was the town has to create local laws. Supervisor Palcovic responded that he has been in conversation with the town attorney, and has subsequently sent a written inquiry out to him to clarify. The Supervisor stated they would do what is necessary and correct to fix this situation.

Dog Control – No report from Mr. Dutcher.

Golf Course – Mr. Stedman reported the equipment is just about done. There are two more pieces of equipment to go through so he has been switched over to help out with the club house. He is ordering and following up on planning tournament events for this year. He called WB about the cost of cart rentals for this year. Tomorrow he will attend a meeting on the proposed club house design.

Council Member Sturgess noted there are equipment reserves for the golf course of \$50,500.32, and there is \$25,442.91 in Golf Course Improvement Reserves. He will offer a resolution later today to purchase a new Toro top dresser (diesel) unit at a cost of \$57,503.75, and a tow behind debris blower for \$11,297.73 it is gas powered. They did get quotes from John Deere as well. They came in about \$2,000.00 cheaper on the top-dresser but we already work with Toro on all of our other equipment. He did not want to bring in another vendor. Toro has been good getting us parts and it was noted that the Toro dealer is located in Latham NY and Deere dealer is in Connecticut. The Supervisor thought we could do that as a sole source and due to proximity. The procurement policy will need to be looked at.

Highway – Roy Stock thanked his staff for the great job they've been doing at the barn. Mr. Stock gave the board members folders regarding a new truck. Council Member Cooper had Mr. Stock put the folders together for the different truck vendors. It was suggested to have a work session on this. Supervisor Palcovic thanked the highway department for their work during the multiple storms. He has not received any calls so the public was happy with his performance.

Lakes Management Program – Councilmember Glenn noted Mr. Hogan and Mr. Harazin are not available this evening. Both submitted written reports. Mr. Hogan wrote he is working with DEC to obtain grant funds for a ProcellaCOR pilot grant program he anticipates between \$40 - \$45,000.00. He received a proposal from Ready Scout to apply ProcellaCOR to Bennetts Bay with an option to extend it along the shoreline along Kirchens Grove to the sandbar. The purpose of the proposal is to obtain an estimate of the cost of these two areas to be treated which contained the heaviest concentration of Eurasian Milfoil in East Caroga Lake that were not included in the pilot program. A review will be done to see if one or both or neither program is feasible.

Mr. Hogan has been in communication with the four divers from last year. They indicate they will all be returning for the upcoming season. The tender position is still unknown. If vacant and the remaining Milfoil growth is light it may be possible to have the divers perform that function.

Mr. Harazin wrote a two-page report on the 2024 Aquatic Invasive Species for the Town of Caroga to the Fulton County Soil and Water District. It summarizes everything that was done this past year. Council Member Glenn thought the report would go to Mr. Persch at Soil & Water.

Council Member Glenn stated Mr. Potocar is working on wording for information to go out to people in Caroga about Welcome to Caroga, keep the water clean. This is about 2/3's developed.

Council Member DeLuca offered distributing the information over the Tourism Committee network social media.

Town Hall Building – Council Member Cooper reported the boiler is working after a couple of repairs. On boiler #1 the power vent for the exhaust went. The new part was bad so another was put in today. The vent was put on the pipe up in the ceiling outside the meeting room. There shouldn't be another leak problem. The tiles will be put up.

Caroga Tourism Committee – Council Member DeLuca reported on the January meeting. They have a plan for the year. All of the information will be on the Instagram page and revamped Facebook page. The next event is the fishing derby next week. There are some events at Royal Mountain at the end of March – cardboard derby. There will be an Easter Egg Hunt in April at the Firehouse. They are working on a celebration for the beginning of summer – Memorial Day weekend – similar to the recent Winter Carnival. They have also met with the group organizing the Kane Mountain Anniversary and will attend the next meeting next week.

Council Member DeLuca noted the Comprehensive Plan Committee did not meet last month there wasn't a quorum due to illness. They will next meet on February 27, 2025.

Code Enforcement & Sanitation – Fancher,

Supervisor's Report:

Supervisor Palcovic reported the Winter Carnival was put together by private citizens and a business group. The weekend was a huge success starting with Friday night, Saturday events and Sunday Outhouse races. It showed what the town can do, and he sent a thank you letter out to the Chairman of the County Board of Supervisor for the support of Scott Henze and Carla Kolby. The County paid for the fireworks and advertising. Everyone was happy with the event. It was a lot of hard work for volunteers, businesses, and the emergency management who supplied safety signage and portable lighting. The anticipation is that next year it will be bigger and better with the county's support. The Supervisor thanked everyone who worked hard to put the town on the map again.

The Supervisor stated we have a draft preliminary design plan for Golf Club House building. It will eventually include, on the ground floor, the municipal building – in the future. The objective is to get the final design before the summer gets here. Tomorrow, the Supervisor, Council Member Cooper, and Mr. Stedman will meet with CT Male to finalize the conceptual drawing what it may look like inside the building. No pictures yet. They are working to get a cost effective, very usable, user friendly, aesthetically pleasing and functional building for the Town of Caroga.

The Supervisor received a letter from WCLA requesting funds for fish stocking on West Caroga Lake. The town supports all the associations and provides a contribution to fish stocking. We know fishing is a big part of the town's tourism. We divide up a budget line item between the lake associations, and the Fish & Game Club. Support will be distributed.

A question has come up and the board will have to make a decision as one of the highway employees is not utilizing the town insurance. Previously the town has paid a buyout. Council Member Sturgess thought the amount was \$2,500.00. The Supervisor noted the highway department is no longer contractual – they are a member of the teamsters and this was not in the contract. This would be a benefit the town would be paying above.... the supervisor stated he was not opposed to this because we are saving money. A resolution may be necessary to go forward outside of the contract. The board was asked if they wanted to discuss this in executive session. Four board members responded that they wanted to go into an executive session tonight.

*****Public Comments***

Historian Richard Nilsen wanted to make a brief statement as he has not been in meetings lately. He stated he is part of the Kane Mountain Centennial. He designed a postal cancelation for the event. It has been accepted by the U S Post office for use in August. Mr. Nilsen noted the role of the historian has changed in the last few years it is more about bringing people to the community than anything else. Mr. Nilsen noted he has written several books about the Caroga area. He was a teacher, a reporter for the Leader Herald newspaper for a decade, then did a column after his partner, Katherine Spira, passed away in 2018. It was called "My Adirondack Corner" for a couple of years until the newspaper sold to the Gazette. He is also a news channel 10 weather watcher for Caroga.

Karen Dutcher has a traffic concern and a possible liability issue about Morey Road. It is a snowmobile road but for the past few years, it has not been plowed properly. Lately the trail has been made on the road so the road is one lane. Snowmobile traffic is coming at you riding on the left instead of right. There are fuel trucks on the road. Now if you go too far over you can't get out. The snow needs to be pushed back properly making it a road so they can link up to the trail. She is afraid of a head on collision especially on Friday and Saturday nights. Supervisor Palcovic responded that he has made that observation himself. Mr. Stock was informed that this is a snowmobile road, the bank has to be kept shelved so they will stay on the bank. The snow is all over the road. Before the trail was wide enough so machines could pass on the trail. Mrs. Dutcher just did not want to see an accident. The distance is about ¼ mile. The Supervisor thanked her. The only other thing to be done is to perhaps have a patrol car come up.

Mary Jablonski of Hutchinson Road wondered why zoom was no longer available at meetings. She stated that lots of summer residents took advantage of using zoom. Supervisor Palcovic stated it was offered as a convenience post covid. The town is not obligated to offer it. Finding someone to run it is part of it, but also the clerk did a data review and the numbers show a surprising low number of people used it. Council Member Sturgess stated it was extremely expensive to keep it going. The person to run it and the fees. Should something change in the future we still have the equipment. Right now, the board has formally decided not to keep it running. During covid it was a different scenario. We are not there today. He thanked her for voicing her concern.

At 7:02 pm the public portion of the meeting was closed.

Old Business:

There has been an opening for a janitor for quite a while. The town did advertise. Supervisor Palcovic interviewed Mike Voght and wants to offer the position to him.

RESOLUTION #2025-015 to hire Michael P Voght as Janitor was offered by Supervisor Palcovic at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on February 12, 2025.

WHEREAS, Mr. Robert Thompson has been filling in as janitor since Mr. Baker resigned, and

WHEREAS, Michael P Voght of 130 Shawn Drive in Caroga Lake was interviewed and is know to all, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Mr. Voght is hereby hired to be the janitor at the rate established in the budget.

Seconded by a unanimous voice of the board – Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

Adopted by a vote of five Ayes; Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

New Business:

Supervisor Palcovic announced the open seat on Planning Board to fill out a term until 12/31/26 and for the vacant of Mr. Hamilton. There is also an alternate seat open. The clerk was asked to advertise for interested individuals on the website and a posting at the post office.

Correspondence:

Supervisor Palcovic noted the 1/8/25 resignation letter from George Hamilton from the Planning Board.

The Caroga Transfer Station will be closed 2/17/25 in observance of Presidents' Day, it is open Tuesday 10th - 8 – noon.

The Tentative Election Schedule was announced as follows: Primary 6/24/25, General 11/4/25 Special 21st Congressional April or May.

RESOLUTIONS:

RESOLUTION #2025-016 to accept the books of Town Justice Subik as presented for audit was offered by Supervisor Palcovic at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on February 12, 2025.

WHEREAS, Supervisor Palcovic and Deputy Supervisor DeLuca reviewed in audit format the Town of Caroga Court financial books and found them to be in order with no deficiencies noted on January 28, 2025, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town board does hereby move to accept the books of Town Justice Subik as presented for audit.

Seconded by Council Member Sturgess

Adopted by a vote of five Ayes; Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

RESOLUTION #2025-017 to hire a special Code officer to oversee the Royal View Pub, Pavilion, and Campground project was offered by Supervisor Palcovic at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on February 12, 2025.

WHEREAS, it would be a conflict of interest for the current Caroga Code Officer Anthony Fancher to oversee the Royal View Pub, Pavilion, and Campground project, and

WHEREAS, the Town Board has reached out to Dylan Moore a Johnstown Fire Department Code Enforcement Officer who has no ties to anything going on in the Town of Caroga and who would act as an independent third-party view, he is to oversee all aspects of the project at 2533 State Highway 10 Caroga Lake NY from today forward until the Certificate of Occupancy is issued, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to hire Dylan Moore at a rate of \$30.00 per hour and whom shall act unilaterally, honestly, ethically and without collusion in his roll at special Code Officer for said project.

Seconded by Council Member DeLuca

Discussion: Council Member Sturgess noted that mileage would be paid to Mr. Moore at the current rate of \$0.70 per mile.

Adopted by a vote of five Ayes; Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

At this time, it was noted that the report from the code office was skipped over earlier this evening.

Code Officer Report: Supervisor Palcovic read from Mr. Fancher's report that 5 permits were issued. They were valued at \$1,700,000.00, a total of \$2137.00 in fees were collected. Twelve inspections were done on open permits. Three new building plans are being reviewed. It was noted that the My Hill project is moving forward. Supervisor Palcovic noted that Mr. Fancher is very supportive in any miscellaneous operations going on in this building or the infrastructure. He makes sure the walk ways are shoveled. There are some issues with the roof outside of the repairs that were done this year, and also the heating system. The Supervisor noted he goes above and beyond in regards to his core job. The clerk noted that she also knows how to start the boilers. Council Member Sturgess noted that the clerk was teaching others to restart them.

Council Member Sturgess noted last month the board reviewed the proposed rates for the Nick Stoner Municipal Golf Course but did not make a resolution. The rates had to be updated to list the additional credit card fee of 2.87%.

RESOLUTION #2025-018 to set the golf rates for the 2025 season at the Nick Stoner Municipal Golf Course was offered by Council Member Sturgess at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on February 12, 2025.

WHEREAS, the rates were discussed and reviewed at the January meeting, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Golf Rates for the Nick Stoner Municipal Golf Course are as follows for the 2025 Season: Daily Greens Fees: Credit Card Surcharge 2.87% in (Parentheses)

Walking: 9 Holes \$17.00 (\$17.48) **Cart:** 9 Holes \$25.00 (\$25.71)

18 Holes \$28.00 (\$28.80) 18 Holes \$40.00 (\$41.14)

Monday & Wednesday Special: 18 Holes with Cart \$35.00 (\$36.00)

Military / Veteran / Law Enforcement & Seniors 65+ There will be a Ten Percent (10%) Discount on DAILY rates upon request. Discount not applied to Memberships, Tournaments and or League play.

Membership Information:

Adult (21-64)	\$675.00	(\$694.37)
Couples	\$1,250.00	(\$1,285.87)
Junior (20 & Under)	\$200.00	(\$205.74)

Seniors 65+, Military / Veterans / Law Enforcement \$525.00 (\$540.06)

Cart Membership \$550.00 (\$565.78)

Fall Rates Begin (October 1st)

Walking: 9 Holes \$15.00 (\$15.43)

18 Holes \$25.00 (\$25.71)

Cart: 9 Holes \$23.00 (\$23.66)

18 Holes \$35.00 (\$36.00)

Seconded by Council Member Glenn

Discussion: Council Member DeLuca asked where does the 2.87% collected go to? Council Member Sturgess stated it is charged to the consumer. That goes to the credit card company. He was not sure how it is paid either daily, monthly or quarterly.

Adopted by a vote of five Ayes; Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

RESOLUTION# 2025-019 to purchase a Toro tow behind blower and a Toro Diesel Top Dresser was offered by Council Member Sturgess at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on February 12, 2025.

WHEREAS, Mr. Stedman greenskeeper at the Nick Stoner Municipal Golf Course has indicated the need to purchase various equipment for use on the course, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stedman procured the following quotes from:

Grassland 892-898 Troy Schenectady Road Latham NY.

Q173311 for a Pro Force Debris Blower \$11,297.73 and

Q115015 for a Top Dresser: ProPass 200 Base and a workman mount kit with front hopper a workman HDX 4 wd Diessel Kubota with Canopy and high flow hydraulics kit \$57,503.75 and, John Deere Finch Turf Inc. 458 Danbury Rd Unit D-1 New Milford Ct 06776

ProGator 2020A Gas and Dakota 410 \$53,221.58

ProGator 2020A Diesel and Dakota 410 \$55,519.06, Now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to spend \$68,801.47 with the funds coming out of A0201-80 Golf Course Improvement Reserve and A0201-70 Golf Course Equipment Reserve for a Toro tow behind blower and a Toro Diesel Top Dresser.

Seconded by Council Member Cooper

Adopted by a vote of five Ayes; Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

RESOLUTION# 2025-020 to fix the front end of Highway Truck #17 was offered by Council Member Cooper at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on February 12, 2025.

WHEREAS, Council Member Cooper, liaison to the highway department, explained that the front differential pinion bearing went out on truck #17 and ate the ring gear on it, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the necessary repair be made to Highway truck #17 in the amount of \$3,941.61 with the work being done in house.

Seconded by Council Member Sturgess

Adopted by a vote of five Ayes; Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

RESOLUTION# 2025-021 to purchase new bulk storage tanks from R H Crown was offered by Supervisor Palcovic at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on February 12, 2025.

WHEREAS, a need has been identified to purchase new bulk storage tanks for the highway garage, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to purchase new bulk storage tanks from R H Crown at a cost of \$5,100.00.

Seconded by Council Member Cooper

Discussion: Supervisor Palcovic noted previously that the town was not in compliance with New York State regulations for storage of petroleum hydrocarbons, waste oil tanks noting that the town had an outstanding notice of violation from the State of New York. In order to remedy and for our safety and environmental compliance the town needed to purchase new tanks for inside the building. Council Member Cooper noted the tanks that were there were old steel tanks. The tanks going in are double walled tanks. They are self - contained. If the inner shell leaks it will contain itself. They can be moved to the new highway garage when it is built.

Adopted by a vote of five Ayes; Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

RESOLUTION #2025-022 to enter into a contract with St. Mary's Employee Assistance Program and authorize the Supervisor to sign said contract was offered by Supervisor Palcovic at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on February 12, 2025.

WHEREAS, annually the town enters into a contract with St. Mary's Employee Assistance Program which is a five-page contract on file in the town clerk's office, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to contract with St. Mary's Employee Assistance Program at a price of \$408.00 annually for 12 employees at \$34.00 per employee.

Seconded by Council Member Glenn

Adopted by a vote of five Ayes; Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

At 7:16 pm Council Member Sturgess made a motion to enter into an executive session to discuss personnel and a contractual matter. The motion was seconded by Council Member Glenn. All board members were in favor of the motion: Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

At 7:25 pm Council Member Sturgess made a motion to exit from the executive session. The motion was seconded by Council Member DeLuca. All board members were in favor of the motion: Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

RESOLUTION #2025-023 for payment in leu of taking town insurance was offered by Supervisor Palcovic at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on February 12, 2025.

WHEREAS, the Town board entered into an executive session to discuss a highway insurance issue, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to pay a \$2,500.00 buyout to a highway employee for not utilizing the town offered insurance with the caveat that the Teamsters Union approves this decision as non-precedent setting. And be it further **RESOLVED**, that Supervisor Palcovic shall contact the business agent and get something in writing from him that this will not be precedent setting.

Seconded by Council Member Sturgess

Discussion: Council Member Cooper wanted to qualify that the employee shall show proof that they do have other insurance.

Adopted by a vote of five Ayes; Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

RESOLUTION #2025-024 to pay former highway employee Jason Busch accrued vacation and sick time per an executive session on February 5, 2025 was offered by Supervisor Palcovic at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on February 12, 2025.

WHEREAS, the Town board entered into an executive session at the February work session to discuss information from Town Attorney Chris Langlois, and

WHEREAS, and executive summary was put together upon advice of the town attorney, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, to go forward with this matter and reduce any future attorney fees, the Caroga Town Board agreed that the former highway employee Mr. Busch shall be paid for accrued vacation and sick time based on his rate of pay pending the dollar value to be determined based on the hours of his accrued time and upon the advice of the Town Attorney.

Seconded by Council Member DeLuca

Adopted by a vote of five Ayes; Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper

Council Member Sturgess made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 8th 2025 Town Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Cooper. All board members were in favor of the motion: Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

Council Member Sturgess made a motion to approve the bills as presented for audit. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Palcovic. All board members were in favor of the motion: Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

Council Member Glenn noted in the bills the town pays Suburban and Mirabito for heating fuel. Council Member Cooper explained Suburban does the propane for the town hall building. Council Member Glenn stated Mirabito could do both. Council Member Sturgess noted this will be looked at, at the next meeting as the propane comes out of Marcy NY, and we ran dry last week even though we are on automatic fill. Council Member Sturgess is working on supply and service. It was noted we should continue on this way through this heating season so there isn't an interruption. Supervisor Palcovic noted we will also look at state bid pricing.

At 7:31 pm Council Member Cooper made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council Member Glenn. All board members were in favor of the motion: Palcovic, Glenn, DeLuca, Sturgess, Cooper.

Submitted by Caroga Town Clerk,

Linda Gilbert, RMC, CMC

Highway #'s 6 – 28 421,785.81

General #'s 23 – 65 \$31,901.74

Prepaid #'s 21 – 53 \$27,254.85

General Park #'s 1 – 4 \$2,559.25