

MINUTES OF THE TOWN BOARD MEETING HELD ON MARCH 11, 2024

A Town Board work session meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Lewisboro, Westchester County, New York, was held on March 11, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. at the Lewisboro Town House, 11 Main Street, South Salem, New York.

PRESENT:

Supervisor	Tony Gonçalves
Council Members	Mary Shah, Richard Sklarin, Daniel Welsh
Town Clerk	Janet L. Donohue
Absent	Andrea Rendo

Also attending was the Attorney for the Town Gregory Folchetti, Maintenance Employees Shawn Johannessen and Joel Smith, Recreation Supervisor Nicole Caviola and Chief of Staff Kerri Wolfe.

Approximately 22 residents/observers attended the live meeting and approximately 26 participated via Zoom.

Supervisor Gonçalves called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Supervisor Gonçalves noted the exits to be used in the event of an emergency.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Supervisor led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD (7:40 – 8:05 p.m.)

A total of 11 residents spoke.

ISRAELI – HAMAS CONFLICT

Approximately 5 residents spoke out against Councilman Welsh and continued to criticize him for what they feel are antisemitic posts on his personal Facebook page. They stated that his behavior is not fitting of a Town Board member. These residents continue to feel that he is dividing this town when we need to be unified and continue to ask Councilman Welsh to resign. They feel he should not be in the rotation as a Deputy Supervisor. They also stated that in his capacity as a Town Board member he should not be posting about these issues on social media. If he wants to post on his personal page, they feel he should not list that he is a Town of Lewisboro Councilman. Another resident stated that Councilman Welsh represents the people of Lewisboro and is not a delegate to the middle east and what we do in Lewisboro won't fix the world problems. They continued by saying that the Board should focus on town issues and they represent many people.

Approximately 4 residents spoke out in favor of Councilman Welsh stating that they don't believe he is anti-Semitic but rather anti-war. They feel that Councilman Welsh's voice should not be shut down. They stated that his views are held by others as well in the community.

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Another resident suggested that the board set up a professionally facilitated meeting that engages those who want a dialogue on this topic.

During polling of the Board, Board members addressed the audience. Councilman Sklarin stated that everyone is equally important, and the Board does the best that they can to hear all residents and he hopes that the presentation from this evening helped some to feel that they have been heard. Councilwoman Shah has worked her entire life to make sure that people feel safe and welcome, and she will continue to do so. Supervisor Gonçalves stated that none of us want violence in this world but it's an unfortunate characteristic. Supervisor also stated that they cannot remove Dan Welsh from his elected office.

HIGHWAY

A resident complimented the new Highway Superintendent John Winter and the highway department for removing the timber from the salt dome.

INTERNET SERVICE

A resident stated that she has made the switch to Hughesnet and finally got rid of Verizon. She is very happy with it and urged more people to use Hughesnet or Starlink.

GOLDENS BRIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT

A resident thanked the Goldens Bridge Fire Department for battling brush fires and downed wires during school dismissal. Traffic needed to be rerouted and they kept all safe. She also shared the sudden passing of Chief Ray Baker Sr. who has been with the Goldens Bridge Fire Department since 2015.

During polling of the Board, Supervisor Gonçalves read a statement about Chief Ray Baker Sr's passing.

CONSENT AGENDA

MINUTES & REPORTS - Approved

On motion by Supervisor Gonçalves, seconded by Councilman Sklarin, the minutes of the February 26, 2024, Town Board meetings were approved, and the February 2024 Building and Police Department monthly reports were received and filed.

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Shah, Sklarin, Welsh	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Rendo	(1)

SALEM FENCE – Authorize to Replace Onatru Backstop

On motion by Supervisor Gonçalves, seconded by Councilwoman Shah, the Board voted as follows:

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THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Shah, Sklarin, Welsh	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Rendo	(1)

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does authorize the hiring of Salem Fence for the replacement of one backstop at Onatru Farm Park.

PARKS & RECREATION – Amend ARPA Funds Resolution

On motion by Supervisor Gonçalves, seconded by Councilman Welsh, the Board voted as follows:

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Shah, Sklarin, Welsh	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Rendo	(1)

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does amend the prior resolution allocating American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for Parks & Recreation pool equipment to include pool equipment and repairs.

POLICE DEPARTMENT – Amended Approval to Auction 3 Vehicles

On motion by Supervisor Gonçalves, seconded by Councilwoman Shah, the Board voted as follows:

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Shah, Sklarin, Welsh	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Rendo	(1)

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does amend the resolution dated June 26, 2023 and approve the police chief's request to auction off the following three vehicles with Auctions International:

1. 2017 Chevrolet Tahoe
2. 2014 Ford Explorer
3. 2013 Ford Explorer

And be it further RESOLVED that the 2016 Ford Explorer has been given to the Building Department.

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DOWNSTATE JUNIORS' VOLLEYBALL CLUB – Authorize Supervisor to Sign Agreement

On motion by Councilman Welsh, seconded by Councilwoman Shah, the Board voted as follows:

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Shah, Sklarin, Welsh	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Rendo	(1)

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does approve the amended cooperative use agreement with Downstate Juniors Volleyball Club, Inc. and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Supervisor is authorized to sign said agreement.

OPEN SPACE & PRESERVES ADVISORY COMMITTEE - Appoint Member

On motion by Councilman Sklarin, seconded by Councilwoman Shah, the Board voted as follows:

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Shah, Sklarin, Welsh	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Rendo	(1)

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does appoint Pia Baker to the Open Space and Preserves Advisory Committee (OSPAC) with a term expiring December 31, 2025.

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COUNCIL – Appoint Member

On motion by Councilman Sklarin, seconded by Councilwoman Shah, the Board voted as follows:

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Shah, Sklarin, Welsh	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Rendo	(1)

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does appoint Timi Parsons to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Council (PRAC) with a term expiring December 31, 2024.

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PARKS & RECREATION – Approval of Fundraiser

On motion by Councilwoman Shah, seconded by Councilman Sklarin, the Board voted as follows:

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Shah, Sklarin, Welsh	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Rendo	(1)

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does authorize the Park & Recreation Department to waive the fees associated with the rental of the Town Park pavilion and park for a fundraiser to raise money to support the Salla Treatment and Research Foundation (S.T.A.R.) on May 19, 2024.

VISTA HAMLET STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL – Approval of Fundraiser

On motion by Councilwoman Shah, seconded by Councilman Welsh, the Board voted as follows:

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Shah, Sklarin, Welsh	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Rendo	(1)

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does approve the Vista Hamlet Stewardship Council's request to use the Vista Park as for a fundraiser on Saturday March 23, 2024, with a rain date of Sunday, March 24, 2024 from 3-5 p.m. and be it further

RESOLVED, that all fees be waived.

JOHN JAY YOUTH LACROSSE – Approval of Fundraiser

On motion by Councilwoman Shah, seconded by Councilman Welsh, the Board voted as follows:

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Shah, Sklarin, Welsh	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Rendo	(1)

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does approve the John Jay Youth Lacrosse fundraiser at Onatru Farm Park Lions Club Picnic Pavilion on Saturday, May 18, 2024, with a rain date of Sunday, May 19, 2024, from 12 – 4 p.m. and be it further

RESOLVED, that all fees be waived.

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EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK – Revisions

On motion by Supervisor Gonçalves, seconded by Councilwoman Shah, the Board voted as follows:

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Shah, Sklarin, Welsh	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Rendo	(1)

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does approve the circulation of the revised employee handbook to the unions for their comments.

POLICE DEPARTMENT VEHICLE BUILD OUT – Approve Payment

On motion by Supervisor Gonçalves, seconded by Councilwoman Shah, the Board voted as follows:

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Shah, Sklarin, Welsh	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Rendo	(1)

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does approve the payment of the police department vehicle customization invoice in the amount of \$17,027.79 from the surplus vehicles' sales proceeds.

HOUSING COMMITTEE – Appointment of New Member

On motion by Councilwoman Shah, seconded by Councilman Sklarin, the Board voted as follows:

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Shah, Sklarin, Welsh	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Rendo	(1)

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does appoint Paul Dennis to the Housing Committee with a term expiring December 31, 2025.

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AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE (AJC) STATE OF ANTISEMITISM IN AMERICA REPORT - Presentation (8:14 – 9:05 p.m.)

Myra Clark-Siegel, the Regional Director of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) of Westchester/Fairfield made a presentation regarding the State of Antisemitism in America Report (see attached).

There was some discussion after the presentation and the Board thanked Ms. Clark-Siegel.

PUBLIC COMMENT II (New Business Only)

A total of 11 residents spoke.

ISRAELI – HAMAS CONFLICT

Approximately 9 residents spoke out against Dan Welsh and his statements that have been on social media. A resident stated that the Board works for the people of the town, not the other way around. A handbook was discussed at the meeting earlier and he suggested that guidelines be put in the employee handbook regarding employees and social media.

Two residents spoke out in favor of Councilman Welsh and feels that he has the clearest voice. They feel that other residents are disrupting the meetings. And they reminded residents that Councilman Welsh cannot be removed from office.

CLAIMS – Authorized for Payment

On motion by Supervisor Gonçalves, seconded by Councilwoman Shah, the Board voted 4-0 to authorize payment of the Town's bills in the amount of \$335,888.11.

POLLING OF THE BOARD

LIBRARY

Please visit www.lewisborolibrary.org for upcoming Lewisboro Library events.

PARKS & RECREATION

Parks & Recreation staff were commended on a great job at Old Field Preserve.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Town received recognition for the Community Choice Aggregation which makes the town eligible for a \$50,000 grant for sustainable issues.

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JOHN JAY HIGH SCHOOL BLOOD DRIVE

There will be a John Jay High School Blood Drive held at the small gym at the high school on March 27, 2024, from 8 am – 2 pm.

NARCAN TRAINING

There will be free Narcan Training on March 21, 2024 from 7:30 – 8:30 pm at the Lewisboro Library.

HAPPY ST. PATRICK’S DAY

MEETINGS – Dates Set

There will be a Town Board meeting on Monday, March 25, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. at the Town House, 11 Main Street, South Salem, New York.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Councilwoman Shah, seconded by Councilman Sklarin, the Board voted 4-0 to adjourn at 9:41 p.m.

Janet L. Donohue

Town Clerk