

**APPROVED**

**5/11/2020**

**April 13, 2020  
Town of Taghkanic  
Town Board Meeting**

**Note all documents in these minutes may be clicked on and enlarged for easier reading**

Town Board Members audited and signed vouchers on Friday April 10, 2020 separately do to the COVID-19 social distancing.

**7 pm:** The Taghkanic Town Board held its regular monthly meeting on the above date via Zoom. Supervisor Ryan Skoda opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence.

<b>Present:</b>	Ryan Skoda	Supervisor
	Elizabeth Craig	Board Member
	Kara Gilmore	Board Member
	Linda Swartz	Board Member
	Joyce Thompson	Board Member
	Cheryl Rogers	Clerk

**Guest Speaker:**

**Supervisor Ryan Skoda then asked for a motion to approve the following minutes:**

**March 9, 2020:** Town Board meeting minutes were accepted as written with suggested changes, motioned by Board Member Joyce Thompson, seconded by Board Member Linda Swartz.

**Approved**      5 Aye      (Ryan, Elizabeth, Joyce, Kara, Linda)  
0 Nays  
0 Absent

**The Correspondence:**

- a) National Grid, COVID – 19 precautionary action
- b) Charles Schwab, Taghkanic Volunteer Fire Company LOSAP
- c) NYMIR, COVID – 19
- d) Peter Paden, Executive Director Columbia Land Conservancy
  - + Board Member Joyce Thompson: saddened to hear that Peter Paden is stepping aside.
  - + Supervisor Ryan Skoda: Peter has been very dedicated for many years.
- e) Columbia County Board of Elections, 2020 Elections and Poll site needs
- f) NYSTCA, Governor Cuomo’s Executive Order
- g) Suzette Booy, Grievance Day
- h) Joyce Thompson Q&A Grievance Day/ Suzette Booy

**Reports from the Boards:**

**Animal Control:** no report submitted.

**ZBA:** James Romaine, Chair, no report.

**Planning Board:** Katherine Bainer, Chair report submitted.

**Assessor:** Craig Surprise report submitted.

**ZEO/CEO/Building Inspector:** Dennis Callahan report submitted.

**Historian:** Nancy Griffith, no report submitted.

**Traffic Safety Board:** Board Member Linda Swartz, no meeting

**Environmental Management Council:** no report submitted.

**Zoning Commission:** Joyce Thompson, report submitted as follows.

The Zoning Commission met on 2 March 2020 as scheduled. Meetings on 16 and 30 March were cancelled. The 6 April meeting was held via Zoom and worked well.

The final review of changes continued in both meetings but the process has been delayed by the two cancellations. We will continue using Zoom for our meetings going forward until some conditions change. We should be able to make good progress despite the new operating mode.

The public is welcome to attend via Zoom. If you are interested, please email me at [joyce.thompson721@gmail.com](mailto:joyce.thompson721@gmail.com) or call me at 518.851.3487 and I will send you an invitation.

Comprehensive minutes of these meetings are available on the Town Website or upon request to Joyce Thompson.

**Last month the Zoning Commission sent a recommendation to the Town Board asking for a separate committee to work on Short Term Rental issue.** The purpose is to fast track work on that complex topic while allowing work on the final draft code to continue as quickly as possible.

**That recommendation needs to be discussed at the April meeting.** The Zoning Commission looks forward to seeing this important work enabled by the Town Board. This, too, can be done via Zoom. The Zoning Commission stands ready to share all the information gathered to date.

Next meetings: 20 April, 4 & 18 May via Zoom. The meeting time will continue to be 4:00 to 6:00P.M.s

**Office for the Aging:** Joyce Thompson, no meeting to report; next meeting is in April.

**Clerk/Collector:** Cheryl Rogers, reports were submitted to the Board.

**Supervisor:** Ryan Skoda, report submitted as attached.



**Highway:** George Hotaling, report submitted.



**[Advisory Board reports:](#)**



Supervisor Ryan Skoda: Thank you Joyce. Superintendent George Hotaling and I been searching for a used tractor for the past few years and we have the following three bids for the Boards review:



The bids are all from the same company we asked other businesses to provide bids but Salem Farm Supply was the only one to submit. Superintendent George Hotaling and I agree the used Case JX1075C Tractor for \$18,900.00 is in excellent condition and is the one we would like to purchase. The only additional piece of equipment to purchase would be a new mower.

Board Member Linda Swartz motioned to purchase the Case JX1075C Tractor for \$18,900.00, seconded by Board Member Elizabeth Craig.

**Approved**      **5 Aye**      **(Ryan, Elizabeth, Joyce, Kara, Linda)**  
**0 Nays**  
**0 Absent**

**Tgazette Newsletter Advisory Committee:** Nadja Palenzuela no report submitted.

**TGazette newsletter statistics  
 March 2020**

Total Sent:	233
Open Rate:	71%
Click-through rate:	62%
Bounce rate:	1
Unsubscribe:	0

Take out/Delivery service was the most popular post, followed by broadband. For the first time we embedded a document and many people downloaded it.

Opens by device:	47% mobile
	53% desktop

**Tgazette.com**  
 1229 visits to website  
 1658 post views 94 contacts

**Facebook**  
 total likes: 163

**Conservation Advisory Committee:** Tony LaSalvia no meeting to report:

**Broadband Advisory Committee:** Arthur McGuire, report submitted as follows:

The Gtel hotspot was installed at Town Hall on Wednesday, April 8th. Anyone can access broadband Internet from the parking lot there. You just find Gtel Hotspot in your WiFi settings and accept the terms and conditions.

All of Gtel’s line crews are now working in Taghkanic. They have finished hanging the fiber on Taghkanic Churchtown Road from County Route 10 to the Claverack border. Work continues with splicing on County Route 27 and splicing/testing on County Route 10. The first week of April saw work focused on Post Hill Road from County Route 10 to County

Route 27. Gtel expects all Phase 2 infrastructure work to be completed in June with Phase 3 completed a couple of months later.

Most importantly, home installations also continue but in a different way. With the Coronavirus, the technicians cannot enter the homes. Instead they deliver a self-install kit so that the residents can set it up themselves. It includes clear instructions with pictures of how to set up the hardware. Once the hardware has been installed, the customer can get further necessary setup help over the phone. In its first 20 installations, Gtel found that 17 could successfully manage the system. In the last week of March, the company was able to accomplish 23 of these self-installs. Gtel can now install customers at a rate of about 20 per week.

But installation will not happen quickly for everyone. For example, although Taghkanic Churchtown Road now has broadband on the poles, one resident was told not to expect home installation there until June. At 20 installations per week, it will take time.

We are encouraged that progress is still being made with broadband in Taghkanic. Well over 100 of our homes now have fiber from Gtel, with a like number receiving similar service from Mid-Hudson and Consolidated. Despite Coronavirus, lines are being attached to poles and self-installs are taking place. And we now have our broadband hotspot at Town Hall. Broadband is available to many of our residents and coming closer to others.

#### **April 13, 2020**

Since the Broadband Report sent out last week, we have learned about the following construction matters:

Fiber runs continue on County Route 10, Post Hill Road to Route 27. They will then continue West on Route 27 to County Route 12 near the Churchtown Fire Station.

Splicing and testing is underway at the Northeast quadrant of Taghkanic.

Over 125 Taghkanic residents now have Gtel fiber in their homes, with 18 more scheduled through the end of April.

Residents in the following areas are being canvassed to see if they wish to have the fiber connected to their homes:

County Route 27 north of New Forge Road I to County Route 10 and from there, west on County Route 10 to the Taghkanic State parkway.

We have also recently learned that the Berkshire Lake association on Sam Hill Road is not eligible to have Gtel install fiber on its private road. This is not permitted by the terms of the NY State grants. The Gtel fiber is now available on Berkshire Road at the foot of Sam Hill Road. The association can either have Gtel dig trenches for underground fiber construction at a cost of about \$140,000 or have the trenching and installation done by a private contractor. In that case, Gtel would provide the fiber at cost. The association's officers must now decide what to do. Gtel has encountered this kind of situation twice before. In one case, the association paid to have a contractor do the work; in the other, the fiber was not installed.

Finally, Gtel has requested that the Broadband Committee and the Town of Taghkanic send letters to The Public Service Commission for permission to borrow up to \$4 million to finance its share of the broadband buildout. The proposed letters from the Broadband Committee and from the Town are shown below.

Board Member Joyce Thompson motioned to authorize Supervisor Ryan Skoda to sign a letter to Hon. John B. Rhodes, New York State Public Service Commission urging the Commission to approve the pending petition of Germantown Telephone Company (GTC) and its affiliate, Valstar, for authority to accept \$4 Million in debt financing, seconded by Board Member Kara Gilmore.

**Approved**      **5 Aye**      **(Ryan, Elizabeth, Joyce, Kara, Linda)**  
**0 Nays**  
**0 Absent**

+ Arthur McGuire: the Broadband Committee would also like to send a letter as well.

+ Supervisor Ryan Skoda and the Town Board agreed. Clerk Rogers will prepare a copy on town letterhead and send to Arthur McGuire.

### Old Business:

A. **County Route 15 Complaint:** Supervisor Ryan Skoda: Attorney Howard informed me that sale is still on schedule May 8, 2020 at 10:00 AM 401 Union Street, Hudson, N Y.

B. **Highway Facility:** Supervisor Ryan Skoda: On hold due to COVID-19

C. **Culvert Inventory:** Board Member Joyce Thompson: On hold due to COVID-19

D. **Zoning Commission Recommendation to Appoint a Short Term rental Task Force:** Board Member Elizabeth Craig, Chair will draft a notice to recruit members for the task force; she will email it to all Board Members for their review.

+ Board Member Linda Swartz: I am willing to help guide the task force but not be a member.

### New Business:

A. **June 2020 Calendar:** Board Member Joyce Thompson moved to accept the June 2020 as amended, seconded by Board Member Elizabeth Craig.

**Approved**      **5 Aye**      **(Ryan, Elizabeth, Joyce, Kara, Linda)**  
**0 Nays**  
**0 Absent**

B. **COVID Outreach Program:**

+ Supervisor Ryan Skoda: reported a 9th community member has passed away from, there are 93 positive cases and 38 of the 93 cases have recovered from COVID-19

+ Board Member Joyce Thompson: reported that there has been information posted on the TGazette and the Town Website.

- ✚ Board Member Elizabeth Craig: My groups of Volunteers have been in contact by phone with our list and are still calling daily to a few people who wanted us to check on them. Everyone was very appreciative.
- ✚ Board Member Kara Gilmore: My group of Volunteers delivered the following notice to the list of residents 70+.



- ✚ Board Member Linda Swartz: reported 50 masks were made by Debbie Colgrove and Elizabeth Craig and delivered to the Taghkanic Fire Department.

**C. Appointment of Dog Control Officer: Board Member Joyce Thompson moved to appoint Kyle Miller, seconded by Board Member Linda Swartz.**

**Approved**      **5 Aye**                    **(Ryan, Elizabeth, Joyce, Kara, Linda)**  
**0 Nays**  
**0 Absent**

Supervisor Ryan Skoda: Kyle Miller requested we also contract with Columbia Greene Humane Society as well as Pine Plains Veterinary as Pine Plains is not open on weekends. All agreed, Clerk Rogers will contact Columbia Greene Humane Society.

**D. BAR Process: Supervisor Ryan Skoda: being we have the 2020 Property re-val in process this year I feel we need to remove the cap \$150.00 on the earning for the BAR. Board Member Joyce Thompson moved the Cap of \$150.00 for the BAR be removed seconded Board Member Elizabeth Craig.**

**Approved**      **4 Aye**                    **(Ryan, Elizabeth, Joyce, Kara)**  
**0 Nays**  
**0 Absent**  
**1 Abstained (Linda)**

Board Member Joyce Thompson: I would like to draft a letter explaining the process of the Re-Val with information from Suzette Booy, Director CC Real Property Tax Service Agency.

**The bills were audited and approved for payment as follows:**

- ✚ **March 24, 2020 Abstract**: on a motion by Board Member Linda Swartz, seconded by Board Member Elizabeth Craig.

2020 General Fund Vouchers	#	104	-	116	\$	23,359.55
2020 Highway Fund Vouchers	#	57	-	58	\$	6,093.08
2020 Hwy Project Fund vouchers	#		-		\$	

**Approved**      **5 Aye**                    **(Ryan, Elizabeth, Joyce, Kara, Linda)**  
**0 Nays**  
**0 Absent**

✦ **April 13, 2020 Abstract:** on a motion by Board Member Linda Swartz, seconded by Board Member Elizabeth Craig.

2020 General Fund Vouchers	#	117	-	131	\$	5,753.46
2020 Highway Fund Vouchers	#	59	-	80	\$	6,255.11
2020 Hwy Project Fund vouchers	#		-		\$	

**Approved**      **5 Aye**            **(Ryan, Elizabeth, Joyce, Kara, Linda)**  
**0 Nays**  
**0 Absent**

**The following people commented during the fifteen minute public comment:**

- ✦ Nadja Palenzuela: Very disappointed with GTel's progress.
- ✦ Supervisor Ryan Skoda: Taghkanic-Churchtown Road is part of Phase III process, which is the last Phase to be completed.
- ✦ Jeff Kalpak: enjoyed participating in the Zoom meeting.

**Executive Session:** none

**With no further business,** on a motion by Board Member Linda Swartz, seconded by Board Member Kara Gilmore the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm, carried unanimously by all members present. The next Regular meeting will be **May 11, 2020** at the Taghkanic Town Hall.

**Audience:** via Zoom:

Larry Kadish  
Arthur McGuire

Anna Kadish

Nadja Palenzuela

Jeff Kalpak