

Approved

4/3/2023

**March 13, 2023
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 March 12 and 13, 2023 separately, due to the COVID-19 social distancing.

6 pm. *Supervisor Ryan Skoda* opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence.

Present:	Ryan Skoda	Supervisor	
	Elisabeth Albert	Board Member	
	Elizabeth Craig	Board Member	Zoom 6:20-6:39 (in person 7:06)
	Kara Gilmore	Board Member	Zoom 6-6:35 (in person 6:59)
	Linda Mirabelli	Board Member	
	Cheryl Rogers	Clerk	
	Andrew Howard	Town Attorney	

6 pm: Public Hearing: Creation of the Taghkanic Fire District and the dissolution of Taghkanic Fire Protection District #1 and Taghkanic Fire Protection District #2 pursuant to Town Law §170

Opened PH 6 pm: *Board Member Linda Mirabelli* motioned to open the Public Hearing , to hear all persons interested in the matter of the proposed creation of the Taghkanic Fire District and the dissolution of Taghkanic Fire Protection District #1 and Taghkanic Fire Protection District #2 pursuant to Town Law §170, *Board Member Elisabeth Albert*.

Approved *4 Aye* (*Ryan, Elisabeth, Kara (via zoom), Linda*)
 0 Nays
 1 Absent (*Elisabeth*)

Supervisor Ryan Skoda: asked for questions, comments or concerns?

✚ *Sam Pratt:* presentation

✚ *Supervisor Ryan Skoda:* yes back in 2021 I started to receive complaints from concerned residents of the town. I contacted the town *Attorney Andrew Howard* (Sitting to my right) for his advice. October 12, 2021 Attorney Howard sent a letter to Jamie Preusser, Churchtown Fire Company, Inc. with no response. Two more letters were sent dated May and June 2022 with no response. I meet with Mr. Preusser and a few other firemen at the Churchtown Fire House one evening we discussed the creation of a fire district and that Churchtown may merge with Claverack Fire Company.

✚ *Paul Nostrand:* John Senerchia called me and is very much in favor of the change to a fire district.

✚ *Doug Craig:* if a call goes in to 911 who decides who is called out for a fire?

- + **Supervisor Ryan Skoda:** Taghkanic Fire Company will cover all of Taghkanic except for Craryville, district.
- + **Kristine Wertz:** in favor of the change.
- + **Arthur McGurie:** mutual aid agreement is in place and will continue. I was on the Board when this was first discussed 3 years ago the Board wants to provide the best service they can.
- + **Sam Pratt:** Mr. Linton the previous owner of my property had a controlled burn that got out of control Churchtown Fire Company responded. My concern is the response time and I hope there will be a Mutual Aid Agreement will still be in place.
- + **Paul Nostrand:** all fire companies welcome Mutual Aid Agreements. There is no and nor does anyone want an adversarial effect from this.
- + **Supervisor Ryan Skoda:** the Mutual Aid Agreement was amended in May 2022 was not filed with 911 until December when I took it in to 911.
- + **Renee Nostrand:** support the Town Board with their decision thank you.
- + **John Roberts:** what is going to happen with LOSAP?
- + **Supervisor Ryan Skoda:** I have contacted the Comptroller and waiting for a call back.
- + **John Roberts:** appreciate you contacting the comptroller.
- + **Art Griffith:** is the Board judging their decision on one fire call?
- + **Supervisor Ryan Skoda:** no. Are there any more questions, comments or concerns? As there are none I will entertain a motion to close the Public Hearing.

Closed PH 6:31 pm: *Board Member Linda Mirabelli* motioned to close the Public Hearing, seconded by *Board Member Elisabeth Craig*.

Approved 4 Aye (Ryan, Elisabeth, Kara (via zoom), Linda)
 0 Nays
 1 Absent (Elisabeth)

6:49 pm: The Taghkanic Town Board held its Regular monthly meeting on the above date with a combination of Supervisor Skoda, Board Members, Town Attorney Howard, Town Clerk, 21 residents at the Taghkanic Fire House and 7 residents attending via Zoom.

Guest Speaker:

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

February 13, 2023: Town Board Regular meeting minutes were accepted as written on a motion by *Board Member Linda Mirabelli* seconded by *Board Member Elisabeth Albert*.

Approved 3 Aye (Ryan, Elisabeth, Linda)
 0 Nays
 2 Absent (Elisabeth, Kara)

February 20, 2023: Town Board STR and Zoning Review meeting minutes were accepted as written on a motion by *Board Member Linda Mirabelli* seconded by *Board Member Elisabeth Albert*.

Approved 3 Aye (Ryan, Elisabeth, Linda)
 0 Nays
 2 Absent (Elisabeth, Kara)

February 28, 2022: Town Board STR and Zoning Review meeting minutes were accepted as written on a motion by **Board Member Linda Mirabelli** seconded by **Board Member Elisabeth Albert**.

Approved 3 Aye (Ryan, Elisabeth, Linda)
 0 Nays
 2 Absent (Elisabeth, Kara)

March 6, 2023: Town Board STR and Zoning Review meeting minutes were accepted as written on a motion by **Board Member Linda Mirabelli** seconded by **Board Member Elisabeth Albert**.

Approved 3 Aye (Ryan, Elisabeth, Linda)
 0 Nays
 2 Absent (Elisabeth, Kara)

The Correspondence:

1. Helen Hemendinger, letter of resignation as Assessor Clerk
2. Kenneth J. Dow, Attorney Town of Copake PH Notice February 28, 2023
3. Teal, Becker, & Chiaramonte, LOSAP AUDIT final
4. Columbia County Hazardous Collection Day, April 29, 2023 8 am to noon
5. Charles Schwab Taghkanic LOSAP yearly
6. Zita Kobos, Craryville Road and Manor Rock intersection
7. Stawnychy Financial LOSAP monthly

6:59 PM: Kara Gilmore present at meeting

Reports from the Boards:

Animal Control: *Kyle Miller*, report submitted as follows

I have no entries for this past month

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

Planning Board: *Katherine Bainer*, report submitted as follows

The Taghkanic Planning Board met once in February 2023. The Zachary lot line revision on Manor Rock Road (Nussbaum, Katz) was reviewed. Public hearing was scheduled for the March meeting.

Assessor: *Craig Surprise*, report submitted.

Reassessment 2025 Resolution 10-2023

Board Member Linda Mirabelli motioned to approve Resolution 10-2023 Supporting the Taghkanic Assessor in updating the 2025 assessment roll, seconded by **Board Member Elisabeth Albert**.

Approved 5 Aye (Ryan, Elisabeth, Kara, Linda)
 0 Nays
 0 Absent (Elisabeth)

7:06 PM: Elizabeth Craig present at meeting

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

Historian: *Nancy Griffith*, no report submitted.

Traffic Safety Board: *Board Member Linda Swartz*, report submitted as follows

Traffic Safety Board will meet on March 23. I will have a report for the April Town Board meeting.

**Environmental Management Council: *Robert Brush* no report submitted:
Office for the Aging: *Joyce Thompson*, report submitted as follows.**

The Advisory Council to the Columbia County Office for the Aging (CCOFA) changed its meeting schedule for 2023 from two sets of three consecutive months to meeting every other month. The change was made to keep the information flow more consistent throughout the year. The first 2023 meeting was held on Wednesday, January 23rd at the Fire Training Complex in Ghent, New York.

The major topic of discussion was persistently lower attendance at the congregate sites. Two contributing factors are the loss of many members to COVID and the residual reluctance to participate in group gatherings. While numbers are rising somewhat, it is a slow process. Similarly, many agencies and programs are back in full-service mode but fewer people are using them.

The group discussion raised several suggestions for ways to address this general issue. A sub-committee will develop a survey to ask Columbia County seniors what they need in terms of services in this post-pandemic environment. It may be necessary to modify service priorities and delivery methods if there is a shift in how and what people need to live safely at home. It was also suggested that a senior section be provided on town websites with information about services and perhaps the menus and programs in the congregate sites.

For those needing durable medical equipment like walkers or wheelchairs the Independent Living Centers now has a loan service and accepts donations of used equipment. Call the Office for the Aging at 518.828.4258.

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

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



Highway: *Roberts Burns*, report submitted as follows:



🚧 **Town Wide Cleanup Day:** the Highway Department is having a cleanup day May 13, 2023 from 8am to 2pm.

Advisory Board reports:

Financial Advisory Committee Report: *Joyce Thompson* report submitted as follows:

Questions Regarding Discrepancies found in February UHY report as follows

One Budget Amendment needed as follows.

Town of Taghkanic				
13-Mar-23	Budget Amendment #2-2023			
		Increase		Decrease
HIGHWAY FUND				
MACHINERY	DA5130.4	30,000.00		
BUDGETED FUND BALANCE	DA9100			30,000.00
		30,000.00		30,000.00

Board Member Elisabeth Albert motioned to approve Budget Amendment #2-2023 as presented, seconded by **Board Member Linda Mirabelli** as follows:

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

Conservation Advisory Committee: Tony LaSalvia no meeting to report:

I am attaching the minutes of the meeting held on Feb 23. This was a combined meeting of the CAC and CSC Task Force. We are going to be doing that in the future as well. Doug Craig has taken the chair position on the CSC Task Force and has been running the meetings. The report is actually from him.



Anthony LaSalvia read a letter he sent to the Hudson River Estuary Program in support of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Counties to update the town wide Road-Stream Crossing Inventory Document and Management Plan that was developed in 2020. This review and update will help our municipality build the capacity to access funding and implement upgrades.

Supervisor Ryan Skoda: We used that document applying for the culvert on Taghkanic Churchtown Road thank you Tony.

Climate Smart Community:

Present were Doug Craig, Tim Kennelty, Larry Kadish, Peter Paden, Charlene Paden, Tony LaSalvia, Stephen Kling, Kevin Pastor, Bob Brush, Perry Ascher, Auggie Queros, Scott Marinoff, Betsy Albert, Joyce Thompson, Joan Feinberg, and David Koehler.

The upcoming program activities in the Pollinator / Home Grown National Parks series were reviewed.

1. Gardening with Deer: A presentation is scheduled for Mar 18 at the Firehouse. Billy informed us the kitchen area could be used to provide a 'kids' corner' for activities to entertain children of parents who attend the presentation. These activities will be

overseen by Joanne Klein. The presentation will be on Zoom and a recording will be posted or provided for anyone who wants to view it later. Stephen Kling was notified that we can move forward with the final, high resolution poster for this presentation.

- a. There was discussion about the desire to emphasize that several of the presentations belong under the umbrella of the Home Grown National Parks / Pollinator themes. **Bob Brush** will draft an article that communicates this point. Peter reminded us that we hope to coordinate with other towns on some of these activities and that we should take care to not seem to exclude their involvement / contributions in any article we publish.
 - b. In addition, the notion of identifying these presentations as being part of a larger theme, e.g., “Taghkanic Talks” or “Taghkanic Talks and Donuts”, was raised and received with uniform enthusiasm. The “Taghkanic Talks” would be a general educational series dealing with matters related to climate change and environmental sustainability. To be further discussed and incorporated into next Website / Tgazette postings.
2. May 20th Garden Planting at Town Hall:
 - a. 9:30am short talk (30 min) at Firehouse followed by planting at Town Hall. Targeting May 12th for dirt delivery (donated by Almstead, we will pay for delivery) volunteers needed weekend of 12th to rake out dirt and move wood chips (provided by Moribito). Clara Cordato 4H Group will build and deliver raised beds (flowers and veggies) for front of Town Hall. Remember to take photos of event. Already on Firehouse calendar. Will have 30 oak saplings and extra plants for residents.
 3. Garden Tour – This is not a tour to see lovely, finished gardens, but rather to view native pollinator garden in progress, to see how people are getting along with their efforts to incorporate the HGPN philosophy into their properties. David Newman, Tim Kennelty, and Avalon Bungee have agreed to participate (show their gardens).
 4. Notification of all these activities will be through the Website, Tgaz, IMBY (Doug and Bets) and the Columbia and Star Register (Peter). And Stephens posters.
 5. Beavers – *the CSC Task Force members unanimously agreed that the Town Board should be presented with the proposal of the Beaver Institute representatives to (1) give a presentation about the value of beaver populations and methods of mitigating beaver-related situations (flooding, etc) and (2) make inspection of 2-3 sites where recurring, costly mitigation activities are required by the highway department.* While we have not seen exact figures on how much time / money is spent by the HD annually on beaver mitigation, Joyce indicates it is a significant sum and that the town would stand to see a savings if these sites were good candidates for the Beaver Institute approaches. **Betsy** will present this to the Board. We will need to get land owner permission for site visits.
 6. Solar Panels for the Highway Department: Doug raised the idea of installing solar panels at the highway department, either on the rooftop or on a framework on the grounds. **Doug** will run this by Rob and then get one or more developers to visit the site and give us a recommendation / quote. Once we know these answers, we’ll figure out where to get the funding.
 7. *The CSC Task Force also agreed that the proposal by John Buono to upgrade the lighting at the Town Hall and at the Highway Department be presented to the Town Board for approval asap. Betsy will present this to the Board.*
 8. The committee considered a number of potential projects in an exercise to identify a CSC Plan for 2023:
 - a. Taghkanic Headwaters – (Peter) Peter has been in discussions with folks from neighboring towns who were involved in the previous Taghkanic Headwaters project. That dealt with the portion of the Tag Creek upstream of the pipe feeding the Hudson Reservoir. The idea now is to complete the analysis of the creek downstream of that site. **Peter and Tony** will flesh this out further for our next meeting, so that it becomes a SMART goal. (see next)
 - b. Doug brought up the idea of SMART goals and that we ought to try to be mindful of this concept in developing and communicating our ideas and projects for this Task Force. The acronym SMART stands for Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely. It is a guide to making sure that plans we come up with are well defined, that there is a way of measuring whether we have or have not succeeded, that they are within our means and resources, that they are aligned with the goals of the Climate Smart Committee, and that they cannot go on indefinitely, but have a specified time when we expect them to be completed. We can’t ‘do climate change mitigation’, but we can do a heat pump project where we hope to get 10 households in Taghkanic to switch to heat pumps.
 - c. Natural Resources Inventory for Taghkanic specifically – There is a general agreement that we want to do this, but it’s not clear what it is we would do. **Charlene** will look into how other towns have done their own NRI and where the grant money came from and who did the field work, etc.
 - d. Doug mentioned that there are incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act that will pay entirely for the installation of Heat Pumps for low-to-moderate income (LMI) families making less than 20% of the AMI in that area. **Doug** will check on this to make sure it is correct. **Charlene and Joan** will look into how to identify / communicate with LMI families. We would like to know how to reach out to these individuals in a non-compromising / ethical manner.
 - e. Resiliency Plan – (Larry) – this is another thing we’re sure we want to do, but aren’t quite sure what it entails. **Larry** will flesh this out further.

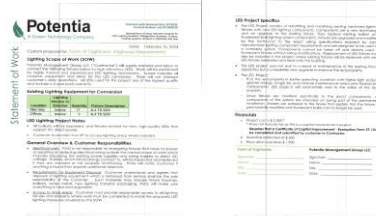
Also discussed a community calendar – how to hear about all local events in this realm.

Larry Kadish; the town has achieved the Bronze certification which helps when applying for grants.

✚ Proposal to upgrading Lighting at Town Hall



✚ Proposal to upgrading Lighting at Highway Department



Board Member Elisabeth Albert motioned to accept the two proposals for the Town Hall and Highway Department upgrade of the lighting systems, seconded by **Board Member Elizabeth Craig**.

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

✚ Beavers: **Board Member Elisabeth Albert;** the CSC is asking for the Town Board to approve \$500.00 for a one day site visit from Beaver Solutions and Beaver Strategies work in concert to determine what type device would best solve the problem and give us a quote on installation of same.

Board Member Elizabeth Craig motioned to approve \$500.00 for the site visit by Beaver Solutions and Beaver Strategies, seconded by **Board Member Elisabeth Albert**.

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

✚ Solar: **Anthony LaSalvia;** asked the Board for permission to investigate the option for solar for the Highway Department. All Board Members present agreed.

Digital Communication Advisory Committee: *Joyce Thompson and Nadja Palenzuela*

Old Business:


- Zoning Law Review:**
 March 22, 2023 6:30 PM Zoning review

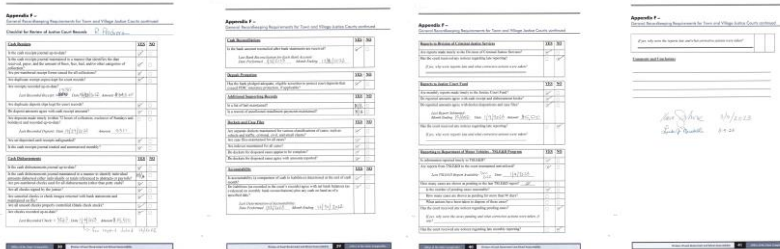
New Business:


A. May 2023 Calendar: *Board Member Elisabeth Albert* motioned to accept the May 2023 as presented, seconded by *Board Member Kara Gilmore*.

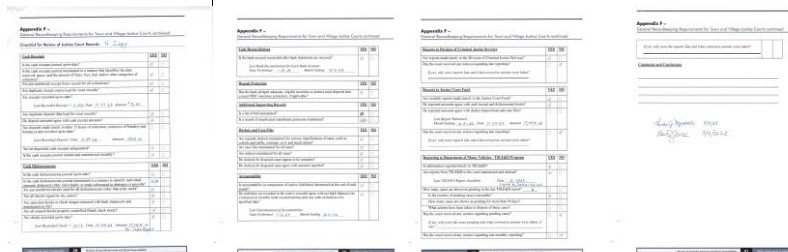
Approved 5 Aye (*Ryan, Elisabeth, Elizabeth, Kara, Linda*)
 0 Nays
 0 Absent

B. Annual Court Books Audit: *Board Member Elisabeth Albert* motioned the annual audit of Justice Prochera and Justice Zapp books showed no discrepancies and deemed satisfactory, seconded by *Board Member Elizabeth Craig*.

 Justice Prochera



 Justice Zapp



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

C. SEQRA Creation of Taghkanic Fire District: Attorney Andrew Howard walked the Board through the Full Environmental Assessment Form Part 2 – Identification of Potential Project Impacts.

D. Resolution 11-2023 Negative Declaration under SEQRA in Connection with the creation of Taghkanic Fire District No. 1: *Board Member Elisabeth Craig* motion a Negative Declaration under SEQRA in connection with the creation of Taghkanic Fire District No. 1, *Board Member Elisabeth Albert*.

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

E. Resolution approving the Creation of the Taghkanic Fire District and Dissolution of Taghkanic Fire Protection District # 1 and taghkanic Fire Protection District # 2: Tabled

F. Application to the Comptroller: Tabled

G. Churchtown Fire Co. LOSAP 2022 Points: *Board Member Elizabeth Craig* motioned to approve the LOSAP points as presented, seconded by *Board Member Linda Mirabelli*.

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

The bills were audited and approved for payment as follows:

✚ **February 23, 2023 Abstract:** on a motion by *Board Member Elisabeth Albert*, was approved for payment, seconded by *Board Member Linda Mirabelli*.

2023 General Fund Vouchers	#	55	-	72	\$	17,200.65
2023 Highway Fund Vouchers	#	18	-		\$	4,049.11

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

✚ **March 13, 2023 Abstract:** on a motion by *Board Member Elisabeth Albert*, was approved for payment, seconded by *Board Member Linda Mirabelli*.

2023 General Fund Vouchers	#	73	-	89	\$	8,169.69
2023 Highway Fund Vouchers	#	19	-	37	\$	74,069.22

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

The following people commented during the fifteen minute public comment:

- ✚ ***Anthony LaSalvia:*** would like to state there are no problems between the fire companies we all get along.
- ✚ ***Bill Hilscher:*** I will be making calls in the morning to investigating how changing to a District will affect LOSAP for all that are vested.
- ✚ ***Supervisor Ryan Skoda:*** I will be reaching out to the Comptroller as well.

Executive Session: *None*

With no further business, on a motion by *Board Member Kara Gilmore*, seconded by *Board Member Elisabeth Albert* the meeting was adjourned at **7:53 pm**, carried unanimously by all members present. The next Regular meeting will be **March 13, 2023** at the Taghkanic Town Hall.

Audience at Town Hall:

Bill Hilscher	Dennis Callahan	Art Griffith	Renee Nostrand
Paul Nostrand	Tony LaSalvia	Kara Desiderop	Kristina Wertz
Mary Suelflow	Steve Suelflow	Donay Queenan	Polly Horton
Arthur McGuire	Alastair McRobbie	Bob Brush	Zita Kobos
John Roberts	Perry Ascher	Anna Kadish	Larry Kadish
Sam Pratt			

Audience via Zoom:

Joyce Thompson	Peter Leggieri	Doug Craig	Scott Marinoff
Celina Kagan	Harriet Shur	Mel Harris	