

MINUTES OF
TOWN OF RENSSELAERVILLE TOWN BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 1, 2011

The Town Board of the Town of Rensselaerville held a Special Meeting on September 1, 2011 at 5 o'clock in the evening at the Rensselaerville Town Hall, 87 Barger Road, Medusa, NY 12120. The meeting was convened by Supervisor Dermody and the roll was called with the following results:

PRESENT WERE: Supervisor Marie Dermody, Councilman Robert Bolte, Councilman Gary Chase, Councilwoman Marion Cooke, Councilman John Kudlack, Town Clerk Kathleen A. Hallenbeck
Also present were Acting Highway Superintendent Potter and 21 interested citizens.

The purpose of the Special meeting is to discuss the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene and take any actions that may be necessary or appropriate as a result of this event.

Supervisor Dermody mentioned that she can't thank all of the volunteers in this Town enough for what they did to get us through this. We had organizations that were willing to pitch in but they hadn't come through nearly as effectively as the volunteers, the fire companies, the ambulance squad, and community members. We would have never fared this well without them. She thanked them on behalf the rest of the Town.

Supervisor Dermody mentioned that she had a whole chronology of events in terms of what was going on in Town Hall; just know that on Sunday she did declare a State of Emergency and she did declare a local emergency order for the evacuation of the Preston Hollow Hamlet when she found out what was going on because of the severity of the conditions. Those documents were faxed to John Layton, Captain of the County Emergency Management Office and those orders were rescinded on Tuesday once we knew that the waters had crested and we weren't in any further danger of flood waters. We also sent this documentation to the County Clerk and the Department of State. This chronology is available if anyone would like to look at it.

Supervisor Dermody asked the Town Board if they had any questions on what transpired from Sunday to Tuesday.

Councilwoman Cooke asked how we get the word out to people.

Supervisor Dermody, there was an unprecedented condition in this Town. Did we do some things right? Absolutely. Could we have done some things better? Positively. Now we know what works, what didn't work. She and Brian talked earlier; once things settle down we need to get together as a group to come up with protocol that everybody understands. Once we get this, we can put it on the website, we can have a hard copy, whatever. Thanks to our emergency volunteers, we wouldn't have gotten through this without them.

PRESTON HOLLOW PARK: It is a shame what happened to the Park. Our priority should be with homeowners to get them back up and running and in livable condition. In the meantime she is concerned about the liability and safety of the use of the field, especially where the baseball field was with kids playing on the rocks. Supervisor Dermody spoke to Attorney Catalano and he said it would be appropriate if the Town Board wanted to authorize no trespassing signs and somehow cordon off that area. So if anyone chooses to go in there the Town is not liable for any injury or damages.

Councilman Chase mentioned that the gymnasium pieces and things that are hanging there are a liability also.

Brian Wood mentioned that the people need a place to get away from everything that has happened. The pavilion is okay for people to go to have a picnic to clear their mind. He has worked all day on the Park. He explained where they could cordon off the Park and still have a place for the people to go to. The playground area is unsafe; the pavilion and basketball area are fine.

Can we take the playground down?

Supervisor Dermody mentioned that she contacted John Layton concerning contacting Craig Apple and the inmate Work Release Program. She was called back and asked how many inmates they want for tomorrow.

That would be an appropriate use for inmate labor, the cemeteries, the debris along the road.

A motion was Councilman Bolte to cordon off the part of the Park that can't be used, that is unsafe and put up "No Trespassing Signs" and the yellow caution tape; 2nd by Councilman Chase. *Motion Carried. Ayes (5) Dermody, Bolte, Chase, Cooke, Kudlack; Nays (0)*

A motion was made by Councilman Kudlack authorizing Supervisor Dermody to contact Craig Apple to set up a Work Release Program; 2nd by Councilman Chase.

Councilman Chase mentioned that we are going to need somebody to be our liaison on where our priorities are in different areas.

Supervisor Dermody, who is going to coordinate what they are doing and when and how many do we need?

Councilwoman Cooke, for the cemetery, about 4 or 5.

Councilman Chase and Councilman Kudlack will coordinate what gets done. We must provide the tools. A town truck will be available for them to load the debris into. It should also be dumped daily. For the wood, pile it all in one place and the fire company will have a drill.

Councilwoman Cooke suggested that Jon Whitbeck, Recycling Coordinator had an extra dumpster to sit in the middle of the area so people could put their debris into.

Gerald Wood, the problem with a dumpster sitting in the middle of the town people from all over would be using it.

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Supervisor Dermody mentioned that people need to let us know what needs to get done. If there is an area that is in dire need, let us know.

A couple loads of gravel are needed at the park.

Motion Carried. Ayes (5) Dermody, Bolte, Chase, Cooke, Kudlack; Nays (0)

SEWER PLANT: Supervisor Dermody mentioned that we had emergency repairs at the Sewer Plant. Apparently there was enough under-current to remove the support for the sewer pipe, with that dangling there and if it breaks we are in real trouble. She authorized the emergency repair. We have signed easement agreements from the landowners, she needs ratification of this because it would have cost us a whole lot more to fix it if it went further. Whatever it cost comes out of the sewer fund. They have funding in their account to pay for it.

Chairman Long mentioned that he had the engineer from the Water Supply dam out here on Tuesday to survey the damage to the Water Supply Dam and the Sewer District pipe that was undermined. He recommended that we temporarily shore up the pipe so it doesn't break. He estimated the cost of the temporary repairs to be \$1000.00. He contacted Phil Pearson to do this.

Supervisor Dermody mentioned that he needs a certificate of insurance naming the Town as an additional insured before doing any work.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Cooke to ratify the designation of this repair to shore up the sewer pipe as an emergency repair; 2nd by Councilman Kudlack. *Motion Carried. Ayes (5) Dermody, Bolte, Chase, Cooke, Kudlack; Nays (0)*

COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE: Supervisor Dermody mentioned that she was informed by Gary Horn of the County Emergency Management Office that Red Cross Volunteers will in the Preston Hollow Hamlet during the weekend to help with the cleanup. She spoke to Brian Wood who said that in a lot of the homes people did a lot of the work already. They could help cleanup some of the debris around Route 145 and things like that. We need a contact person to tell them what needs to be done. She could meet up with them to tell them what needs to be done.

Councilman Bolte asked who we are going to get to coordinate FEMA and make sure that it is all documented.

Supervisor Dermody mentioned that Councilman Kudlack and Councilman Chase approached her with the following a concept.

Councilman Chase mentioned that we need to come up with some kind of committee like a disaster assistance committee to bring all the information from people in the Town that had or have issues. They drafted a form that asked what they need, what happened, how much the cost is, how much damage was done so that we can gather all the information that we need. We would be aware of all the areas out there that had problems; for instance, the park, the fire companies, the dry hydrants, etc. Maybe by working with the Ambulance, Fire Departments, volunteers that we can get on the committee to see people, get this information back in. This way they can see what is a priority area and what we need to do.

Supervisor Dermody, it helps us keep track of whether or not they are following through.

Councilman Chase, he thinks it will better in a group. Some people have been approached by FEMA and FEMA has walked away from them. As a Town we should stick behind all the people that live in the Town and work as a group and try to get FEMA funding. Councilwoman Cooke, it is going to be tough going door to door. Perhaps if we announce it on the radio that there will be a meeting at the fire house on Saturday morning to discuss this.

Councilman Chase, have each of the Hamlets working on what they are doing, if you know of somebody who needs help, get the information to us.

Supervisor Dermody, we could do a bulk mailing to all postal patrons to get the information out, FEMA Flyer and the questionnaire to be filled out. The FEMA forms explained what is needed from the individual to apply for the FEMA funding.

When you call FEMA it takes about 20 minutes to complete the form over the phone. They will ask pertinent information to get things moving along, an inspector will come to your home.

Councilman Bolte mentioned that we have to separate between individuals and private entities and what we are trying to do with the Town as far as a Highway and all that stuff. We need a person as a FEMA Clerk or whatever to document all the work that these guys have done already.

Supervisor Dermody, we could ask the Highway Clerk to do that part of it.

Brian Wood mentioned that there is a difference between the FEMA stuff for the Town and for the individuals. It is not the responsibility of the Town Board to take on the individuals' FEMA stuff. We don't know who needs help, who doesn't; this will leave it on the individuals to respond. If we get some help and offers, we will send it their way.

Gerald Wood, he feels right now the Town Board, Fire Chiefs, Civil Defense should be doing the work or you are going to have so many people involved that the right hand is not going to know what the left hand is doing.

Councilwoman Cooke mentioned that the whole Town Board should be on this because you and Jack would know what is going on but the rest of the Town Board wouldn't so you wouldn't know what answers to get back to people. If the whole Town Board was on this with the Fire Chiefs, etc., we would know what is going on.

Supervisor Dermody, the problem is that it would become an open meetings law issue. You would then have to notice every meeting.

Brian Wood, one suggestion that he would have for the open meeting policy is an attempt on Sunday and carried into Monday that kind of feel apart because nobody really had interest in participating beyond much more than the Fire Chiefs. The one thing that we lack in it was any type of organized command structure. Besides himself, Dennis, and Tom Richie, there is nobody else in the Town that has had the NIMS Command training. By doing that, you set up some sort of inter-management system that you would delegate authority to try to help what is needed out here and by doing that at least for the next seven days you would have a briefing twice a day, just to see what is going on. It doesn't mean two guys will be in charge of this; you have to delegate a management system. For instance, someone would be working on a damage report. That is how you manage these types of systems, not by committee or by bureaucratic rule and regulations. You have an incident management system that you as the Town Supervisor and the Town Board delegate authority to manage this operation and then move forward. As we move forward and recover from this and take the lessons we learned, one lesson we learned is that we need to have a comprehensive emergency plan. We need to have emergency management procedures in place. That may be something to consider. He will help; there is enough knowledge in this room to get that moving forward. Having special meetings doesn't get things solved. If you do it in an emergency management way, there are all types of legislation out there that allows you to do a task group of people as an incident management team. The flood waters are down, but the recovery period usually last ten times longer than the actual emergency. That becomes a consideration as you go forward. There are a number of things that need to be addressed.

Councilwoman Cooke, if we set up one night a week for the next 4 or 5 weeks and just notify people when we are going to have a meeting.

Brian Wood, you can do that but it comes back to the incident management function. That group meets twice a day. The person in charge of public information can have a meeting whenever he wants to keep the townspeople informed. This group of people who has incident commander and operations chief, planning chief; that is really the direction this should go to be done appropriately. The Town Board will ask these people to get it done. It is a feedback. The Town Board would give a delegation and ask him to report back on what is going on so you are informed. Every twelve hours there is an update and we can see what we are going to do for the next twelve hours. The night briefings are benign because the emergency is over.

Councilman Bolte, you don't get involved in the open meetings law and things like that.

Mr. Wood, no, it is an emergency management meeting that is done; they are the only ones involved.

Supervisor Dermody asked Mr. Wood if that is something that he could or would be willing to do is to discuss in greater detail with the Town Board at a work meeting so that they have an idea of the structure. We have to get the process going.

Mr. Wood, if you are going to do it you have two choices, from today and forward, you can go through bureaucratically by having special meeting and bogging stuff down that way or just say we are going to have an Incident Management Team and we are going to move forward. There is not a lot to be done it seems to be coordination with cleanup. There is a huge need and coordination for fixing streams and stream banks. He will get the Town Board a copy of the delegation authority which you would assign an incident commander. You want to have somebody in there that knows what they are doing.

Supervisor Dermody, if you could do that and at our regular meeting we will appoint someone to do that and the committee can start meeting and put this protocol together.

Councilman Bolte mentioned we should have somebody now.

Mr. Wood mentioned that you don't appoint people to this; it is a delegation. I delegate you as Incident Commander from now until next Thursday and this is what I want you to do. It is not creating another position, once it is over it goes away.

Councilman Chase, yourself, a couple of fire chiefs, he and Jack would be able to bring the information back to the Town Board.

Mr. Wood, you don't have to be on the fire company to do that; you pick people who are specialized in certain areas.

The Town Board delegates an incident manager and this person would pick his own people.

Supervisor Dermody, because we also are involved with the County, let's say we delegate you as the incident commander and you're busy with county stuff, then you further delegate somebody to take over for you.

Mr. Wood, yes.

Councilman Bolte asked Brian Wood if is willing to do this for us.

Mr. Wood, yes.

Councilman Chase asked how many people you need on the team.

Mr. Wood, when he sees what needs to be done, you need to have a task of what the Town wants. You tell him what you want done. You want clean up, you want food, you want a shelter, you want a report on the electric, that type of stuff, then he can report back to them and you pick who you want. In the delegation if he is gone there is somebody to sit in his spot.

Councilman Bolte made a motion to delegate Brian Wood as Critical Management Commander effective through September 13, 2011; 2nd by Councilwoman Cooke.

CEO Overbaugh asked how far does this Incident Command go to, when do you stop.

Brian Wood, whenever they want. Mr. Wood explained how this works.

CEO Overbaugh asked if you are just going to do cleanup or are you going to start tearing things apart and put things back together? Brian Wood, that is not what the incident command does. The incident command deals with the emergency. When it comes down to rebuilding a bridge, he doesn't rebuild the bridge; he gets the people and say, "Are we ready to do the bridge.?" You are just dealing with the emergency, the cleanup of hazards, taking care of the park and making sure it is safe, making sure we have access, etc. This should have been done on Saturday so it was in place and ready to go. The incident command is going to be half because it is 5 days after the emergency. So you basically know what is left. That should have been Saturday but we will learn from this and move forward and then the next time this happens we will be prepared. The declaration of the emergency can be put in first.

Discussion ensued on this topic.

Motion Carried. Ayes (5) Dermody, Bolte, Chase, Cooke, Kudlack; Nays (0)

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT: Acting Highway Superintendent Potter mentioned that the roads that were washed that are beyond the Highway Department scope at this particular time are Tigner Lane and Gulf Road. Gulf Road extension is closed but he thinks we can get those culverts back. All the other roads are open. We put about 800 tons of shale on the roads where the washouts were. There are some small washouts left.

McCulloch Bridge: Acting Highway Superintendent Potter mentioned that the bridge is really packed with wood and there is a whole gravel bar behind it. He is not sure if the County will help; he will talk to them tomorrow. The bridge is a county responsibility. He explained what they could do at the bridge. They may have to rent a piece of equipment to do the work.

Councilman Bolte explained that he got a call for shale, being on the Town Board he should not sell the shale. Also they had the machine in another shale bank already, it did not make much sense to move the equipment just because the cost was a thousand dollars. His answer was to stay in the shale bank, keep the machine there, and keep hauling shale and forget about the procurement policy in an emergency and just verify with the Town Board on what was spent.

Councilwoman Cooke made a motion to ratify letting Acting Superintendent Potter continue to get as much shale as he needs with no regard to the thousand dollar procurement policy issue; 2nd by Councilman Chase. *Motion Carried. Ayes (5)*

Dermody, Bolte, Chase, Cooke, Kudlack; Nays (0)

FEMA: Supervisor Dermody mentioned that we are getting individual assistance from FEMA, the personal home owner step. This is the only time in Albany County history that we have gotten funds and not everybody got it. Mr. Wood took FEMA and SEMO through the town the other day and showed them the important spots.

EXCAVATOR: Acting Highway Superintendent Potter asked if he could get an excavator, get three quotes and go with the cheapest quote, would that be acceptable with the Town Board. It is to cleanout bridges.

Councilman Bolte asked if he has spoken to any of the local guys about taking the stuff out of the creeks.

Acting Highway Superintendent Potter, no, he has to talk to the County to see what they are going to do.

Councilman Bolte was not sure what kind of experience the Highway Clerk has with FEMA. This is a whole new ball game; she doesn't have experience with FEMA. This work needs to be documented properly. If it is not documented we won't get paid for it. If we know of anybody or if somebody is interested in doing it, it would be a good thing.

Supervisor Dermody, the only person she knows of who has massive experience with FEMA would be Joyce Chase.

Randy Bates offered to do survey and documentation with David Potter. He did not think he would want to be FEMA clerk, he would be willing do the documentation of the damage and the detail estimates. He would volunteer to do that. It is important right now at this stage before the cleanup. It needs to be videotaped and create the record. Gather the information and put it on a form and give that to the clerk.

There has been a lot of pictures and taping all along.

The two bridges in Preston Hollow need to be videotaped and checked, the abutments need to be checked; that is for the reimbursement. It is very expensive to repair that. All that stuff needs to be documented.

The FEMA Clerk would get paid through FEMA

Supervisor Dermody asked if Acting Superintendent Potter is willing to work with Randy Bates and if Kayla is able to do the Clerk part. Acting Superintendent Potter will check with Kayla to see if she is willing to be the FEMA Clerk.

Discussed was what needs to be done in filling out the FEMA forms.

A motion was made by Supervisor Dermody to appoint Kayla Lee as FEMA Clerk contingent on her willingness to take the position for this disaster; 2nd by Councilman Chase. *Motion Carried. Ayes (5) Dermody, Bolte, Chase, Cooke, Kudlack; Nays (0)*

Gerald Wood mentioned that he hopes you people sitting up there put politics aside. Be here for the people that need help.

Supervisor Dermody, she did not see any politics going on here.

Supervisor Dermody asked CEO Overbaugh is he had anything from the Building Department concerning the disaster.

CEO Overbaugh, not yet.

Councilwoman Cooke asked about the burned out house down there, that we don't have the authority to go in and inspect these places without getting Town Board approval first.

CEO Overbaugh, are you talking about the burned out building or disaster. This disaster is considered an emergency and that is different. On the burned out building, the Fire Chief asked him to go look at it; it is their scene. If you look at our Unsafe Building Law, that has to go to the Town Board first and follow protocol on that.

MAILING: Supervisor Dermody, is it the Town Board's desire to make this available (FEMA information & survey) to all townspeople via a mailer?

Yes.

Town Clerk Hallenbeck said that we could get it out tomorrow; they would be hand delivered to each post office in Town.

STREAM: Supervisor Dermody mentioned at some point we have to get DEC out there to fix the stream.

Mr. Wood, you are also going to have to get in touch with FEMA and the State to get in here to clean out the streams. If we get 2 inches of rain on Saturday, we are going to have a mess.

To get these agencies in, it will need political pressure, also from the County and State officials.

CAMP CASS: Councilman Kudlack asked what was the response when you called Camp Cass?

Supervisor Dermody mentioned that she called Camp Cass on Sunday and left a message and did not get a response back. Yesterday, James Warrick, Internal Affairs, stopped by and left phone numbers and said if we ever need that building all we have to do is call. They have water, food, a kitchen, showers, anytime we need that all we have to do is give him a call.

INSTITUTE: Supervisor Dermody called the Institute and spoke to Nancy Hofstadter who made some phone calls for her and called back said they had a meeting room and the Straus Building available up until Wednesday because they had a group coming in. Gillian William sent an email confirming that.

Mr. Wood, it is un-realistic to not have your Town Hall capable of being an emergency operations center for events like that. Not just a generator, you have the resources here, simple management stuff here, extra phones, private areas for different people to get away. He can help with that. It is great that Camp Cass and the Institute came through, with all the records that you have here and all the resources you have here and the highway department also being here.

Councilwoman Cooke asked if anyone knew how long the Red Cross is going to be at the Ambulance building. This information needs to be advertised that they are there.

Mr. Wood, there is plenty of water, dry ice and we are still waiting for the Salvation Army with food. One lesson you will learn from this that he has learned from disasters in the past is, although they are great people, they are not the most reliable (Red Cross). Don't depend on them to be the save all for the operation.

Supervisor Dermody mentioned that she was told on Tuesday that the distribution trailer was on route, and yesterday she found out that when they said "in route" it just meant that supplies were coming into the region and then it would be disbursed to the sites.

Supervisor Dermody mentioned that she got a call from Gary Horn who said that the Salvation Army was on its way with ready to eat meals and go to the Fire House. We have no idea where they are.

Supervisor Dermody mentioned that if it weren't for our volunteers and our organizations here, we would really be in a hole.

Supervisor Dermody mentioned that Captain Layton said that maybe that we are too self sufficient; there were only two 911 calls from Rensselaerville throughout the entire disaster. Maybe we need to learn to make noise.

Supervisor Dermody mentioned that she wants people to understand, she didn't realize that she was expected to be at the Ambulance Bay when all this came down, she stayed home, not because she liked being there but because it is the first time in her life in Cooksburg that the creek had risen within twenty feet of her driveway. However, she knew she had one of the only live phones in town and she didn't want to be in a place where she had no phone to call out on. That is why she stayed there. If that was the wrong thing to do she apologizes. At the time she was doing what she thought needed to be done in terms of having contact with the outside world.

Mr. Wood, we are all aware that we have no instructions in place, in the future we will have to do this.

Supervisor Dermody, at the time she was also in contact with Chad Jemison regarding the Myosotis Lake Dam. We had to be ready to put the emergency action plan into motion if the water level in the lake reached a certain level. That was a protocol that was in place and working relatively well; however, there are glitches in the plan and they are meeting to revise it to make it more user friendly and less subjective.

Supervisor Dermody, there were a lot of things going on. She thanked the volunteers, we could not have gotten through this the way we did without all of your help.

Who puts up the barriers? You had people being directed to go to the Fire House but there was no way to get there.

The barriers are not there to keep people out; they were there because it was not safe to drive on 145. The people won't be directed to the fire house anymore; it is all going to be out of the Ambulance Building.

Discuss briefly were the detours.

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Discussed was using Camp Cass as an overflow building.

Mr. Wood spoke to Central Hudson concerning the power and when certain areas would be turned on.

Gerald Wood mentioned that if anyone needs help to call the Ambulance Bay at 239-6914. They have water, food, etc. Neighbors help neighbors; if someone needs help send them to the Ambulance Bay.

Did anybody have to be evacuated?

Preston Hollow did, there was an order in place. They didn't have to leave if they didn't want to.

There were about 60 people at the Ambulance Bay.

Is there some kind of data base or list of residents in the Town who have medical problems or are or aged?

Yes, Albany County has a Special Needs Registry. We have a list and the Sheriffs checks on them.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Councilman Chase to adjourn the meeting at 6:20PM; 2nd by Councilman Bolte.
Motion Carried.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED;

Kathleen A. Hallenbeck
Town Clerk