

# Sennett Town Board Regular Monthly Meeting

## April 17, 2025

Minutes of the Town of Sennett Town Board Meeting Held on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at 6:00 PM at the Sennett Town Office Building.

Members Present: Thomas Blair, Supervisor  
James Vivenzio, Councilman  
Edward Rizzo, Councilman  
Kristopher LaPointe, Councilman  
Michael Wellauer, Absent

Also Present: Cheri Major, Bookkeeper  
Kris LaPointe, Water & Sewer Superintendent  
Kathy Gray, Sennett Seniors Chair  
Jeff Lowe, Assessor  
Kathleen Salisbury, Town Clerk

Residents: Bill Feocco, Candace Searing, Amy Rose

Remotely: Richard J. Andino, Esq.  
Greg Hotaling, MRB  
Tom  
William M

### **Call to Order**

Supervisor Blair called the meeting to order and asked attendees to turn off their cell phones. He noted that the meeting was being recorded.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by a prayer led by Supervisor Blair.

### **Roll Call**

Town Clerk Kate conducted the roll call:

- Councilman Vivenzio: Present
- Councilman Rizzo: Present
- Councilman LaPointe: Present
- Supervisor Blair: Present

Supervisor Blair noted that Councilman Wellauer was excused.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Supervisor Blair asked for comments or corrections to the previous month's minutes. Councilman LaPointe noted that the approval for the GIS tablet for water was not initially included in the emailed minutes but had been added to the current version. He made a motion to accept the minutes with a correction to change the word "excavator" to "tablet" on page 4.

*Motion by Councilman LaPointe to accept the minutes as drafted with the correction from "excavator" to "tablet". Seconded by Councilman Vivenzio.*

The motion carried unanimously.

## **Public Hearing(s)**

Supervisor Blair noted that there were no public hearings scheduled for the current meeting. He mentioned that a Water District 8 public hearing was scheduled for the following Thursday, April 24th, at 5 PM.

## **Scheduled Speakers**

### **MRB – Engineering Items**

Greg Hotaling from MRB Group presented updates on various projects:

- Water Master Plan: MRB is preparing a proposal for professional services to develop a master plan for water and sewer systems, including replacement schedules.
- Water Rate Study: GHD, Auburn's chosen contractor for wholesale water negotiations, is undertaking this study with MRB providing support.
- Ambulance District: Mr. Hotaling reported that the map plan report for the board's education is almost complete, pending input on response times and the benefits of having an ambulance stationed in the town.
- Water District 3: MRB is working with Water & Sewer Superintendent LaPointe to finish up GIS work, focusing on attribute input.
- Local Government Records Management Information Fund Grant: The town has been awarded the grant and the project is underway.
- Water District 8: MRB is revising the Map Plan Report based on initial feedback. A resident, Candy Searing, presented a petition to the Board with 14 signatures out of 22 homes (63.6%) on Beech Road in support of adding Beech Road to the proposed Water District #8.
- Subdivision Regulation Update: MRB has provided a draft of revised subdivision regulations for review and comments. Mr. Hotaling suggested scheduling a meeting with Supervisor Blair, Sean (planning board chair), and himself to discuss the current status.

Greg Hotaling also provided an update on the potential addition of Beech Road to Water District 8. He explained that adding more users would reduce the cost per EDU from \$1,735.62 to \$1,708.80, assuming a 60% grant from WIIA. He noted that while this would create an additional dead-end in the system, it wouldn't negatively impact the overall district.

The board discussed the timing of grant applications, particularly the WIIA grant, which has been pushed back to late summer or early fall. Rich Andino, the town attorney, advised that the town could still complete the necessary procedures for district formation before the new WIIA application deadline.

*Motion by Councilman LaPointe to add Beech Road to Water District 8. Seconded by Councilman Rizzo.*

The motion carried 3-0 with Supervisor Blair abstaining and Councilman Wellauer Absent.

The board also approved two resolutions related to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) process for Water District 8:

*Motion by Councilman LaPointe to amend the Full Environmental Assessment Form Part 1 and SEQRA to include Beech Road. Seconded by Councilman Vivenzio. Motion by Councilman LaPointe to designate the Town of Sennett as lead agency for the SEQRA process. Seconded by Councilman Rizzo.*

Both motions passed 3-0 with Supervisor Blair abstaining and Councilman Wellauer Absent.

## **Public Be Heard**

Motion is made by Councilman Rizzo to open the Public Be Heard Period, seconded by Councilman Vivenzio at 6:33 pm. All in favor.

With no public comments, a motion to close is made by Councilman Rizzo and seconded by Councilman Vivenzio at 6:33 pm. All in favor.

## **Department Reports**

### **Attorney**

The attorney's report was covered during the discussion of Water District 8 and the SEQRA process.

### **Bookkeeper**

Bookkeeper Major presented the financial status report, noting that there was an error in one of the cells that she would correct and provide updated information. She mentioned working on the final report for ARPA, due by April 30th, with \$5,000 left to allocate. Cheri also reported on her upcoming attendance at a retirement seminar at the end of the month.

### **Planning Board**

Councilman Rizzo reported on behalf of the Planning Board:

- Mike O'Neill had two applications: one to separate Panera Bread from the larger development, which is currently on hold, and another for Pizza Hut, which is delayed due to health issues.
- The Cayuga County 239 review approved the parking lot project across from the Jeep dealership.
- The building next to Jonathan's Furniture, formerly an auto parts store, will become a Hyundai dealership.
- The old Fox Honda location will become a Toyota dealership.
- East Hill Medical is expected to submit a project proposal soon.

Supervisor Blair mentioned that East Hill Medical would be petitioning for tax-exempt status and that their project would involve a change of use for the entire building.

### **Codes/Fire Marshall**

Councilman LaPointe presented the Codes and Fire Marshall report:

- 13 permits and certificates were issued
- \$550 in fees were collected
- Construction cost totaled \$163,000
- 18 site visit inspections were conducted
- Various other inspections were performed, including foundation, framing, plumbing and heating, insulation, final, fire and safety, and electrical inspections
- One training class was attended

### **Zoning Enforcement Officer**

Councilman Vivenzio presented the Zoning Enforcement Officer's report, which included:

- Discussion with a developer about turning Lake House store property into multiple apartments
- Review of an engineer's report on Pizza Hut
- Subdivision of Moran and Dauphin property
- Conversation with a resident about a walking trail
- Discussion about a sign on Pine Ridge Road
- Conversation with Bob Edmunds about a Hyundai dealership on Grant Avenue
- Interaction with a persistent solar company about building in Sennett
- Discussion about B&B restrictions

The board briefly discussed the town's stance on solar projects, with Supervisor Blair indicating that the town was not actively seeking solar developments and that any proposals would need to fit specific criteria.

## **Assessor**

Jeff Lowe, the town assessor, presented information on the town's equalization rate and assessment practices. He explained that the town's residential properties are currently assessed at 56% of their market value, while commercial properties are at 81%, resulting in an overall equalization rate of 61%.

Mr. Lowe discussed the pros and cons of conducting a town-wide reassessment, noting that while it would bring assessments closer to market value, it could be costly and potentially disruptive. He emphasized that Sennett's current assessments are relatively consistent and fair compared to sale prices.

The board also discussed a potential change in how sales information is entered into the county system, which could result in a cost savings for the town.

## **Fire Dept.**

Supervisor Blair presented the fire department report for March 2025:

- Total alarms: 67
- Year-to-date alarms: 182
- Fire calls: 3
- Rescue and EMS calls: 36
- Hazardous conditions: 5
- Service calls: 5
- Good intent calls: 12
- False alarms: 6
- Mutual aid provided: 2
- Mutual aid received: 22

The board discussed the high number of mutual aid calls received, particularly for EMS services, and considered inviting the fire chiefs to a future meeting to discuss the department's challenges with EMS calls.

## **Highway Dept.**

In the absence of Brandon La Sagna, Councilman Rizzo presented the highway department report:

- The department is cleaning up damage from winter plowing
- Brush clearing has begun
- Preparations are underway for Swamp Road repairs
- Dumpster days are scheduled for May 3rd and 4th
- The department is working on chip and seal estimates for the year, potentially including Carrie Court
- The 284 forms need to be signed
- A new mowing contract has been received

The board also discussed the potential placement of a speed reduction sign on County Line Road to collect data for residents petitioning the state for a speed limit reduction.

## **Water Dept.**

Kris LaPointe presented the water department report:

- Meter readings were completed, with 612 out of 801 meters read
- Approximately 190 meters are left to install
- The annual water quality report for 2024 was completed, showing a reduction in water loss by 3.7 million gallons (3%), saving the town about \$19,000
- A water break on Wegman Street was repaired
- The Harmony system was updated
- Leak detection efforts are ongoing for a leak near South Hunter and Route 20
- An XTR was replaced in District 103's meter pit

- The annual water quality report has been submitted to Cayuga County and State Departments of Health

Mr. LaPointe also mentioned his upcoming attendance at a rural water conference in May and the potential hiring of a new employee within the next two weeks.

## **Town Clerk**

Kate, the Town Clerk, reported on the following:

- March collections: \$4,296 total, with \$4,002.74 going to the general fund and \$23 to animal population control
- Online tax payments: 31 residents paid online, totaling \$121,795.87
- Total tax collection: \$3.5 million
- Online water bill payments: 66 payments totaling \$12,298.38
- The clerk's office will be closed for a conference from Monday to Wednesday of the following week

The board also approved a contract for a cloud system for digitization of town records:

*Motion by Councilman LaPointe to approve the Enterprise Content Management System cloud system with Community Development Solutions for \$5,000 for the year 2025. Seconded by Councilman Rizzo.*

The motion passed unanimously.

Additionally, the board ratified the purchase of a new server for the town hall:

*Motion by Councilman Vivenzio to approve the purchase of a new server from Business Systems of Central New York for \$15,023.37. Seconded by Councilman LaPointe.*

The motion passed unanimously.

The board also approved the annual Veeam backup and licenses for the town:

*Motion by Councilman Vivenzio to approve the annual Veeam backup and licenses from Business Systems of Central New York for \$1,187.50. Seconded by Councilman LaPointe.*

The motion passed unanimously.

The board also approved the upgrade to the wireless access points for the town:

*Motion by Councilman Vivenzio to approve the upgrade to the wireless access points from Business Systems of Central New York for \$597.00. Seconded by Councilman LaPointe.*

The motion passed unanimously.

## **Animal Control**

Councilman Vivenzio presented the animal control report for March 2025:

- 2 complaints received
- 0 dogs seized and sheltered
- 0 dogs redeemed
- 1 dog transferred for adoption
- 0 dogs advertised or euthanized
- 0 license applications or notices to comply issued
- 0 lost and found matches

## **Committees**

### *Parks*

Councilman Rizzo reported on the parks committee:

- Waste stations have been received
- Benches are expected to arrive soon
- The highway department will assist with setup before the opening

- Signage designs are pending approval
- The architectural plans for a building project are nearing completion and will soon be ready for bidding

The board discussed the timeline for opening the dog park and the need for additional work, including planting and pathway preparation.

#### *Veteran Affairs*

Supervisor Blair reported that flags have been ordered for the memorial park and that quotes for plaques have been received. He mentioned that J&J Landscaping has proposed a cost-saving measure for the service emblems installation.

#### *Sennett Seniors*

Kate reported that the Sennett Seniors had their luncheon the previous day, with approximately 102 attendees.

#### *Historian*

Councilman Vivenzio, serving as the town historian, discussed two main points:

- A proposal for the town to be part of a scenic byway project related to Harriet Tubman. The board expressed concerns about potential zoning code restrictions and decided to schedule a call with the project organizers for clarification.
- The need for better genealogy research tools, such as a public access version of Ancestry.com, to assist with inquiries from the public.

## **Old Business**

The board briefly discussed ongoing projects and updates, including:

- The town records digitization project
- Handbook updates
- E-Code 360 codification project
- Town branding and marketing progress
- Vehicle and traffic safety sign deployment
- The need for new board members in various positions

## **New Business**

The board discussed the upcoming dog park ribbon cutting and signage installation, agreeing to revisit the topic at the next meeting when more information would be available.

## **Supervisor Correspondence/Report**

Supervisor Blair shared various correspondence items, including:

- A certificate for explosive storage by US Fireworks on Mutton Hill Road
- Information about grants
- A resolution opposing part of the governor's 2025 Article 7 revenue bill regarding the siting of major electric transmission facilities
- An offer from a customer service representative to provide funding for EV charging stations

## **Executive Session**

A motion is made by Councilman LaPointe to enter into executive session at 7:57 p.m., seconded by Councilman Rizzo.

A motion is made by Councilman Rizzo to return from executive session at 8:15 p.m., seconded by Councilman Vivenzio.

Supervisor Blair advised no action was taken in executive session.

## **Payment of Monthly Bills**

*Motion by Councilman Rizzo to pay all bills. Seconded by Councilman LaPointe.*

The motion passed unanimously.

## **Adjournment**

*Motion by Councilman Vivenzio to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Councilman LaPointe.*

The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.