

On July 25, 2012, a Special Work Session of the Town Board was held at the Town Hall, 363 Underhill Avenue, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598

Present: Michael J. Grace, Supervisor
Terrence Murphy, Councilman
Nicholas Bianco, Councilman
Vishnu Patel, Councilman
David Paganelli, Councilman
Alice E. Roker, Town Clerk

Supervisor Grace explained that this Special Work Session is a courtesy that is being extended to the members of the Citizens for a DPW.

Mr. Aaron Bock, a member of Citizens for a DPW, read from prepared remarks. Among the comments he made was that he began work on this issue almost twenty years ago when he was Town Supervisor. A study was conducted of the Town and one of the issues we looked at was a DPW. The Citizens for a DPW believes this is a good time for implementation. We need to modernize our existing government structure. We estimate a savings of \$250,000 per year.

Mrs. Jane Daniels, a member of Citizens for a DPW also read from prepared remarks. Among the comments she made was there they are concerned about the reduction in town services including street paving and fewer police officers; there is a need for drainage improvements and infrastructure is crumbling. Mrs. Daniels spoke about the economy stating that continuing on the path a we're going down, our budget will exceed the two percent cap. Over the past four years, the tax revenue has declined by more than \$1.9 million.

Mr. Bock explained how some former Town Board members took steps to begin a DPW, but he stated that those measures did not go far enough.

Supervisor Grace asked if having an elected Highway Superintendent and creating a Department of Public Works were separate issues. The Supervisor spoke about the new programs that the Town has implemented such as a computerized purchase system, a new fleet management system and soon a record management system will help us get a better handle on managing documents shared by various departments. He took exception to the remark by the committee that the delivery of services has declined.

Mr. Bock asked that a public hearing for this issue be scheduled for mid -August.

Mrs. Jane Daniels explained that in doing their research, they made contact with thirty different entities, i.e. village, town and or county. There is no model for a department of public works. They were all different. Mrs. Daniels gave an illustration of a possible makeup of a department of public works for Yorktown. The slide presentation also explained how they were able to determine that the savings to residents of Yorktown could be \$250,000.

Mr. Jay Kopstein, a resident of Yorktown spoke about a problem he had with garbage on his street. For several weeks he tried to get help from the Department of Environment Protection

and the former Town Supervisor. When those efforts failed, he spoke to the Highway Superintendent and the garbage was cleaned up in fifteen minutes. He does not support having a DPW.

Mr. Anthony Basso, spoke in opposition to a DPW. Among his comments; the Town of Yorktown's Highway Department does a better job with its roads than DPW's in the Town of Cortlandt or the City of Peekskill. Having a DPW removes someone who is directly accountable to the voters.

Mr. Nick DiTomasso expressed concern about where the savings in this plan were.

Mr. Dan Lockett read prepared remarks. Among the issues he talked about is the issue of accountability and how some positions are technical, while others are policy driven.

Mrs. Ann Kutter stated that she was disappointed at some of tonight's discussion. She asked the Town Board to advertise a public hearing on this issue so that it might be placed on the ballot in November.

Mr. Fred Guiltz said accountability is very important. He also spoke about the State Comptroller's Audit of the Town of Yorktown.

Mrs. Roz Weis stated that she read information provided to her by the Citizens for a DPW and it appears there will be a savings. It is incumbent that the citizens of Yorktown be allowed to vote on this issue.

Mr. Brian Carroll stated that he applauded the Citizens for a DPW who have put together a package which he believes is well done. He asked the Town Board how many petitions they have received.

One of the members stated zero, another received 6 and one member of the Town Board stated that he received several hundred.

Mr. Carroll ended his discussion by stating that the issue should be placed on an agenda so that it goes to referendum in November.

Mr. David Humphrey stated that it is disingenuous for the Town Board to believe that the committee could walk in with a completed plan. The structure of DPW's are all different. On the issue of accountability, except for the Highway Superintendent and the Town Clerk, all department heads are appointed and they do a good job.

Mrs. Barbara Wilkens stated that she has lived in the Town of Yorktown for seventy (70) years. She spent 12 years as a member of the Yorktown Town Board. During her time in office, two or three different Highway Superintendents were elected. One of the more frustrating issues is the Town Board's involvement with the Highway Superintendent which began and ended with the budget. The Town Board has no input into how the Town's infrastructure works.

Mrs. Jennie Menton stated that she is confused and doesn't believe the Town Board or the residents of Yorktown have enough information to make such an important decision.

Mrs. Kathy McGowan stated that she feels the Town Board has an obligation to allow the residents of the Town of Yorktown to vote on this issue.

Mr. Anthony Grasso stated that when he went out to his mailbox, there was a flyer in it telling people to come to the meeting tonight. He is going to the Post Master tomorrow with a complaint about this flyer. He also stated that the budget prepared by the former Town Supervisor cut out funding for paving. The money spent on paving over the last three years, came from New York State. Mr. Grasso stated that when he served on the Yorktown Town Board, they put money from the general fund into the paving line. Mr. Grasso stated that his experience was different than that of Mrs. Wilkens; in addition to his duties as a Councilman, he served on the Town's Roads and Improvement Committee as well as our Public Safety Committee with the Highway Superintendent.

Mr. William Primavera stated that his motto is that if it is not broken, don't fix it.

Among some of the comments made by Mrs. Susan Siegel was that the Highway Budget will remain separate under a DPW. The Town of New Castle has an electrician on staff who is paid \$58,000 annually. The flyer that Mr. Grasso spoke about was not done by the Citizens for a DPW. She asked the Town Board to advertise a public hearing on this issue on the next Town Board Agenda.

Several Department Heads including Kim Angliss-Gage representing the Environmental Conservation Department and Central Garage, Sharon Robinson representing the Engineering Department and the Sewer Department, Brian Gray, Superintendent of the Yorktown Parks and Recreation Department and David Rambo, the Yorktown Water Distribution Superintendent made power point presentations. In them they spoke about the number of people in their department and the duties they are charged with performing.

Eric DiBartolo, the elected Highway Superintendent spoke about how and why some of the proposals listed in the information provided by Citizens for a DPW would not work. He invited the Committee to come into his office and get informed about how his department works and the CSEA contract.

Supervisor Grace adjourned the meeting,

This meeting was broadcast live on video tape for the residents of Yorktown.

Alice E. Roker
Town Clerk
Town of Yorktown