

Caroga News Flash

Town Board Meeting Highlights

February 10, 2021

TownOfCaroga.com contains all issues of the ***Caroga News Flash***.

This monthly meeting lasted 157 minutes at Town Hall and via zoom, with 53 connections. Executive Session was called to introduce new staffing plans for the Nick Stoner Golf Course.

Resolutions / Local Laws:

1. Nick Stoner Municipal Golf Course Staffing —

- After the Board received 74 letters from citizens supporting the core value and essential benefits of retaining Golf Pro Steve Jennings (see TownOfCaroga.com/board/promail.htm), the Board passed a resolution to end employment / benefit negotiations with Mr. Jennings (3 Yes—Horton, Glenn and Travis versus 2 No—Sturgess and Long). During discussion, Councilmember Glenn insisted, “We tried to have a smooth transition and give him \$10,000 a month for 3 months.” Supervisor Horton added, “We tried to negotiate. Now we have to stop and look at another way. It’s been heart wrenching. I understand the public’s admiration for Steve Jennings. He’s done a good job. It’s nothing to be happy about.”
- With a 4-1 vote, the Board appointed Supervisor Horton to negotiate with 2 candidates for a new year-round **Golf Course Superintendent** position with a \$75,000.00 annual salary plus benefits: (1) Mr. Alex Aloisio, of Florida’s Streamsong Resort, (2) Mr. Steven Stedman, of Country Club of Buffalo (see www.turfnet.com/jobs/j47419-golf-course-superintendent/).

2. Golf Clubhouse Fire Recovery —

- Authorized \$68,758.01 replacement purchase of a multi-use greens mower with 11 blade and 8 blade cutting units on State Contract from Grassland (5-0 vote)
- Approved \$52,000.00 purchase of 2 sheds for temporary clubhouse & rest rooms (5-0 vote)
- Authorized \$65,500.00 purchases of miscellaneous equipment and personal property, including “tee markers, golf ball washers, trash bins, benches, etc.” (5-0 vote)
- Approved retaining Golf Course Architect, Stephen Kay (see kaygolfcoursedesign.com) for \$4,000.00 to review the golf course layout and design (5-0 vote)

3. Investment — Authorized investing \$350,000.00 excess funds in a 1-year CD (5-0 vote)

4. Zoning Ordinance and Map — Set a public fee of \$7.00 per copy (5-0 vote)

5. Town Records — Accepted the 2020 books of the Town Clerk and Town Justice (4-0 vote)

6. Minutes — Accepted minutes of December 30, January 6 and 13 meetings (4-1 vote)

Next Meetings:

Golf Clubhouse Steering Committee — Thursday, February 25, 2021 6:00pm

Town Board Meeting — Wednesday, March 10, 2021 7:00pm at Town Hall & via zoom

Join zoom.us or dial 929-205-6099 Meeting ID: 687 640 4445 Passcode: 427903

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First Public Golf Clubhouse Steering Committee Meeting

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Regarding recovery after the Golf Clubhouse fire, Supervisor Horton emphasized, “I encourage the public to see opportunities for the Town to come together. We have a history of more than 90 years at the golf course. I’d like the community to come together and be positive, so when we finish we can say as a Town that we did our best with the resources and made something great for the community and region.”

Scott Horton, Rick Sturgess, Denny Fincke, and Gene Centi reported on their work to date.

- Supervisor Horton briefly described a meeting about insurance yesterday, on 02/09/21. He also noted meetings and a site visit with the architects of Phinney Design Group. The basic parameters of the clubhouse building include a 1930s Adirondack style with timber frame and wrap-around porch, 120-person gathering room with a catering kitchen, 500-square-foot golf store, management office, storage room, and ground-level golf cart storage. The architects are now preparing a bubble diagram for space planning.
- Rick Sturgess reported on over \$200,000.00 lost equipment and repurchase plans.
- Denny Fincke provided a rationale to consult an expert golf course architect, Stephen Kay.
- Gene Centi emphasized the golf project is “fast moving with constant meetings and calls.” In November 2020, he arranged a Town lease of 30 Yamaha golf carts to arrive April 2021. He also reported an October 2020 meeting with KemperSports Golf Course Management Company. He said he purchased a golf course point-of-sale system to manage cart rentals, merchandise sales, inventory management, mailing systems, and promotional programs. He has a new logo (see PLRT Facebook page), and he welcomes feedback and ideas.

Steve Jennings, who also was appointed to the committee, was not invited to speak.

- Public citizens sent 74 letters to the Town Board emphasizing both the value of retaining Mr. Jennings and risks of not doing so (see TownOfCaroga.com/board/promail.htm).
- During public comment, Randy Snyder said, “I spoke to Steve Jennings. He’s very upset by how he’s been treated. He wants the course to succeed. The public would like to hear from Steve. The communication needs to be resolved.”
- The Supervisor said, “Going forward, we will have committee meetings every 2 weeks, starting on February 25 at 6:00pm. We want to come openly, as best we can, to keep everyone up to speed. We encourage comments. We take all of them seriously.”
- During the Board meeting, Mr. Jennings asked to speak. Due to tech failures, he could not.
- Dan MacIvor emphasized needs to run meetings well with zoom and offered tech help.

Additional discussion addressed options for the clubhouse site, banquet room, and course planning. The committee emphasized that short-term plans focus specifically on rebuilding the clubhouse. At the same time, a long-term master plan is needed, because golf courses are never “finished.” Mr. Fincke noted, “The Nick Stoner Municipal Golf Course is a jewel in the Southern Adirondacks. In 8 years at its 100th anniversary, we want it looking real good.”

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