TOWN OF PLATTEKILL

REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING

January 15, 2025

Time – 7:00pm

SALUTE TO THE FLAG:

ROLL CALL:

The following Town Board Members were present:

 Supervisor Depew

#### Councilman Fazio

Councilman O’Flaherty

Councilman Castillo

ABSENT- Councilman Hoppenstedt

PUBLIC HEARING: None

MINUTES:

* Supervisor DePew made a motion to NOT read the minutes from the January 2, 2025 Town Board Meeting

Seconded by Councilman O’Flaherty

On the vote: All Ayes

Supervisor DePew made a motion to ACCEPT the minutes from the January 2, 2025 Town Board Meeting.

Seconded by Councilman Fazio.

On the Vote: All Ayes

ADDITIONS:

* Supervisor DePew added that there will be an Executive Session tonight to discuss personnel.
* Supervisor DePew thanked the Plattekill Police Department for their lifesaving efforts with a hunting accident within the town on January 3rd. Thanked Officer Cusack & Detective Wolpert

REPORTS:

* Supervisor Depew read the monthly department reports and noted they are all available at the Town Clerk’s Office upon request.

The following reports for the month of December were available.

Plattekill Police Monthly Report

Dog Control Monthly Report

Buildings & Grounds Monthly Report

Building Department Monthly Report

Supervisor DePew announced that as of Monday, January 13, we have a new Building Inspector. He is very educated and we look forward to a good future here.

Assessor Report Monthly Report

Seconded by Councilman Fazio.

On the Vote: All Ayes

PUBLIC INPUT:

* Supervisor Depew made a motion to open Public Input at 7:03 pm.

Seconded by Councilman Castillo

On the vote: All Ayes

1. Mark Reynolds- Liberty View Farms, at what point will the Town Board take up that issue. I understand the ZBA referred it back over for determination from the Town Board. The application requests to appear in front of the Town Board. Should they miss the February deadline, what happens then?

Supervisor DePew-To clarify, the recommendation was to turn it over to the Town Board but it is up to the applicant to follow up on that. As of now, they have not furthered any application from the board to review it. I believe they have until the end of February. It is their obligation to follow those recommendations. I believe they will have an opportunity as a completely new site plan.

Mark Reynolds- Starting from scratch?

Supervisor DePew- Yes, I believe

1. MaryAnn DePew- Every third Thursday, we have our Veterans Meetings. 7:00PM. Everyone is welcome.
2. Kathy Beinkafner- What happened at the last meeting regarding the Police ATV Request? I see they gave you a copy of a topographical map for the Town, can I have a copy of that?

Supervisor DePew- We put it on hold. The Police Chief is going to explore the possibility of applying for grants to purchase. There was a lot of moving parts to that request. Parts of the town is mountainous, parks, trails-places hard to reach by foot and it would assist big time doing police work.

* Supervisor Depew made a motion close public input at 7:08pm.

Seconded by Councilman Fazio

On the vote: All Ayes

OLD BUSINESS:

Councilman Fazio announced that the new Building Inspector is joining our Battery Storage Committee.

NEW BUSINESS

* Data Breach Policy: File #1177-021.

Supervisor DePew stated that this is something the Town Board should adopt as part of a data breach. When we were going through our Audit, the NYS Comptroller was very adamant about. We look at our computer systems, our IT networks and make sure that they are secure. This would be a policy that lays out the guidelines of what we should be achieving. By adopting this, following It and adhering to it, it should make all of our IT processes more secure.

Supervisor Depew tells the Board members that they should read this carefully and ask questions if they need to. This is pursuant to the State Technologically Law.

The Town Board members stated that they never received this.

* Standard Workday Resolution- NYS Retirement

Elected Officials are required to fill this out once every 8 years. This is in regards to the Retirement System and it is a sheet that they document hours. The Town Board has to reestablish the work day hours for various positions within the NYS Retirement system.

Supervisor DePew made a motion to adopt the Standard Work Day and reporting resolution for elected officials. This resolution is sent to NYS retirement system and kept on file in the Town Clerks office to be used for calculating retirement credit.

Seconded by Councilman Castillo

On the Vote: All Ayes

* Plattekill Day 2025

Supervisor Depew made a motion to set the date for this year’s Plattekill Day,

Saturday, September 20, 2025. 10:00am-5:00PM

Rain Date is September 21, 2025

Seconded by O’Flaherty

On the Vote: All Ayes

* Red, White & Blue Celebration

Supervisor DePew made a motion to set the day for this year’s celebration.

July 12, 2025.

Rain Date is July 13, 2025.

Seconded by Councilman O’Flaherty

On the Vote: All Ayes

* Blood Donation Drive

Supervisor DePew read a letter from the Town Clerk requesting to host a Red Cross Blood Drive on Saturday, March 15, 2025. 9:00am-1:00PM. At the Town Hall.

Councilman Castillo stated this is excellent.

Supervisor DePew made a motion to secure the date.

Seconded by Councilman Castillo

On the Vote: All Ayes

Councilman O’Flaherty asked how we get the word out? Do we have to guarantee a number of donations?

Town Clerk answered that our goal is 22 donations and she is going to ask the local Fire Departments and Library to help advertise.

* Reappointment- Board of Assessment Review

Supervisor DePew made a motion to reappoint Joseph Eagan to the BAR.

Seconded by Councilman Fazio

On the Vote: All Ayes

* Camp Sunset Property- Letter from Louis Braun

Supervisor DePew: Early to late Fall 2024, there was discussion about this piece of property and others regarding being home to a County Wide landfill. At the time, Ulster County was targeting Plattekill in 2 areas within our town. We started looking at trying to get resolutions which wouldn’t allow Ulster County to bring in a landfill within our community. We had already been hit with 2 major spills areas: one was the Hertel Landfill and the other was Sabin Metal Corp. Sabin Metal has been cleaned up and Hertel Landfill still exists. At the time, Mr. Braun was in opposition of the new proposed landfill. Mr. Braun had approached myself and Councilman Fazio and was looking to sell that property on Camp Sunset; roughly 129 acres to the Town. Obviously, the town was not in the position to purchase a piece of property but appreciated that the property was going to be made available. His desire was to make the property Forever Wild and dedicate it in such a way that it would become park space or open space. At the time, we did hike the property with Mr. Braun and looked at it. I reached out to the Wallkill Valley Land Trust, Open Space Institute, DEC, Hudson River Keepers, Town of Newburgh and several other organizations. The desire was to possibly have them pick it up and with the same idea, keep it Forever Wild, basically a park, that way the community can use it and utilize it. At the time, the approximate cost was extremely high, and there were different numbers that were batted around. Nothing that was nailed down with a specific price but we never let the project go and Mr. Braun didn’t let us either. He kept in touch with me over the summer and he has some other ideas. He has sent a letter to the Town Board. The letter gives a basis of what he would like to do and the possibilities of what can be done with that property. Supervisor DePew announced what Mr. Brauns intentions are to sub-divide 4 different portions of the property and utilize that for himself and his own personal endeavors. The remaining portion of the property, he would like to sell to a conservatory or donate the rest of it to the Town. I started looking at that possibility. We are at the infancy stages of this but of course for every action there is an equal reaction. I did express that I would look with the blessing of the board and hopefully the board would have the same idea, that if we did do something, that where the property was going to be donated to the town, we would try to do something with a conservatory group. The Wallkill River Land trust or the Open Space Institute or some other organization that would take and foster that property and absorb the responsibility but yet our community can utilize the property as a park.

Supervisor DePew read the letter from Mr. Braun aloud and presented some maps from Mr. Braun to show you what he had in mind.

Supervisor DePew asked the Town Board if they had any questions:

Councilman O’Flaherty- Do they have a developer in mind?

Supervisor DePew- No, to the best of my knowledge right now, this is all conceptual. The idea originally was for Mr. Braun and his wife to sell the property to the Town to keep it Forever Wild based on a lot of communities buying these properties and keep them as open spaces. I had extensive conversations with him back when we first started talking about this and my concern was that we already have the largest park in Ulster County I believe and the money that we have would be better spent in the park we already have. But it makes sense to me that we preserve something like this since it is environmentally sensitive area. It is the headwaters to the Black Creek where this property lies. Those headwaters flow, its an estuary to the Hudson River so there is definitely value in making that forever wile. I will tell you this, on the Easterly portion of this property and approximately half of the lake that is up there, is owned by that Eastly property. That is the property that they just proposed about the Battery Storage facility so again, when you start looking at that property, and how environmentally sensitive it is and how large of a parcel it is, it’s the size of the property you would need to establish some sort of County wide landfill. They probably would have to take that property as well; I think that is what the Counties intentions were. Regardless of whether they are talking about putting the landfill somewhere else, they have every opportunity to come back and revisit that land. I will tell you, that I asked the County to pass a resolution with a motion that says the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency will take Plattekill and all properties in Plattekill off the list to build a landfill and they refused to do that. They held firm with that. Ulster County is tasked with an incredible hard project themselves but I think Plattekill has paid its dues in the past and I do not believe we need even the possibility of a landfill in our community ever again. Primarily it is an opportunity to get this property for nothing.

The cost to us as described in this letter, but the desire of the owner of this property to have an agreement would be the Town to have approximately 84 acres on both sides’ property on both sides of the road and half of that lake. We would then forgo those subdivision fees and how he would re-coup and make it beneficial for him, would be Mr. Braun subdividing those properties out.

Councilman O’Flaherty- I get that. He is looking to sell off the dirt to have those parcels essentially pay for the property. And then have the Town conceive the fees in lieu of tax revenue. Who will buy the dirt? Who will buy the property? There is a lot of semantics to this.

Supervisor DePew- The 12 acres, when he subdivides those 12 acres, but what he is looking to do is take those properties out and donate the rest of the property to the Town. He will retain ownership of those 12 acres lots and then he will develop that or sell it to someone else that has the desire to develop it, whether it be 1 home or whatever the Zoning allows up there. Does 12 acres sound like 4 lots? I don’t know what the geography is, what the desire is. In looking at it, I am not saying it is, I am saying is it; an opportunity for the town to somehow acquire 84 acres at just the expense of allowing the foregoing of the fees to subdivide that out and again, do we want those 84 acres? To me, the best possible case scenario is that some conservatory or organization takes that over and we still benefit by having our residents be able to use that property like he wants them to.

Councilman Castillo- The way I look at it, is that if you keep those properties from being developed, it is less likely that Ulster County could come back and look at it as a possible landfill location because there will be houses around it. And no one could put a Battery Storage Facility there either. If those 12 acres have houses built, and it being a primary water source to Newburgh and the Hudson River, this will protect more by having residences there.

Supervisor DePew- That is a benefit. But this is all conceptual.

Councilman Fazio- If that happens, if the Town acquires this; what happens with the taxes he pays? School and Town, what is the amount on that? If the Town takes It, it will be coming off the Tax Roll and we would lose that revenue.

Supervisor DePew- Yes there is. Numbers can’t lie. Until I have everything written down, I don’t know what the numbers are. I would have to imagine that Mr. Braun has owned this property since 1982 I believe, for the 112 total acres, I am sure it is not going to be as big of a number if it were sold 2 years ago or even 5 years ago. The way that they value land, it changes. He may have exemptions. All of that stuff would need to be written down and listed. Mr. Braun did take the steps to drop off the maps and write the letter. He did offer to come here tonight. I thought that there was more value to show the Board tonight, look at it and then invite him to the next meeting.

Councilman O’Flaherty- Pro’s on the surface are, if you go back to the report, the criteria for selecting the certain parcels with a certain acreage. He is smart by subdividing it because then that also removes the quantifying parcel to be considered so its pretty smart from that aspect.

Supervisor DePew- He is looking at it from both sides of the road.

Councilman O’Flaherty- But again, it is the overall footprint that we would need to have for a lifespan for a landfill. The other side of it is what Councilman Fazio brought up is the revues that will most likely be offset by the new home construction by some X number. If we are in charge of maintaining it or protecting the property, what would that look like? He’s “gifting” over the 87 acres, what is our Town responsibility?

Supervisor DePew- That is where I said earlier, even though it would be given to us, that is one fact that that portion would be taken off the tax roll. That is one side of the scale. The other side of the scale, if we owned that 87 acres, we would have to put eyes on it. If we put eyes onto it, it comes at a cost. We would have to insure it at a cost. Maintain it to some level, that is another cost. There are costs associated to this. But that is where I thought it would be advantageous to have a conservatory group be interested and sell the interest to them. They hold parcels and what they do is convert them over to the Open space institute.

Councilman Castillo- On Teakettle Road, when you go towards the end of that, before it goes to the swamp back there, it also has a bird sanctuary that is part of that. So, there are many groups that we can reach out to that will want that protected land.

Supervisor DePew- Everyone wants to protect it but the money is not there. That really is what the problem is. If we have someone that is willing to work with us like Mr. Braun but he is also on a limited time schedule too. Taliferro Farms in New Paltz, around June 2024, that was transferred to Wallkill Valley Land trust, they sold the development rights to them so they basically have taken that over. They are maintaining it. It is not a burden to the town. There are a lot of towns that have passed laws and it is a very small percentage, they can go up to 2%, I don’t want to do this but a lot of towns do. What they do, is they put a tax and it is basically a conservatory tax for the Town and they collect that fee. It goes into an account, and as that account increases, when projects come up like this, they look at the value of purchasing that to keep it forever wild. If that account is low and they don’t have the money to purchase that property outright, towns will borrow from future funds coming in. That is how a lot of communities’ purchase land.

Councilman O’Flaherty- With that same idea, instead of taxing existing residents, any new home sales, you can put that on the mortgage tax. It will be a higher sale, more revenue instead of levying it across the board. There are a lot of questions.

Supervisor DePew- I am not in favor of establishing something like that. I am talking about what other communities have done. That is how they purchase land. When this was first handed out, I spent a lot of hours calling different organizations for grant opportunities. It is great to get grants but grants cost a lot of money to get. They cost a lot of time and effort to write them. A lot of them are matching grants. Right now, this is strictly conceptual and that the possibilities are there.

Councilman O’Flaherty- How much does he think by selling and developing the 4 parcels, what will that amount money wise?

Councilman Castillo- Can we also reach out federally?

Supervisor DePew- I have.

Councilman Fazio- There was a ton of phone calls made.

Councilman Castillo- I know and this is what we are discussing. Lots of possibilities.

Councilman O’Flaherty- I like it on the surface but we need to get through the weeds.

Supervisor DePew- The back portion of this property to the South about 180-200 yards is the Quassaic Creek. That creek that flows South and eventually flows into Chadwick Lake which is the Town of Newburgh Water Supply. I have reached out to the Town of Newburgh and met with them several times. I met with Pat Hines a few times; he is also the Town of Newburgh’s engineer and spoken o them. Basically, my desire was hoping for them to purchase that property because of their water supply. It doesn’t look like is it close enough to be conducive for them to do that. So, we have the Wallkill Valley land trust but we also have the Orange County Land trust. I reached out to them. I have spoken to organizations from Warwick, and their past Supervisor. I have been adamant that I am not committing to anything. Everything that I have done is nothing more than research. Mr. Braun is very willing to work to make the Town owners of that property.

Supervisor DePew showed the Town Board the property maps with pieces of paper taped over approximately where Mr. Braun wanted his 12 acres. Basically, it shows the property to the east of those 12 acres and the actual property line that cuts down the middle of the lake. It will give you an idea of what the property will look like. Supervisor DePew stated that this sector, the North East side of the 12 acres along Rabbit Run that he wanted to divide, Mr. Braun gave me another piece of paper, it gives you a better idea of the property that he is looking at. The Black Creek will be part of the property that the Town will acquire. He did not keep the Black Creek on the property that he wants.

Councilman O’Flaherty- You can tell that there is a strategy to this.

Supervisor DePew- 100% yes. This to me is a start. I wanted to get an idea of the Board if there is a desire to look into this further. I don’t want to steer him down the wrong road. Is there value in having Mr. Braun lay out specifically what he wants and come before the Town board and give a presentation?

Councilman O’Flaherty- Yes. I worry about the back end, carrying cost of this.

Kathy Beinkafner- Did you talk to Scenic Hudson? They own part of the Mountain in Lloyd.

Supervisor DePew- Yes. There are not many folks we haven’t talked to.

Councilman O’Flaherty- We do have some leverage with the Black Creek. On the surface this looks awesome. A lot of towns will use the transaction costs of new home purchases to purchase land within in their town to preserve the land in the towns. It will actually inflate the property. You cannot develop on the land. You are reducing the amount of foot print that you can use within the town and it creates demand.

Supervisor DePew- Mr. Braun asked me to call him tomorrow to tell him how the meeting went. Is there value in me telling him to tighten things up, put things in writing and come and give a presentation?

Councilman O’Flaherty- We need to that presentation but then we have to create a list of what it will cost us to insure it. Are we making trails through this property? There is a lot of parts to this.

Supervisor DePew- That piece of property is surprisingly open. It is all mature hardwoods; it has never been harvested.

Councilman Castillo- If they sign this over to us, that can be in the works for the town once it is deeded to us. And then we can continue with the homework to hopefully get one of these organizations on board. What I am looking at is protecting the water source and trying to keep any kind of solar farm, landfill, anything can pollute the property or water supple away.

Supervisor DePew- If the Board desires, I will talk to Mr. Braun tomorrow and let him know to put something more precise together and in writing and do a presentation, that would be great. This way we can ask him the questions. I would also ask the Board, maybe 2 members of the Board can get together and come up with ideas and look at those costs, see what they are.

Councilman Castillo- I think after he does the presentation, it will be up to the Board to think about this. We should get a hold of the Planning Board and have them come to our meeting so they can hear the presentation this way they have an idea of what is being asked. I feel that when that comes to have the Planning Board so we are all on the same page, we all have the same information.

Supervisor DePew- Mr. Braun has asked me and the Chairman of the Planning board to meet. I asked him to not go forward with that yet but we should present to the Town Board to see if there is even a possibility of going forward. Something like this, I think that at some point if Mr. Braun comes in and gives his presentation, and there is enough desire to have two of our Board Members and 2 Planning Board members, have us sit down, 1-1 with Mr. Braun and they can report back to the Town Board as a whole. This way we can have eyes on what is really going on.

Councilman Fazio- I think we should talk to him and get an idea of exactly what Mr. Braun wants to do.

Supervisor DePew- I did walk that property with various organizations that I had reached out to. Lots of excitement but the money isn’t there. There are opportunities for conservatory groups to pick up those properties for very little money. The good part about that is they lock the land up and it won’t be sold ever again for development. I will reach out to him and see if he is available at the next Town Board meeting.

* Set Public Hearing on Proposed Planning & Zoning Terms of Office

Introductory Local law to reduce terms of office from 7 years to 3 years for Planning and Zoning Board Members. This will promote the public interest in maintaining high quality interest. This will provide additional appointments to interested qualifying candidates to the Boards. The New proposed local law will have no effect on current Board Members.

Supervisor DePew made a motion to set the date for the Public Hearing to February 5, 2025.

Seconded by Councilman Castillo

On the Vote: All Ayes

* Annual Justice Audit

We appoint 2 Town Board members each year to audit the Justice Department records.

Supervisor DePew appoints Councilman Hoppenstedt and Councilman O’Flaherty.

Councilman Castillo said that they need to talk to the Bookkeeper for the balance of their monies.

Supervisor DePew stated that this has to be completed by the middle of March.

TRANSFERS: NONE

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Supervisor DePew made a motion that the Town Board will enter into Executive Session at 8:08PM to discuss personnel matters.

Seconded by Councilman Fazio

On the Vote: All Ayes

Supervisor DePew made a motion to exit Executive Session at 8:52PM.

No decisions were made.

Seconded by Councilman Fazio

On the Vote: All Ayes

VOUCHERS:

* Supervisor Depew reviewed the Voucher Detail report Dated January 15, 2025 which includes:

The A-General Fund amount of 175,549.35

The DA-Highway Fund amount of $87,362.92

The H4- Misc. Supplies & items in the amount of …………………………….$6,824.11

The SA- Clintondale Lighting in the amount of………………………………. $980.65

The SB- Modena Lighting in the amount of ……………………………………. $1,806.92

For a grand total in the amount of **$272,523.95**

Supervisor Depew made a motion to accept the vouchers, recognizing that the Audit Committee has reviewed the claims and found them acceptable for payment.

Seconded by Councilman Castillo

On the vote: All Ayes

ADJOURNMENT:

Supervisor Depew made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:55PM

Seconded by Councilman Fazio On the Vote: All Ayes