

**A Regular Town Board meeting was held on October 19, 2023, at Lysander Town Hall, 8220 Loop Road, Baldwinsville, New York.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Robert A. Wicks, Supervisor  
Jeffrey Kudarauskas, Councilor  
Kevin Rode, Councilor  
Peter Moore, Councilor  
Robert Geraci, Councilor

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Dina Falcone, Town Clerk, Kevin Merrill, Parks and Recreation Director, Jennifer Fricano, Comptroller, Anthony Rivizzigno, Town Attorney, Al Yager, Town Engineer, and several guests and residents.

**Supervisor Wicks called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM with the Pledge to the Flag.**

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**Adoption of October 5, 2023 Minutes**

**TABLED**

**Motion by Councilor Geraci seconded by Councilor Moore** to adopt the October 5, 2023 Town Board Meeting minutes.

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**Citizens Comments**

**Rob Helfrich** of Hourglass Lane expressed his dismay with the recommendation to increase industrial lot usage. His comments are attached to these minutes.

**Fred Burtch** of Plainville Road spoke regarding the CLUP. He said that he spoke to the Board about 14 years ago asking why TOL couldn't have more fast food restaurants like Clay and Van Buren. He later realized that Lysander is a special place and he didn't want it to turn into what the neighboring towns are. He said that since the Board is contemplating changing the CLUP, it could result in a potentially higher percentage for build out for one particular site, which he is not in agreement with.

**Lisa Anderson** of Country Lane spoke regarding the CLUP and the proposed use of industrial land use. Her concerns are that an updated traffic study should be done, if one hasn't been done already, and that there is insufficient data within the CLUP.

**Richard Lotano** of Coachmans Whip spoke about the CLUP and stated that he opposes taking the industrial build-out from 30% to potentially 80% because he prefers that everything is left as it is, and operate on an exception basis. He stated that if TOL gets a manufacturer who wants to build an environmentally friendly product, or a good product, [he said we have some of those in our community right now] and they need 30% or if they need 50 or 60%, TOL should consider it given the fact that they're going to manufacture a product, create jobs, and quality taxable income for the community. His additional concerns for industrial [use] were the possibility of having someone come in and store industrial chemicals used for highways, or other things that could happen which could negatively impact the area. He agreed that the tax rate is low and thanked the Board for that, but also the residents of the community do their part; as they all take care of their property with the net result being rising property values.

**Mike Russell** of Chaucer Circle spoke about the CLUP and said that since it affects so many people and it could change the environment in the Lysander community, the word needs to be spread more by reaching out to the community so that people can read it and outline exactly what it states and what the changes are and what the effects may be.

**Lane Keshishian** of Chaucer Circle referred to the CLUP and wanted to know if an environmental consulting firm was used to review it from an environmental standpoint. He mentioned the forest fires and air quality. He stated that he knows a lot about the effects of pollution that can affect human life negatively, and that he suffered from cancer from second hand smoke, but had not smoked in his life. He related this type of pollution to the potential of warehouses going into the area. He mentioned Lysander Park and the effects of air pollution the kids could be exposed to as a result of industrial pollution. He also mentioned potential traffic issues in addition to atmospheric conditions. He mentioned inversion, which occurs as pollutants are trapped close to the surface of the air. He reiterated that there's a real problem and suggested that an environmental company be brought in to assess the situation.

**Bill Spreeter** of Hourglass Lane expressed his concerns and offered that a survey be taken of those interested in what they have to say to determine the CLUP content themselves. He asked if there was ever a meeting or referendum about it. Everything he has heard seems to indicate that there are issues and problems in increasing [industrial] to beyond 30%. He expressed concerns about that and the environmental and traffic issues. He says he has heard a lot at the meeting from others, and hopes the Board considers those issues addressed with regard to an expansion of the industrial base.

**Wayne Weiss** of Smokey Hollow Road stated that he lives roughly a mile away from the proposed industrial lot, and noted that he has no piped-in water, and there are sewers north of where [proposed industrial site could possibly be built]. He said there could be the possibility of destroying part of the water flow from south to north. He said he has seen a drop in his pond and it is at least seven-eighths of what it normally is. He said that his pond is about four feet below the front of his house, and it used to be 12 feet deep, snapped down. He mentioned farming, and when there was plenty of water for it. The main issue is there should be clean and available water and if a [project] goes through as it will put a handicap on those with water issues. He said they asked the Board 20 years ago for a water line, and it did not happen.

**John Barnett** of Connell Terrace referenced truck traffic and the [dangers of same in the proposed industrial site]. He said that traffic is a real safety concern and asked who would take responsibility if someone gets killed there. He mentioned the United Auto warehouse and that half of the time their warehouse is half full of FedEx trucks, and that perhaps 50 trucks a day are FedEx Ground. However, his main issue is with safety and the other issue is the wildlife that will be displaced from construction.

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### Town Board Comments

**Councilor Moore** mentioned the CLUP and the Code Book, and the differences therein. He noted that a majority of the discussion was based on the warehouse, and he said that to his knowledge, the warehouse isn't happening. He also said that the CLUP is a narrative with suggestions; it is not law. He continued to state that there is a lot of misinformation spreading, and he would like to table the motion in case there are any further concerns from the public.

**Councilor Geraci** stated that the Board knows where he stands with regard to the CLUP, and he is and has always been very involved in the quality of life and that doesn't want anything in the CLUP referring to 80%. He mentioned that the CLUP is a vision statement and suggested taking out the percentage guidelines.

**Councilor Kudarauskas** mentioned that he would be comfortable removing the reference to the lot increase on page 52, so that there is no misinterpretation.

**Councilor Kudarauskas** also mentioned that the HW Department and the Town Engineer have done a wonderful job working with D.E. Tarolli to get work done.

**Councilor Rode** mentioned that the warehouse was removed from the plan, but he doesn't think that it is the end of the [or a] project. He agreed to remove the language with the lot coverage in agreement with Councilor Kudarauskas. He said that he had very little involvement in working on the first CLUP, but has an idea that perhaps people from different areas of TOL could have input on future projects.

**Councilor Rode** reminded everyone that early voting begins on October 28<sup>th</sup>. He also mentioned a terrible event that happened at the bowling alley when a friend of his was hurt. He thanked GBAC and all of the first responders who were there to help so quickly. His friend is to make a full recovery.

## State of the Town by Supervisor Wicks

The current fiscal health of the Town of Lysander is great. We are poised to head into the future with confidence knowing we will continue to provide the citizens of Lysander with excellent services while always being conscious of our property tax rates. The tax rate over the last four years, which includes this year's preliminary budget, has been reduced each year, and we've been able to accomplish this even with the hyperinflation that we are currently facing.

Under my direction, in the past year the town has held assessments steady through this economically uncertain time, we have passed a property tax exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Ambulance Workers in the interests of community safety and well-being, and to recognize their valuable contribution to our community. We've also raised the Senior Citizen Disability Exemption income levels in recognition of their limited income, to allow more seniors to qualify for the exemption.

I've worked diligently to maintain a healthy fund balance, which according to the New York State Comptroller, helps us reduce the cost of borrowing for cash flow, offset revenue, shortfalls, during poor economic times. Maintaining a healthy fund balance helps with unexpected expenditures which stabilizes taxes and maintains services without budget cutbacks, improving long term planning initiatives, and enhancing the credit rating [of local government].

The New York State Comptroller created the Fiscal Stress Monitoring System as an early warning system for communities and school districts with fiscal problems. The system is designed to objectively identify issues with budgetary solvency. The ability to generate enough revenue to meet expenditures for each town through a series of indicators. For example, our fund balance is one of the indicators used to determine our score. For this score, lower is good, like in golf, the scale goes from one to 100, with zero being like in golf; or hitting a grand slam. The fund balance operating deficiencies are included in the Comptroller's score. In 2019, TOL had a 3.3 Fiscal Score and an Environmental Score of 13.3. In 2020 our Fiscal Score went to zero. The lower the better - so that's as good as a town can get, and TOL's Environmental Score was still 13.3.

The reason being, [NYS Comptroller] goes back five years and TOL's score was low, because at that time the housing prices were not keeping up pace with the rest of the county. But in 2021 and 2022 our scores for both fiscal and environmental were zero for each one. That's the best that you can get.

The New York State Comptroller's criteria verifies that Town of Lysander is in great fiscal condition. Another fiscal instrument that we have at our disposal is debt for various needed capital projects. Debt is an effective instrument, and when used wisely it can help Lysander with expenses while simultaneously assisting in cost cutting and tax rate consistency.

Some of the projects from 2020 include the Radisson Sewer Project ending in 2028, and the LED street lighting project ending in 2035. Along that time period, the LED project will significantly lower utility costs for street lighting throughout the town, where everyone will benefit.

Prior to the interest rates rising, we financed some of our debt at a lower interest rate, resulting in significant cost savings. I will continue to monitor interest rates as our current debt dissipates. We will be prepared to take on some additional capital projects which will benefit the entire town in the future. As we talk about funding, it is also important to understand property taxes. Fund balance and debt are not our only sources of revenue. I've been diligent in seeking out other sources of grant and project funding to offset the tax levy. We've completed over \$2 million worth of infrastructure projects utilizing grant funding. Some which includes numerous road improvements, such as town-wide drainage and culvert repairs, and sewer and water projects in the West Phoenix in Indian Springs district. We've received grant funding from each branch of our government [County, State and Federal]. We've also had several grants allocated for the future.

We have future grants for park projects and road projects amounting to over \$450,000. There's a large amount of funding that the town was fortunate enough to receive as part of the American Rescue Plan Act, or ARPA as it is better known, and the town received approximately \$1.8 million in ARPA funds. We've made a conscious effort to use ARPA funding in a responsible way with two main goals in mind, ensuring funded projects do not result in a large increase in annual costs to the taxpayer and benefits to the community.

Some of the highlights of spending include fixing several drainage issues, infrastructure issues, including Whispering Oaks, Melia Park, Clinton Heights, the Phoenix Sewer District, and the Fireside Inn water main relocation site, all of which have resulted in sorely needed infrastructure improvements and large cost reductions to the taxpayer.

There will soon be a new soccer field in our park, which was paid for not only with our funding, but also the previously mentioned Onondaga County grant. The fields are a great addition to our park and it was a perfect project for [that source of spending] and the upkeep costs going forward will be minimal.

We have supported organizations in the local community with these funds as well. ARPA funds were also used for a much-needed ambulance for GBAC in the amount of \$50,000. ARPA funding also paid for the redesign of the Engine 91 website used by Volunteer Firefighters. I believe both of these projects to be vital to the safety and health of our community.

We made sure to improve the efficiency of our Highway Department through championing some new fleet upgrades: Three new plows with another one on the way, a tractor with a mower, several trucks, an excavator, and a payloader. The upkeep and safety of our roads and infrastructure is an important priority, and [we are] always remaining conscious of our bottom line and fiscal responsibility to the taxpayers.

The Town of Lysander has a strong vision for the future. We want to help increase small businesses creating a unique destination experience. I'm currently working with County Planning (who is assisting me on) a Waterfront Development grant. The funding will help our community develop a plan to revitalize and capitalize on one of our greatest commodities, our many miles of waterway. The plan will provide a roadmap for further grant opportunities, and some of the possibilities for funding could go towards providing additional recreation on and along the river, small business growth and enhancements to our community's aesthetics.

I'm working with the Village of Baldwinsville and the Town of Van Buren on this project to ensure the whole community benefits from this, including the additional senior housing. Parents and grandparents will have the opportunity to downsize without having to leave our community, while providing existing housing for young families.

Finally, I'm working with State and County officials to ensure that our community continues to enjoy the quality of life that we are all accustomed. With Micron coming to Onondaga County, I will be the voice for the residents regarding any discussions that might impact the Town of Lysander.

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**Department Head Reports**

**Kevin Merrill, Parks and Recreation Director** noted that there is information about programs on the website and is gearing up for closure of the park. He stated that window painting is to commence this coming weekend, and over 200 people signed up.

**Councilor Geraci** asked about one of the park fields being aerated, and **Mr. Merrill** stated that he did some research and two professional seeding companies stated that it would not be a good idea to aerate in anything less than two years. **Councilor Geraci** thanked Mr. Merrill for doing things the right way in the park.

**Jack Corey, Planning Board Chair** spoke about the CLUP and his dismay that the motion wouldn't be passed this evening. He said the rest of the CLUP has been on the website for 30 days, and a lot of what was in the CLUP was in the 2015 document, except items such as solar. He said the CLUP can be developed, it is only a recommendation for the Town Board to be considered if the right opportunity came along. He said it would be fine to remove the lot coverage and move forward with it.

**Supervisor Wicks** reiterated the misinformation regarding lot percentage/usage, and this is why the motion will be tabled. He also stated that he wants the public to take the time to address the misinformation and review the draft document again. Residents will have an opportunity to ask more questions. There will be a vote after the paragraph is removed.

**Dina Falcone, Town Clerk**, mentioned that since November 2<sup>nd</sup> is an early voting day in the Auditorium in Town Hall, with the voting hours ending at 9:00 PM, the 2024 budget presentation and public hearing must occur on another date. It was determined by the Board that the date would be November 13, 2023 at 6:30 PM in the Auditorium. There will not be a Town Board meeting on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

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**Regular Agenda Items**

**MOTION TO HOLD AND ADVERTISE FOR A  
PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE 2024 PRELIMINARY BUDGET**

**RES#174/2023**

**Motion made by Councilor Geraci seconded by Councilor Moore** to hold a public hearing for the Town of Lysander 2024 preliminary budget on Monday, November 13, 2023 at 6:30 PM in Lysander Town Hall. This motion shall authorize the Town Clerk to advertise for same.

Supervisor Wicks	Aye	Councilor Kudarauskas	Aye	Councilor Geraci	Aye
Councilor Moore	Aye	Councilor Rode	Aye		

**All ayes, motion carried and adopted**

**TABLED**

**Motion made by \_\_\_\_\_ seconded by \_\_\_\_\_** to hold a public hearing to hear citizens for or against the 2024 Fire Protection Agreement by and between the Town of Lysander and Enterprise Fire Company No. 1 (West Phoenix Fire Protection Agreement) on Thursday, November 2, 2023 at 6:30 PM in Lysander Town Hall. This motion shall authorize the Town Clerk to advertise for same.

**TABLED**

**Motion made by \_\_\_\_\_ seconded by \_\_\_\_\_** to adopt the revised Comprehensive Land Use Plan of 2023 (CLUP).

**MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN OF  
LYSANDER TO LEVY UNPAID 2023 WATER BILLS**

**RES#175/2023**

**Motion made by Councilor Rode seconded by Councilor Geraci** to authorize the Town of Lysander to levy unpaid 2023 water bills onto the 2024 County/Town tax bills.

Supervisor Wicks	Aye	Councilor Kudarauskas	Aye	Councilor Geraci	Aye
Councilor Moore	Aye	Councilor Rode	Aye		

**All ayes, motion carried and adopted**

**MOTION TO AUTHORIZE TAX CERTIORARI  
PAYMENT FOR TIMBER BANKS EVALUATION**

**RES#176/2023**

**Motion made by Councilor Rode seconded by Councilor Geraci** to authorize payment to Colliers International for valuation and advisory services for the Timber Banks apartments Tax Certiorari case. This is the final payment in the amount of \$2,100.

Supervisor Wicks	Aye	Councilor Kudarauskas	Aye	Councilor Geraci	Aye
Councilor Moore	Aye	Councilor Rode	Aye		

**All ayes, motion carried and adopted**

*Per Attorney Rivizzigno, there was a tax certiorari case brought by Timber Banks for a five-year period. TOL had to provide a statement as to the value of the property. The taxpayer waived all tax claims.*

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion made by Councilor Kudarauskas and seconded by Councilor Rode** to adjourn the Town Board Meeting at 7:56 PM.

Supervisor Wicks	Aye	Councilor Kudarauskas	Aye	Councilor Geraci	Aye
Councilor Moore	Aye	Councilor Rode	Aye		

**All ayes, motion carried and adopted**

This is a true and complete recording  
of the action taken at this meeting.

Dina Falcone, Town Clerk