**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN BOARD**

TOWN OF SANDY CREEK
1992 HARWOOD DRIVE, PO BOX 52

SANDY CREEK, NEW YORK 13145-0052

**Date:** February 7, 2024

**Kind of Meeting:** Joint Special Meeting with the Town of Richland

**Place:** Sandy Creek Town Hall

**Sandy Creek Councilmen Present:** Timothy D. Ridgeway  **Others Present:**

 Ruth E. Scheppard Michael C. Kastler

 Nola J. Gove-left @ 6:50 pm Tammy L. Miller

 Dave Warner Dustin Clark

 John W. Wood, Jr. Brett McVoy

 Brittany M. Washburn

**Richland Councilmen Present**: Robert North Charles Skellen

 Larry Atkinson Michael Lisson

 Sue E. Haynes Laird Petrie

 Eric Pappa Herbert G. Yerdon

 Donna Gilson Joe Hurteau

 Cheryl Yerdon

 Meg Sprague -left @6:45 pm

 Teresa Stowell Hollis

 Robert Jeffery

 Tim Crouch

 Ed Gilson

 Carl Falk

 Mike Fahey

 Robert Aurelio

 Jill Mattison entered @ 6:31 pm

Town of Sandy Creek Supervisor Timothy D. Ridgeway opened the special joint meeting at 6 pm. The purpose of the meeting was for the two town boards to re-open communication regarding their water departments. One joint water project is complete, and the second joint project is nearing completion. The Town of Richland provides the water for Water Districts 1 and 3 in the Town of Sandy Creek. Municipal Consultant Laird Petrie reviewed the financial records of both projects for the Town of Richland. Then the Town of Sandy Creek hired Michael Lisson, CPA, CITP to review the Town of Richland’s water department finances. Mr. Lisson reviewed the detailed revenues and expenditures of Richland’s water department for 2022. He also provided a summary of revenue and expenditures for all of Richland’s five water districts for 2018 through 2022. During this time the amount that Richland charges Sandy Creek for water rose from $1.80 to $4.50 per thousand gallons of water.

Water Superintendent Michael Kastler stated that the current water project is not completely finalized. The two town boards need a good working relationship moving forward. In the early years of working together there was a gentleman’s agreement to raise prices gradually. It had been done in 20 cent increments. The 125% increase all at once was not expected. Sandy Creek is aware that the rates in the Town of Richland also increased. He wonders why the lower rate for Brennan’s Beach is still being honored even though the property has changed ownership twice since that deal was negotiated. He also doesn’t feel that a municipality should be paying higher rates than a commercial business. The Town of Sandy Creek served as lead agency for both joint water projects and did all administrative paperwork without any charge to the Town of Richland. We are now in the final stages of the current project and working to refinance the loan at 0% interest.

Town of Richland Supervisor Robert North stated that Councilman Eric Pappa is their new Commissioner of Water. Councilman Atkinson stated that they don’t know the true cost of water yet but should know by budget season in August or September. It was agreed that the towns should repair their relationship and work as a team to serve each other.

Superintendent Kastler wants to see the Town of Sandy Creek’s cost for water based off Richland’s Water Districts #3 and #5, the districts that we partnered with them to build. He doesn’t believe it should be based on 30% of their entire water department.

County Legislator Ed Gilson stated that he is happy to see the two town boards working together again. County Legislator Herbert Yerdon stated that he felt that former Town Supervisor Kern Yerdon was being blamed for the water issues. He came to the meeting to support his brother Kern. He hopes the water rate issue gets resolved and the two boards can continue working together. Councilman Pappa stated that the board will continue to gather data to get to the true cost of water. It was agreed that the two boards need to continue to meet and communicate.

Councilman Wood asked how Richland divides common costs amongst their five water districts. Consultant Petrie recommends that Richland’s unrestricted fund balance should be kept at 20% to 25% of the following year’s budget. Jill Mattison asked if the water rate will increase again. It will not in 2024, but Sandy Creek will need to add the 50 cents per thousand back to the cost soon as it helps with the cost of unmetered water usage such as water main breaks, leaks and flushing.

It was agreed that the two boards will meet again on March 6th at 6 pm at the Sandy Creek Town Hall to discuss and update the two intermunicipal agreements (IMAs) that are in place.

**On motion** by Ruth E. Scheppard, seconded by John W. Wood, Jr, and carried unanimously, the joint special meeting was closed at 7:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy L. Miller, RMC

Town Clerk