*Draft- not yet approved* **SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING**

**Town Board/Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)- Joint Meeting**

Town of Ulysses

Oct. 24, 2023

*The meeting was held in person at the Town Hall at 10 Elm St., Trumansburg NY as well as via Zoom videoconference. Notice of Town Board meetings are posted on the Town’s website and Clerk’s board.*

*Video recordings of meetings are available on Youtube at*

[*https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWVIs--g9CpHIxdk9YxZyPw*](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWVIs--g9CpHIxdk9YxZyPw)*.*

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Ms. Olson called the meeting to order at 6pm.

Mr. Morreale called the BZA meeting to order at 6pm

**ATTENDANCE:**

TOWN OFFICIALS:

Town Board:

Supervisor- Katelin Olson

Board members- Mary Bouchard, Liz Weatherby (remote due to extenuating circumstances), Rich Goldman, Michael Boggs

Planning Board:

Linda Liddle

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA):

Stephen Morreale (chair), Bob Howarth, Tom Butler, Andy Hillmann, David Tyler

Other Town Officials/Staff:

Town Clerk- Carissa Parlato

Second Deputy Supervisor/Budget Officer- Michelle E. Wright

Bookkeeper- Blixy Taetzsch

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

*(none)*

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Olson and Mr. Morreale reiterated the purpose of the meeting- to come to an agreement on the town board’s training requirements for board and staff.

Ms. Olson proposed that the attorney present Sexual Harassment, Civil Rights, and ethics trainings. If board members are not available, the town can decide to accept a certificate of completion from another agency.

Mr. Tyler said that Sexual Harassment and Civil Rights trainings are not relevant for the BZA, but ethics are.

Ms. Olson said that the training rules were vetted by the HR officer (Ms. Taetzsch), and that the town must show compliance with policies and training when applying for federal grants.

Mr. Morreale said that many of the BZA members do these trainings already and they are not applicable or relevant to this setting.

Ms. Olson explained that the town attorney makes a differentiation between town officials and volunteers. BZA members serve an important legal function of the town and are considered town officials.

Mr. Howarth disagreed with Ms. Olson’s version of what the town attorney said.

Ms. Weatherby said that although the BZA doesn’t make hiring decisions, they still interact with community members and the town must ensure that this is done appropriately and the community is served in the best way possible.

Mr. Howarth said that he does training in diversity, human rights, and sexual harassment and that he often does way more training that what is required for the BZA.

Mr. Butler said that there are 2 different issues- mandatory training and more specific training related to the BZA and the legalities associated with it decisions.

Ms. Olson said that the board is proposing training in person that is tailored to the BZA. She also noted that the training issues are relevant and important to address- there have been issues at the town level over the last few years.

Mr. Morreale said that want to be good citizens and have the same training they’ve done in other places be accepted by the town as well as find better trainings tailored to the BZA.

Mr. Howarth said that the BZA has never been sued and this is an accomplishment. He suggested a training on open meetings and other BZA legal issues would be helpful

Ms. Liddle suggested training on managing difficult situations.

Ms. Olson added that civil rights training is important as well.

Ms. Taetszch shared her experience with federal grant- Newfield got a DOT grant like the town has and got civil -rights audited by the DOT. They had a policy but did not have training or a plan… Large federal grants sometimes do audits. This is not a new policy. Also based on recent state laws, comptroller are auditing on these laws and even non-staff get written up.

Mr. Howarth questioned whether BZA members were considered employees. Ms. Olson said that for legal purposes, the attorney has said that BZA members are closer to an employee than a volunteer.

Ms. Olson said that Comprehensive Plan Committee members are also being required to do training based on the importance of the job that they are doing.

Mr. Hillmann noted that he did some of the town’s training and didn’t find it to be very relevant to the BZA. He said that something more specific to BZA and how to deal with people/applicants would be helpful.

Ms. Taetzsch said that any Harassment & Discrimination training taken needs to comply with the NYS law.

*Mr. Butler and Mr. Tyler were excused at this time. (6:48pm)*

Mr. Morreale and Mr. Howarth noted that they frequently need to look up case law to make determinations.

All agreed that a guided meeting with the attorney would be useful.

Ms. Olson said that they would find a training more pertinent to BZA and schedule a session with the attorney; and extend the training deadline and update the policy.

Mr. Howarth added that clearer definitions of the jobs of the Planning Board and BZA would be useful for both groups.

Mr. Boggs expressed concerned about the lack of training for the Planning Board members this year, especially the new ones.

ADJOURN

Mr. Hillman made a motion to adjourn the BZA meeting at 7:09pm. This was seconded by Mr. Morreale and passed unanimously.

Mr. Goldman made a motion to adjourn at 7:09pm. This was seconded by Ms. Bouchard and passed unanimously.

*Respectfully submitted by Carissa Parlato, Town Clerk*

*11/13/23*