

Town of Red Hook

TOWN BOARD MINUTES

Volume VIII RECORD SERIES DESCRIPTION

1970 - 1973

Volume VIII of the Town Board Minutes is bound, sewn and glued, with leatherette binding in good condition. It has an index in the beginning with alphabetical sections from A - Z, including Mc. There are no entries in the sections for I, Mc, N, O, Q, U, W or X; there is a listing for P after Z. Entries in the index may be by subject, department or person's name. For example, appointments are listed under A, or under the first letter of the appointee's last name, or under the position to which the appointment was made.). Listings may occur under more than one category, but there is no consistency. The index does not appear to be very complete.

There are 300 pages of records with printed numbers; pages 160 - 300 are blank. The records are in good condition, with some yellowing of the paper. Entries are handwritten, with variations in ink. The handwriting is often barely legible. There are some smudges and stains; corrections are very common. Misspellings and grammatical errors also occur.

Included in the records are many inserts; a few are stapled in, but most are loose. Inserts are typed and handwritten in fair to good condition, though there is some folding and tattering. Some are photocopies or xeroxes. Pencilled numbers were added to the inserts for purposes of microfilming and to prevent loss of order. Inserts included were agendas, bids, resolutions, reports, petitions and miscellaneous correspondence.

Some inserts are mentioned in the minutes as an attachment to the minutes; others relate to business in the minutes, but are not necessary to the record. A few duplicates were removed; the remainder were left because that is the way the record was kept. In cases where the inserts were found in a location not appropriate to the business in the minutes, they were put in the appropriate location, with a notation of where they were found. There are instances where an attachment is noted in the minutes and was not found; there are also notations that the budget shall be entered in detail, but was not.

STRUCTURE:

The structure of Volume VIII of the Town Board minutes remains basically the same as the early 1900's. Whether the meeting was regular (now the second Tuesday of the month) or special was noted, followed by the location (now a Town Administration building), date, time and list of officials present. The Supervisor gave a monthly fiscal report, which at this time included a General Fund, Fire Protection Fund, Highway Fund and separate Lighting District Funds. Bills were audited and paid, by abstract number and Fund. Transfers of money from one fund to another were made. In varying order, public hearings were held, appointments made, presentations and requests heard, and business discussed and voted on. At the end of the meeting, the minutes were read and approved, followed by a motion to adjourn and the signatures of the Town officials.

Most votes were recorded by the names of the Town Board members who made and seconded them; for important issues, roll call votes were recorded. Public hearings were common for important issues.

At this time, the Town Board consisted of the Supervisor, two Justices of the Peace and two Councilmen; in 1973 two more Councilmen were added to the Town Board and Justices of the Peace became separate offices responsible only for court proceedings.

More discussion and detail are included in Volume VIII of the Town Board minutes, particularly for public hearings. Names of guests and their interests are sometimes included. More concerns, opinions and reasons for decisions are recorded. There is an increase in legal formality; resolutions are made with whereas ... whereas... therefore be it resolved... Information includes more personal details, such as memorials to deceased or retiring officials and proclamations.

CONTENT:

DOG CONTROL: There is mention of enforcement of dog licensing requirements and contracting with the SPCA.

ELECTIONS: The Town Board no longer acts as a Board of Canvassers for general elections, and there is no recording of candidates and votes. The Town Board continues to designate polling places and appoint election inspectors.

HIGHWAYS: Highway matters remain a routine and important part of Town Board business. Bids for highway materials and equipment are accepted and voted on, usually with details. A new Highway Communication system is purchased.

The Town Board adopts highway specifications as prepared by Dutchess County Superintendent of Highways and accepts

several new roads. There is public concern about traffic and pedestrian safety, as there is a request for a foot path to Mill Road School and the Recreation Park. Dumping on highways and speed limits are minor continuing issues.

EDUCATION: The Town Board continues to approve funding for public libraries.

PUBLIC SAFETY: Street lighting has increased to the point that the Town Board forms a Consolidated Lighting District in 1971. Changes of lights and new street lights are approved.

Residents request police protection for Halloween.

The Town Board continues to approve Fire Company contracts.

TAXATION: The Town Board adopts a one man Board of Assessment in 1971, and appoints one Assessor and a 3 man Board of Assessment Review.

FISCAL/PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY: Town Clerk, Justice of the Peace and Tax Collector fiscal reports are included at the end of the year (no Supervisor's annual report). The Supervisor gives monthly fiscal reports. Bonding of public officials continues.

A Code of Ethics is adopted in 1970, followed by appointment of a Code of Ethics Board.

FRANCHISES: the Town Board approves a contract for cablevision in 1970.

BUDGET: The budget process follows established patterns of preparation and approval of preliminary budget in October, and public hearing and adoption of budget in November. Very little information is included about the budget, though approvals of expenditures of Federal Revenue Sharing Funds are recorded.

PERSONNEL/PAYROLL: The Town Board continues to set salaries for officials and employees, and vacations, holidays and sick leave as well. The Town agrees to pay the pension retirement costs for Town employees.

Appointments to Committees and assignments of Town Board members are listed at the reorganizational meeting, usually in January.

PURCHASING: The established bidding process is reflected in these minutes. There are details of bids advertised and accepted for fuel oil, highway equipment and materials.

TOWN HALL: Increased activities of Town government have

created a need for more space. There is discussion of renovation of the Town Administration Building and rental of the Grange Hall for public meetings.

PUBLIC RECREATION: The Town Board approves funds for joint Town /Village Youth Recreation Programs. The Recreation Park (private) requests use of Town equipment.

PLANNING: Planning issues increase, though more of the responsibility is delegated to the Planning Board. The Town Board approves Subdivision Regulations prepared by the Planning Board in 1970 and sets fees. These regulations are revised in 1972. The Town Board empowers the Planning Board to approve all subdivision plats, and preliminary plats as well.

ZONING: Zoning is a major issue, as the Town Board approves the first Zoning Law and appoints a Zoning Board of Appeals and Zoning Enforcement Officer in 1970. By 1972, there are revisions to the zoning.

The Town Board considers the first Planned Unit Development proposal in 1971. There are hearings, meetings and consultations with County agencies and other Boards, before the Town Board rejects the proposal. Subsequent discussions and changes in the Zoning Law are recorded. Other rezoning requests are brought before the Town Board.

WATER SUPPLY: The Town hears a complaint of residents served by Annandale Water Works, does not consider it a Town problem, but refers it to the Planning Board.

ENVIRONMENT: The Town Board continues to appoint a Conservation Advisory Council (name changed to Environmental Conservation Commission in 1974), and adds a Visual Environment Committee in 1973.

TOWN CODE: A need to organize the body of Town ordinances is addressed by approval of a contract to publish a Town Code in 1971.

As the complexity of Town business increases, so does the time span for resolution of issues in Volume VIII of the Town Board minutes. There is more discussion over a period of time before decisions are made. There are more public hearings. The public hearing process is well defined - the date set, the hearing publicized, the hearing held (sometimes more than one) and then the decision made, a process requiring several months. There is more public comment and participation. In the late 1940's and 1950's, it was common for public hearings to generate no comment; in this time period, they generate a much comment. Increased influence and interaction with other public agencies also is reflected in the minutes.

END VOLUME VIII RECORD SERIES DESCRIPTION