

State of New York  
County of Fulton  
Town of Caroga

Minutes of a Caroga Town Board informational meeting held Tuesday September 30, 2008 at the municipal building located at 1840 State Highway #10 at 7:00 pm with the following board members in attendance:

Supervisor Kane - Here  
Councilman Ralph Palcovic - Here  
Councilman Robert Sprung - Here  
Council Member Valerie Scribner - Here  
Councilman Robert Sullivan - Here

Mike Heberer – Code Enforcement Officer and a representative of CT Male – Matt Mason met with the board prior to the open meeting. Approximately 60 people were in attendance.

Supervisor Kane welcomed everyone to the public information session for the construction and renovation of the town municipal offices. He then asked Councilman Palcovic to take over the meeting.

Councilman Palcovic set some ground rules. Mr. Mason will help answer the questions as they come up. The board will answer the best they can. If the board does not have the answer this evening please speak to the board after the meeting and they will try to get the answer.

Councilman Palcovic opened by saying; this structure was obtained from the school district about 17 years ago for a cost of \$1.00. In an executive summery from the school the reason it was no longer utilized for a school is because the existing building continues to age. Several serious issues have become evident. Structural components, and thermal components. Councilman Palcovic stated, “One of the biggest concerns is to provide a safe, healthy respectable environment for the general public and the town personnel who work and live in this building on a daily basis. The town of Caroga must determine a coarse of action to efficiently and economically resolve the structural and building deficiencies as they exist” He noted the display at the front of the room. “There is also a future potential collateral to person and property within the municipal offices – the building health issues. Our objective is to provide repairs or remediation and upgrades to the existing facility or demolish and provide a new municipal office complex. Those are the options we are looking at. These options are going to take place in phases, if so approved by the public.” The first phase is a partial demolition and abatement of the utilities to the existing 1955 and 1985 structures. Phase two will complete the demolition of the old school structure – it is failing dramatically. If approved the options of renovating the existing structure as put forth of the executive summery or if approved the design and award of bids of a new energy efficient structure. Phase two would include the design aspects of the needs to continue to use or build new. “Phase three will be if approved the reconstruction – the move forward, rehabilitation or build new energy efficient structure office space that meet the needs of the town.”

Councilman Sullivan supplied a sheet with the cost since 2002 to heat the municipal building. Approximate cost in 2002 - \$15,000.00, 2003 – \$10,000.00. 2004- \$15,000.00, 2005 - \$20,000.00, 2006 23,000.00, and in 2007 - \$33,000.00. He estimates a cost of \$50,000.00 heat the structure in the coming season. In an energy efficient building the cost is projected to be about \$10,000.00.

Councilman Palcovic stated it is up to the public whether we reinvest in this existing structure or go forward with a design scope and build a new 21-century office space to meet the needs and future growth. There are pictures of the deficiencies for the public to see.

Councilman Palcovic asked those with questions to come to the microphone, identify themselves and speak so that everyone can hear the question.

Terry Wrobel asked if the clinic was having the same structural problems as this building. Do they plan to help with the cost of a new building? Councilman Palcovic stated that the town has had preliminary discussions with the hospital. The town does look forward to providing them with new facilities. It was noted that they do pay rent, but he did not know how much. The current space is small and inadequate. Dept. of Health regulations require grater space Councilman Palcovic stated. There has been a discussion on possible grant money availability. “Mrs. Wrobel asked if they supply grant money would they still pay rent. Council Member Scribner responded yes. Mrs. Wrobel asked why buildings in Johnstown older than these are still usable and conducting business everyday. She asked if the problems were because of the lack of maintenance on this building.

Mr. Mason gave an architectural view/summary of the building. He noted that he was a credited LEED – accredited professional qualified to do sustainable design. He was not part of the initial team that came in to evaluate the building. His first impression of the building was it was OK. He didn’t see anything wrong. It looked like something that could be salvaged that can be fixed. He related a story about a car that he purchased whereby the when it came to do an inspection it could not be repaired. When he looked closer at the building he saw so much damage and so many problems with the facility. “Yes you can fix things, you can throw a lot of money at a building but at what point do you reach the threshold where it stops making sense.” He referred to the photos where on the roof there is a lot of water infiltration into the structure. It is to the point where the structural roof joints are damaged and deteriorated. There are roof leaks. All of the insulation under the roofing membrane throughout the building is completely saturated. There are two systems on the roof of the 1955 section. The 1985 roof section has reached the end of its lifecycle. The walls have been constructed without through wall flashing. The water has no place to go so it goes into the building. Peeling paint is visible, as is stain on the walls. The 1955 section has no insulation at all in the walls. There is minimal insulation in the 1985 section but it does not meet the current energy code requirements. The current building is 1300 sq ft. the new building was designed to be half the current square footage. The current building was designed as a school the rooms are large and not conducive to privacy. “The indoor air quality as many of you may have noticed as you even walked in the building is very poor.” There is water vapor migration coming up from below the building and water infiltration through the walls, and there is a crawl space that only has a dirt floor. Seasonably there is a high water table problem here. Geotechnical probes have been done that verify this problem. “Because there are no slab, no gravel or vapor barrier water vapor migrates up through the ground in to the crawl space and will eventually find its way into the building. This will cause a tremendous amount of mold growth, and indoor air quality problems.” The foundation wall perimeter has water coming in through it and into the building. That contributes to vapor migration and moisture buildup. This will result in floor tiles coming loose, mold growth, and indoor air quality. The crawl space also does not have any insulation. Today’s buildings have insulation envelopes, the roof, the floor, and the walls. There is a choice of doing the floor or the foundation wall. This building has neither. It is a tremendous source of heat loss.

There are roof drain problems. There are roof leaders that are leaking and ones that need to be connected and taken away from the building. As he began to see all of these problems he began adding up the number. It would be a tremendous cost. The roof joists would have to be reinforced, the damaged ones would have to be repaired. In addition to the fact that where there are two roofing systems the code does not allow you to do a third. The original two systems would have to be removed in order to put a new roof on. "When you really begin to analyze it and look at what it is going to take to be safe effective and code compliant that cost begins to be very high." The exterior walls would have to be studded out with metal framing and ridged insulation, drywall, and including new windows. He noted that floor finishes have been damaged, carpets that need to be replaced, ceiling tiles that are damaged, and asbestos in this building that needs to be abated. "When you put all this together it comes out to a certain number that I've summarized in the executive summary. When you begin to compare that cost to a new building, it begins to say time for a new building." Just as he had to get a new Honda. "To answer the question - This particular building was not designed and constructed in a way that was going to be long term working building that was safe and effective." There are many variables in building designs.

It was asked how much CT Male was being paid for this information. It was asked why there aren't any other estimates on this project. Councilman Palcovic responded that CT Male was "brought on as a consulting engineer to help us get through these issues." "We are under contract for various capacities. We are talking about design and understanding what our problems are. They have helped us come through that to the point of if in fact we do go forward in what ever capacity..." It was stated that the town does not have an engineer on payroll. "A job of this magnitude requires someone of CT Male's capabilities. They deal with municipal projects."

Councilman Palcovic stated, "We don't have all the answers yet. These questions you are posing to us will help us to understand better."

Linda Pomeroy – in the executive summery there is a range for this new construction. She asked about the cost for the demolition and removal of these buildings. Councilman Palcovic responded that before we demo any part of the structure we have to go through the asbestos abatement process. The county demolition team will come in and properly remove the structure. There will be a \$20.00 per ton municipal tipping fee.

Lucille Unger asked if the North Bush Church would be able to continue to have the annual dinner here? She noted that they would need to have the large walk-in-cooler, three ovens, and the dishwasher. Councilman Palcovic responded there would be kitchen facilities available in the proposed new structure. According to Supervisor Kane the walk in cooler and three ovens are on the plan. Councilman Palcovic looked "forward to supporting the churches mission in the future the best we can."

Mike Vickerson asked if there was any consideration of selling this building and putting a new building at a new location? Councilman Palcovic responded that they have discussed this – the infrastructure, the well, and sanitary sewer system already exists on this lot. The board wants to attempt to use these facilities.

Inger McDaniel asked how everything was going to be accommodated if the proposed new building in only ½ the sq footage of the existing building? Councilman Palcovic responded – "all of the considerations all of the needs of the town were considered."

Mr. Mason –“we did project programming. We do a special analysis of the needs of the town administrators. WE use an average allocation for an office or meeting room or kitchen. Based on the intended occupant load. Thus we arrive at a certain amount of sq footage for the building.” Finances are a huge consideration. We have kept it to an average size. It keeps maintenance and utility costs down.” “We are heating ½ of this room that we don’t even need to heat.”

John Anderson commended the board for the work they have done on this. He asked how the board was planning to pay for this? What will the tax rate be like? Councilman Palcovic responded, “That is to be calculated. We are putting this information out there at this time. WE have a proposed project cost. For both the renovation and the reconstruction. We would be looking at a bond issue of probably 30 years.” “The interest rate of today is 5% Supervisor Kane stated, but the financial planner also said in 2 –3 months it will be down to about 4.65.” It will raise taxes Mr. Anderson stated. Councilman Palcovic stated it will eventually, but I can’t tell you what the dollar value will be. “The best belief at this time for either new construction and or renovation will run around a million dollars hopefully less. That may be on the high side.” He noted the fluctuation on the construction building materials. “Obviously it will be put out to bid. Whatever we decide and whatever the town would like to do. We would obviously utilize some project oversight of CT Male to make sure we get the building we want, or the reconstruction done adequately.” Mr. Anderson asked with today’s economy shouldn’t a project like this be put off for a year? “Everyone in this room is going to get hurt – no question about it.” Councilman Palcovic responded, “A thirty year bond issue will minimize the impact to the greatest extent.”

Ann Nostrand asked where the working members of the town would be put while this was under construction and how much would it cost? She noted that there is still an open bond on the school. The board could not respond to the school bond issue. There will be a phase in construction approach. The town will continue to operate in some facet of this building as the projects progress. It will be business as usual. It was explained that the proposed new structure would fit in the place of the white old school building. The first phase is constructing a utility shed to contain all the heating, lighting and phone system.

Mr. Shutts commented that the public is supposed to make a decision on this but they don’t have all the numbers. “Is there going to be another meeting? If this is a referendum then we have to vote in November.” “How can we make educated decisions on a million dollar thing...at the end of almost everyone of your statements – not to pick on you, you keep saying we don’t have it....” Councilman Palcovic asked if he had a copy of the executive summary. (He did.) Councilman Palcovic stated that they did not have the financing and the interest rates. These are things Mr. Shutts thought were needed to make a decision. Council Member Scribner noted that this was not going to be on the ballot in November. “As soon as we can get it on.” Councilman Sprung stated “I think the earliest we could get it, I think we were told December by our attorney.” Mr. Shutts wanted another meeting prior to that so that the public could have the final numbers. He remembers when the school did this process they had the tax rate all broken out. Councilman Palcovic said this is the first informational session. “This is not the end. This is the preliminary. There are questions that we can’t answer today. I can’t tell you how much it is going to affect per thousand. We don’t know that yet. We will have that.”

Millie Bush asked when this does go out for a vote; will the summer people (property owners) be able to vote on it? Or is it just the people that are registered voters of the town of Caroga? Linda Pomeroy stated that she is a registered voter who is a seasonal person also. Council Member

Scribner responded that they would get an absentee ballot. Councilman Palcovic did not know if seasonal residents could vote on a public referendum.

Mrs. Shutts asked what other meetings take place in this facility, the snowmobile and boating education classes, various other organizations. It is infrequently. The museum, and Canada Lake Protective Assoc. also hold meetings here. She asked if the building was safe enough to have these groups use the building? “These are issues that we are responsible for.”

Mr. Mason in his own assessment has put himself in her place. He responded, “Yes. The only place I would not feel safe is in the main entrance way.” Some of the photos show a steel joist that bares into the foundation wall the baring point is actually gone. Temporary scaffolding has been put up in there. One of the photos is incorrect, Mr. Mason noted. (The photo in the upper right of the basement plan. He is pointing to a certain location in the building it is not there. It is actually supposed to point to the main breezeway) “As for the rest of the building yes, there is damage yes it is deteriorating. Not to the point where he would be specifically alarmed. Eventually if the problems of water infiltration and vapor migration are not addressed those structural members are going to continue to rust and deteriorate. They are somewhat rusted now. In my opinion fairly OK for now. If these issues are not addressed it eventually is going to become like it is now at the entrance way.”

Mrs. Shutts noted that the town recently received approval to alienated land for a new highway barn project. Which project is a priority? How soon is the town going to start on this project and then start on the other project? Councilman Palcovic stated that this was priority one, this project here. As far as the salt barn and the highway garage that will take a back seat for the future. The sewer system, which we invested heavily in, the engineering survey, that is also taking a back seat.

Mrs. Shutts asked what kind of money does the town have? Councilman Palcovic responded that the town continues to do business through the best we can. Do you think we have a million dollars in our back pocket? She asked how much money was in our bank accounts? There are some capitol reserve funds. But this is a capitol project all of it’s own. What is available in the budget now was the question. He did not have the answer to that question.

The public asked about the yearly budget. Councilman Palcovic noted that engineering fees were incorporated in the budget this year for this project. “Next year there will be additional line items to continue working on this project. Up to the point we decide what we are going to do to finalize the project.”

Mr. Fenzl noted he was involved initially with the inspection of the building 1 – 2 years ago. There are two issues glossed over. He did not see any money put in for the repairs or remediation of the roof drains. Presently the roof drains for this building all discharge into the ground around this building. Going into the ground effects this building. Good engineering practice says keep water away from the foundation. When the building was designed the roof water was put into drywells and an old abandon well. It is doing damage to the soil under the footings. The second issue is even more serious the foundation is settling as evidence by all of the step cracks in the cement block wall and the brick veneer. He thought it would be practicably impossible to put a price tag on stabilizing the foundation, as you never know what you are going to run into once you excavate around the building and see the soil conditions under the footings.

Mr. Shutts asked if the Budget Director could be available for the next meeting. Councilman Palcovic responded that if it doesn’t happen. “We will have a complete financial statement of costs and tax assessments and total impact to the individual taxpayer.” It will be very public.

Mr. Shutts had hoped for more information tonight. Supervisor Kane asked, “What aren’t you getting? You’ve got the cost here to repair this building and the bottom consensus here tells you what the new one is going to cost.”

Mr. Mason noted that his concerns were valid. “As a taxpayer you are entitled to see a referendum or some type of complete description as to what the cost of the building is, what the tax impact is going to be, how they are going to fund it. You want complete information.” It is his understanding that the town is committed to providing that. This is the first meeting and the information is developing – good questions are being asked. The board sees the homework they still have to do. “That information will be put together and you will be fully informed.”

Mrs. Marler asked if there was a maintenance department and how many hours a week they work. Mr. Springstead works 13 hours a week, which includes time to clean the building. She asked if lack of maintenance over the years was half of the problem. Mr. Springstead (maintenance person) responded yes. She stated if proper maintenance was not set up for the new building this would happen again in another 50 years. What has been/will be set up to protect our investment. Councilman Sullivan hoped that the public would monitor the board’s progress in maintaining the building. Council Member Scribner thought in the future they would have a maintenance man on board to take care of the building and it won’t happen again.

Ann Nostrand asked why the rush to have the referendum in December which is a very busy month. She noted the town was also going to have a new supervisor, and that the economy is tanked. Councilman Palcovic stated this could not go on the ballot before December. This is not a steadfast date. The board is looking in the near future. He stated with a new supervisor, after the first of the year, to follow the whole project may be the right thing to do.

Mr. Selmsler ran a few numbers; if we were to borrow \$800,000.00 at 4.5% the cost per year would be \$48,000.00 that is in the ballpark of the difference between the current energy projection and the possibility of a smaller building. It would be a break-even situation. He noted the importance of reserve funds and a plan for maintenance in the future. He would see that this happened. (if elected supervisor) Mr. Selmsler asked if there has been any discussion with the Wheelerville School to see if they had any capacity to rent out space due to declining enrollment. Councilman Palcovic stated that those discussions have not taken place. He hopes the school enrollment would go up again. Councilman Sullivan has been contacted by the Wheelerville School Board – of which he was a former member, to meet with the current board to discuss ways to attract younger people into the community. This was part of the master plan generated five years ago.

Bill Fielding also wondered if the Town Board and the School Board met to see if the new structure is needed or can it be dovetailed in any way. He wanted to know what the needs of the school vs. the needs of the town with this new (proposed) structure. Has dialog been opened to see if there were any suggestions or if they have any needs? Several members of the board responded no. Mr. Fielding thought there was some duplication of services, which might help both entities. The school has a cafeteria, kitchen, and large meeting area. “Is there a possibility of consolidating services which could help the both of you?” “The dialog needs to happen. Is that reasonable?” Councilman Palcovic responded that the statement of shared municipal services is excellent. “What can we work together on to eliminate some of each needs to meet the needs of both?” Mr. Fielding stated that several times this evening the board has said things have been put on the back burner. There are some other real issues in this community that should be addressed financially along with the proposal for the new structure. People are going to have questions and

if the board does not address these issues at the same time you are trying to sell a new municipality building you are going to fall short.” The town barn is in deplorable shape and condition. The site is an accident waiting to happen. It is only fair to the taxpayers to look far enough into the future to say this also needs to be done relatively soon also. He did not understand the dirt pile. Years ago it was moved away from a stream at the town barn property, to the site the state used during a road resurfacing project. Then there was a situation where the pile may drain off salt into Canada Lake so the state said it had to be moved. Then the pile was moved back to the town barn site where it had been 15 years prior. He wished the board would address some of the issues that have been gnawing at us and are going to cost us money in the future. He would like a long-range vision that the town has for this community. He would really appreciate if the town board would work with in conjunction with the school board to develop a package as to where this town is going in future and how is it going to get there. (Applause)

Councilman Palcovic noted that long-range measures and planning have to take place. “We have been reactive instead of proactive.” He noted a lot of time was spent on the proposed sewer system, which would have promoted growth. But at the public hearing a lot of people were not in favor of it. He agreed the Town board should work closer with the school board.

Mrs. Sullivan asked if a sewer system would be a cost to the taxpayers or would the town be able to recoup that money. Councilman Palcovic responded, “There is an initial cost that could impact your local tax rate.” There is an annual fee to use the system. At the time it could not exceed about \$600.00 – which is a significant amount of money for the average taxpayer. Potentially there could be growth with motels and maybe the amusement industry.

Nancy Zeiser asked how she would learn of any future meetings and when the referendum would take place. The information will be advertised, it will be on the website, there may be a mailing.

Mr. Shutts agreed with Mr. Fielding’s points. He wondered how the town could generate interest to get kids to go to school here let alone buy property to live with the taxes going up. He also has a vested interest in the salt/sand pile issue, as it is catty-corner from his house. He is concerned with contamination at a new site. It was noted that the salt is currently housed inside. In the future all environmental conservation standards will be met. Mr. Shutts is concerned with human error.

Mr. Barkevich observed that the current building is 12700 sq ft the new building would be 7000 sq ft. thus there is 5700 sq ft of excess space here. Has any consideration been given to consolidating and maybe demolishing a portion of this complex, which would reduce the cost. It is a 45% reduction. He asked if steel trusses were proposed to retrofit the building. Mr. Mason answered it would be a sloped metal roof with a steel framing substructure. The walls would have to be addressed in the design, as the trusses have to set on them. A portion of the wall would need to be used, as would the existing roof joist as a support for the steel framing. A clear span would mean more load on the walls. Which require further investigation as the walls are susceptible to water infiltration even now. It is a choice. The deteriorated roof joist would still need to be repaired. The clear span trusses would be significantly larger and Mr. Mason explained that he did not see a cost savings. It was noted that the building is a type two non-combustible building and non-combustible materials would need to be used. Mr. Mason agreed that there may be some savings in the cost to repair, replace, and reinforce the roof joists. Mr. Barkevich noted the new systems on the market to bypass J-joists, which have deteriorated, should be explored. He believed the total space in the complex should be looked at to see where it can be reduced or demolished to get down to the 7000 sq ft. Which is all we need according to the projected plans.

Mr. Mason mentioned if that approach was taken then it would make sense to demo the 1955 part of the building and an addition would be needed to hook on to the 1985 section. But he did not see where the cost savings would be. Mr. Mason pointed out that the damaged building components and systems he has looked at have been limited. A comprehensive or total look at the building has not been done. "Because there is so much, it gets to the point where you are over that threshold where it doesn't make sense to fix this building."

Ralph Ottuso asked how much does the town generate each year in income? What does the town take in, in income in a year? Revenue? He asked if the town was overspending? Councilman Palcovic –"have we reached our taxing limit as the counties have?" Mr. Ottuso thought a realistic estimate for this project was a million five. "Multiply that by 5% a year for 30 years, what is the town making? How can we pay for this without raising taxes? Councilman Palcovic didn't say we couldn't raise the taxes but they are trying to limit the amount. He figured it would cost \$65,000.00 per year. Mr. Selmsler figured \$53,6800.00 per year on a million dollars for 30 years at 5%. He asked for the figures of what the town makes per year. He believes the board should know what they are taking in and what they are spending. A monthly report is given to the board members each month.

Dan Tantalio figured the cost would \$85,000.00 a year for a million dollars @ 5%. He agreed there would be a savings with the energy costs each year. On a \$90,000.00 assessment the cost per thousand would be between \$40 - \$60 per home on an annual basis. He thought that made more sense than trying to renovate this whole building.

Councilman Palcovic stated that anyone who has a question and did not get a clear answer, basically on the finances, to write their name down and the board would make sure they got the answer for them. The board is trying to keep this project in an affordable range. Any one with suggestions/ideas for future growth were recommended to go to the planning board. There was a lot of good material in the Master Plan. "We've come through some of it and the other part of it is we need to keep promoting growth. It will keep substantiating the tax base, which will be the benefit of everyone in this room.

The website address was given: [carogalakeny.com](http://carogalakeny.com)

One resident thought lowering the school tax was a way to encourage people into the community. Councilman Palcovic noted what a fine school district we have. If it does "go south" then we would be engaged with either the Gloversville or Johnstown enlarged school district. "Then we would have no local say over our school district." He did not want to see that happen. "We need to work together with the school board in the future, that would be to everybody's benefit.

Mr. Springstead noted the very poor condition of the white section of the building.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda M. Gilbert - RMC