

State of New York  
County of Fulton  
Town of Caroga

Minutes of an Emergency Caroga Town Board meeting held Tuesday May 4, 2010  
at the municipal building located at 1840 State Highway #10 at 7:00 pm with the following  
persons in attendance by Roll Call:

Supervisor Selmsler - Here  
Councilman Ralph Palcovic - Here  
Council Member Valerie Scribner - Here  
Councilman Robert Sullivan - Here  
Councilman Anthony Russitano - Here

Others in attendance were Wally Hart – Fulton County Regional Chamber of Commerce, a  
reporter from WIZR, and four members of the public.

Supervisor Selmsler opened the meeting at 7 pm by conducting the pledge to the flag. He said  
he called the meeting as an informational meeting on the closing of the Caroga Campsite, as a  
follow up to a meeting on Monday with 3 people from DEC, Senator Farley, Assemblyman  
Butler, Chamber members, Council Member Valerie Scribner and himself. He was hopeful as to  
the outcome of the Monday meeting, but may have been too optimistic.

Council Member Scribner reviewed what she has done to date. A face book page was started  
and it has 5095 members. Since she has gone over the five thousand mark she is no longer able  
to send out a mass mailing to them and at this time she wanted to ask for donations.

At the Monday meeting DEC presented various scenarios for 2010. They want to adjust the  
season. They estimated the operating cost at \$113,868.00. This reflects an 18% reduction over  
2009. Using these numbers the operating debt would be \$35,543.00. DEC wanted a  
commitment to provide additional funding by May 10<sup>th</sup> of the deficit. The Senator and  
Assemblyman have tried to put the money in the state budget. Since there isn't a budget it is  
unknown if the money will be there.

A fundraiser was started on face book and through the newspaper. As of today \$175.00 has  
been collected from yesterday. Someone has pledged \$50.00 also.

Wally Hart has been working today on how best to contact those 5000 plus people on face  
book. He has sent out the donation information on his own face book page to his friends. He  
noted it is huge to have that many people on your face book page. Other businesses that use face  
book who are giving away merchandise only have 1500 members. DEC was very impressed  
with the face book response.

Council members Scribner & Councilman Russitano went to the school board meeting last  
week. They discussed what the options were if the campsite did not open. The school will put  
more money in their budget incase an alternate site has to be used for Summer Recreation. The  
owner of Pine Lake has been contacted. The estimated cost to use the beach is around  
\$1,000.00.

Council Member Scribner noted that there is a list of volunteers. A member of the public  
suggested that if the 5000 people on face book donated \$5.00 each the budget gap would almost  
be closed. It was asked what happens if the campsite does not open? Where does the money go?  
People don't want to see the state take the money. Wally Hart speculated that if the  
Assemblyman comes up with the \$35,000.00, and the committee raises \$1,000.00 what could the  
money be used for. Mr. Hart explained that there obviously are a number of people who care  
about Caroga; they want to see something positive to come of this. He suggested positive

marketing about the Town of Caroga that is what the funds would be used for. It would be used to meet the goal of getting the campground open and to help promote the town. Many people may not know that the bathrooms were upgraded, or that the state campground has a beach for day use. Packages about the entire town could be put together. There is the golf course, hiking at Kane Mountain, and motocross. A real marketing plan would be developed for the future if there were extra money. The chamber won't do anything with the funds unless there is direction from the town. The money will be set aside for the town. Maybe the business community could get together to promote the town.

Councilman Sullivan noted that the deadline is May 10<sup>th</sup>. He thought the only people to make this happen was the town. They could front the money and go from there. He did not think the \$30,000.00 could be raised. The councilman spoke to some residents and they were not opposed to the using of town funds. He did not, however, want to do this on an annual basis.

Mr. Hart wanted to focus on the marketing not just the campground, but the other things that are good in the town.

Mr. Stumpf asked about a rumor he heard about the National Park Service and their involvement with the APA and money they donated for historic preservation. Council Member Scribner thought those monies went into Johnson Hall but it did not go into our park.

Supervisor Selmsler noted the line item to promote the town has \$1,000.00 in it. Suggestions for the future to promote Caroga Lake include an Adirondack Paddle Fest at the campsite (if it is open)

Mr. Hart emailed DEC with some questions yesterday about the operating plan. He noted there were 256 canceled reservations, which total \$4608.00 in lost revenues. The state wanted reimbursement for those lost reservations. Mr. Hart did not think anyone should have to come up with money to cover that loss. They made the decision to close the campground. He learned the day use fee is \$8.50 per vehicle. There were a couple of questions that the response was they would get back to him. DEC stated that they need a week to get the people with cancelled reservations back in the system. We are going to have to do marketing to let people know it is open.

It was noted that the next state budget deadline is May 10<sup>th</sup>. Council Member Scribner asked about getting an extension. The DEC is concerned about having time to hire staff. They don't want to wait until July to hire staff that may be inexperienced. It was noted that the park will very shortly need maintenance – mowing. Mr. Hart noted that Johnson Hall is not being maintained the grass is getting tall.

Council Member Scribner was contacted by Herb Vernon who has a public access TV show. He invited anyone who was available to his show on Thursday from 12:30 to 1:30 pm.

Councilman Russitano asked about the issue of the discounted day passes. Mr. Hart responded that this is an issue that is going to be discussed anyway with Parks and Recreation. They have proposed changes. This is already in the budget unless something comes up in public comment. An adjustment is being recommended as to the amount of time and the usage, and justification of the access pass. Supervisor Selmsler wanted to raise this to people's attention. Currently persons with an access pass can stay for 14 days at a cost of \$2.50 – regularly it is \$20.00 per night. If there are open sites the person can stay another two weeks, but may have to change sites. One Council Member related that people stay at the campsite and then go to visit people incarcerated in the county jail.

Mr. Hart noted that the fee in Northville is \$22.00 per night. He would like to see that fee in Caroga as well. DEC was not in favor of raising the rate because it would have to go through the department of budget. If our campsite is closed and the people go to the Northville campsite they will pay the two dollars more.

Revenues and expenditure figures of the campground were made available to the town board.

It was noted that the town already picks up the garbage at the campground. Mr. Hart noted the roads were paved for the first time in 40 year and drainage work was done. Supervisor Selmser asked if the capitol projects were factored in to the operating cost of the Caroga Campground. Mr. Hart said they were not in the annual operating expenditures. Mr. Hart asked why weren't the loss of revenues reviewed three years ago prior to improvements being made (money spent) on the campground. He noted the significant cost (\$80,000.00) of renovations when the operating budget is \$138,000.00.

Supervisor Selmser asked Mr. Hart if there was a response from DEC about having a private individual or if the town or County wanted to take it over/lease it. The issue there is that constitutionally it is not allowed. The legal avenue was not pursued as to changing/challenging this. Since we are in the park it is another layer. Someone should be check into this down the road. This may need an amendment. It was asked if other towns run their own campsite. Mr. Hart explained that this is state land contained within a state park.

Councilman Sullivan expressed concern that people are going to be in the park anyway even if it is closed. Staff will need to be there even if it is barricaded. Mr. Hart stated that the town should make it clear they won't be responsible for anything that happens. The Fire Chief has already expressed a concern about the closing of the park gate and response time if someone is injured within.

Mr. Hart contacted 46 media outlets today. He sent out a press release about the face book page and the five thousand people who signed up. He hopes that they would each donate something. It depends on the news day if the story is picked up. A suggestion was made to contact Mr. McLain who has a public access show on Thursday night. Mr. Stumpf will talk to him tonight.

Supervisor Selmser said if the town has to show some support there may be some funds available. He was not comfortable committing the total amount of money. The state operated at a loss last year and maybe for the past couple of years. The supervisor suggested meeting  $\frac{1}{2}$  way or  $\frac{1}{3} - \frac{2}{3}$ .

The board was in favor of continuing to put pressure on the state to open. The town wants them to come up with an operating plan. The board wanted an extension until the budget is passed. Council Member Scribner said the town couldn't give them all the money. It was noted that the town supports the campground with in-kind services through garbage collection. Supervisor Selmser noted that it offsets the recreation expense. A counter offer has not yet been made to DEC. Mr. Hart noted that the board has to make an offer. The Town has to put a dollar value on what we currently provide them and also what they give us for allowing summer recreation to use the beach. The board will ask the highway superintendent for the figures.

Councilman Russitano suggested taking the budget gap, minus the in-kind services we already provide and then split the difference with DEC as our counter offer, – negotiate.

Councilman Palcovic wanted the board to make a resolution to support the campground. Council Member Scribner stated that there are a lot of projects already that are important to the town without adding more. She noted the town hall building is in disrepair. She wanted to think before taking any action.

Councilman Palcovic noted that hundreds of thousands of dollars was spent on the Herms case. There are certain principals that the board has to support that are in the best interest of the public. The Herms case is a classic example. This is the same consideration for the good of the long-term event. The board has to look at the wellbeing of the town long-term.

Times are changing, the population is older, and we have to bring attention to what we have available to offer new residents.

The board discussed other services they could offer DEC. Councilman Palcovic noted we already provide fire and emergency medical response. The town could sweep the streets; go in at the beginning of the year to clean up winter debris. Chip tree limbs. Maybe the streets need to

be done more than once a year. A firm figure for expenses of garbage collection will be put together. The wench on the truck picks up the dumpster at the campground.

A counter offer needs to contain a partial offer, and identify the services that are offered presently, and recommend that there are highway personnel that can supply some other basic services once a year or as needed. Before the offer is given the board would be notified.

**RESOLUTION in Support of the DEC Campsite in the Town of Caroga #2010-000**

Offered by Councilman Palcovic

Seconded by Councilman Sullivan

**WHEREAS**, Supervisor Selmser called an emergency meeting to be held on Tuesday May 4, 2010, and

**WHEREAS**, a notice was placed in the Leader Herald newspaper and notice was posted on the bulletin board outside the town clerks office, and near the other entrance of the municipal building, and also posted at the Post Office bulletin board, and

**WHEREAS**, all board members were present and participated in a discussion of the options to the closing of the Caroga Camp Ground, now therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that the supervisor is hereby authorized to tender an offer to the State of New York in regards to our support of the campsite. This board is offering in-kind services and a cash value to be determined at a future date, and does hereby move to be acting in good faith.

Adopted by a Roll Call Vote:

Councilman Russitano – Yes

Supervisor Selmser – Yes

Councilman Palcovic – Yes

Council Member Scribner – Yes

Councilman Sullivan – Yes

Mr. Hart suggested asking for an extension until the 14<sup>th</sup> of May, which will be submitted to Chris Valentine at DEC. This will give the board time after their meeting. The board hopes to have a response back by their next meeting to know where they stand.

At 7:50 pm Council Member Scribner made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Russitano seconded the motion. All members were in favor of the motion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda M. Gilbert, RMC, CMC  
Town Clerk