

TOWN OF ROSENDALE
TOWN BOARD MEETING
PUBLIC HEARING SAFETY RADIO TOWER
FEBRUARY 12, 2025

Supervisor Walsh asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present:	Supervisor	Jeanne L. Walsh
	Councilmember	Ashley Sweeney
	Councilman	Marc Cassidy (arrived 6:45 PM)
	Councilman	Joseph Havranek
Excused:	Councilmember	Carrie Wykoff

Also Present: Kenneth Hassett; Deputy Supervisor, Joe La Fera; RMC Building Manager, Billy Liggan; Planning Board Chair and Penny Coleman; Environmental Commission.

Dennis Doyle; Director Ulster County Planning Board, Steve Peterson; Director Emergency Services and Mike Patel; Managing Director Tectonic Engineering presented the Town Board and the public with the plans for the Public Safety Radio Tower. They gave a power point presentation which is on file in the Town Clerk's Office.

Supervisor Walsh made a motion to open the Public Hearing at 6:35 PM, 2nd by Councilman Havranek. ROLL VOTE: 3 YES.

The Town Clerk read the opening of the Public Hearing at 6:36 PM.

Jack Petrozzelli, resident – Is concerned about visibility, property value and health reasons. He also said this seems like a done deal.

Connie Harkin, resident – Connie stated she has been a taxpayer and resident for 35 years. She thanked all the service members who are at the meeting tonight. She said that she also will have to live next door to the cell phone tower. She said that she read Motorola's proposal from 2019 which was originally supposed to be cited at SUNY Ulster and wants to know why it was moved to this location. She also requested an adjournment or continuance of this meeting as they have neighbors who have not had time to review the application.

Adele Ruger, non-resident – Adele read a letter from residents who could not make the meeting Patchin and Marisa Podes and will be submitted to the Town Board.

Aubrey Van Aken, resident – Aubrey asked for people to not spin or make her seem as she is against the tower being utilized for the first responders. She feels the tower should be placed at the original proposed location. On September 27, 2019 Motorola had sent out to Steven Peterson who at the time was the director of Ulster County Emergency Communications outlining all the towers for the

area and SUNY Ulster was the original site and why it now be proposed here. She said she drives an hour and ten minutes to work every day and since hearing about this tower coming to our area she looks around and sees a lot more towers. Her concern is that a lot of those towers are on higher elevations, and they are not in residential areas. This is a residential area and the elevation at the college is much higher. The college is 331 feet and at this location it is 291 feet. She also said a concern is property value being reduced and she looked at National Association of Realtors homes close to towers sell for a discount of up to 7.6%. Aubrey said that the foliage will shield the tower but being so close it is admitting RF and microwaves. She said according to the American cancer website at this time, there is no strong evidence that exposure to RF waves from cell phone has been proven safe. Most expert organizations today say that more research is needed to help clarify this, especially for any long-term effects. Aubrey said her concern is she doesn't want to be a guinea pig along with her kids. She is consulting with her primary care physician making sure that any kind of base line studies that need to be conducted so if something does happen in the future, she knows who to point the finger to and who to blame. She said she would like them to consider the residents who live by this tower proposal.

Sherry Dunham, resident -Sherry said she has lived here for a long time. She said that all the photos presented only shows the views of the tower from straight on but not from a top view like where their house is. When they have people visit they always compliment her view, but there is no way they won't have a view of the tower once it is installed. She stated she is really against this. Sherry said her mother wears a life alert and has used it two times. Police showed up very fast and in another incident there was a fire behind her house, 911 was called and they were right there. Sherry said when she drives though Stone Ridge her cell phone hardly works, and the tower needs to be built closer to where the problem is. She has never had an issue at home having first responders arrive at her house. She said this is a nice neighborhood and now there is going to be this huge tower. She stated she is against this and for the reasons everyone has said.

Tom Rinaldi, resident – Tom said that the view doesn't bother him, and he understands the need for it, but he is concerned about the microwaves and what that will do. Most of the recommendations are 1500 feet of residence and most of the houses in the development are in that range. He asked if they are looking at different sizes the tower can be built. He also asked if the cell tower is going to have radios on it or the pads for cell service. Supervisor Walsh said this is a radio tower. Tom said there were 2 dishes that were going to be about 100 feet and Supervisor Walsh said that they are for cell service. Tom asked if it was going to be a cell tower for the County or public cell. Supervisor Walsh replied that it was going to be public. Since the County is going through this process, he asked if the private cell carriers will have to get a permit as well. Mary Lou Christiana said they may still need to go through the Planning Board. Dennis Doyle said there are several case law that include a County and/or a Municipality immunity from zoning can apply to private carries. The Counties application includes 2 cell facilities right now and there are also indications under the telecommunications statue that adding certain kinds of cell facilities to existing towers. Tom asked once the County gets in if they can be grandfathered in and the 2 pads. Dennis said there will be no change to the site plan. Tom said when the door opens everybody goes there. He also said he understands the communication needed for the first responders and it is needed, but when there is talk about several towers that's a different standard. Dennis said the reason the County is to

include cellular facilities on its public safety radio towers is that 90% of the calls to the 911 center are made by cell phones and adequate cell service is also critical for public safety. Mary Lou asked if it was limited to two cell carriers. Dennis replied that it will only be two.

Aubrey Van Aken, resident – Aubrey said that it is her understanding that AT&T has an interest in this. She had a conversation with Dennis about the fee. The County or the Town will be reaping the benefits because they will probably be charging a lease fee. Supervisor Walsh said that it hasn't been figured out, but there probably will be some benefit. Aubrey said from what she has read the lease fee can be anywhere from \$500.00 to \$2,000.00 a month. She said the town could very well benefit from this and wants to know how the residents can benefit from it also. Supervisor Walsh said that residents benefit anytime the town gets extra money because there is a budget and if funds come in from other ways that benefits the residents on their tax bill. Aubrey said her tax bill hasn't gone down since she moved here. Supervisor Walsh said she is not saying her taxes will go down she is saying whatever the budget is will be offset by whatever revenue comes in.

Otto Scherrieble, resident – Otto said he is with the High Falls Fire Company and has been a member for a long time. He said that they have been working with the same radio system since 1954 he believes. They are working with 35–40-year-old technology. He said if you go down the road and everything starts making noise and losing communication. Otto said he respects everyone's concerns, but they must understand this is primarily an emergency communication system. It's for the department to communicate to get to the emergency calls. He is a member of the Ulster County Fire Board, and they have been at this ever since he has been there and that was the mid 1980's. This has been pushed off for so long and really needs an emergency communications tower.

Manna Jo Greene, resident – Manna said she remembers several years ago with a similar situation with Central Hudson upgrading power lines and they were going to be very near a trailer park. She just wanted to know why not SUNY Ulster. She thinks the neighbors are concerned about the microwaves and radio frequency.

Kevin Keller, resident – Kevin said he is the past Chief of the Bloomington Fire Company and has been with them for 48 years. He said there is nothing more frustrating when you have a crew in a house, behind a house or in a basement and you cannot hear them. Someone is going to get injured. He said he appreciates everyone's concerns and wants everyone to appreciate theirs. Kevin said his biggest fear is injury or death of one of the members. This system needs more than anyone can imagine.

Tim Williams, resident – Tim said he has been here for four years and loves his neighborhood. He said he has lived in cities his entire life and it took him 62 years to buy a house. He thanked all the first responders for all their work, and he knows a system is needed, but he thinks things are being slightly inflated. It's not a binary choice if a tower is built or you don't have a system. Tim said he didn't think the community didn't want a tower it is more where is the best place for it. He also asked since there is more information if this can be put on hold. Tim wanted to know how far along this project is. There is something that feels odd to him and cell companies and seems to be down played. Tim said the town should know what the fees are going to be, and he isn't hearing that.

Supervisor Walsh said there is no contract in place and not available yet. She also said everyone needs to remember that this is something that is being proposed to the town from the County and those answers the town does not have. Tom said if the town is making a proposal there seems there would be some internal organization where these things are figured out. Supervisor Walsh said this is the beginning stage of this process. He also said he lives on Michael Drive and when the balloon test was done you could see it way above the trees and it was very clear.

Supervisor Walsh made a motion to keep the Public Hearing open for written comment until March 12, 2025, 2nd by Councilman Havranek. ROLL VOTE: 4 YES.

Dennis Doyle said they will provide a written answer as to why this project is not being done at SUNY Ulster.

Connie Harkin, resident – Connie asked if no decisions will be made until written comments have been submitted. Supervisor Walsh said nothing will be decided at least for 30 days.

Tom Rinaldi, resident – Tom asked if the letter will be posted on the website. Supervisor Walsh said she wasn't sure if it was going to be posted on the website until the Town Board has a chance to review it.

Councilman Havranek said the question that really is asked are the carriers that are engaged and looking to be put on the tower. He asked if they are involved with the Town or with the County. He said if this information is being brought to the County it also needs to be brought to the town. Councilman Havranek asked if the 80 foot and 120-foot platforms are viable platforms or are something to make it look nice and make it look as there are 2 spots available but only one for cell service. He also asked if 80 feet is a practical location for cell service, or even 120 foot. Also, who the carriers who may be engaging with the County and their fiduciary offers are to the County and how those proceeds are brought to the town.

Mary Lou Christiana, Town Attorney – Mary Lou asked Supervisor Walsh if more information was needed about emissions. Supervisor Walsh said yes.

Councilman Havranek said It would be good to know what the impact to the community the microwaves will have and to make sure there it is a safe community. He said that is one of the major charges he has as a board member. Councilman Havranek said they must make sure the emergency responders that need to have a communication system, but also safe for the community. He also said this is a tough situation and how does the town weigh out all the concerns. He also asked if the proposed joint Municipal Garage is not cited in the area where the tower may be going. Supervisor Walsh said that the town's engineers had been meeting with them to make sure that wasn't going to happen.

Councilmember Sweeney asked if the tower would have lighting as a few people asked to about that previously. Dennis replied that it will not have lights as FAA determined it is not needed.

Connie Harkin, resident – Connie said when she first moved here it was an elementary school and it was quiet, now there is consolidation of services, and it has impacted the neighbors next door. She said first there are lights, now a cell phone tower and next will be an 18-bay garage. She also said it is like residents are being unduly impacted because of consolidation. Supervisor Walsh said she feels it is hard to believe that it's more of an impact from having a school and this was a public building. This is just being considered right now so the tower wasn't in the same location. Supervisor Walsh said they work very hard to do what's best for the community and their needs. She said radio communication is needed and during hurricane Irene it was very scary because no one could communicate. The town must look at all the pros and cons, but the first reason this was considered was because the town understood how important that communication is. Councilman Havranek said one of the big eye openers was the last ice storm and it really targeted Rosendale. He said his Highway Department lost communication throughout the whole day and nobody knew what each other was doing. There was huge safety concern for highway crews and safety responders. This problem has been going on for many years and everyone was lucky.

Otto Scherrieble, resident – The system was being used now is obsolete. There are portable radios and radios in the vehicles, and no one can get more parts for it. So, when they die, they throw them out. There isn't a high ban system, it's a low ban system. Otto said there is nothing more frustrating than trying to go to a call to save somebody's house is burning and they are inside and there is no communication.

Public Comments/Community events – Councilmember Sweeney said there will be a game night at the Recreation Center February 21st at 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM.

Supervisor Walsh made a motion to approve the January minutes, 2nd by Councilman Cassidy.
ROLL VOTE: 4 YES.

Committee Reports:

Recreation (Councilmember Sweeney):

The new playground is expected to be delivered April 8th and Building and Grounds will remove the old playground. Once the new equipment arrives it shouldn't take long to install. They are looking at minor landscaping from the money raised from the fundraiser. The Recreation Commission meets every 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:15 PM.

Youth (Councilmember Sweeney):

Kids Night in took place on January 31 and was very successful. There were approximately 25 participants, and the cost was \$15.00 per person. There were games, dancing and pizza. Saturday morning art labs will continue through the month of February. Summer camp registration will start in March. The Youth Commission meeting are the 1st Monday of every month at 7:00 PM

Food Pantry (Councilmember Sweeney):

They are still looking for volunteers with pickup trucks for deliveries.

Donations are always welcome.

Tax Collector (Councilmember Sweeney):

Payments have been flooding in and have paid the town over 3 million towards the warrant.

There is a new tax program this year and they are still figuring it out. It has been difficult and they are unsure if they like it.

Elder Assistance (Councilmember Sweeney):

They still have concerns about the speed limit on Route 32 in front of the Recreation Center.

Environmental (Councilmember Wykoff):

(Reported by Councilmember Sweeney):

The last meeting was January 16th. The Community Solar Campaign Power Market has informed the commission that the array offering of 15% discount for LMI customers has been fully subscribed.

Solar at the Municipal Center for the roof is being evaluated by the New York Power Authority

Penny Coleman has spoken to Mark Rider Executive Director of the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency, and they did not receive the UKRA Grant which would have allowed them to provide aerators that would support composting at municipal sites.

Plant swap is scheduled for April 6 from 11:00 AM to 1:30 PM at the Recreation Center.

They would like to explore the dark sky community movement as they expressed concern about lighting around town.

They are reaching out to local restaurants about compostable take-out containers.

Next meeting is January 20th at 6:30 PM.

Economic Development (Councilmember Wykoff):

(Reported by Councilmember Sweeney):

There may be 2 new members interested in joining the committee.

RMC (Councilmember Wykoff):

(Reported by Councilmember Sweeney):

Joe met with the Ulster County Animal Response Team. They are looking to utilize the RMC in the event of emergencies. This would allow people and their pet(s) a safe place that would have some form of power and/or heat. The Town of Esopus has already signed up with them. Joe still must meet with the Supervisors to get their feedback.

Joe has received the two quotes for the Police Department flooring and has passed them along to both Town Supervisors for their review and approval to schedule installation.

The Bistro is in the process of being rented. Currently working on updating a lease for them to sign.

It is expected that they will be opening sometime in March or April if everything goes smoothly.

A-6, the room formerly rented by Empress Ambulance Service, has been cleaned up. Joe has spoken with Dorene and put a Work Request Order in for the conference table at Maple Hill to be brought back over to that room.

The Historian Bill Brooks was provided multiple boxes over the past month so that he can start to pack up his items for the move over to the Maple Hill space.

Took in \$9,778.19

Bookkeeper (Councilmember Wykoff):

(Reported by Councilmember Sweeney):

She has been busy completing end-of-year things such as:

breaking down the New York State Retirement bill by each department and each employee's contribution rate, completing all billbacks to Marbletown for the 3rd & 4th quarter, completing all the vouchers for each meeting, depositing all the water/sewer payments and transferring all the money from these into the correct accounts (January is a busy month for these payments).

Next week Taylor will begin preparing for a Highway bond payment that needs to be made and start preparing all the tax warrant checks to be distributed to all the local fire departments and library.

Transfer Station (Councilmember Wykoff):

(Reported by Councilmember Sweeney):

George will be returning next week.

January Income:

\$6094.40 in fees

\$1540.00 in permits

The Town Clerk said they will start using credit cards.

Planning (Councilman Cassidy):

They have a minor subdivision with Petras and in the final stages.

Williams Lake has put in an application with a 34-lot major subdivision on 79 acres. They spoke about different things happening with this project and future projects.

Building (Councilman Cassidy):

In January there were 11 new permits for \$2,990.00 in fees.

There have been a lot of short-term rental applications and court appearances have been sent to owners who have not complied.

Water/Sewer (Councilman Havranek):

A customer on Davis Street had a pipe burst and lost about 50,000 gallons of water. Rosendale Fire Department went and pumped out of the house.

The water tank replacement tank is hoping to start in the Spring or Summer.

A punch list has been completed for the wastewater and the contract has been satisfied.

Supervisor Walsh said St. Peter's has gotten their approval to sell the town the lot and once there is a closing the town can move forward.

The water meters are starting again, and Roy is training the new staff for installation.

Sewer took in \$33,984.47 and water took in \$38,763.86.

High Falls Water \$331,276.26 for the year.

Police (Councilman Havranek):

There was no meeting last month due to not having a quorum.

Calls to service 400, 32 criminal cases, 11 arrests, 2 Personal injury auto accidents and 18 property automobile accidents.

The Police Chief said they struggle to have adequate staff and hope to recruit more staff.

The Police Chief wrote a letter thanking everyone for the rescue behind the Transfer station.
Took in 50 cents.

Highway (Councilman Havranek):

They have been dealing with a lot of ice events and black ice.

Salt and materials have been good as there is a statewide issue. He also recycles the product by street sweeping.

Took in \$142.95.

Supervisors Report: READ.

Supervisor Walsh made a motion to pay bills, 2nd by Councilman Havranek. ROLL VOTE: 4 YES.

AUDIT OF BILLS:

GENERAL FUND	ABSTRACT 2	VOUCHER #66-92	\$40,817.26
HIGHWAY FUND	ABSTRACT 2	VOUCHER #23-31	\$14,791.69
SEWER FUND	ABSTRACT 2	VOUCHER #19-31	\$5,863.34
WATER FUND	ABSTRACT 2	VOUCHER #16-27	\$4,479.64
RMC FUND	ABSTRACT 2	VOUCHER #28-36	\$8,379.00
SPECIAL LIGHTING	ABSTRACT 2	VOUCHER #1	\$759.65

Supervisor Walsh made a motion to adjourn at 8:25 PM, 2nd by Councilman Cassidy. ROLL VOTE: 4 YES.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mandy Donald
Town Clerk