

September 25, 2014

The Town Board of the Town of Warwick held a Public Hearing for the Creation of the Warwick Ambulance District #4 located in the Village of Florida. Said public hearing was held on Thursday, September 25, 2014 at the Town Hall, 132 Kings Highway, Town of Warwick. Supervisor Sweeton called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Supervisor Michael Sweeton
Councilman Floyd DeAngelo
Councilman Russell Kowal
Councilman James Gerstner
Councilman Mickey Shuback

Attorney for the Town, Jay Myrow

LEGAL NOTICE: The Clerk read the legal notice, which was duly published in the Warwick Valley Dispatch on September 17, 2014. (Copy of this legal notice is printed at the end of these minutes.)

Supervisor Sweeton – We did receive a letter from the Fire Commissioners of the Florida Fire District informing us that as of January 1st they would no longer be able to provide volunteer ambulance service. It was part of the fire department which is unique these days. Apparently in New York not too many ambulance services are part of fire departments and the commissioners felt that they could no longer provide that service adequately. The only mechanism for the town to provide that service to its residents would be to create a district and that's the purpose of the hearing tonight. The boundaries of the district are essentially the portion of that former service area of the Florida Fire District that is within the Town of Warwick and that's the red area on the map there. It encompasses the Village of Florida as well as the surrounding town areas and Goshen will handle their portion of the Florida Fire District through their own volunteer ambulance corp. We have been in discussions with Warwick Ambulance which has authority to service that portion of the town already and they have worked with the Florida Ambulance and the Florida Fire Department and Commissioners to come up with a plan to provide that service as of January 1st and they have presented the town with a proposed budget for that service which amounts to \$97,322.00. The assessed value in the district is \$73,654,843.00 so on an average assessed home it would be a charge of \$49.50 per year for that service based on the agreement if we were to go forward with it with Warwick Ambulance Corp. That would hopefully be offset by a reduction in the Florida Fire District Town of Warwick portion of their budget. We are working with the commissioners on that to understand what their costs were in providing the services and we fully expect we should be able to get close to the neighborhood of that number. I will open it for public comment and I do see representatives here from the Warwick Ambulance Corp. and I want to thank them publicly for stepping up and trying to coordinate this transition so that it's smooth and so that on January 1st Florida residents are protected.

Warwick Ambulance has a long history of service since 1942 to a large portion of the Town of Warwick so we do appreciate their service and we expect that they will step in perfectly. I will open it for public comment on the issue.

Councilman Shuback – I was a Fire Commissioner in Florida for a lot of years and I think a lot of the problems started when one of the commissioners brought in an ambulance service and gave them free rent. After that people said we have an ambulance service taking care of it and that's not happening and I think that's where the real problem started 15 years ago.

Supervisor Sweeton – I think part of the difficulties is to be an ambulance corp. member in the Florida dist. you need to be a member of the Florida Fire Department. There's additional training and I think there are people that just don't have the time or inclination to do that, so it becomes difficult. I know Frank has reached out to many members in the existing corp. and they have an interest in continuing to provide service perhaps joining Warwick however they want to do it. I think this is the best solution in providing service.

Councilman Shuback – We even instituted a service award program for the ambulance corp. and Vince should know, he is a commissioner now, and it didn't work right?

Vince Poloniak – Commissioner, Florida Fire District – We are actually the only company in New York State that still has an ambulance in a fire company. What's happening is the fire members don't want to have to be part of the fire company go through all the training and drills to be on the ambulance corp. and after six months to a year it just falls to the wayside and there was a lot of them that we had. It's just not working, not any more, not in these days. It did 20 years ago when you had a lot of local people that were around but not now with work and when they have to be part of the whole thing where they have to go through the fire department to do the ambulance. We feel the only way to go is contact the Warwick Ambulance Corp.

Councilman Gerstner – Is that a State regulation or is that just a commissioner's regulation?

Vince Poloniak – That was the commissioners back in early 60's.

Councilman Gerstner – Ok.

Vince Poloniak – I think a lot of the ambulance corps. today started out with the fire companies and then they disbanded them from the fire companies to start their own.

Councilman Gerstner – Any resolution can be changed and I was wondering if that was ever brought up.

? - There are still fire departments with ambulance service in New York State but this is still the only one left in Orange County.

Councilman Gerstner – Ok, I’m just wondering if the board made a resolution stating that they didn’t have to belong to both if that would have helped.

Frank Cassanite - Their board?

Councilman Gerstner – Yeah, the Florida Fire District Commissioners made a resolution saying you don’t to belong to both.

Frank Cassanite - No they’ve never done that.

Councilman Gerstner – I just wonder if that would have helped.

Councilman Shuback – The fire department laws have changed a lot.

Frank Cassanite - Mickey is right, if this goes through we are working on agreements with the Florida Commissioners verbally the agreements are pretty much it but need to be signed. Our plan is to take over two ambulances, rent space from the Florida Fire Commissioners and keep those two ambulances in the Village of Florida and hopefully man those ambulances through the volunteers that they may have and build up that ambulance corp. I do agree people do not want to do both; they either want to be ambulance people even in Warwick or fire department people. Hopefully build it up and subsidize with the members from Warwick.

Councilman Gerstner – That sounds like a good plan.

Supervisor Sweeton – It’s a great plan and again I want to thank Frank and the rest of the Warwick Ambulance for taking this and coordinating all of the details because there are a lot of details and to have it for January 1st when the first call comes in it will be nice to know we have a great company doing this and we appreciate. I want to accept written comments for the next 10 days but we will close the hearing tonight and accept comments for the next 10 days.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING: Motion Supervisor Sweeton, seconded Councilman Gerstner that the public hearing be closed. Motion Carried (5 ayes, 0 nays)

**7:28 p.m.
09-25-14**

Marjorie Quackenbush, Town Clerk