

Arthur

I wanted to respond to your recent editorial regarding the January Town Board meeting. Firstly, I'd like to thank you for the kind words expressed about myself as well as Ellen and Don. I think that you will find Kerri and Bill to be equally caring and intelligent individuals. The appointments of these folks to their respective posts is a prime example of the Town Board striving to select the best possible candidates for the job. I wish them well as they tackle the difficult issues of Planning and Zoning in the years ahead.

I'm glad that you choose to characterize the current Town Board as "lively." While I don't consider myself a particularly gregarious individual, I do like to think I have a pulse. I just hope that the remaining meetings continue to be so "boring." I'm not of the opinion that Town Board meetings should be a source of entertainment or sport. With that in mind we'll make every effort to keep them as boring and uninteresting as possible in the future.

While we're on the topic of boring meetings, I find your characterization of the auditing of the bills as an egregious breach of the Open Meetings Law to be a bit theatrical. As you mention it was Jerry Smith who happened to mention that we had discussed the bills prior to the official start of the meeting. What you didn't mention was that it was his wife Cindy who took the Board to task for the apparent violation. I don't pretend to know the Smith's domestic affairs, but I'm willing to bet someone ended up sleeping on the couch Monday night.

Perhaps I should explain how the process normally works. Once the bills are prepared for the month, Town Board members may stop in individually and review them prior to the meeting. In this case, both Joan and Roy had reviewed the bills during the day, well prior to the meeting. The only reason there was any discussion at all was because Jerry and myself, brand new to the process, were asking questions about what the bills were and what accounts they were charged to. Hereafter we will make every effort to insure that no more than two of us are sitting in a well lit meeting room with an open door discussing bills at the same time. I'd also like to take the opportunity to announce, via your website, that I will be present a half hour before each meeting to review the bills. If anyone wishes to come sit and watch me shuffle paper they are free to do so. I just hope they still find me "lively" after the experience.

On a final note, I'd like to explain to your readers that on occasion we are likely to exchange barbs and quips via this forum. They should understand that these exchanges are not born of personal animosity, but simply a "lively" debate amongst two individuals with differing backgrounds and viewpoints. I have always lived by the Teddy Roosevelt axiom of "speak softly and carry a big stick," while your modus operandi seems to be "SWING A BIG STICK AND SPEAK VERY LOUDLY!" Whatever our personal philosophies, I think that we both agree on open government and fiscal accountability.

Hope to see you at the February meeting which should be especially boring since two of the Town Board members will be away.

-Joel

