

Town of St. Armand  
Budget Work Session  
Wednesday, October 2, 2019  
6:30 PM

*These Meeting Minutes were approved by the Town Board on December 10, 2019.*

A Budget Work Session of the Town of St. Armand was held on the above date and time at the Town Hall, Bloomingdale, NY.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Town Supervisor Davina Winemiller, Deputy Supervisor D. Joseph Bates, Councilperson Donald Amell, Councilperson Jennifer Fuller and Councilperson Karl Law  
*A quorum of the Board was in attendance.*

**TOWN EMPLOYEES PRESENT:**

Town Accountant Donna Bramer and Town Clerk Barbara Darrah.

**GUESTS:** There were no guests from the community.

Notice was posted regarding the date of this meeting.

Supervisor Winemiller called the Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and asked all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Supervisor Winemiller began the meeting by informing the Board of the problems with the budget program. This is the program that Mike Kilroy gave to us. It was a graduate final project for a group of students working on their master's degree about 25 years ago. It was a free program they created and gave to municipalities to help them with their budgets. Donna Bramer and Davina struggled to work with the program because a lot of the macros are broken. From sheet 1 which is General Fund A down to the tax rate schedule, the macro is not connecting anymore. They tried to fix it. Donna Bramer called Mike Kilroy and he had a laptop that the macros were still working. Davina borrowed Mike's laptop and she and Donna were able to continue working on the budget. After talking with the Essex County IT, the town is going to have to purchase new computers as most of them are over 10 years old. The budget reflects money for computer replacements for the Town Supervisor's computer, which is from 2008 and has Windows 7, Donna Bramer's computer which has Windows 2003 and the Excel Program is from 2007. The Clerk to the Supervisor and the Tax Collector's computers are also over ten years old and have Windows 7, which is no longer supported.

Winemiller: We need new computers and we can purchase them through the County.

D. Joseph Bates: So, is it necessary for new computers or will the computers handle new software?

Winemiller: We asked about that. I know mine won't because Robert (Essex County) looked at it the last time he was here. You can look at them, Don (to Don Amell) and see what you think.

Donald Amell: I am more concerned with the Budget software, if it's that old.

Bramer: Mike even took a stick and tried to load the program onto mine from the stick and it would not work.

Amell: I guess my concern is will it run on Windows 10?

Winemiller: Here's the thing. We need a new budget program. I did start to write a new budget program in Excel and we may actually, before we are done here, convert over to the new program that I am writing.

Bates: Isn't there a budget software program like Mike has that is available that has support?

Winemiller: Well, Mike still uses this program because it works for him.

Bramer: There is no support for this one at all.

Bates: I understand that. Is there not a software program out there that has support?

Winemiller: I talked to Dan Palmer at the County and he gave me a name of one, but he said it ran about \$25,000.

Bramer: I know some of the other towns have them, too. I don't know what they have.

Bates: Obviously we have to get through this budget session with what we have, but I think going forward we need to look.

Donna Bramer discussed the account code improvements also being made as they are working on the budget.

Winemiller then distributed the 1<sup>st</sup> version of the preliminary budget to the Board. She explained more mistakes were discovered and became even more apparent as she, Donna and Mike worked on this year's budget. They will be addressed as best they can because last year's budget was passed, the numbers can't be changed. Large changes will appear in the percentages and that does not necessarily mean we are spending that much more; but that they came out of a different area. The completed items for tonight are the proposals for the General Fund, the Fire and Rockledge. Currently, there is a good base to start with.

In going over Section of the Town Board's salaries. There were no raises. \$500 was put aside in case of a seminar or conference or something similar that Board members might want to attend.

Town Justice salary stayed the same. Town Supervisor did not get a raise.

Clerk to the Supervisor requested 3% which comes to \$8,300.77.

The \$2000 in the .2 represents the two new computers (Town Supervisor and Clerk to the Supervisor) and the software. \$2,000 was set aside for Supervisor's .4, for paper, toner, binders, supplies, etc.

The Board approved those items.

Don Amell: Should we start talking about maybe getting away from paper and going a little more digital?

Winemiller: We do a lot of things digitally. Most of my correspondence is digital. If you don't want me to give you handouts.....

Amell: I am just wondering how much we could save?

Winemiller: I have been trying to copy just the primary pages and do double sided and I'm just giving you just what you need to give you the gist of what's going on. If you want to get away from paper entirely, do we want to get you all tablets and scan everything. A tablet is about \$100 now? We could get you all a tablet.....

Amell: How much of our information is already digital? (To Barbara Darrah)

Darrah: The minutes. I send them ahead of time so you have the time to read them for you to review. We could eliminate that. We could have one copy here for review. I know Davina could probably email.....

Winemiller: Basically, everything I do is through email. Actually, the more we talk about this, the more I like the thought of each of you having a tablet. When you sit down at the meeting, you open a tablet, here's the folder with the date, and here we go. I think it is important to have the documents in front of you when we are at the meeting. With a tablet, you don't need to print, etc. They all come with email addresses.

Amell: Is this something we want to carry forward to the next budget?

Bates: I have no problem with the amount of paper we have right now, but if we could continue to make the effort to cut down.

Darrah: Couldn't the County help us out with the tablet, getting the type that uses a thumb drive.

Winemiller: Let's look into that.

Amell: Let's leave it (\$ for the tablets) in there.

The Accountant is requesting more hours. Historically, the Accountant has been expected to work 10 hours per week. The issues that keep coming up have to do with hours. There is so much more to the Accountant position now. With employee requirements, insurances, payroll, and other required entries to complete the tasks. In order to follow the Comptroller's rules, it's more hours period. As an example, we had to take and move \$25,00 from the Trust and Agency fund to the DA Highway fund. To do that, Donna had to do ten separate entries in order to make the correct entries with the correct coding, and that is for the Comptroller. These are the things we were getting dinged on during the audit. In order to follow the Comptroller's rules, it is more hours period.

Don Amell: So, the current job description says 10 hours a week? What are you calculating it really takes Donna?

Bramer: Twenty.

Winemiller: She is requesting twenty hours per week. She has been working twenty hours or more per week since she started and I will verify that. We know part of it is learning, but a lot of it is just the way the accounting is now. It is different. Our accounting issues have been happening over and over and over again. We went from Mike to Nicole who was a CPA, who complained there was not enough hours, to Tina who complained there was not enough hours. We need to do it right and we need to do it now.

Amell: The current budget says \$9,104. So, then it would be double that. And then, to cover the 120%, what's the pay increase?

Bramer: What I did, I actually upped it to 10% and then doubled that because the \$9104 isn't a lot of.....

Winemiller: I don't understand how \$9104 was adopted in 2019, when in 2018 it was \$9620.

Bramer: I think she got a stipend for doing the B fund.

Bates: So basically, it's a 9% raise.

Winemiller: So, the \$9104 is for 10 hours, so 20 hours x 2 = \$18208 .....so, if we did \$18208 plus 3% that would bring her to \$18754.24. Would you be willing to accept that Donna?

Bramer: Well, I think the \$9104 is low. That's the problem.

Winemiller: If 52 weeks in a year x eight hours a week that 416 hours.

Bramer: But it's 10 hours.

Winemiller: I apologize. 52 weeks a year x 10 hours is 520 hours. If it's \$9104 divided by 520 hours = \$17.51 per hour.

Bramer: You have to remember I get \$750 for doing the water and sewer and you asked me to wrap it into that so that water and sewer costs did not increase.

Winemiller: Yes, I did. We all know the problems we have with water and sewer. The way its funded and trying to keep the prices low.

Amell: But, be careful. Are you in fact, spending that much of the time in water and sewer.

Bramer: We opened five new checking accounts for the water and sewer.

Amell: So moving the money from Water and Sewer to General isn't going to cover the water and sewer rates. That's no way to resolve that issue as far as I'm concerned.

Bates: No, we can't do that.

Winemiller: So, we didn't increase her rate as the bookkeeper in the Water and Sewer. The only increase in rate is in the General. But I know what you are saying. That's everything.

Bates: You can't do that.

Amell: You can't pay for Water and Sewer out of the General, which is in effect what you are doing.

Winemiller: You are right. I am.

Amell: And if in fact if the time and effort is with the Water and Sewer.

Bramer: But that's putting more of a burden on the people with water and sewer.

Amell: That's unfortunate. But if it's the reality of the situation.

Winemiller: How about we do this. Can I sit with Donna and work out a better breakdown?

Bramer: I get \$28 per pay period for Water and Sewer.

Winemiller: So is it okay with you (Donna) if we table your salary for a minute?

Bramer: And, I know in the past that the request has been more pay without more hours. And that is not what I am asking. I am asking for more pay and more hours. I have been stumbling across things that are not correct.

Winemiller: There is extra work, there is no doubt. Can I ask that we table this until we work this out?

Bates: What are the water and sewer hours?

Winemiller: It's not really broken down. When it's collection time for the accounts, she works more for the water and sewer. There is an ebb and flow.

Bates: So there would be a total number of hours for the year.

Winemiller: The .2 for equipment she needs \$1,000 for equipment and the .4 is the software is \$3,000.

Darrah: It should stay \$4,000 because the checks that are ordered and other accountant supplies.

A 3% raise was put in for the Tax Collector.

Bramer: She hasn't had one in a very long time. The .2, \$1,000 is also a computer for Tax Collector.

The Board approved the raise and the new computer for the Tax Collector.

Donna Bramer is asking for a raise as the Budget Officer.

Bates: That has been tabled until it is broken down.

Winemiller: Donna is asking for a 3% raise as Assessor.

The Board approved the Assessor's raise.

The Town Clerk did not ask for a raise.

There is \$1,000 in .2 for a new laptop. And \$4,000 is in .4 for supplies, newspaper advertising, etc.

The Board approved the laptop and the .4 amount.

Winemiller: The Town's Attorney budget amount has been increased. There were more things going on this year. We have the Highway Garage issue, and Rockledge. It's hard to say how much those things are going to run. Please keep in mind I do speak with Dan Manning and Dan Tedford for regular attorney questions. It's contracts, etc., that we need Matt Norfolk.

Amell: We are at \$5400 this year so far. I am just trying to figure out how much more we will need for next year. Do we have any idea what the Garage thing is going to cost?

Winemiller: We have an Executive Session at the end of this meeting to discuss.

The Board agreed to keep the amount in the Attorney budget.

Winemiller: Records Management received the grant, so that amount is \$32,000+ in the Revenue, therefore is also appropriated because we are going to be spending that amount on the Records room and organization.

\$3,000 is set aside for Kofile, the vital records books preservation.

Darrah: We need to talk about the grant. If you recall when we put in for the grant last fall, Dean was here, and Dean and Dougie were going to build the room for approximately \$5,000 and we would be getting it back from the grant. And now Dean is not here anymore and then Derrick said no one can work up there because there is not a second form of egress. The funding date runs from July 2019 through June 2020. We should be seeing the first portion (\$16,000) shortly.

Winemiller: So the grant is \$32,453 for the grant and Kofile.

Darrah: The concern is the Records Management will not be able to work upstairs because heat was supposed to be set up in that new room. Maybe they can do some of the work down here. I don't want to lose the grant, that's the bottom line. A certain percentage of the work has to be performed by the timeframe, otherwise we do not get the remainder of the money.

Amell: So what is the first thing that could be done that doesn't have to be done upstairs?

Winemiller: The first thing that has to be done before anything can be done upstairs is the second set of stairs.

And if you go down to Capital Outlay Buildings, I put \$40,000 and that is for that second set of stairs and any other repairs or maintenance that we would need on any of our A-fund buildings.

Amell: Even if we had a second set of stairs, nobody can work up there because it is too cold. So, is heating.....

Winemiller: You can't heat that space.

Bates: Why can't you heat that space? I work with contractors all winter long that heat basements, houses with no heat. They use space heaters, tarps; they can work in the winter inside a building that is not heated.

Winemiller: Let me rephrase. You can't work upstairs in the winter as it is. We would have to do something.

One of the big problems up there is it has the old windows that are over 100 years old. Maybe if we did some kind of plastic storm on each window and had heat and a second set of stairs put in, then they could.....

Bates: I think that the most part is the second set of stairs because they can't work up there without it and then everything else can be done with tarps and salamanders. We can get the room made, the tarps in, the heat in and then when they can go up there they work up there comfortably. We need to get bids for the stairs.

Darrah: Okay. That's what I want to be able to tell them.

Bates: We have to get bids for the stairs.

Winemiller: I did talk to Ben Greene from G&G about a quote for that. If anyone knows of anybody, please send them this way. Jim Ferlik is a metal worker from Lake Placid. Ben Greene did contact Jim and asked him how much he would charge to fabricate a set of steel stairs. Jim is coming tomorrow to measure and look and provide Ben with a quote with a quote to build the stairs that Ben would install.

Bates: Are we good at going with one quote?

Winemiller: If it's under \$30,000, we don't have to get a quote. It's always wise to get another quote.

Bates: What about Matt Courier? He's with Saranac Lake Sheet Metal.

Winemiller: The stairs are not in the grant. The stairs are in the Capital Outlay. If that's the case, then we could probably do away with the \$5,000 in the .2 if we aren't building a room.

Bates: We still have to build a room, don't you?

Darrah: Yes, we still need the room. It's a storage room.

Winemiller: And is that part of the grant or no?

Darrah: I need to clarify that with the person doing the work. He mentioned if we build the room, the grant would be part of that. I would say leave it there for now because that is going to be the materials and whatever.

Amell: You are talking about the \$5,000 for the room?

Bramer: So, this \$35,000 should be brought down to \$28,000....

Darrah: I would still leave it in there just in case. I need to talk to him.

Winemiller: You just got that yesterday. Let's skip over that for right now. Let's give a minute to look at that.

Let's move onto 1620.1. That is the labor for mowing the lawns. The .2 is gas and string for the mower.

Amell: Why is there an increase in salaries 1620.1?

Winemiller: We don't have to but part of that was charge to highway. It was the youth hired to help the highway. I don't think their payroll was appropriated correctly. There was no differentiating when they were mowing to when they were doing work at the highway.

Amell: I still question why we are raising it.

Winemiller: We don't have to raise it. We can leave it at \$3,152.

Amell: Yes. I don't see any evidence for any increase.

Winemiller: This is one of the biggest problems with the budget. This is what Donna and I are finding as we are working our way through this budget and this is why I started writing a program for the budget. When Donna processes a voucher, there is a code. That code is what the check is written off from and it is deducted and that is where these numbers come from. What we are finding is we are having a hard time fitting the previous codes into these codes. There are big gaping holes. We are trying to make more codes and have them make sense.

Bramer: But we have to be careful because the Comptroller dictates what these codes are and what they are used for. There are codes in the computer that are not in this budget. It can be more clear.

Winemiller: We are trying to make it right.

Amell: Maybe the way to look at it is; you have reduced it from \$4,600 down to \$1,000 we can't really justify \$1,000 yet, but maybe later on in the process if we need some place where we can pick up in those books, maybe we can justify it. So, at least for me, I guess I can accept this.

Winemiller: So, we are going to \$3,152, we are leaving the \$1,000. The 1620.4 is Town Hall expenses. 1910.4 is the liability insurance on the Town Hall buildings; Ayres and NYMIR in the amount of \$27,500.

Municipal Dues is \$700. Please change that \$700 to \$1,500. The \$40,000 on Capital Outlay is the stairs and the second floor repair, windows, heat, etc. Last year the Capital Outlay and Contingency were switched and they shouldn't have been. The Capital Outlay should be what you plan to do for repairs and things, and contingency is "Hey, the boiler just blew".

The Board agreed and approved the \$40,000 in capital outlay.

Winemiller: 1920.4 is going to go to \$700.00 for dues. Do we know how much the Humane Society is going to charge us this year (to Darrah)?

Darrah: They raised it last year, so I am assuming it is going to be the same this year.

Winemiller: Here is a perfect example of why I hate the budget like this. A4540.4 for ambulance service is actually Lifeflight, Hospice and the United Way.

Darrah: But Hospice is a donation.

Winemiller: I know. It's under A4540.400. I am fine with Lifeflight being there, (under ambulance service) but we have to change where we put Hospice and United was as donations. They are not ambulance services.

The Board approved the donation of Lifeflight for \$500, High Peaks Hospice for \$500, and United Way for \$500.

\* Five-minute break at 8:05 pm:

Winemiller: Doug Snickles has asked for a 3% raise. I agree with that.

The Board agreed.

The Deputy Supervisor was not paid yet this year. The Board agreed Keith Bordeau should be paid for the first six months of 2019 as that is what the Union Contract states.

Winemiller: Highway Superintendent supplies and equipment we will keep at \$500. 5132.2 is the fire alarm system that was installed.

The Board agreed to leave 5132.2 it at \$3,900. 5132.4 will be left at \$15,000 for utilities.

Winemiller: 5615.4 is the airport. It will remain the same. People who are active military fly into that airport and some of them are from St. Armand.

Winemiller: 6410. For \$750. We haven't sent the check out for this year.

Bramer: That amount is Robert L. Stephenson for \$500 and the Saranac Lake Winter Carnival is for \$250. 6772.4, the Program for the Aging, \$1,900 is our donation.

Amell: Are these new categories?

Karl Law: They are not in last year's budget.

Winemiller: I don't think you will see this format again. They are going to change a lot.

Darrah: They are in the supplement though, correct?

Winemiller: Yes, all of these accounts are in the supplement. 6772.4 is SL Adult Center \$950 and Bloomingdale Seniors Over 55 get \$950. And that's it. A7110.4 for \$250 for the Village Improvement Society. A7310.1 personal services, is Gail for the Summer and Winter program.

Darrah: What about Josh Woodruff? The Ice rink attendant should be included in A7310.1

Winemiller: Let's skip the whole youth program until we get Josh's numbers and we'll talk about it next session. Moving on to Historian, A7510.1, there will be no raise as he is brand new. The .4, he is asking for \$1,000 for equipment to do recordings of interviews with some of the Seniors in our town, shadow boxes for donated historical items, materials, mileage for attending historical society seminars, etc.

Refuse Disposal - .1 if \$8,000, we are not through the year yet. As far as I know, there was no raise there.

Salary is \$7,880. The .2 is for replacing the platforms along the trailers because they are rotted. Doug said if we purchased the lumber, he could build the new platforms. Metal stairs would be in the thousands.

Cemetery Salary 8810.10, the salary should be \$5,383 and that will be a 3% raise. 8810.4, that \$10,350 I was thinking with the cemetery extension, that would be for the survey, the filing, and Cy asked for blades, filter, oil and grease for lawnmower, replacing new footers and cement plus labor, topsoil, and a Husqvarna weed trimmer.

Darrah: The weed trimmer was purchased already. Actually, it was a combination of two things, (equipment) which together totaled together over \$500. Anything less than \$500 does not go in equipment.

Winemiller: So, we can eliminate the \$1,000 out of .2. The highway garage and interest is what it is.

Of course these items here for the revenues are going to change. For the most part everything that is in here is everything we know that is rock solid. Then as we go through the budget process, the real property taxes, etc. will become apparent, but until we are done with the process, we won't even know what the amounts will be. So we are going to skip revenues.

Bramer: Do they want to change any of the fees? Like these fees (Town Clerk, cemetery)

Winemiller: Do you want to charge anything different as far as the fees, for example, the Clerk fees?

Amell: Do we have any suggestions on any changes Barb?

Darrah: No. The state dictates the fee amounts.

Winemiller: The next one is Fire Protection from Bloomingdale and Saranac Lake. Basically, these numbers are cut and dried. This is how much our contract is. Do we have the actual contracts yet?

Bramer: No.

Winemiller: So these are estimates on all of these, because we don't have the contracts yet.

Darrah: We do have the contract for North Elba.

Winemiller: One thing I did want to point out; Donna and I found this, but one of these fire protection funds in last year's budget, \$1,000 was rolled over to reduce the tax on that fund and there was only \$547 in fund balance in it, so that one cannot be fixed. We will firm it all up next time.

Rockledge: If we look at SW8340.4, as you can see the actual year to date this year was \$2,3223 and that was the MJ Engineering. That was the surveying and mapping. We do have a substantial fund balance in that account over \$30,000 after paying this. The reason I put \$10,000 into it this year is because of that North Elba, the four parcels that we have to do a new taxable district for, and I have Matt Norfolk working on that. I don't know how much that is going to cost and we are going to have to do filing.

Bramer: From an assessor's point of view, the Town describes who is in the district, so why are we getting a lawyer involved in this? Normally, a Town just writes a letter to the County telling them who is in the district and then the county puts them in.

Winemiller: Because when the district was established it was only established for the Saranac Lake parcels. So we need to establish the district to include the North Elba parcels. All I know is how we have to fix it. And to fix it involves an attorney and public notices and public hearings and that is why there is \$10,000. And we have fund balance. Basically we are doing this so we can start collecting from those parcels that are in our district that are not paying.

The Board approved the \$10,000 to be included in that account.

Amell: Donna, in light of the AMA sale, if in fact they do close in the middle of October, what does that do to the pilot?

Bramer: We already got the amount for the pilot. We are going to get \$32,484.75.

Amell: For this year in 2019?

Darrah: We received the payment in May.

Bramer: That building is part of the whole. The mappers will have to separate that out.

Amell: Right now, we get the Pilot because they don't pay taxes. But now, the new owner of the property.....

Bramer: That will become taxable. It will be on the 2020 roll. We put in \$32,484.73 for the amount.

Winemiller: At this point I would like to have a motion for an Executive Session to discuss litigation.

#### MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

Davina Winemiller requested a motion to move into Executive Session. The purpose of the Executive Session was to discuss litigation.

Deputy Supervisor D. Joseph Bates made the motion to go into Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Karl Law and the Executive Session began at 8:30 pm.

#### MOTION TO END EXECUTIVE SESSION

Deputy Supervisor D. Joseph Bates made a Motion to end the Executive Session. The Motion was seconded by Councilperson Karl Law and the Executive session ended at 8:34 pm.

BUDGET WORK SESSSION RESUMED

The Budget Work Session resumed at 8:34 pm for the purpose of passing RESOLUTION # 83 of 2019.

RESOLUTION # 83 OF 2019

AUTHORIZATION TO COMMENCE LITIGATION FOR MONIES OWED TO OR LOSS REALIZED BY THE TOWN OF ST. ARMAND FROM ETHAN HALL OF RUCINSKI HALL ARCHITECTURE, AND INTEGRATED RIGGING & CONTRACTING, INC. FOR DEFECTIVE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TOWN'S HIGHWAY GARAGE

Deputy Supervisor D. Joseph Bates, who moved its adoption, offered the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, in April 2019, while a fire alarm system was being installed in the Town's Highway Garage it was discovered that there was an apparent problem with condensation resulting in wet insulation and possible mold, etc., and

WHEREAS, upon further investigation by Essex County DPW engineers in May of 2019, it was determined there were construction errors made which resulted in problematic defective issues discovered with the venting of the Highway Garage, and

WHEREAS, the original engineering and construction of the Highway Garage was awarded to Ethan Hall of Rucinski Hall Architecture, and Integrated Rigging & Contracting, Inc., with construction taking place in 2014, and

WHEREAS, over the summer of 2019 the Town of St. Armand's Attorney, Matthew Norfolk, has been in contact with Ethan Hall of Rucinski Hall Architecture in an attempt to come up with an amicable resolution to correct the problematic defective issues, and

WHEREAS, these attempts have not resulted in any resolution,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED the Town Board of the Town of St. Armand hereby gives authorization to commence litigation by commencing with a lawsuit as part of the Town's financial duty to collect money owed or the loss to be realized by the Town as a consequence of the defective design and work.

This Resolution was duly seconded by Councilperson Donald Amell, and adopted by Roll Call Vote as follows:

Supervisor Davina Winemiller	AYE
Deputy Supervisor D. Joseph Bates	AYE
Councilperson Donald Amell	AYE
Councilperson Jennifer Fuller	AYE
Councilperson Karl Law	AYE

Dated: October 2, 2019

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Barbara J. Darrah  
St. Armand Town Clerk

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

Councilperson Jennifer Fuller made a Motion to Adjourn the Budget Work Session. The Motion was seconded by Councilperson Karl Law and the Budget Work Session adjourned at 8:35 pm.

I, Barbara J. Darrah, Town Clerk for the Town of St. Armand, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct transcript of the Budget Work Session meeting minutes held on the above-referenced date.

Dated: October 2, 2019

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Barbara J. Darrah  
St. Armand Town Clerk