

Yorktown

Your Truly Local Paper Reaching

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Town hires new insurance carrier

BY BRYAN FUMAGALLI
OF YORKTOWN NEWS

The Town Board held a special meeting last Friday where it approved a new insurance contract, as the Town's current insurance coverage expires on Dec. 31. Supervisor Michael Grace said the move on the insurance was necessary after Trident Insurance Agency, the Town's existing carrier, said it would no longer cover the municipality due to a number of losses. Grace said Town insurance broker Bob Spadaccia sought out other carriers and that Travelers Insurance was the only company interested in submitting a

proposal.

"There is no confidence anymore," Grace said in an interview after the meeting.

He then cited the number of lawsuits involving the Town and current and former employees as a reason for the difficulty the Town had in finding a carrier. He did not specify the losses, but said that lower deductibles and a change in coverage of attorney's fees would benefit the Town in the long run.

As a result of the switch, the 2013 package will cost the Town \$655,618 compared to approximately \$487,000 for 2012 coverage. Grace said that some aspects of the new policy offer better cov-

erage—but only if the Town needs to use it.

At the Dec. 5 budget hearing, Grace said that Travelers would be taking over, and it was expected that the cost would be similar to Trident's.

Grace told Yorktown News over the weekend that the increased insurance costs for next year are factored into the 2013 budget, which passed unanimously on Dec. 18.

The Board authorized the supervisor to sign the new policy by unanimous vote.

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News

ing Every Household & Business

Thursday, January 3, 2013

Town Board's Friday meeting under microscope

BY BRYAN FUMAGALLI
OF YORKTOWN NEWS

Due to the fact that Friday's meeting was not scheduled until Friday morning, the normal process of notifying the public and the media was not followed. This paper, through an email from the supervisor's office, received notification of the meeting at 12:14 p.m. The meeting took place at 12:30 p.m. No members of the local press were able to attend. As a result, the issue of transparency came into question, as written notice is required prior to meetings.

As stated in section 104 of the New York State Open Meetings Law:

"Public notice of the time and place of [all meetings not scheduled at least one week prior] shall be given, to the extent practicable, to the news media and shall be conspicuously posted in one or more designated public locations at a reasonable time prior thereto."

As well, the state mandates that written notice be given to Board members not less than two days prior to a special meeting. At the special meeting on Friday, each member of the Town Board waived their right to a two-day special meeting notice.

Bob Freeman, executive director of the New York State Committee on Open Government, said that he is not aware of any such law enabling a Town Board to waive

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its right to notice, though state officials have accepted the practice in the past.

"Like the Open Meetings Law, there is nothing in §62 [state-mandated Town law] that refers to or authorizes a waiver of notice," Freeman wrote in an email. "I am mindful of the opinions rendered by the attorney general and the comptroller advising that business may validly be conducted at a meeting held on less than two days written notice of the members of a town board, so long as all of the members had actual notice, attended and participated. If that is so, the members may waive the two day written notice requirement."

Freeman added, "... with due respect to the Attorney General and the Comptroller, it is questionable in my view whether a court would reach the same conclusion as they did in consideration of the clear and unequivocal language that statute."

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