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TOWN BOARD

COUNTY OF ALBANY

TOWN OF COLONIE

STATE OF THE TOWN ADDRESS

THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above
entitled matter by NANCY STRANG, a Shorthand Reporter,
on January 18, 2018 7:20 p.m. at Memorial Town Hall, 534
Loudon Road, Newtonville, New York 12128

BOARD MEMBERS:

- PAULA A. MAHAN, SUPERVISOR
- LINDA MURPHY, DEPUTY SUPERVISOR
- CHRISTOPHER CAREY
- DAVID GREEN
- PAUL ROSANO
- MELISSA JEFFERS-VONDOLLEN
- JENNIFER WHALEN

ALSO PRESENT:

- Julie Gansle, Town Clerk
- Michael C. Magguilli, Esq., Town Attorney

1 SUPERVISOR MAHAN: Good evening. Before we begin
2 the actual meeting tonight, I would like to take a few
3 minutes to share the 2018 State of the Town message.

4 First let me say that I am honored to stand before
5 you as I begin my sixth term as your Town Supervisor.
6 It's great to be here. All of you have played a big part
7 in the Town's success, and I thank you for your support.
8 I can truly say that being your Supervisor has been a
9 very positive and rewarding experience. Looking ahead, I
10 see more great things for Colonie again. When I think
11 about where the Town is now, all I can say is, look how
12 far we've come. I'm truly thrilled by how vibrant
13 Colonie is today.

14 When I first became Supervisor ten years ago, it
15 was difficult to see the light at the end on the tunnel.
16 But with a collaborative effort and a tremendous amount
17 of hard work, we got the Town out of a very deep
18 financial hole. Today we're on solid ground and
19 experiencing unprecedented success. New families,
20 businesses, and jobs come to Colonie every day. The look
21 of the Town has changed. Instead of big-box stores,
22 we're seeing architecture that enhances our
23 streetscapes.

24 Because of our successful focus on redevelopment,
25 countless vacant or underused sites have been reborn,

1 breathing new life into our commercial corridors. And
2 today, Colonie offers a huge variety of goods and
3 services, including an exciting mix of new residential
4 options. Colonie is truly prospering. The beauty of it
5 all is that we've retained our hometown feeling. That's
6 something we never want to lose. Our neighborhoods are
7 safe and welcoming, our schools are excellent, and our
8 public safety and emergency services are outstanding.
9 Plus, we're seeing an exciting influx of new young
10 families who want to make Colonie their home. Often,
11 these families are buying the houses of seniors looking
12 to downsize. And because of the Town's many new senior
13 housing options, those seniors can now remain here in
14 Colonie.

15 Once again, I was very proud when Colonie was
16 ranked the Best Suburban Community in the 2017 Times
17 Union's Readers Poll. That's the fourth year we've been
18 named as Best Community. And last year we were named a
19 "Tree City USA" by the National Arbor Day Foundation, a
20 designation that reflects the Town's ongoing commitment
21 to the environment and urban forestry. Over the past ten
22 years, we've increased our Town-owned open space, and we
23 currently are exploring options for a dedicated revenue
24 stream for open-space acquisition. We are also one of
25 the safest towns in the nation, and our Police, EMS, and

1 DPW Departments have received many honors for
2 excellence. Late last year, our EMS Department earned
3 the American Heart Association's 2017 Mission Lifeline
4 Gold Award for excellence in emergency cardiac care.
5 We've received recognition and awards for our Town
6 Library, our parks, for economic development and our
7 youth and senior programs. What great votes of
8 confidence for life in Colonie.

9 We also got some very encouraging results in a
10 Siena Research Institute poll conducted as part of our
11 2005 Comprehensive Plan review process. In the poll, 95
12 percent of respondents rated Colonie as a good or
13 excellent place to live and showed strong support for
14 Town services. Eighty-six percent said our property
15 taxes were about right relative to services. It's pretty
16 amazing when people think they pay the right amount of
17 taxes. It takes a lot of people working very hard to
18 achieve such success, and I'd like to take a moment to
19 thank some of the many people who help make it possible.

20 First, several Town Board Members are here today.
21 I'm always proud of the way our Board Members work
22 together to move the Town forward.

23 Would our Town Board Members please stand so we can
24 give you some well-deserved applause?

25 I'd also like to recognize departing member David

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Rowley. Dave couldn't be here tonight. His last meeting was our last meeting in 2017 and of course we welcome our newest member, Melissa Jeffers Von Dollen.

Also, will have many Town Department head who have done a tremendous amount to move the Town forward. I see a few tonight so let's give them a round of applause. We thank all of our department heads and staff. Let's say thank you to all of you for your hard work and dedication.

Finally, I'd also like to give my very special thanks to our Police Officers, as well as our EMS staff and the firefighters from our 12 volunteer fire companies for their service. Thank you for all you do every day to keep us safe. You make Colonie a great place for all of us.

Speaking of keeping Colonie safe, the Colonie Police Department has some great numbers to report. In 2017, the Town had a three percent drop in serious crime and a ten percent drop in less serious crimes, for an overall total decrease of 6.7 percent. And the CPD was able to achieve these numbers in spite of a three percent increase in calls for service.

Thank you, Chief Teale, for your leadership, and your outstanding officers for their service all year long. We set the bar high, and the results speak for

1 themselves. We built a strong foundation that will take
2 us far into the future.

3 But there's a lot more to do as we enter 2018. Our
4 priorities remain the same - continuing our conservative
5 financial approach, keeping Colonie safe, investing in
6 our infrastructure, and collaborating with our schools
7 to set the stage for the next generation. We will also
8 be working to ensure that future development protects
9 our quality of life through growth that's in line with
10 what makes Colonie a special place to live and do
11 business. In short, we plan to keep Colonie a great
12 place to call home. When I stop and think about it, the
13 ten years I've spent as Supervisor is a pretty big block
14 of time. Together we have made tremendous
15 accomplishments, and I'm very proud to report that our
16 2018 operating budget of \$90.8 million is less than the
17 \$91.8 million in expenses incurred in 2007, the year
18 before I took office. How were we able we do this? We
19 did it year by year, reviewing every dollar spent by
20 every department, consolidating operations, sharing
21 resources, and aggressively paying down debt. And, yes,
22 we had to do a whole lot more with a lot less. We all
23 owe a big debt of gratitude to everyone who helped to
24 achieve these outstanding results.

25 I'm proud that our 2018 budget also meets the NYS

1 Tax Levy Cap requirements - for the seventh year in a
2 row. Incidentally, the 2018 cap limits our tax levy
3 growth to about \$808,000, so you can see the cap
4 presents a big challenge for the Town every year. We
5 have worked very hard over the past seven years to live
6 within the cap. However it does present many challenges
7 for us.

8 After right-sizing our finances, we were able to
9 begin addressing the Town's long-term infrastructure
10 needs. Our infrastructure was in dire need of
11 rejuvenation. Many critical systems at our water and
12 sewer plants had been in place since the 1970s, and some
13 of the water and sewer mains as early as the 1920s.

14 This is the fifth year of major investment in both
15 our water and sewer infrastructure, and the ninth year
16 of our highway and storm-water improvement program. By
17 the end of 2018, we will have invested \$18 million for
18 our drinking water systems and \$14 million in sewer
19 system improvements. The long-term infrastructure plans
20 we've put in place will call for investment at these
21 levels for the foreseeable future. We've invested at
22 least \$2.5 million in our roadways every year since
23 2010. I'm happy to report that today 95 percent of the
24 Town's major feeder roads are in very good or excellent
25 condition, and we are making steady progress with our

1 residential streets. The Town has 320 miles of roads,
2 and it will take some time to get to all of them, but
3 we're making good progress. I hope that within the next
4 few years we will be able to increase our paving plan
5 budget above current levels, but that remains a goal for
6 the future.* Major upcoming projects at the Latham Water
7 District this year include replacing almost two miles of
8 water main in two capital projects. The first includes
9 replacing approximately 2,900 feet of main along Maxwell
10 Road, from Old Niskayuna Road to Hills Road, and 2,600
11 feet of main along Route 9, from Campus View Drive to
12 Turner Lane, with a new 12" diameter main. The second
13 includes installing about 3,800 feet of new main along
14 Route 9 from the point of Old Loudon Road to Maxwell
15 Road. The projects will cost \$1.7 and \$1.63 million,
16 respectively. Replacing water mains is expensive but
17 necessary so we can continue delivering optimal service
18 to our residents and businesses.

19 At our Pure Waters Division, we expect a spring
20 2018 completion of a \$1.2 million project to replace a
21 1978-era emergency generator and for roof repair at our
22 Mohawk View Water Pollution Control Plant. We also
23 anticipate completion of the \$1.9 million Wolf Road
24 Pumping Station rehab, which is ongoing right now with
25 no interruption to service right here on Wolf Road.

1 Looking ahead to next year, Pure Waters plans further
2 improvements at the Pollution Control Plant, upgrades to
3 the Albany Shaker Road Pump Station, and replacement of
4 \$1 million worth of aging sewer lines. We're also
5 focusing on improving our many beautiful parks and
6 recreational facilities. Among our first tasks was
7 making some much-needed updates at the Town Park on
8 Schermerhorn Road.

9 Recently, we installed new filtration systems and
10 new pool liners for the Town pools and a beautiful new
11 ADA-compliant playground. Now we're finalizing our plans
12 for a beautiful new splash pad there, and I really think
13 everyone's going to love it. Plus, we're beginning a new
14 effort to improve the 12 pocket parks located throughout
15 the Town. It's taken us a while to get to the point
16 where we can afford to make these improvements, but we
17 worked hard and found a way to get there. Even though
18 we are undertaking much-needed capital improvements, we
19 must still continue our conservative fiscal approach.
20 First and foremost, we must ensure that the Town can
21 continue to live within its means for all the years to
22 come. That's why we've kept bonding for our capital
23 projects to about 11 percent or less of our legally
24 authorized debt limit. We're proceeding very cautiously
25 in order to be certain our finances will remain sound -

1 and our taxes low.

2 This year, I'm very happy to tell you we've been
3 successful in obtaining grant funding from a number of
4 different sources to assist us with important Town
5 projects. These grants will help us continue our
6 progress in important areas such as economic development
7 and also to make additional capital improvements at our
8 library, parks, bike path, municipal training center,
9 and to the Latham Water System infrastructure. A
10 \$960,000 Drinking Water Infrastructure Improvement grant
11 is helping us move forward with an important
12 infrastructure improvement at the Latham Water District.
13 The grant will help defray the Town's \$1.6 million share
14 of a project to establish connections between the
15 Colonie and the City of Albany water systems. These
16 connections will enable both the Town and the City to
17 provide each other with an emergency back-up water
18 supply. This is an extremely far-sighted project. First,
19 it provides for shared services, a very important goal
20 for all municipalities these days. But most important,
21 it will provide both Albany and Colonie with much more
22 efficient and cost-effective emergency water systems.
23 And in our case, it will mean we will no longer have to
24 support a more expensive back-up system at our Stony
25 Creek Reservoir in Clifton Park.

1 As you may know, we're now beginning some
2 much-needed updating and beautification of our Town
3 Library. The Town expects to commit \$3 to \$4 million to
4 renovate the library for the 21st century, which calls
5 for enhanced technology and more flexible space for
6 meetings and educational services. Plus, we are
7 extremely grateful to Colonie Assemblyman Phil Steck for
8 arranging \$1 million in special funding for the library
9 renovation. This funding will be used for renovation of
10 the library's lobby and entryway. The new configuration
11 will be beautiful, and I think everyone will be pleased
12 when it's completed. Assemblyman Steck also arranged for
13 \$500,000 to fund capital improvements to the Town's
14 Municipal Training Center, a regional training resource
15 where thousands of the region's first responders train
16 every year. This is another example of shared services.
17 In addition, through his efforts, the Town will also
18 receive special funding of \$250,000 for improvements to
19 the bike path and \$125,000 to construct a much-needed
20 new pavilion in the Town Park. Finally, we are really
21 excited about a future \$125,000 grant, also arranged by
22 Assemblyman Steck, to construct a new playground at the
23 south end of The Crossings. This will greatly expand
24 recreational options for our residents and help us
25 realize the potential of the park's south end. The Town

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will also construct a new parking lot there. On behalf of the whole Town, I want to thank Assemblyman Steck for working so hard to deliver this support for Colonie. Assemblyman Steck could not be here today, or I would ask him to stand for a very well-deserved round of applause. Last year, we received a \$175,000 grant from the NYS Attorney General's Office to help the Town deal with the issue of vacant and abandoned - or zombie - properties. This new initiative builds upon our earlier efforts to confront this problem through creation of a vacant property registry.

I want to thank the Town Attorney's Office for their leadership in getting this grant and helping the Town tackle the issue of zombie properties more aggressively.

Finally, as you know we've had great success redeveloping some of the Town's most challenging sites. Now, the Town has begun the first steps in a process to determine the best ways for 340 acres of the Lincoln Avenue Corridor to be redeveloped. This effort is being supported by a \$269,000 Brownfield Opportunity Grant obtained by our Planning and Economic Development Department. Community outreach and involvement will be part of the process. I think we can all agree that the Lincoln Avenue Corridor is a case unto itself. If we can

1 help bring this corridor back to productive life, we
2 will have accomplished a huge public service for
3 everyone. The Town is also working on a project through
4 the Municipal Electric and Gas Alliance (MEGA) and
5 Gravity Renewables to use Hydro Electric Generation to
6 earn green energy credits that will offset a significant
7 portion of our electricity usage and help stabilize the
8 Town's energy costs over the next twenty years. We
9 finalized the agreement with Gravity late last year and
10 their engineering team has been preparing information
11 for the interconnection to the utility. The Town's
12 formal submittals to the utility will be made shortly. I
13 expect more information about this exciting project to
14 be announced in the next few months.

15 As many of you may know, the Town has been
16 reviewing its 2005 Comprehensive Plan since last summer.
17 The review process has involved a broad-based review
18 committee, community meetings, the Siena survey I
19 mentioned earlier, and regular meetings open to the
20 public. This spring, we will also be looking to engage
21 the business community through a breakfast roundtable
22 because a business perspective is very important to the
23 process. We are now looking at a late spring or early
24 summer completion of the review. The goal of the review
25 is not to replace the 2005 plan, but to supplement it

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based on the review process. We have been following the 2005 Plan in such areas as redevelopment, quality of life, open space, and recreational activities. The plan also directed the Town to create a business-friendly environment that would support a diverse economic base, and I'm proud of our success in doing that.

Many zoning provisions were changed to support the 2005 Comprehensive Plan goals through adoption of the 2007 Land Use Law, and we now have an opportunity through the review process to determine if there are areas that should be updated or modified. Many things worked, and some things didn't. This update of the 2005 Plan gives us the opportunity to modify the areas of the plans that may need improvement. When we look at Ayco's recent decision to locate its new headquarters here, I think we can all point to our success in creating an environment supportive to Colonie's economic development and expansion. That Ayco chose Colonie after an exhaustive search speaks volumes about our desirability. In addition to many very good jobs, the Ayco project would also make possible a connector road between Route 9 and Route 9R. This connector road was recommended to the Town during the Boght Road GEIS update, which was prepared in conjunction with Creighton-Manning, the Capital District Transportation Committee, and

1 Clough-Harbor. We think the connector road will help
2 reduce traffic congestion in the corridor. The results
3 of several other studies are also being considered as
4 part of the review process to ensure a more holistic
5 approach to the plan's next phase. Among these are the
6 Town's Central Avenue and Fuller Road studies, the
7 recent Wolf Road corridor sanitary sewer analysis, and
8 the Albany Airport GEIS now being developed, as well as
9 the Albany Shaker Road Corridor Study. All of these
10 studies suggest land use and implementation processes
11 that can guide us as we move into the future. We have
12 made good progress on the Albany Shaker Road Corridor
13 Study, which we are conducting with Albany County and
14 the Capital Region Transportation Council.

15 We had two community meetings to present
16 information and gather feedback about the possible scope
17 of corridor improvements, such as turning lanes,
18 intersection improvements, and enhanced pedestrian
19 accommodations. Now we are working to incorporate those
20 ideas into a long-term plan agreeable to the community
21 that can help improve traffic flow. Speaking of traffic
22 flow, we are really looking forward to the future
23 revamped Exit 4, which will also help alleviate traffic
24 flow along the Albany Shaker Road and Wolf Road. Based
25 on traffic counts provided by the NYS Department of

1 Transportation, over 200,000 vehicles a day pass through¹⁶
2 Colonie from Central Avenue and the Northway alone. If
3 we were to include other roadways the number would be
4 much higher. We are very lucky to have had the active
5 participation of the Chamber and the Albany
6 International Airport in advocating for this
7 improvement.

8 In closing, I would like to thank all of you for
9 your commitment to Colonie. It's all of us working
10 together that makes Colonie such a vibrant successful
11 community. I'm happy that 2017 proved to be a really
12 great year for the Town. Many more exciting projects are
13 in the works, and we're really looking forward to
14 continuing our progress in 2018 and keeping the Town of
15 Colonie the best place in the region to call home.

16 Thank you, very much.

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18 (Whereas the above entitled proceeding was
19 concluded at 7:35 p.m.)
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CERTIFICATION

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I, NANCY L. STRANG, Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of New York, hereby CERTIFY that the record taken by me at the time and place noted in the heading hereof is a true and accurate transcript of same, to the best of my ability and belief.

NANCY L. STRANG

Dated _____