

The regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Homer held on Wednesday, May 6, 2015, in the board room of the Town Hall building was called to order by Supervisor Frederick J. Forbes, Sr., at 7:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Frederick J. Forbes, Sr., Supervisor
Barry E. Warren, Councilman
Dan A. Weddle, Councilman
Kevin M. Williams, Councilman
Brian D. Young, Councilman
Patrick M. Snyder, Attorney for the Town
John R. Phelps, Highway Superintendent
Anita W. Jebbett, Town Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT

Martin Sweeney, Town Historian
Nancy Ruscio, Superintendent, Homer Central School District
Michael Falls, Finance Director, Homer Central School District
Bernie Zolla, Audio-visual Assistant, Homer Central School District
Linda Jones, Cortland County legislator
Tyrone Heppard, reporter, Cortland Standard
Donald Ferris, reporter, The Homer News

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES

The minutes of the April 8th, 2015, regular meeting were approved as presented, on motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Young and carried unanimously.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Presented for audit by the Board were:

1. The Town Clerk's monthly report of all receipts and disbursements for April
2. The Code Enforcement Officer's report of all building permits issued for April.
3. The Dog Control Officer's report of all activities for April.

ANNUAL REPORT

Also presented for audit by the Board was:

1. The annual report of the Homer Fire Department of fire and emergency calls in the Town.

BILLS TO BE PAID

General bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Councilman Young and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that General Fund vouchers #95 through #119 totaling \$17,945.18 be approved for payment.**

Highway bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilman Young, seconded by Councilman Weddle and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Highway Fund vouchers #65 through #81 totaling \$11,351.57 be approved for payment.**

PROPOSED LOCAL LAW ON MANURE STORAGE FACILITIES

There was discussion about the recommendations of both the County and the Town Planning Boards and Mr. DeAngles suggestions. Board members had received lengthy comments from Amanda Barber, manager of the County Soil & Water Conservation District, just prior to the meeting.

On motion by Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Councilman Warren, and carried unanimously, **the Board decided to table a vote on the proposed local law establishing site plan review for certain manure storage facilities in order to give them time to review written comments on the local law by Soil & Water Conservation District Manager Amanda Barber and other comments from the public hearing.**

NEW BUSINESS

Memorial Day Parade – Supervisor Forbes informed the Board that the Memorial Day Parade will be held on Monday, May 25th, and that Highway Superintendent Phelps will again offer his horse-drawn wagon for the Town Board to ride on.

Request for walk light at Route 281 & Route 41 intersection – Supervisor Forbes said that he received a copy of a request from an advocacy group from the J.M. Murray Center for a crosswalk and crossing signals. The State Department of Transportation which is responsible for the intersection has agreed to conduct a review.

Amnesty week – Forbes said that the Cortland County Landfill will hold Amnesty Week the week of May 18th through the 22nd for all municipalities to dispose of their solid waste at the Landfill. This year there will be a 30-ton limit after which municipalities will have to pay the normal tipping fee.

Thoma Development Consultants – Rich Cunningham from Thoma was present to follow up on the Board's interest in applying for a Housing Rehabilitation Grant. Several times in the past the Town had applied for such a grant and been turned down each time. The grants are for \$400,000 which would cover repairs for 12 to 15 single-family, owner-occupied homes, and administration costs. Cunningham said that Thoma Development would provide grant writing services for the submission of a 2016 Community Development Block Grant application to initiate a Town-wide Housing Rehabilitation Program for a fee of \$5,500.

Homer Central School District budget presentation – School Administrator Nancy Ruscio and Finance Director Michael Falls gave a presentation on the proposed 2015-2016 school budget. Issues discussed were the restoration of some but not all of the State aid due to the District and the leasing of school buses to save on maintenance costs. The Town Board thanked them for their informative presentation.

Lincoln monument project – Town Historian Martin Sweeney explained that the agreement that he had hoped to make with CNY Arts, Syracuse, to handle any tax deductible contributions that the Lincoln Monument Committee may receive towards the project, has fallen through. However, the Homer Education Foundation, with Matt Neuman as its President, has stepped up to take on that role. They have agreed to retain up to 1% of the funds collected for this project as an administrative fee instead of the 5 % that CNY Arts had requested. Sweeney thanked Attorney Snyder for all his help and advice on the sponsorship agreement.

On motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Young and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Supervisor Forbes be authorized to sign the Fiscal Sponsorship Grant Agreement with the Homer Education Foundation whereby they will create a restricted tax-exempt fund designated for the Lincoln Monument Project (copy attached).**

Assessor agreement – Supervisor Forbes gave an update on the agreement to share an assessor with the City of Cortland and the Town of Virgil. Due to the decision by Data Collector Stephanie Baldwin to take another position and the recent illness of Assessor Clerk Fran Armstrong, it was decided to hire Colleen Brown, the Assessor Clerk for former Town Assessor Lawrence Fitts. Forbes had met with Mack Cook from the City and John Kaminski from Virgil and had agreed to move Fitts' office into the Town Hall so that Brown would be available as a clerk on a full-time basis. Fitts is to pay the Town rent of \$1,000 per year and will cover a portion of Brown's salary. The office will be staffed Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Forbes reported that there has been a good working relationship between all parties. A written agreement with the City of Cortland is expected in the near future. On motion by Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Councilman Young and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Supervisor Forbes is authorized to sign the agreement between the Town of Homer and the Town of Virgil for the provision of an Assessor and assessing services (copy attached).**

Proposal for new phone/internet system – There was discussion about the proposal from Finger Lakes Technologies presented at the April meeting for high-speed internet through a fiber network and a hosted phone system.

On motion by Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Councilman Young and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Town approves the quote from Finger Lakes Technologies Group, Inc. for the equipment, installation and services for high-speed fiber internet services and a hosted phone system for a lease term of 36 months at a monthly cost not to exceed \$561.07.**

Snow & ice control contract with County of Cortland – On motion by Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Councilman Weddle and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Supervisor Forbes is authorized to sign the agreement with the County of Cortland whereby the Town agrees to clear snow from and provide salt and/or sand for ice control on certain County highways – East Homer Baltimore Road and Health Camp Road or 7.72 miles – from November 1st, 2016, through October 31st, 2021, beginning at \$3,752.77 per mile and increasing 2% each year.**

Landmark Society – Roger Williams of the Landmark Society has inquired about space in the Town Hall. Forbes will ask him to attend the June meeting.

Government Efficiency Plan – Mack Cook, Director of Administration & Finance for the City of Cortland, has prepared a government efficiency plan outlining any cooperation agreements, shared services, mergers and efficiencies undertaken by the various municipalities within Cortland County which should result in savings to the taxpayer.

On motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Councilman Young and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Supervisor Forbes and Town Clerk Jebbett be authorized to sign the necessary certifications that the Town will undertake its best efforts to fully implement by the end of fiscal year 2017 the cooperation agreements, mergers, efficiencies and/or shared services specified in the Government Efficiency Plan.**

Town Hall painting – Councilman Warren said he will be contacting Halliwell Painting about completing the job of painting the Town Hall.

Senior Center contract – On motion by Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Councilman Warren and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Supervisor Forbes is authorized to sign the agreement with the Cortland County Office for the Aging for use of the Senior Center in the Town Hall.**

Town Hall testing – Councilman Williams discussed the possibility of conducting another test on the Town Hall – air quality, mold, asbestos, etc. – to allay any perception that the building is unsafe.

Councilman Warren said that he was concerned about the high cost of the quote from Obrien & Gere to conduct testing. Board members agreed to have Steve Major from Lakeland Environmental attend the June Board meeting to discuss testing.

Thoma Development Consultants – On motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Councilman Young and carried, Councilmen Warren, Weddle, Williams & Young voting in the affirmative and Supervisor Forbes voting nay: **RESOLVED: that the Town Board accepts the proposal by Thoma Development Consultants to provide grant writing services for an application for a 2016 New York State Community Development Block Grant for a fee of \$5,500.**

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

Highway Superintendent Phelps reported on his department's activities over the past month.

They have been tearing down a section of their building that was in bad repair and will be going out to bid to replace it in the near future.

They have finished sweeping the roads after the winter season, particularly in the more densely populated areas, and will be recycling about 500 ton of sand. Phelps said that despite the more severe winter weather, the repairs they will need to make are no more than usual.

Phelps reported that during their mandatory safety training the County Sheriff's Department made them aware of potentially hazardous chemicals – the remnants of the local methamphetamine epidemic – that may be discarded along the roadsides.

He also reported that he would be looking into the cost of repairing the Wall Street bridge and that he is considering the possible purchase of a new rotary mower on State contract.

ATTORNEY FOR THE TOWN

Attorney Snyder reported that he is frustrated by the lack of response to his FOIL request from the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Services for the engineering plans and other information on the new manure storage facility built by New Hope View Farms. He also gave an update on the "Ash for Trash" plan that is being considered by the Cortland County legislature.

COUNTY LEGISLATOR

County Legislator Linda Jones gave a brief summary of the County's activities over the past month including replacing the County Chairperson, Susan Briggs, with Donald Boyden, appointing a new Budget & Finance Director, an opening for a County Landfill manager that remains unfilled, and a request for a budget increase by Tompkins-Cortland Community College.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Anita W. Jebbett
Town Clerk