

The regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Homer held on Wednesday, August 3, 2016, in the board room of the Town Hall building was called to order by Supervisor Frederick J. Forbes, Sr., at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Frederick J. Forbes, Sr., Supervisor
Larry R. Jones, Councilman
Michael R. Park, Councilman
Barry E. Warren, Councilman
Kevin M. Williams, Councilman
Patrick M. Snyder, Attorney for the Town
Anita W. Jebbett, Town Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT

Martin Sweeney, Town Historian
Patrick Clune, Homer Village Trustee
Linda Jones, Cortland County Legislator
Mark Suben, Cortland County District Attorney
Donald Ferris, reporter, The Homer News
Brad Smith, reporter, WXHC
Jacob DeRochie, reporter, Cortland Standard (arriving at 7:30 p.m.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES

The minutes of the July 6th board meeting were approved as presented, on motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Park and carried unanimously.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Presented for audit by the Board were:

1. The Supervisor's report of all receipts and disbursements for June.
2. The Town Clerk's report of all receipts and disbursements for July.
3. The Code Enforcement Officer's report of all building permits issued in July.

BILLS TO BE PAID

General bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilman Park, seconded by Councilman Williams and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that General vouchers #170 through #189 totaling \$18,325.81 be approved for payment.**

Highway bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Councilman Park and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Highway vouchers #117 through #130 totaling \$47,514.56 be approved for payment.**

NEW BUSINESS

Liability insurance proposal – A quote from Bailey-Place Insurance Agency for liability insurance for 2016-2017 was discussed. Supervisor Forbes noted that there will be a small decrease of \$266 in the cost of the insurance to \$27,801.37, and thanked Board members for their work with Bailey-Place to provide current information.

On motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Town's liability and public officials insurance be renewed with Bailey-Place Insurance Agency for a premium up to \$27,801.37 from August 19th, 2016 to August 19th, 2017.**

Lincoln historic items – Town Historian Martin Sweeney informed the Board about the possibility of Homer receiving donated historic items relating to Homer natives Francis B. Carpenter and William O. Stoddard from renowned Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer’s collection of Lincoln artifacts. The items being considered for donation have been appraised and would be given to The Homer Education Foundation, a not-for-profit organization.

There was discussion of concerns about their proper display, security, and their relation to the Lincoln monument project.

Mark Suben, District Attorney – Suben gave his annual report on criminal justice in Cortland County, including an update on recent homicides, his prosecution strategies, and an update on the Child Advocacy Center. The Board thanked him for coming each year to inform them of his department’s activities.

OLD BUSINESS

Assessor committee – Councilman Williams reported on the status of the committee’s review of applications for a new assessor for the Towns of Virgil and Homer and the City of Cortland. He said that they will be meeting again on August 10th and will be scheduling interviews for August 17th & 18th. He is in hope of being able to make a recommendation to the Town Board at the September meeting.

Village bridge committee – Councilman Park reported that the first meeting of the committee to discuss the replacement of the Wall Street Bridge was a successful one, with representatives from the Town and Village, the former Village Superintendent of Streets & Parks, Bob Lottridge, former mayor Mary Alice Bellardini, Town Historian Martin Sweeney, and Highway Superintendent John Phelps in attendance.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, August 12th. Park said he is hopeful that decisions about the bridge can be made by the end of the year.

Solar energy projects zoning – Attorney Patrick Snyder reported that in response to a request by the Town Board, the Town Planning Board has been considering changes to the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and additions to the Town’s Zoning Law regarding solar energy projects. He read the recommended addition to the Town’s Comprehensive Plan, under Article VII, *Implementation*, Section A. *Town Zoning*, to add a new section 11 as follows:

There is an increasing demand for solar energy projects. Renewable energy is considered to be desirable by the state and local governments, as well as the public. The Town should allow solar energy projects in any zoning district, consistent with sound land use planning.

Solar energy projects should be subject to site plan review to insure that adequate setbacks are achieved, glare onto adjoining properties is avoided, and visual impacts are mitigated. Solar energy projects should not be constructed on prime farmland if other alternatives are feasible. Removal of trees and other vegetation should be minimized or offset by other plantings. The solar energy regulations should also address the decommissioning and removal of the equipment when it is no longer in operation.

Attorney Snyder said that the Planning Board is still working on changes to the Town’s Zoning Law, but recommended that the Town Board go ahead with the addition to the Comprehensive Plan. On motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Councilman Park and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that a public hearing of the Town Board be held at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 7th, on the proposed addition to the Town’s Comprehensive Plan to allow for solar energy projects and a SEQRA review of the same.**

Speed limit reduction for Cosmos Hill Road – Supervisor Forbes reported the receipt of a letter from the New York State Department of Transportation approving the Town’s request to lower the speed limit on the Town of Homer section of Cosmos Hill Road from 55 mph to 40 mph.

Charter Communications – Forbes also reported that Time Warner has now become Charter Communications.

ATTORNEY FOR THE TOWN

Attorney Snyder reported that at the most recent Planning Board meeting, the Tyrrell's, who own property on Rice Hill Road, were present to propose that the allowed uses in an Agricultural District in the Town be changed so that ag-related event planning, such as wedding celebrations, become an allowed use. They will be submitting a proposal. They also said that they understand that the barn will need to meet the building code before they are authorized to hold events there.

Snyder also helped Dog Control Officer Lindsay Andersen put together a model for ticketing negligent dog owners that will be acceptable to the Court.

COUNTY LEGISLATORS

Linda Jones reported on current activities at the County Legislature.

VILLAGE TRUSTEE

Patrick Clune, Village Trustee, was present to discuss ways that the Town and Village could work together to provide cost savings. Councilman Warren reported that he and Councilman Park had met with Clune and Trustee Ed Finkbeiner to discuss the possibility of combining the Town and Village highway garages after the resignation of the Village Street Superintendent. Councilman Warren said that the general consensus was that there would not be a savings. Clune said that even if they do not decide to combine, it was worthwhile meeting to have a better understanding of the departments and improve the working relationship between the Village and Town.

Supervisor Forbes said that he is pleased with the improved communication between the two municipalities, and Warren said that he and Park will continue to be open to discussing ways they can cooperate with the Village to provide cost savings for residents.

Attorney Snyder is to research laws regarding combining the positions of an appointed Village Street Superintendent and an elected Town Highway Superintendent for future planning purposes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Anita W. Jebbett
Town Clerk