

The regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Homer held on Wednesday, September 4, 2019, in the board room of the Town Hall 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
John R. Phelps, Highway Superintendent
Anita W. Jebbett, Town Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT

Mahlon Irish, Chief, Homer Fire Department
Patrick Clune, Trustee, Village of Homer
Kelly Preston, Cortland County Legislator
Shenandoah Briere, reporter, Cortland Standard

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES

The minutes of the August 7th regular meeting were approved as presented, on motion by Councilman Park, seconded by Councilman Williams and carried unanimously.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Presented for audit by the Board were:

1. The Town Clerk's monthly report of all receipts & disbursements for August.
2. The Code Enforcement Officer's report of all building permits issued for August.

BILLS TO BE PAID

General bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Councilman Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that General Fund vouchers #202 through #224 totaling \$246,173.19 are approved for payment.**

Highway bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Highway Fund vouchers #155 through #167 totaling \$89,087.73 are approved for payment.**

NEW BUSINESS

Assessor appointment – On motion by Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Councilman Williams and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Brian Fitts is hereby reappointed to a six-year term as Assessor for the Town of Homer, with the term to begin on October 1st.**

Cyber security insurance – Councilman Williams reviewed the policy proposal from Bailey-Place Insurance for cyber security insurance and recommended that the Town decline coverage at this time. He plans to meet with Plan First Technologies to review the Town's vulnerabilities in the near future. Councilman Park suggested that the computers belonging to the Court and the Assessor also be reviewed.

Court grant application – On motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Councilman Park and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: That the Homer Town Board hereby authorizes the Town Justice Court to apply for a 2019-2020 grant from the State of New York Justice Court Assistance Program (JCAP), in the amount of \$2,977 for the purchase of a digital photo copier in order for them to provide suitable and sufficient service to the community through proper court facilities and automated equipment.**

Winter maintenance contract with County – Supervisor Forbes explained that the Town Highway Department maintains 7.72 miles of County highway under a contract agreement with the County. He explained his concerns about the way the new contract is written, specifically, that the Town would need to bill the County, and that the payments are unevenly split and mostly paid the following year. After some discussion, Councilman Park made a motion, seconded by Councilman Williams, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the contract between the County of Cortland and the Town of Homer for the period from April 30th, 2019 through April 30th, 2021, for the Town to provide the winter maintenance of 7.72 miles of County road, 5.27 centerline miles of East Homer Baltimore Road, and 2.45 centerline miles of Health Camp Road, for the amount \$30,744.75 for the 2019-2020 season, and \$31,359.65 for the 2020-2021 season is approved.**

Planning Board Chair to retire - Supervisor Forbes has received a letter from Planning Board Chairman Eugene Wright stating that he plans to retire from the Planning Board on December 31st, due to his advanced age of 90+ and his wife's health concerns.

Forbes stated on behalf of the Board that it has been a privilege and an honor to have someone like Gene Wright as the Town's Planning Board Chair. He said that Wright has also been involved with the County's Soil & Water Conservation District for many years, and has certainly left his mark on the well-being of the Town of Homer and Cortland County. Attorney Snyder said that Wright has been a fabulous public servant, and all agreed that he will be sorely missed.

Housing grant request – Attorney Snyder explained that one of the homeowners who received a housing grant from the Town is applying for a new mortgage in order to reduce her interest rate and shorten its term. Because of this, she is requesting that the Town subordinate their mortgage for her home improvements of \$13,000, thereby keeping it as her second mortgage. He recommended that the Town approve the request since it will make it more likely that she stays in the home and repays her mortgage.

On motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Supervisor Forbes is authorized to sign a Subordination Agreement with Diane Purvis of 32 Grove Street to allow CFCU to hold the first mortgage on the property.**

Fire District meeting – Supervisor Forbes asked Board members to attend a special meeting scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 10th, in the board room to discuss the possibility of forming a Fire District separate from the Village.

Grant announcement – Forbes also invited Board members to attend a special visit by State Senator James Seward at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 5th.

OLD BUSINESS

Worker's Compensation – Supervisor Forbes reported that talks with the County regarding their worker's compensation fund are progressing well and that Chairman Kevin Whitney is working very hard on the matter. The next meeting will be held on September 30th.

Town Hall Office Renovation Project – On motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Warren and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Village is authorized to install and monitor an Elkay surface-mount bottle filler adjacent to the new drinking fountains.**

On motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Warren and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Village proceed with the purchase of a large screen TV and rolling cart for use at board meetings and by the Code Enforcement Officers, at a cost of under \$800 to be shared equally by the Town, with the details of the laptop to be used to be determined.**

Supervisor Forbes said that he is looking to get an estimate for cleaning the front of the Town Hall and the windows. There was discussion about how best to prevent birds from nesting on top of the pillars. Councilman Warren said that he has spoken with a plumber about installing a hot water heater to provide hot water to the Senior Center bathrooms. He is still checking with a contractor regarding a possible leak in the dome of the Town Hall and about installing magnetic doorstops in the back stairwell which would close in the event of a fire alarm.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

Highway Superintendent Phelps reported on their activities over the past month. He said that the Pine Street Bridge work is now complete, Economy Paving having installed the rip-rap to prevent erosion after having gotten the permit from the DEC. The work by Complete Construction Concepts (CCC) to install new wider sidewalk in front of the Town Hall is now complete. He also reported that all the large road reconstruction projects have been completed and CHIPS grant monies applied for. Phelps said that they are now getting prepared for the winter season, and he will be attending the annual fall training conference later in the month.

Phelps praised his help for all their efforts over the summer and said that all work with the County and other municipalities ran very smoothly.

ATTORNEY FOR THE TOWN

Attorney Snyder reported that he is working on the Speedway assessment lawsuit and that he thinks the Town is in a good position in the matter. Speedway had never provided any documentation to support their request to have their assessments lowered. He also mentioned that an attorney in Syracuse has filed a notice of appearance to represent the county and/ or school district in the case. The hearing is scheduled for later this month.

He will also be representing the Town at an upcoming trial regarding a dog running at large in the Pine Hill Trailer Park.

COUNTY LEGISLATOR

Legislator Kelly Preston reported on activities of the County over the past month, including their search for a County Administrator, discussion about having centralized arraignments, and the new laws allowing early voting this fall at the Board of Election Office on River Street. They received a grant to purchase new electronic poll books, and after the 2020 election, they will be looking to replace the current voting machines. She also noted that Carl Bullock has agreed to return as director of the Veterans' Service Office temporarily, volunteering his time, after the previous director left.

FIRE CHIEF

Mahlon Irish, Chief of the Homer Fire Department, reported that he is waiting for one piece of the dry hydrant to be received before it can be installed, with the help of the Highway Department, on East River Crossing Road. He said he was surprised by the speed with which he obtained a grant from the NYSDEC for the dry hydrant. The Town of Homer Fire District has agreed to pay the matching 50%.

Irish also urged Board members to attend the special meeting on September 10th at 7:00 p.m. regarding the establishment of a Fire District.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Anita W. Jebbett
Town Clerk