

The regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Homer held on Wednesday, December 4, 2019, in the Town Hall board room 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

Shenandoah Briere, reporter, Cortland Standard
Patrick Clune, Trustee, Village of Homer

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES

The minutes of the November 6th regular meeting were approved as presented, on motion by Councilman Park, seconded by Councilman Jones and carried unanimously.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Presented for audit by the Board were:

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

BILLS TO BE PAID

General bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that General Fund vouchers #279 through #303 totaling \$57,590.65 are approved for payment.**

Highway bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Councilman Park and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Highway Fund vouchers #204 through #222 totaling \$45,710.06 are approved for payment.**

REGULAR BUSINESS

Disability Insurance – Supervisor Forbes reported on his meeting with Celeste Peplinski of Haylor, Freyer & Coon regarding disability insurance. They also discussed health and dental insurance policies offered through their agency. Forbes asked Councilmen Park and Williams to review the information from Peplinski for consideration in the future.

Workers' Compensation – Forbes had attended a meeting at the County with other local municipal representatives to discuss proposed changes to the County's workers' compensation fund. They are considering having PERMA (Public Employer Risk Management Association) administer their plan. Forbes said that if they follow through, it would benefit all County residents to have the Town of Homer return to the County Self-Insurance Fund. He presented a chart of the proposed cost to each municipality if they remain in the larger County group.

There was much discussion, with members Williams, Park and Jones saying they lack confidence in the County to handle the program properly. Forbes explained that the Town would deal directly with PERMA who would handle all the claims. Councilman Williams said that the Town would save \$4,000 by remaining independent and suggested that the Town wait a year before considering re-joining the Cortland County Self-Insurance Fund. Park said that he would like to support the County but he still has too many concerns. Park and Jones both said that they would re-consider joining in the future.

On motion by Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Councilman Park, with Councilmen Jones, Park and Williams voting nay, and Supervisor Forbes and Councilman Warren voting aye, the resolution to re-join the Cortland County Self-Insurance Fund if the County contracts with PERMA for that coverage, was defeated.

PERMA meeting – Supervisor Forbes and Clerk Jebbett had met with a representative from PERMA and were both impressed by what appears to be a very well-run company. A worker's compensation claim that occurred on October 31st, just one day prior to being covered by PERMA, will also be handled by PERMA for an additional fee.

EDF Renewables – Supervisor Forbes said that the Town has been notified by the NYS Board on Electric Generation Siting & the Environment that the Town will need to nominate four candidates to serve as ad hoc members on the Siting Board to provide a local voice in the review of the Homer Solar Energy Center proposed by EDF Renewables in the Towns of Homer, Cortlandville, and Solon. Attorney Snyder explained that due to the size of the project, it falls under Article 10 of the Public Service Law which empowers the State Siting Board to authorize the construction and operation of the proposed utility. Forbes explained that each Town nominates four candidates, the County nominates four candidates, and of the sixteen, the leader of the State Senate and the leader of the State Assembly each select one to participate on the Siting Board.

On motion by Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Councilman Park and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Planning Board select four of their members to be nominated by the Town Supervisor as candidates for the NYS Siting Board in their consideration of the proposed Homer Solar Energy Center.**

Town Hall Balcony – Forbes reported that the Highway crew has been helping to clean out the extra building materials, etc., that remain in the balcony. There was discussion about the best way to begin the renovation of the area for useable space, most likely for storage, and agreed to insulate the floor. They also discussed how to create a safe stairway to get to the dome, previously accessed only by climbing ladders.

Cable Commission – Councilman Williams explained the history of the Commission with the advent of cable TV and the collection by local governments of franchise fees. The Commission is now looking to lobby the State to charge franchise fees on other newer types of media and asking the Town to support their efforts. Councilman Williams said he would recommend against responding to their request as he does not agree with franchise fees in general.

Website re-design – Clerk Jebbett explained that the current web manager has been unavailable for the last several months and that attempts to contact her have failed. Therefore she had asked four varying website developers for quotes for updating, hosting and managing the Town's website and received three responses.

On motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Warren and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the proposal from Good News Computing, Homer, for re-designing and updating the Town's website for a cost of \$600, and for hosting and managing the website at a cost of \$192 per year was accepted.**

Postage meter refill – On motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Warren and carried unanimously, **the Town Clerk was authorized to add \$1,200 in postage to the postage meter in preparation for mailing the 2020 Town & County taxes.**

Records disposition – On motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Councilman Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk as Records Management Officer is authorized to properly dispose of certain records in accordance with the *Records Retention and Disposition Schedule MU-1*, issued pursuant to Article 57-A of the Arts & Cultural Affairs Law of the State of New York, as listed on the form "Records Disposition 2019" (attached).**

Sexual Harassment Policy – Attorney Snyder presented a proposed Town of Homer Sexual Harassment Policy based on the State’s recommended policy. Supervisor Forbes said that all Town employees completed the required training this fall.

On motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Park and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Town adopt the “Town of Homer Sexual Harassment Policy” as presented, with the minor addition of the phrase, “or the Deputy Town Supervisor” whenever the term “Town Supervisor” appears in the policy.**

Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium – Councilman Williams reported that he has attended several meetings of the Consortium as the Town’s representative and said that it remains a very healthy, well-run organization. He suggested that next year the Town look at a plan for seniors that they will be offering.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

Highway Superintendent John Phelps reported on the activities of his crew over the past month. Prior to the recent snowstorm, several of his men had taken their vacation time. The seasonal employee has returned on an on-call basis for snow removal. A new snowplow/dump truck ordered early in the year is still not ready for delivery. Phelps said it should be here by at least mid-January.

ATTORNEY FOR THE TOWN

Attorney Snyder reported that a few days before oral argument was scheduled on the Speedway assessment case, Speedway dropped their lawsuit. Snyder gave much credit to Assessor Brian Fitts who had created a record which documented Speedway’s failure to provide evidence and its failure to attend the Board of Assessment Review hearing after being requested to do so. Snyder said that the Town, County and school district should be prepared next year for the possibility of another Speedway lawsuit.

HOMER FIRE DISTRICT

Supervisor Forbes reported on his conversation with Steve Butts, Secretary of the Town of Homer Fire District, who supports forming a Homer Fire District to replace the Village of Homer Fire Department. Forbes said that Brian Young, former Town Councilman, will be replacing Dennis Underwood, who has moved to the Town of Cortlandville, as a Fire District Commissioner.

Forbes suggested that a meeting be held with representatives from Scott, Summerhill, the Village, Town, and the Town Fire District to further discuss the possibility of creating a Homer Fire District. Village Trustee Clune agreed that this should take place early next year.

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

Anita W. Jebbett
Town Clerk