

The regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Homer held on Wednesday, February 5, 2020, in the board room of the Town Hall was called to order by Deputy Supervisor Michael R. Park, at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Michael R. Park, Deputy Supervisor
Larry R. Jones, Councilmember
Barry E. Warren, Councilmember
Kevin M. Williams, Councilmember
Patrick M. Snyder, Attorney for the Town
John R. Phelps, Highway Superintendent
Anita W. Jebbett, Town Clerk

ABSENT

Frederick J. Forbes, Sr., Supervisor

OTHERS PRESENT

Kevin McMahon, Deputy Code Enforcement Officer
Martin Sweeney, Town Historian
Steve & Mary Fisher, residents, Edonna Drive
Galen Head, New Hope View Farms
Stuart Young, East River Dairy
Patrick Clune, Trustee, Village of Homer
Victor Siegle, Village resident
Shenandoah Briere, reporter, Cortland Standard
Donald Ferris, reporter, The Homer News

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES

The minutes of the January 8th organizational meeting were approved as presented, on motion by Councilmember Warren, seconded by Councilmember Jones and carried unanimously.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Presented for audit by the Board:

1. The Town Clerk's report of all cash receipts and disbursements for January.
2. The Dog Control Officer's report of all activities for the month of January.
3. The Code Enforcement Officer's report of all building permits issued in January.

BILLS TO BE PAID

Highway bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilmember Jones, seconded by Councilmember Williams and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Highway Fund vouchers #3 through #18 totaling \$30,886.21 are approved for payment.**

General bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilmember Warren, seconded by Councilmember Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that General Fund vouchers #8 through #30 totaling \$17,595.42 are approved for payment.**

NEW BUSINESS

Complaint regarding manure truck route – Steve & Mary Fisher, who reside on Edonna Drive, off of Sessions Hill Road, were in attendance to explain their written complaint about the route manure trucks are taking to access a new manure pit on Corl Hill Road. Their main concern was with the frequency of traffic by the large trucks, and that they are driving up and down Sessions Hill Road which is a gravel/dirt road, creating dust and mud, and affecting their quality of life. Fisher explained that he was also speaking on behalf of his neighbors.

Deputy Supervisor Park explained that he had asked the other involved parties to attend the meeting. Stuart Young of East River Dairy explained that the Corl Hill manure pit belongs to them not to New Hope View, and that they are accessing it from Forbes Road. He explained that the State regulates the spreading of manure and is encouraging the use of pits.

Galen Head of New Hope View Farms on Route 11 explained that in January they were spreading manure on a field on Verne King Road. He said that is why trucks were traveling the road so frequently. He said that now that that the field has been saturated, they will no longer be traveling up Sessions Hill.

Deputy Supervisor Park explained that the Town has little authority over the placement of manure pits and no jurisdiction over who may use the roads. Attorney Snyder explained that the Town may require site plan review of a new manure pit and only that they meet the Town's setback regulations.

The Fisher's thanked the Board for listening to their complaint and clarifying the issue.

Park asked about a similar complaint from Foster Road in which trucks from New Hope View Farm were using Foster Road instead of Harrison Hill Road to access their manure pit on Foster-Moore Road. Galen Head explained that the steepness of Harrison Hill makes it unsafe for the trucks to travel.

Changes to Code Enforcement software – Deputy Code Enforcement Officer McMahon was present to explain the addition of a fire inspection module to the code program shared with the Village. Although the majority of properties needing fire inspections are in the Village, there will also be a few in the Town. The Village will begin sharing the annual cost of the software maintenance so that even with the addition of the module, the Town will pay less than it has in the past.

McMahon also reviewed current building permit activity. He said that Homer Hops on Route 90 has received a conditional permit and is working to develop a storm-water plan. Although they had had to take a couple of steps backwards to obtain the permit, Kristof and his business partners will be continuing to work on the inside of the new building.

Obtaining a second Carpenter painting – Town Historian Martin Sweeney reported that plans to obtain a second Francis B. Carpenter painting from the Landmark Society have fallen through as their painting of Watts Barber is proving to be a draw for visitors to the Homer History Center on Main Street. Sweeney has approached the Cortland County Historical Society for their Carpenter painting of Aiden Webb, an early Town Clerk and school teacher in Homer, which has been in storage. He believes that they will be agreeable if the Town can provide some additional security for the painting. The Town Board agreed to pursue a loan of the painting and asked Attorney Snyder to review a proposed loan agreement with the Historical Society. Sweeney was asked to determine the type of security that the Historical Society is looking for.

Senior Center Space Agreement – On motion by Councilmember Williams, seconded by Councilmember Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that, in the absence of the Supervisor, Deputy Supervisor Michael Park is authorized to sign the agreement with the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging for their use of the basement of the Homer Town Hall for the twelve month period beginning on January 1, 2020, and ending on December 31, 2020.**

There was discussion about Senior-related groups using the space when the County is not operating the facilities, specifically on Tuesdays when the ceramics group wishes to meet. Deputy Supervisor Park asked Attorney Snyder to check with the Town's insurance agency about coverage.

On motion by Councilmember Warren, seconded by Councilmember Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Town authorizes the use of the Senior Center by persons or groups approved by the David Harum Senior Club on certain days when the space is not being used by the County Area on Aging, contingent upon the Town's insurance coverage.**

Senior Center storage room – Councilmember Warren said that he would look into having locking mechanisms placed on the doors to the Senior Center storage room, at the request of members of the Senior Club.

Extension of tax collection period – On motion by Councilmember Williams, seconded by Councilmember Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Deputy Supervisor Park is authorized to sign the application to extend the period of time in which the Tax Collector is authorized to collect the Town & County taxes until June 1st, 2020.**

Homer Solar Energy Center – On motion by Deputy Supervisor Park, seconded by Councilmember Warren and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Town nominates the following four individuals to serve, if selected, as ad hoc members to the New York State Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment on behalf of the application by EDF Renewables Development, Inc., for construction of the Homer Solar Energy Center in the Towns of Homer, Solon and Cortlandville: Mary Elizabeth (Betsy) Gray, Michael May, Robert Perry, and James Zimmerman.**

Victor Siegle again expressed his concern about tax breaks for solar energy projects and urged Board members to seek to obtain the best PILOT plan possible for the Town. He handed out a written summary of his conclusions after studying the issue at length.

Budget modifications – Clerk Jebbett reviewed the proposed modifications of the 2019 budget. On motion by Councilmember Williams, seconded by Councilmember Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the year-end modifications of the 2019 budget were adopted as proposed (attached).**

Deputy Supervisor Park tabled discussion of a deferred compensation plan and the 2019 Town Court audit to the March meeting.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

Highway Superintendent Phelps reported that a mower rented from Stevenson Equipment had broken down while they were using it and that the Town's liability insurance had covered the cost of the repairs. Over the past month he has been planning for summer road repairs, and has had to mix more salt and sand for winter use. The new snowplow/dump truck ordered in 2019 is almost ready and he is looking to purchase a new pickup truck this year.

ATTORNEY FOR THE TOWN

Attorney Snyder said that Homer Hops is now on the right track to obtain their conditional permit after some missteps. The Zoning Board of Appeals will be meeting to consider a request to build a second small home on the same property – an issue that has not been addressed in the Town's Zoning Law. Snyder offered to update the Zoning Law, as he recently has done for the Town of Virgil. Homer's Zoning Law has not been updated since 2008 and since then several local laws have been passed. On motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Councilman Williams and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Attorney Snyder's proposal to update the Town's Zoning Law for an extra fee equal to four hours of work is approved.**

VILLAGE TRUSTEE

Village Trustee Pat Clune noted how difficult it has been to get a member of the Town's Fire District to sign what is now a one-year contract. Park agreed to get in touch with them. Clune also said that there are still neighbors complaining about the angle of the new lighting for the Town's parking areas, particularly along the side of the building. Councilmember Warren will ask Bob Beard to make another adjustment.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Anita W. Jebbett
Town Clerk