

The regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Homer held on Wednesday, April 8, 2020, in the Town Hall Senior Center was called to order by Supervisor Frederick J. Forbes, Sr., at 6:30 p.m. Social distancing was observed due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.

PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES

The minutes of the March 4th regular meeting were approved as presented, on motion by Councilmember Park, 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 March.
2. The Tax Collector's report of all activities for the month of March.
3. The Code Enforcement Officer's report of all building permits issued in March.
4. The Dog Control Officer's reports of all activities for February & March.
5. The Supervisor's report of all cash receipts and disbursements for February.

BILLS TO BE PAID

General Fund bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilmember Jones, seconded by Councilmember Williams and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that General vouchers #54 through #77 totaling \$16,932.83 are approved for payment.**

Highway Fund bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilmember Warren, seconded by Councilmember Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Highway vouchers #37 through #58 totaling \$43,392.95 are approved for payment.**

NEW BUSINESS

New methods to pay bills – Supervisor Forbes said that he has been looking into different ways for the Town to pay their bills, such as on-line or through a bill-pay system. Councilmember Williams suggested that if that were to be done, Board members should take turns auditing the bank statements.

On motion by Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Councilmember Park and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Town proceed with paying select bills through the bill-pay system at First National Bank of Dryden.**

Forbes said that he is also looking into having the County make their payments to the Town through direct deposit into the Town's accounts.

Budget concerns – Councilmember Park voiced concerns over the purchase of any large items for the remainder of the calendar year due to the ongoing crisis. Forbes said that Highway Superintendent Phelps has already committed to the purchase of a new pick-up truck but has agreed to hold off on other large purchases. Forbes suggested that until the Town is certain about getting State CHIPS funds for major road repairs, that work should be put on hold. He voiced concerns about the entire 2020 Town budget due to the potential for a large loss of revenue.

Court audit – Councilman Williams agreed that he and Councilmember Jones would conduct the audit as soon as the Justice Court re-opens.

Town Hall balcony – Supervisor Forbes said that he would still like to meet with Board members to look over the balcony area of the building and discuss plans for renovating it in the future.

Deferred compensation plan – Supervisor Forbes said that only one Town employee is interested in a deferred compensation plan. He is in process of getting the paperwork to enroll that employee.

Options for meetings – Board members discussed using Zoom or other internet-based programs to hold meetings during the crisis. Attorney Snyder said that NYS Governor Cuomo’s executive order allows for voting remotely during the pandemic, with Zoom or Skype the preferred methods. Councilman Park suggested that the Town pay its own fee in order to use Zoom rather than piggyback on the Village’s contract. Councilmember Warren stated that he was fine with social distancing using the Senior Center and the other board members agreed.

Verizon Fios – Supervisor Forbes said that due to some technical issues, the Village has changed their internet provider from Spectrum, paid for by the Town, to Verizon Fios which is being paid for by the Village. Following some discussion, the Board agreed to look into switching to Fios in the near future.

Town employees – Councilmember Park said that he would be meeting with Highway Superintendent Phelps to go over the State’s recommendations for keeping employees safe.

ATTORNEY FOR THE TOWN

Attorney Snyder reported that he and Councilmember Warren had met with Victor Siegle last month to hear his concerns and suggestions regarding the proposed Homer Solar Energy Center and other solar projects in the county. Victor is concerned that the local governments are not going to receive the property tax income that they need and deserve. Low property tax assessments are being forced on the local governments by the state or through IDA PILOT agreements. Victor was of the opinion that towns could stop the approval of solar projects and/or PILOT agreements, an opinion not necessarily shared by Mr. Snyder. Victor also pointed out that the Governor’s budget bill will eliminate Article 10 of the Public Service Law and make it much easier for the state to force solar projects on towns that do not want them.

Snyder also reported on Governor Cuomo’s executive orders during the pandemic and said that he is keeping track of them.

COUNTY LEGISLATOR

In the absence of any County Legislator, Councilmember Jones reported on behalf of his wife, Legislator Linda Jones, the statistics regarding the cases of COVID-19 found in Cortland County along with the number hospitalized, recovered and tested – 19 positive, 12 recovered, and 3 hospitalized. Overall 621 people have been tested to date.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Anita W. Jebbett
Town Clerk