

The regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Homer held on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, 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
Michael R. Park, Councilmember
Barry E. Warren, Councilmember
Kevin M. Williams, Councilmember
Patrick M. Snyder, Attorney for the Town
Anita W. Jebbett, Town Clerk

ABSENT

Larry R. Jones, Councilmember

OTHERS PRESENT

Patrick Clune, Village of Homer Trustee
Kevin Fitch, Cortland County Legislator
Donald Ferris, reporter, The Homer News
Kevin Conlin, reporter, Cortland Standard

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES

The minutes of the February 3rd regular meeting were approved as presented, on motion by Councilmember Park, seconded by Councilmember Williams and carried unanimously.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Presented for audit by the Board were:

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

BILLS TO BE PAID

General bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilmember Williams, seconded by Councilmember Park and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that General Fund vouchers #27 through #53 totaling \$15,086.84 are approved for payment.**

Highway bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilmember Warren, seconded by Councilmember Williams and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Highway Fund vouchers #18 through #34 totaling \$26,469.59 are approved for payment.**

REGULAR BUSINESS

Extension for tax deadline – On motion by Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Councilmember Park and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Supervisor is authorized to sign the extension of time for the collection of taxes in the Town of Homer to May 31st, 2021.**

ZBA appointment – On motion by Councilmember Williams, seconded by Councilmember Park and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Lynn Gilbert is appointed to fulfill the unexpired term of Gerald Neuman, who resigned as of the end of 2020, on the Town Zoning Board of Appeals through December, 2023.**

Fios for Town Hall – Councilmember Williams reported that the Town has now signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Village in order to connect to their Fios internet in place of the current Spectrum internet. Williams has arranged with Plan First Technologies to connect the Town offices in the near future.

Cameras for Town Hall – Councilmember Williams also reported that he and the Village have agreed to the installation of four cameras at the Town Hall entrances. He expects to have more information by the April board meeting.

Town Hall maintenance & renovation – Supervisor Forbes discussed different three areas in the Town Hall that the Board needs to consider repairing or replacing.

First, Forbes suggested that, at the least, the balcony area should be insulated, electricity installed, and the walls sheet rocked, even if they have not yet decided on a use for the space.

Secondly, he suggested that Councilmembers Park and Warren look over the roof this spring to see if repairs or replacement is necessary. It was last replaced approximately 20 years ago. Forbes said the Town's Building Repair reserve funds could possibly be used for a roof project.

Thirdly, Forbes said that the furnace had quit working properly twice this winter and had to be repaired. Currently K & B Plumbing & Heating is waiting for warmer weather to complete their repairs. Forbes suggested that the Town Board consider updating the furnace which was installed in 2008.

Bookkeeping services – There was much discussion about allowing the firm of Cahill & Knobel, which will be handling the Town's payroll and accounting, access to the Town's bank accounts.

On motion by Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Councilmember Warren and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that access to the Town's bank accounts at First National Bank of Dryden by the bookkeeping firm of Cahill & Knobel will be restricted to viewing only.**

Keeping chickens in a residential area – Town Attorney Pat Snyder reported that the Planning Board gave a conditional permit to the Cobb family to have chickens in a residential area at their January meeting. However, he apologized for not waiting to receive the County's recommendations prior to the Planning Board meeting. Although the County Planning Department approved the issuance of a conditional permit, it did so with some contingencies which were not addressed by the Planning Board. Snyder said that, therefore, the conditional permit issued by the Town is now null and void. As it now stands, the Cobb's will need to apply for an area variance from the Town's Zoning Board of Appeals and again to the Planning Board for site plan review and a conditional permit.

To prevent this situation in the future, it has been suggested that the Town consider reducing the minimum lot line setback requirement for the keeping of farm animals. This issue had been discussed by the Town Board previously, but no decisions were ever made about how to revise the Town's zoning law to allow for the raising of chickens in a residential area. Attorney Snyder proposed drafting a local law for the Town Board to review next month and board members agreed to have him do so.

Wall Street Bridge – Supervisor Forbes said that the County Highway Superintendent has informed him that it would not be possible for the Town to re-use the structure of the East River Crossing Bridge to replace the Wall Street Bridge. The County will be removing and replacing the East River Crossing Bridge in the near future but, due to State regulations, will need to instead find another use for the old bridge, such as placement on a snowmobile trail.

Court audit resolution – On motion by Councilmember Williams, seconded by Councilmember Park and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: WHEREAS, Section 2019-a of the Uniform Justice Court Act requires that Town Boards provide an annual audit of the Town Justice Court’s records and dockets; and**

WHEREAS, Town Board members Kevin M Williams and Larry R Jones performed such an audit of the 2020 Town of Homer court records on January 13th, 2021, using a checklist and documentation provided by the New York State Comptroller’s Office; and

WHEREAS, Board members Williams and Jones found all records to be clear, concise, and accurate; that all reports and disbursements were made on a timely basis, that the checkbooks were reconciled on a timely basis, and that cooperation by the Town Justice and Court Clerk was found to be excellent;

During the audit the following was noted:

- 1) Audit sampling included random months chosen during the 2020 calendar year**
- 2) Sampling including verification of deposits in the Justice Account and Bail Account, and that cash receipts tie-in to deposits in the Justice Account and Bail Account**
- 3) Verification of timely banking procedures and timely monthly reporting of documents**
- 3) Open caseloads were within normal range**
- 4) Closed caseloads were sampled for time to completion, and found to be completed in a timely manner**
- 5) Bank reconciliations frequently reconciled online prior to receiving monthly mailed statements**

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, upon recommendation by Councilmembers Williams and Jones, the Town Board hereby accepts and files the 2020 fiscal year audit with the Town Clerk, and forwards a copy of the audit to the NYS Unified Court System along with a copy of the motion accepting the audit.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Anita W Jebbett, Town Clerk