

The regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Homer held on Wednesday, December 7, 2016, in the board room of the Town Hall building was called to order by Supervisor Frederick J. Forbes, Sr., at 7:05 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

Linda Jones, County Legislator
Brad Smith, reporter, X101
Donald Ferris, reporter, The Homer News

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES

The minutes of the November 2nd public hearing and regular meeting, and of the November 28th special meeting were approved as presented, on motion by Councilman Park, seconded by Williams 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 Supervisor's report of all revenues & expenditures for October.
3. The Code Enforcement Officer's report of all building permits issued in November.
4. The Dog Control Officer's report of all activities for the months of October & 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 vouchers #263 through #292 totaling \$57,243.92 be approved for payment.**

Highway bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilman Williams and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Highway vouchers #193 through #225 totaling \$62,943.78 be approved for payment.**

NEW BUSINESS

Changes to tax collection program – Town Clerk Jebbett explained that the County has decided to change to a different software provider, ATC Taxes of Binghamton, for their portion of the tax collection program. Since they will no longer support the current software used by a majority of the smaller towns in the County, the County Treasurer's Office is offering the ATC program to all the Towns in the County at no cost for 2017.

After reviewing the ATC software, Clerk Jebbett did not think a change from current programmer Williamson Law Book would be in the best interest of the Town. Williamson has offered to provide a monthly file transfer to the County of tax collection data, and to post all tax bills online from the Town's website, which would also allow taxpayers to pay by credit card or e-check for an additional fee. These additional services are also offered by the ATC program. The cost to the Town would be a one-time fee of \$250 and an additional \$10 per month to be added to the current software agreement. While the ATC program would be offered at no cost to the Towns in 2017, there was no guarantee that the County would continue to pay the cost of the software contract.

On motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Councilman Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk/Tax Collector be authorized to accept credit card and e-check payments for town and county taxes through an agreement with Payment Processing Consultants, Inc., of Pittsford, NY, with all additional fees for that service to be paid by the taxpayer.**

Changes to the health insurance policy – Supervisor Forbes reported that he had met with health insurance broker Bill Chamberlain who recommended that the Town make a change to its current Excellus Blue Cross/Blue Shield policy by increasing the deductible slightly, lowering coverage from a 85% /15% formula to a 80%/20% insurance company to subscriber cost, as well as a small increase in the cost of prescriptions. To offset the increase in costs to the employees, the amount transferred into the health savings accounts by the Town would be increased.

On motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Warren and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Town's health insurance plan change as proposed by the Finger Lakes Group for 2017, and an increase in the Town's contributions to the health savings accounts from \$4,400 for a family plan to \$5,200 and from \$2,200 for an individual plan to \$2,600, are accepted.**

Fireworks permit waiver – On motion by Councilman Park, seconded by Councilman Jones and carried unanimously, **RESOLVED: that the Homer Winterfest Committee be granted a waiver from the \$50 fee for a fireworks permit to be given by the Town for their scheduled January 27th, 2017, display.**

Purchase of new roller – On motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Councilman Park and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Town of Homer share ownership of an Ingersoll Rand DD24 double drum asphalt roller from Tracey Road Equipment of East Syracuse (the purchase of which was approved at the November 2nd Town Board meeting) with the Town of Truxton, with Truxton to pay ½ the cost, or \$7,250, and ½ of the maintenance costs.**

Smart Watt street light program – Councilman Williams reported on his meeting with a representative from Smart Watt and the Village Mayor regarding retrofitting street lights with more energy efficient lamps that the town or village would then own. There was much discussion about whether this would benefit the Town, as there are only around 80 street lights in the Town. Supervisor Forbes had spoken with new assessor Brian Fitts about his concern that ownership of the lights could affect the National Grid assessment. More information is needed before the Board can make a decision about the program.

Bridge Committee – Highway Superintendent Phelps said that he would be calling a representative from the Army Corps of Engineers to inquire as to the possibility of getting help on the construction of a new bridge. Supervisor Forbes said that Julian Adams of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation would be visiting Homer before Christmas to look over the current bridge. Forbes said that they were also still looking into getting help from the IRT program offered by the military. He also suggested that the Pine Street Bridge be made one-way. Attorney Snyder asked that the Bridge Committee take into consideration the 100-year flood plan and the floodway.

Superintendent Phelps reported that he had received another quote for core drillings related to the bridge project. GeoLogic, a company based in Homer, had submitted a bid of \$1,500 which was the lowest bid received. After some discussion it was decided to wait until Mr. Adams and a representative from the engineering firm of Barton & Loguidice have looked over bridge situation before going ahead with the core drillings.

Court audit – Councilman Williams said that he and Councilman Jones would be conducting the annual audit of the court financial records by the end of the year.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

Superintendent Phelps reported on his department's activities over the past month. He said that they have been finishing up their preventive maintenance and getting prepared for the winter months. He said that he has purchased approximately 750 tons of stone to be used in 2017 for road repairs. His plans for major projects include Rice Hill Road, White Bridge Circle, a portion of Brake Hill Road, and Foster Road. Phelps also said that he has connected a roof drain on the north-west corner of the Town Hall to the storm sewer.

There was discussion about purchasing a new pickup truck prior to the end of the fiscal year. Supervisor Phelps said that he was looking into piggybacking off a bid from another county.

Phelps submitted three bids he had received on a small riding mower, with the low bid being for a Ferris SRSZ2 mower from CNY Farm Supply of Cortland for \$5,949.15. He also said that the Village was considering selling their Kobelco 120 track hoe for \$18,000. Phelps explained that the Town frequently borrows the track hoe and is interested in purchasing it.

On motion by Councilman Park, seconded by Councilman Williams and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Highway Superintendent Phelps is authorized to purchase a new Dodge diesel pickup truck as bid by another municipality, a new Ferris mower from CNY Farm Supply, and the Kobelco track hoe from the Village of Homer for a total amount not to exceed \$69,000.**

ATTORNEY FOR THE TOWN

Attorney Snyder reported on representing the Town in four different cases in Town Justice Court – two dog cases which were resolved, and two cases of code violations regarding junk. Those property owners have been given more time to clean up their properties.

Councilman Park thanked Attorney Snyder for sending him the floodplain maps and said that he will start looking into what needs to be done to have them revised.

COUNTY LEGISLATOR

County Legislator Linda Jones reported on the actions of the County Legislature over the past month including a reconsideration of the "Ash for Trash" proposal, the County's decision to take over the operation of the recycling center again, and the auction of surplus equipment which was quite successful.

Supervisor Forbes reported that the Village has received a grant for \$150,000 to purchase the former railroad freight station on James Street to renovate for new Village offices. The Village Board will be making a decision in the near future on whether to renovate the station or to move back into the Town Hall.

Forbes reminded Board members of the year-end meeting scheduled for noon on Friday, December 30th, to be followed by the annual Christmas party.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Anita W. Jebbett
Town Clerk