

The regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Homer held in the board room of the Town Hall building on Wednesday, February 8, 2017, was called to order by Deputy Supervisor Michael R. Park at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Michael R. Park, Deputy Supervisor
Larry R. Jones, 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

ABSENT

Frederick J. Forbes, Sr., Supervisor, due to illness

OTHERS PRESENT

Derek Green, Cortland County Environmental Health Department
Nichole Angeski, Cortland County Health Department
Linda Jones, Cortland County Legislator
Daniel Ellis, Program Manager, Thoma Development Consultants, arriving at 7:30 p.m.
Phil Connery, Rehabilitation Manager, Thoma Development Consultants, arriving at 7:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES

The minutes of the January 4th organizational meeting were approved as presented, on motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Jones and carried unanimously.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Presented for audit by the Board were:

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

BILLS TO BE PAID

General bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Councilman Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that General vouchers #6 through #34 totaling \$19,804.49 be approved for payment.**

Highway bills were approved as audited on motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that Highway vouchers #2 through #24 totaling \$56,283.14 be approved for payment.**

NEW BUSINESS

Budget modifications – The Board reviewed the proposed budget modifications for the end of fiscal year 2016. On motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Councilman Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the proposed budget transfers for the end of fiscal year 2016 are hereby adopted (attached).**

Transfer of bail money - On motion by Councilman Williams, seconded by Councilman Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that bail money in the amount of \$375 transferred to the Town General Fund by former Town Justice Gary Shiffer, and held as unclaimed for over six years, may now be accounted for as revenue in the General Fund.**

Workers' Compensation – Deputy Supervisor Park read a letter from the County regarding Workers' Compensation and reviewed an attached spread sheet. Councilman Williams noted that there had not been the large increase that had been anticipated. The invoice, in the amount of \$23,504, was included with the bills to be paid for February.

Radon presentation – Cortland County Health Department employees Derek Green and Nichole Angeski gave a presentation on the dangers of radon in Cortland County. The County is the #1 county in New York State for the naturally occurring radioactive gas. Green said that the more people that test their homes, the better data the Health Department will have to work with and to map problem areas. He handed out free radon test kits for interested Board members including one for the Town Hall. He said that the County Health Department has a list of reputable contractors who can provide radon mitigation systems for homes found to contain unacceptable levels of the gas.

Angeski works for the "Healthy Neighborhoods" program that provides free safety inspections for homes including testing for radon as well as providing smoke detectors for needy families and the elderly. They said that there is much information on radon available at the County Health Department.

OLD BUSINESS

Bridge Committee meeting – Deputy Supervisor Park reported on a recent meeting of the committee on repairing or replacing the Wall Street Bridge in the Village. It was attended by Michael Lynch from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation who informed them that the Wall Street Bridge is one of only three of that type of bridge, a lenticular truss bridge, in New York State, the others being the Pine Street Bridge and the Wall Street Bridge. Built prior to 1880, it is one of only 19 in the nation that remain.

Despite its historical value, New York State does not offer any funds for the repair of the bridge. Lynch suggested that if the Town chooses to replace the bridge with a new 20-ton structure designed to allow for fire trucks and other heavy vehicles, the old bridge should be placed in a park or other public area, instead of being scrapped. There was much discussion.

Attorney Snyder suggested that they look at the flood plain when considering replacing the bridge. While the current flood plain determination may not be correct, there still may be some concerns about future flooding. Park said that he would be contacting Dan Dineen, County Planning, and Philip Krey, County Highway Superintendent, as well as Amanda Barber, Cortland County Soil & Water, for their input.

Highway Superintendent Phelps said that an engineer from Barton & Loguidice had suggested that it may be more practical to replace the Pine Street Bridge. On Wall Street there are concerns about the location of the sewerage pump station, a substation and houses close to the road. Park agreed that there is much more homework to be done, but that due to the poor condition of the Wall Street Bridge, they must try to move as fast as possible on the matter.

As for the Hights Gulf Road Bridge, Superintendent Phelps said that new I-beams will need to be installed to bring it back to a 22 or 24-ton bridge within the next few years.

Community Development Block Grant – Dan Ellis and Phil Connery from Thoma Development Consultants were present to explain the Housing Rehabilitation Program and how the Town needs to proceed following its award of a \$400,000 Housing Rehabilitation Grant. They said that the grant will allow for 12 to 13 projects with about a \$25,000 cap on each project. Each project would involve the rehabilitation of an owner-occupied substandard one-family home in the Town. They explained that normally the program takes about two years to complete. Board members thanked them for attending the meeting and providing information about the grant program.

Attorney Snyder said that the first step the Town needs to make is to hire an administrator by going through an RFP process. On motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Councilman Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Request for Proposals for Grant Administration Services for CDBG Program Grant as written by Town Attorney Patrick Snyder is hereby approved, and that it is to be sent out for bids by February 15th, with proposals to be received by the Homer Town Clerk's Office by March 15th and with a special Town Board meeting to open those bids scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 22nd.**

Solar Law review – Deputy Supervisor Park suggested that they postpone any discussion of the proposed local law until the March meeting in hope that Supervisor Forbes will be able to attend. Park said that he would contact Planning Board member Mike McMahon who, along with Attorney Snyder, wrote the proposed law, and ask him to attend the March 8th meeting. Snyder suggested that after the March meeting the local law be sent for GML review and that a public hearing be scheduled for the April 5th board meeting.

SmartWatt street lighting program – Councilman Williams reported on a meeting with the Village regarding a program that offers more economical LED lights for the Town’s approximately 87 street lights. He said that the Town is hoping to piggyback on the Village’s program.

Village Office space – Williams said that he had been contacted by the Village Mayor to discuss the possible move of the Village Office back to the Town Hall. He said that he referred her to the Village liaisons, Councilmen Warren and Park. Park said that he would be talking with her regarding a meeting soon.

MEGA – On motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilman Williams and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Town of Homer has decided not to participate in the MEGA (Municipal Electric & Gas Alliance) Community Choice Program.**

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

Highway Superintendent Phelps said that he has had to purchase more salt. Due to the nature of the winter weather he has already used more of his material than expected. He will be writing up a list of projects and their proposed costs for their summer highway work in the near future and submitting it to the Town Board and the County. He stated that he is very happy with his current work crew and that both of his seasonal employees may also be able to work during the summer months. There was discussion about recently purchased equipment including a new diesel pickup truck, some steel plating and a mini-paving machine.

ATTORNEY FOR THE TOWN

Attorney Pat Snyder reported that one junk case remains in Town Court. The other case was dismissed by the Town Justice when it was reported that the junk cars were moved out of the Town of Homer.

He said that he has been looking into the flood plain situation. The current floodplain study, which was completed in 2010 shows a large area along the river to be not only in the 100 year floodplain, but also in the floodway. No development is allowed to occur in a floodway if it could affect flood water levels. As it is mapped now, a large part to the business district east of Main Street is in the floodplain. The Central New York Living History Museum and the County Highway department facility are also in the floodplain. It would seem that this issue should be studied by a hydraulic engineer to determine if the mapping is correct. If the map could be revised to remove properties erroneously mapped as being in the floodplain it could save the property owners from the need to pay for costly flood insurance. It would also be desirable to know if there is some method such as constructing a small levy that could protect private properties, the museum, and the highway facility.

COUNTY LEGISLATOR

County Legislator Linda Jones reported on activities at the County level over the past month, including an increase of the County Landfill’s tipping fees from \$60 per ton to \$65 per ton.

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

Anita W. Jebbett
Town Clerk