

A special meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Homer to discuss options for providing the Village of Homer with office space in the Town Hall building was called to order at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 3, 2017, in the board room of the Town Hall by Supervisor Frederick J. Forbes, Sr.

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  
Anita W. Jebbett, Town Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT

Martin Sweeney, Town/ Village Historian  
Hal McCabe, Mayor, Village of Homer  
Patrick Clune, Trustee, Village of Homer  
Kevin Slack, Trustee, Village of Homer  
Randy Crawford, Architect, Crawford & Stearns  
Rich Couch, Village Clerk-Treasurer  
Kristin Case, Deputy Village Clerk  
Harry & Mary Alice Bellardini, Village residents  
Donald Ferris, reporter, The Homer News  
Nick Graziano, reporter, Cortland Standard

Supervisor Forbes gave some background of the Village's decision to move their offices back into the Town Hall after moving out of the building in 2010. He said that he would like to have an open discussion of ideas for renovating the current office space layout to provide enough room for the Town offices, the Village offices and the combined Assessors' offices.

Martin Sweeney, Town Historian and newly-appointed Village Historian, said that he is flexible as to an office space, but would like to remain in the Town Hall. He also spoke about retaining the graffiti on the stage and some of the character of the space should it be renovated.

Clerk Jebbett reminded those at the meeting that the Assessor's office is now a combined office for the Towns of Homer and Virgil and the City of Cortland. Assessor Larry Fitts also rents an office for his local towns. More office space is necessary for the Assessor than in the past when only the Homer office was located in the building.

Village Trustees Clune and Slack both expressed their concerns about handicapped accessibility. Supervisor Forbes agreed that the Town needs to add an electronic door opener to the rear entrance of the building and possibly other doors within the building for proper access. The Town Board also agreed that a few more handicapped parking spots would need to be designated.

Clune cited adequate storage as another need of the Village. Forbes said that the current records storage room has been taken over by the Town Justice, and that the former court records storage room is now used by the Town Clerk. He suggested that a records storage room could be built on the stage. Trustee Slack insisted that the Village offices not be located on the stage.

Mayor McCabe suggested that the Village would like to have a room set aside as a common break room/kitchen area.

Councilman Warren reviewed his proposal for utilizing the current board room and a portion of the break room for the Assessor's office. He said that he was hoping that a new office space could be created at a minimal cost. The Town and Village would need to hold their meetings in the Senior Center and extra storage could be built on the stage. He said that he would like to stick with his plan, both cost-wise and time-wise, since the updates could be made within a few weeks' time.

Architect Randy Crawford discussed various options that the Town and Village will need to consider. He suggested that a center hallway may be required for proper public access to all the offices, and the bathrooms may need to be relocated and/or updated.

Supervisor Forbes suggested raising the ceilings, creating a center hallway, and preserving the curvature of the stage in any major renovation of the space. There was much discussion about various options for using the space available.

Councilman Park was concerned that the renovation could take years rather than weeks or months. There was discussion about the Village re-locating prior to the renovations taking place. Architect Crawford said that there could be quite a bit of disruption during the renovation process. Crawford said that he could prepare conceptual layouts for the Board to consider within two weeks.

There was discussion about the funding of any renovations. In response to questions from Harry Bellardini, Mayor McCabe said that the Village would not be able to utilize its grant from State Senator James Seward or its Building Reserve towards the project. There was discussion of the possibility of the Town applying for a grant for consolidation of the offices.

The Village representatives said that they were considering how best to use the current office space on South Main Street and would be making a decision on that in the near future. Mayor McCabe agreed to consider a suggestion by Supervisor Forbes that the Town and Village co-own the Town Hall.

Mary Alice Bellardini, former Village Mayor, thanked both boards and said that despite the long wait, she was very pleased that the offices would again be located in the same building and expressed confidence that all would be worked out to a favorable conclusion.

Supervisor Forbes said that no decisions would be made at this time. He said that he would again schedule a special meeting when the proposals being prepared by Crawford & Stearns are received.

The special meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Anita W. Jebbett  
Town Clerk