

The regular meeting of the Town of Homer Board held on Wednesday, November 2, 2022, in the Town Hall Senior Center, was called to order by Supervisor Frederick J. Forbes Sr. at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Frederick J. Forbes, Sr., Supervisor
Michael R. Park, Deputy Supervisor
Barry E. Warren, Councilmember
Kevin M. Williams, Councilmember
Patrick M. Snyder, Attorney for the Town
Heather M. Hill, Town Clerk
Brooke L. Poli, Deputy Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT

Tim Malchak, Town of Homer Resident
Patrick Clune, Homer Village Trustee
Donald Ferris, The Homer News
Jon Conlon, Cortland Standard
Tim Benett, Cortland Voice
Martin Sweeney, Homer Town & Village Historian
Kelly Preston, Cortland County Legislator
Kevin Fitch, Cortland County Legislator
Cathy Bischoff, Cortland County Legislator
Victor Siegle, Homer Village Resident

PLEDGE

CORTLAND COUNTY LEGISLATORS REDISTRICTING UPDATE

The co-chairs of the redistricting committee members Legislator Kelly Preston and Legislator Cathy Bischoff stated they are visiting all of Cortland County municipalities and requesting their input, ideas, and suggestions for the redistricting map mandatory by New York State Law. They discussed the various districts and how they are divided, including the number of legislators needed based on a five percent population range.

After much discussion and completing their presentation, they informed the board that the tentative proposed map must be completed by January 24, 2023. The Homer Town Board thanked both legislators for all their work and efficiency and for updating them on their progress.

MINUTES

On motion by Deputy Supervisor Park, seconded by Councilmember Jones and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: The minutes of the October 5, 2022, regular meeting and the October 13, 2022, special meeting, were approved as presented.**

MONTHLY REPORTS

Presented for audit by the Town Board were:

1. The Town Clerk's report of all receipts and disbursements for October 2022.
2. The Supervisor's reports of all financial activities through October 2022.
3. The Code Enforcement Officer's report of all building permits issued for October

BILLS TO BE PAID

General bills were approved as audited by Deputy Supervisor Park, motioned by Deputy Supervisor Park, seconded by Councilmember Jones, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: That General Fund vouchers #208 through #227 totaling \$22,460.55 are approved for payment.**

Highway bills were approved as audited by Councilmember Warren, motioned by Councilmember Warren, seconded by Councilmember Williams, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: That Highway Fund vouchers #155 through #175 totaling \$48,891.72 are approved for payment.**

TOWN HISTORIAN

Martin Sweeney presented his six-page 2022 Town Historian's Annual Report (**attached**) in which he outlined his various activities over the past year. Mr. Sweeney read some of the highlights from his report. A letter dated October 27, 2021, he received a request via email from Samantha Menning, a civil engineer for Hunt Architects. She asked for the dates of construction of all schools in the Homer Central School District and subsequent upgrades.

Historian informed the Town Board that he continues to write his column in the Homer News and published his book called *The Heart of Central New York; Stories of Historic Homer, NY*. His book was released in early August and signed copies can be purchased locally at Bev & Company in Homer.

Historian Sweeney showed the map of Cortland County by David H. Barr dated January 5, 1829, that Town Attorney Patrick Snyder donated to the town from his extensive map collection on August 30th. Mr. Sweeney stated that he hung the map on his office wall the very same day. Mr. Sweeney and the board thanked Attorney Snyder for his generous donation.

The Homer Town Board thanked Mr. Sweeney for all he does for the town and for preserving Homer's history by documenting it for future generations to come.

On motioned by Deputy Supervisor Park, seconded by Councilmember Williams, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: to receive Mr. Martin Sweeney's historian annual report and file.**

TOWN HALL SERVER UPDATE

Deputy Supervisor Park updated the Town Board that Computer Outlet North, Incorporated came to the Town Hall this past week and discussed what the clerks utilize in the office. The technician will compose a proposal for the installation of a Town Hall server.

SATURDAY CLERK HOURS UPDATE

Town Clerk Hill gave the final report of the August, September, and October Saturday hours. She informed the board that she sold seventeen DEC hunting licenses, two handicap accessible passes, and completed one wedding correction. Hill stated that even though the office was not busy, she was able to get ahead on daily office tasks. Supervisor Forbes stated it is not what he anticipated even with the advertising in the Cortland Standard, the Homer News, and on the radio.

LETTER FROM IDA

Supervisor Forbes stated that he received a letter from the IDA last month stating they may bring their motion back in attempt to rescind it. They did rescind motion to take back the negotiations of the solar projects, specifically EDF. Supervisor Forbes stated that Supervisor Tom Williams of Cortlandville, recommended having two representatives from each town (Solon, Cortlandville, and Homer) meet to discuss where to go from here.

Victor Siegle submitted his essay of 18 reasons to reject EDF's PILOT property tax proposal and discussed his letter with the Homer Town Board. The board thanked Mr. Siegle for all his time and research he has done.

SEASONAL ROAD DESIGNATION

On motion by Councilman Warren, seconded by Deputy Supervisor Park and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: Listed in the Cortland Standard:**

Highway Superintendent John R. Phelps has designated certain portions of Town highways as seasonal limited use highways and is hereby authorized by the Homer Town Board to temporarily discontinue snow and ice removal and maintenance on those Town highways from December 1st, 2022, to April 1st, 2023, as follows:

Foster Road	.50 miles
Burhans Road	.50 miles
Wolf Road	.25 miles
Grange Road	.75 mile from Rice Road to Brake Hill Road
Brake Hill Road	.50 miles
Rice Road	.50 miles
Carroway Hill Rd	.25 miles
McDonald Road	.25 miles
Sessions Hill Rd	2.50 miles
Vern King Road	1.25 miles from house #5937 to Sessions Hill Road
Maxson Road	1.70 miles from Sessions Hill
Forbes Road	.87 miles
Chapman Road	.75 miles
Searls Road	.50 miles
Dillon Road	.25 miles

ANNUAL ASSOCIATION OF TOWN'S MEETING

Supervisor Forbes asked if any of the board members would be interested in attending the Annual Association of Town's meeting held in New York City on February 19th of next year. There were no board members available to attend.

2023 TOWN BUDGET

On motion by Supervisor Forbes seconded by Deputy Supervisor Park and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: To move his 19th prepared budget forward with a village rate of a \$1.34, a fire protection rate of \$.99, bringing the total town tax rate to \$2.33 for town residents outside the village.**

UPDATE ON TOWN HALL CARPET & COURT BATHROOM FLOOR

Councilmember Warren stated he has not heard back from the Binghamton store and will follow up to see if they were still interested in submitting a quote. Warren stated that they did receive a quote from Osborne Flooring and will bring any updates to the December meeting.

ETHICS LAW & ETHICS BOARD MEMBERS

Supervisor Forbes stated that the Town Board had Attorney Snyder rewrite the Ethics Law last month, as it has not been updated since 1970. Attorney Snyder stated he drafted a new proposed local law based on ethics and the model local law posted on the New York State Comptroller's

website. He stated he added one section based on land use decisions which seems to be a pending issue. That section came from a model produced by the NYS Bar Association. He would like to have the town board review the draft and let him know if any changes they would like to have made to it.

Supervisor Forbes stated that he would like the board to review the draft Attorney Snyder composed and they would revisit the draft and hear their feedback at the next board meeting with a possible vote.

Forbes also stated that the town board should consider reappointing members for an Ethics Board, as some current members have moved out of the town. Snyder stated after some research he learned that to request an opinion from the Board of Ethics, it would need to come from a town official or a town employee. He also stated a Board of Ethics Committee could ask the County Board of Ethics for their input or opinion if there was a conflict of interest or if they cannot come to a decision.

After much discussion, Forbes stated that he wants the public to know that the town board has done everything in their power to prepare the town for any legal challenge. Attorney Snyder stated his opinion that the town would be better served updating a law that is fifty-two years old and having an updated Board of Ethics Policy.

BILLBOARDS/DRONE COMPANY

Attorney Snyder stated he reviewed the Environmental Assessment Forms for the billboard project and made a few minor corrections. Attorney Snyder updated the board on how an Environmental Review is conducted. The next step in this process is the town board needs to look over part two and answer the questions. He also stated that the question the board needs to consider is does it have any minor or major impacts on the environment. If the board finds there is a major impact, then the next step would be to complete an Environment Impact Statement. If the board finds there is minor impact, then the board would have to make a negative declaration prior to adopting zoning amendments that would allow billboards.

Supervisor Forbes said he would like to give the board time to review and complete part two and discuss at next month's board meeting. Snyder also reiterated that it is up to the Town Board's discretion if the town wants to allow a limited number of signs or whether the town should amend the zoning law.

Supervisor Forbes proposed having a drone view of the areas being considered for the billboard signs. He stated Emmanuel Pothos provided a street view through his company of how the signs could potentially look from Route 81. Forbes stated it might be to the towns advantage to have a drone view for the board to examine to get different visuals from various viewpoints.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

Not present.

ATTORNEY FOR THE TOWN

Nothing further.

LEGISLATOR

Legislator Kelly Preston handed out a Distribution sheet Kevin Fitch compiled of the sales tax the county distributed to the local municipalities for years 2017 through 2022. Legislator Preston stated that what the county budgeted for 2022 has gone up 3.8%. She also stated that the county approved to abolish the County Treasurer's position. The county currently has a well-established budget finance department.

She informed the town board that they took \$100,00.00 out of unappropriated fund balance and put towards expanded youth behavior health in Cortland County Schools. The county has been told through family counseling that young children as young as six years of age are threatening to commit suicide. Legislator Preston stated that this investment is just a start towards helping children's mental health in the future.

There was a public hearing for the Ag and Planning Committee recommended the local law and solar pilot agreement directing the Cortland County IDA to negotiate the pilot agreement on behalf of Cortland County.

VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION

Supervisor Forbes informed the town board that he had received an email invitation from Chief Pitman regarding a Veterans Day celebration held on Saturday, November 12th around 10 AM at Durkee Park. Forbes wanted to extend the invitation to the board so he could let Chief Pitman know if anyone could attend.

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Heather M. Hill
Town Clerk