

The regular meeting of the Town of Homer Board held on Wednesday, February 8, 2023, in the Town Hall Board Room, was called to order by Supervisor Frederick J. Forbes Sr. at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Frederick J. Forbes, Sr., Supervisor
Michael R. Park, Deputy Supervisor
Larry Jones, Councilmember
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

Patrick Clune, Homer Village Trustee
Donald Ferris, The Homer News
Emmanuel Pothos, Cortlandville Resident
Tim Malchak, Town of Homer Resident
Kelly Preston, Cortland County Legislator
Amy Bertini, Redistricting Advisor Committee
Steve Major, Preble Resident
Tim Bennett, Cortland Voice
Margaret Mellot, Cortland Standard
J Anderson

PLEDGE

MINUTES

On motion by Deputy Supervisor Park, seconded by Councilman Jones, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: The minutes of the January 4, 2023, for the 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 January 2023.
2. The Supervisor's reports of all financial activities through January 2023.
3. The Code Enforcement Officer's report of all building permits issued for January 2023.
4. The completed Bridge New York application.
5. Town Clerk's 2022 Annual Report.

BILLS TO BE PAID

General bills were approved as audited by Councilmember Warren, motioned by Councilmember Warren, seconded by Deputy Supervisor Park, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: That General Fund vouchers #291 through #312 totaling \$17,376.19 are approved for payment.**

Highway bills were approved as audited by Councilmember Jones, motioned by Councilmember Jones, seconded by Councilmember Warren, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: That Highway Fund vouchers #217 through #235 totaling \$63,774.75 are approved for payment.**

CODE OF ETHICS

Supervisor Forbes stated that the Town Board had received an email from Attorney Snyder concerning the updated changes he made to the proposed local ethics law. Attorney Snyder recommended the Town Board discuss these changes and hold another public hearing next month. Councilmember Williams stated that he does not agree with the timing the Town Board has chosen to update the law. After much discussion, and no other concerns, Attorney Snyder said he would work on the revisions of the local law as proposed by Mr. Williams. The proposed local law must be on the legislator's desk in final form for seven days before the public hearing in March.

LANDFILL LETTER

Supervisor Forbes reviewed with the Town Board the county letter concerning the commercial licensed haulers traffic use on landfill roads. They discussed whether they had a policy in place and decided to table the decision until they did further research. Supervisor Forbes stated he would look to see if he could locate the policy and get back to the Town Board.

NATIONAL GRID BID

Supervisor Forbes discussed with the Town Board on whether they would like to consider converting the Town of Homer's 45 streetlights to LED luminaires through the National Grid's Outdoor Lighting LED Conversion Program. The total cost to convert these 45 lights is \$1,982.08. This program offers an opportunity to improve the lighting quality and energy cost savings by converting the town's streetlights.

Forbes stated that he responded to the letter from National Grid offering discounts and incentives. One of the incentives offered is in the amount of \$2,395.00 which would come back to the town and cover the expenses.

On motion by Councilmember Warren, seconded by Deputy Supervisor Park, Supervisor Forbes aye, Larry Jones aye, and Kevin Williams nay and carried: **RESOLVED: To send a Letter of Authorization to Share Information to Regional Account Services- Central New York with Supervisor Forbes signature.**

COURT AUDIT REMINDER

Supervisor Forbes reminded the Town Board that there is still a need to complete the court audit of the court and judge's records.

LETTER FROM MERCY HOUSE

Supervisor Forbes wanted to inform the Town Board that they had received a thank you letter and receipt for the donation the Town of Homer contributed to Mercy House in memory of Historian Martin Sweeney's beloved wife.

MUTUAL SHARING PLAN AGREEMENT

Forbes stated Attorney Snyder look over the Mutual Sharing Plan Agreement between the Town of Homer and the Village of Homer. All appropriate parties on the Village side have signed the agreement and Forbes stated he needed the Town Board's feedback and approval. After much discussion, the Town Board decided to have the Village compose a document with the stipulation of having the Village DPW Superintendent and the Town Highway Superintendent verifying their collective work and hours.

On motion Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Councilmember Warren and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: That Supervisor Forbes sign the Mutual Sharing Plan Agreement between the Town of Homer and the Village of Homer.**

SENIOR CENTER TAX EXEMPT- 2ND NOTICE STATE REQUIERMENT

Supervisor Forbes stated that in January the Governor signed a law requiring a second notice to be sent to all property owners with listed exemptions. Although the exemptions are listed on the back of the town and county tax bills, there is now a requirement for a second notice.

The county took responsibility for sending the second notices this year to residents since there was a time frame that needed to be met. The cost of mailing the notices this year will be added to a separate line on the town and county taxes next year. Legislator Preston informed the Town Board that she would look into whether or not the cost of sending the notices would fall on the town and let Supervisor Forbes know the outcome of her findings.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN (CAP)

Supervisor Forbes read aloud the final Corrective Action Plan letter in response to the Office of the State Comptroller's audit concerning a conflict of interest that the state found with one of the Town Board members, whose business does work on the town's snow plows and boxes.

Supervisor Forbes stated that the State Comptroller's Office gave Deputy Supervisor Park two options. The first being to resign his position on the Town Board and the second option was to remain on the Town Board, and not receive compensation for his service.

Deputy Supervisor Park decided to remain on the Town Board and donate his yearly salary \$2,460.00 back to the town, which would allow the Town of Homer to do up to \$5,000.00 yearly business with Homer Iron Works.

The Town Board voiced their disagreement with Deputy Supervisor Park's decision but respected his position and thanked him for continuing to serve on the Town Board.

On motion Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Councilmember Williams, Councilmember Jones aye, Councilmember Warren aye, Deputy Supervisor Park abstained: **RESOLVED: to approve and send the Corrective Action Plan letter in response to the Office of the State Comptroller's audit.**

TOWN HALL CARPET UPDATE

Councilmember Warren updated the Town Board that they attempted to obtain bids from four different companies and only had two bids submitted to replace the carpet for the front entrance and the linoleum in the court hallway bathroom. The two bids were received from B & B Floor Coverings and Osborne Flooring. Osborne Flooring submitted the lowest quote in amount of \$3,917.40 and they are trying to schedule the work to be completed over President's Day, as the Town Hall will be closed.

On motion by Councilmember Warren, seconded by Councilmember Jones, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: to accept the lowest qualifying bid of \$3,917.40 submitted by Osborne Flooring to replace the carpet in the front entrance of the Town Hall and replace the linoleum in the Town Court hallway bathroom.**

TAX COLLECTION 2023 EXTENTION& TAX COLLECTION UPDATE

On motion by Councilmember Warren, seconded by Councilmember Williams, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: that the Town Board requests that the County Treasurer's Office grant an extension of time until May 31, 2023, for the collection of the Town/County taxes by the Homer Town Tax Collector.**

Town Clerk Hill informed the Town Board the clerk's office has collected 82.52 percent of the town and county taxes so far and the new software program is working very well.

BRIDGE NY APPLICATION TO STATE

Supervisor Forbes stated the Bridge Application, which was available for review, was filed on January 20, 2023, and thanked Paul Sweeney, Village Trustee Pat Clune, and the rest of the Bridge Committee for all their hard work.

HSA & HEALTH INSURANCE TO BE ADDED TO AUDIT

The clerks requested that the employee Health Insurance and HSA prepay payments and transfers are added to the monthly audit by the Town Board.

CONSORTIUM FOOD PANTRY DONATION BOX

Town Clerk Hill informed the Town Board that Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance is promoting National Nutrition Month. The consortium is hosting a food drive to promote getting active in your community and all donations will be delivered to local food pantries to support the communities where members reside. The Town Hall is joining collecting donations to participate in food drive.

SENIOR CENTER & POLICE PLANS

Supervisor Forbes reviewed and distributed the final proposed plans for the Senior Center and Police Department before they go out for bid. Supervisor Forbes stated that if the Town Board agrees with the final proposed plans, he would notify Randy Crawford.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE

Supervisor Forbes stated that the Town of Homer's Comprehensive Plan has not been updated in approximately ten years. Forbes would like to establish a committee and gather names for possible candidates. After much discussion, the Town Board decided to compile names of possible candidates for a Comprehensive Plan Committee and bring them forward at the next meeting.

ATTORNEY FOR THE TOWN

Attorney Snyder updated the Town Board that he went to court for a two dog cases, and one was resolved quickly and the other one has been prolonged.

LEGISLATOR

Legislator Kelly Preston informed the Town Board that the county has filled two positions. They hired Dr. Pearl Reed Klein as the new Office of the Aging, and Melanie Vilardi, as a new Deputy County Administrator. The County is still seeking to fill the position of a new Director of Planning and possibly making some adjustments to the position.

Legislator Preston stated that they are making renovations to 22 West Court Street, which is funded by a grant and will be their future 911 center. The state mandated program called Code Blue, requires when temperatures are freezing, the county needs to provide an available shelter. This requirement is located the Salvation Army and the county has added grant funding and additional security.

Federal covid extra SNAP funds will be terminated by the end of this month and therefore there will be a need for food consortium donations in our communities.

Currently Legislator Preston said the state owes Cortland County 2 million dollars through Medicaid assistance. In the proposed NYS budget, New York State is proposing to keep all of NYS assistance which would cost the county \$700,000.00. The county has a proposed resolution that will be sent to the state and federal leaders fighting this cost and NYSEG is going to assist them.

They are currently working on redesigning the City Court in the Court House. The total renovation will be fully reimbursed and are in hopes to be moved to the Cortland City County Office building.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

Superintendent John Phelps informed the Town Board that he found a Dodge diesel truck with a plow to replace the current town truck for \$73,592.37. He also stated they are waiting for the new box to be completed for the new plow truck and the old truck will then go to auction. He stated that at the highway garage they have completed some rewiring and have updated lights.

On motion Deputy Supervisor Park, seconded by Councilmember Warren, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: to purchase the Dodge truck with a plow totaling \$73,592.37 and to send the old truck to auction.**

PLANNING & ZONING BOARD TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Supervisor Forbes stated they discussed paying Planning and Zoning Board members for their educational training requirements at the last town board meeting. After much discussion, the Town Board decided to table the decision until next meeting.

OTHER

Supervisor Forbes stated that he was notified that EDF filed their permit with the state and the county has an electronic copy of the permit. Attorney Snyder reiterated that they have only received the correspondence at this time.

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Heather M. Hill
Town Clerk