

The regular meeting of the Town of Homer Board held on Wednesday, November 8, 2023, in the Senior Center, was called to order by Supervisor Forbes at 6:03 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**

Todd R. McAdam, Cortland Standard  
Martin Sweeney, Town Historian  
Jack Eves, X101 News  
Jeff Higgins, Syracuse Astronomical Society  
John Rush, Syracuse Astronomical Society  
Sarah Head, Homer Resident  
Caleb Leach, Homer Resident  
Tim Malchak, Homer Resident  
Cathy Lawrence, Homer Resident  
Gary Lawrence, Homer Resident  
Stephanie & Charlie Spina, Village Resident  
Amy Dahlman, Homer Resident  
Sylvia Hammond, Homer Resident  
Linda Jones, Homer Resident  
Ree & Shawn Cute, Homer Resident  
Miles Dudgeon, Homer Resident  
Maria Arnold, Village Resident  
Charles Bennett, Homer Resident  
Amy Bertini, Preble Resident  
Victor Siegle, Homer Resident

### **ABSENT**

John R. Phelps, Highway Superintendent

### **PLEDGE**

### **MINUTES**

On motion by Deputy Supervisor Park, seconded by Councilman Jones, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: The Regular Meeting minutes of the October 4, 2023, 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 2023.
2. The Supervisor's reports of all financial activities for September 2023.
3. The Code Enforcement Officer's report on all building permits issued for October 2023.
4. The Dog Control Officer's report for September and October 2023.

On motion by Deputy Supervisor Park, seconded by Councilmember Jones, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: The Supervisor's monthly report for September, the Town Clerk's monthly report for October, and the Code Enforcement Officer's Monthly report for October, and the Dog Control Officer's report for September and October are received, accepted, and filed.**

### **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 #500 through #525 totaling \$13,469.48 are approved for payment.**

Highway bills were approved as audited by Councilmember Williams, motioned by Councilmember Jones, seconded by Councilmember Warren, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: That Highway Fund vouchers #367 through #392, with the omission of payment of vouchers # 377, #381, #387, #391, #392, are approved for payment totaling \$34,227.12.**

The remaining highway vouchers were approved as audited by Councilmember Williams, motioned by Councilmember Williams, seconded by Councilmember Warren, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: The Highway Fund remaining vouchers # 377, #381, #387, #391, #392, totaling \$4,302.70, which would give the highway bills a final total of \$38,529.82 are approved for payment once the Highway Superintendent signs the remaining vouchers.**

### **BILLBOARD DISCUSSION**

Supervisor Forbes gave the floor to Councilmember Williams. Councilmember Williams stated he is still working on his proposed law of an I-81 Billboard Overlay District and has not completed it yet. He contacted a consultant and is working on two issues and would like to continue working on it. He stated he would not like to submit the draft until it is completed and would like to continue working on it until March of next year.

Councilmember Jones stated that this has been an ongoing, dragged-out process and the taxpayers and voters have not had a chance to voice their opinions. Deputy Supervisor Park stated there will be time to hear from the public and the Town Board has committed to moving forward in gathering the information the town needs. He said it will still take several months as there are still steps in the process that need to be completed before any decision can be concluded.

Supervisor Forbes said there have been emails received by the public and emailed to all town board members for their review. Supervisor Forbes stated he would like to make a public statement. On August 20<sup>th</sup>, he made his position concerning the billboards clear and he had stated he was not in favor of four large billboards but could be in favor of two smaller billboards: one going north and the other going south on I-81. He also stated that in prior months, he changed his position with the information he had had at the time.

Supervisor Forbes said he will not be here in the new year and realizes this discussion will continue. He stated if he were still here, he would steer this in a different direction and create a new zone called an interstate zone. This new zone would allow the option of signs up to a maximum size of 150 square feet to the property owners in the industrial zoned areas, which were zoned industrial in 1958.

By creating an interstate zone, it would allow those five properties to meet the state requirements and regulations which would allow signs larger than 150 square feet. The signs would be visible from I-81 from their properties. In Forbes' research he believes this would increase the value of the property for each owner and would also benefit the Town of Homer and the Town of Cortland.

Supervisor Forbes reiterated he will not be here January 1<sup>st</sup> and does not dictate how the new Town Board will proceed. He simply wanted to state his position has changed during this process.

He used the motorcycle shop located in Little York as an example that would give K&H the ability to put up a 150 square foot sign, visible from I-81, to advertise their property. There is nothing in that example or position concerning billboards, which is Supervisor Forbes' position at this point. The next Town Board is positioned to discuss this further and will take time. Forbes said they will either proceed with it or they will not.

Councilmember Jones stated he will not be here in January and stated if he were here, he would vote not to allow billboards in the Town of Homer.

## **TOWN HISTORIAN REPORT**

Historian Martin Sweeney distributed a copy of his Local Municipal Historian's Annual Report with the Town Board and delivered his report to the Town Board. Historian Sweeney stated it has been an extremely busy year and Supervisor Forbes and the Town Board thanked him for his work.

On motion by Deputy Supervisor Park, seconded by Councilman Jones, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: To receive and file Historian Martin Sweeney's annual historian's report.**

Please find the copy of Historian Sweeney's delivered report below:

### **Local Municipal Historian's Annual Report**

This report covers the time from November 1, 2022, to October 31, 2023

Date Report was Prepared: November 1, 2023

Name of Municipality: Town and Village of Homer, NY

Historian's Name: Martin A. Sweeney

Date Appointed Historian: April 2008 for the Town and April 4, 2017, for the Village

Address: Town Hall, 31 N. Main Street, Homer, NY 13077

Phone (cell): 607 745-4171

Email: mapsweeney@hotmail.com OR [Historian@homerny.org](mailto:Historian@homerny.org)

Websites: Town of Homer = <http://www.townofhomer.org/> Village of Homer = <http://www.homerny.org/>

Office Hours: By appointment

Compensation: Stipends provided to this municipal employee

**Administrative Tasks** – I continue to file local news clippings and issues of *The Homer News*. I continue to receive artifacts and ephemera from citizens for me to determine their fates. In March, the Mayor requested information on the history of the Homer Fire Department for its Sesquicentennial celebration. I sent via email an article I had written on said history and articles on three school fires confronted by Homer firefighters on Homer's Green. In early Nov. 2022, I was asked by the Town Clerk for input on how to handle the possible scanning of oversized books containing birth and death records since 1910. On April 12, I received a request from Police Chief Pitman regarding the origin date for the Homer Police Department. I responded with the information. I continue to do research on local history, primarily for my news column.

**Number of Office Visits** (estimated): Nine appointments.

Two parties wanted a personalized autograph of two of my books.

On Jan. 20, Charles Spina introduced the new owner of Watts Barber's house on Clinton Street, Mr. Ron Musson. The three of us chatted about local history and activities afoot in the community. Ron is very interested in Homer's history. I let him borrow a copy of Howe's biography of Jedediah Barber, which he returned in September. I then lent him Howe's book about Paris Barber.

On July 6, met with Eve Holberg of Joy Kuebler, the landscape architecture firm working on the DRI Project. We discussed the bronze tribute to Homer's connections to Lincoln as a possible DRI Project to be submitted by August 1<sup>st</sup>. She encouraged me to move forward as soon as possible. On July 10, I handed the 14-page Project Form on behalf of the Village directly to the Village Clerk in person. I have dealt since with various hurdles in shepherding the project.

On July 26, met with historian Richard Palmer to go over Homer's files on early roads and stagecoach taverns in Homer for information he could use for a book he intends to write.

On July 26, received assistance from David Quinlan in safely removing two pastel portraits on temporary loan from the wall to the right of the stage in the Town Hall and putting in their place the 1849 Carpenter portrait of Esther Matilda Tallman.

On August 3, met with Mr. and Mrs. William Thomas who wanted to chat with me about local history and relatives who once lived on North Main in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

On August 16, met with Preble's historian "Jay" Currie at my office to share materials on Little York, NY, I had acquired. The border of the two towns cuts across Little York Lake.

On Sept. 28, had two separate appointments at my office: Kathy Beardsley sought assistance with two projects coming up in October, and Richard Palmer returned items he borrowed for research and wanted to talk about Sig Sautelle and to donate material he had found on early roads and taverns in the county.

**Number of Phone/Email Inquiries Received/Answered** (estimated): 21

Twelve examples to show the range of inquiries made of my office:

On November 28, received and answered an email request from Joseph Zech for the history of and any images of 51 N. Main Street, a home that was originally a schoolhouse in the early 1800s.

On Feb. 27, received email from a professor working on the history of Charles Wallace Hunt (born in Candor, NY, on October 13, 1841, died March 27, 1911, at Richmond County in Staten Island, New York). Hunt was a prolific generator of patents in mechanical engineering. He wanted to know if Hunt attended Cortland Academy until 1861 before going into government service during the Civil War. With Russ Darr's quick help, we had the answer six hours later. Hunt only attended the Academy one academic year, 1860-61.

On March 13, received via email from McGraw's historian, Mary Kimberly, a photocopy and transcription of the 1805 deed of land now called the Green to the First Religious Society of the Town of Homer. Mary's late husband Carl is a descendant of one of the two men who deeded the land in lot 45 of the Military Tract.

On March 16, received and responded to an emailed survey from the Division for Historic Preservation of the New York State Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation. The survey was trying to ascertain the level of need for funding to maintain and preserve cemeteries across the state.

On April 13, received a phone call from Carla L. Canada, the woman who cared for Mr. Thomas Winter of CA until his recent passing at age 93. (See letter from him cited in the Historian's Report for 2022.) She informed me that the gentleman wanted the Carpenter portrait of Tallman donated to Homer. His kin had no interest in the artwork. I said the Town would gratefully accept this painting as a donation and would pay for the cost of shipping and handling. I composed a Memo of Understanding and emailed it to her the next day. I heard nothing further until her phone call on June 14, 2023, from the UPS Store in Loma Linda, CA. I paid for the portrait to be shipped to my residence and paid for the packaging and shipping cost (to be refunded by the Town). The portrait now hangs over the stage in the Town Hall with an explanatory plaque, thus adding to the overall number of Carpenter portraits within the Village of Homer. The painting has survived through the years with only minimal damage to its original frame.

From time to time, the *Cortland Standard* has asked for information for articles they wished to run.

On May 9, received a phone call from Sophie Clough of the Cortland County Historical Society seeking advice on repairing historic markers in the City and County of Cortland.

On May 9, received an emailed question about where the Homer Drive-In was located. I answered immediately.

On July 12, received email request from another historian seeking information on two early Homer milk plants for an article he is writing for the Homer newspaper and a historical journal.

Have received several requests from parties seeking the history of properties being considered as Downtown Revitalization Initiative projects. I was informed that the Brockway Carriage Works building on S. Main was deemed to be unsalvageable and will likely be razed.

On September 25, in response to an emailed request from David Quinlan, I faxed the New York City Art Commission to inquire if there was an interest in Homer being able to acquire the Carpenter portrait of famous preacher Thomas DeWitt Talmage that has been squirreled away from public view in the Brooklyn Borough Hall. No response yet, and I doubt there will be. I believe public art should be displayed in public.

On September 28, received via email a copy of letter from Dan McNeil's business giving approval for the "Tribute in Bronze" to be sited on his properties at No. 11 and No. 9 N. Main since the sculptor is amenable to scaling down the original concept. McNeil's architects have since nixed the site.

**Number of Municipal Meetings Attended** (Town/Village Board, County Legislature, Zoning, Planning, Work Sessions, etc.): Seven

On November 2, 2022, I presented my annual report to the Town Board. The report was then presented on December 20, before a meeting of the Village Board.

On Jan. 31, attended a combined meeting of the Village Board, the Planning Board, and the Zoning Board to voice my opposition as the local historian to a request by three organizations to install digital signs near the heart of the Old Homer Village Historic District which would alter the historic character of that area. Outside the District is not a problem.

On March 8, attended a Town Board meeting to learn about any changes to codes, policies, or plans. I also answered a question about funds that arrived for a new marker in the village.

On March 9, attended a training session for Village employees on how to handle First Amendment issues under newly established policies.

On April 19, attended a public hearing at the Town Hall regarding a proposal before the Town Board to install billboards along I-81. I have reservations about the possible negative impact upon the historic character and environment of the Town, and I question the economic benefit to be derived by the town and the village. Also, travelers use smart phones these days to find the sites they seek.

On July 5, attended a Town Board meeting to present the 1849 portrait by Francis Carpenter that was donated to the Town for exhibit at the Town Hall in perpetuity by the late Thomas Winter of Loma Linda, CA, a descendant of a relative by marriage to Jedediah Barber, Homer's first permanent merchant.

On August 16, attended a special meeting of the Town Board so I might stay apprised as to the matter of billboards proposed along I-81 and to answer additional inquiries made of my opinion.

**Number of Meetings out of Office:** In excess of 29

In early December, met with Larry and Sylvia Nye at their home to discuss the process of applying for grant money for a historical marker for the 19<sup>th</sup> century schoolhouse on their property in Little York.

On Jan. 4, met with Sophie Clough of the Cortland County Historical Society to go over a painting and a box of artifacts brought to my office to determine where the items should go.

On Jan. 6, I brought artifacts to the History Center at Key Bank that people entrusted with me for placement with the most appropriate repository.

On Jan. 9, met with Mike Park at Homer Iron Works to see an old Homer map he has and to see the site of a proposed billboard.

On Jan. 11, met with directors of the CCHS to retrieve the painting dropped off on the 4<sup>th</sup>. I learned it is a painting by Ruth Reed Cummings, known as the "Grandma Moses of CNY," and it had been donated to the Village of Homer by Victor Siegle. There was no provenance on the back, but I have one there now. The painting was placed on the wall in the break room at the Town Hall the next day.

On Jan. 13, met at the History Center at Key Bank with the late Harley Albro's daughter Karen and her husband Michael Dillon. She has returned to Homer and lives in the house where she grew up on Elm Ave in the village. They wished to discuss sundry things of local history. This is the fourth of about six former Homer students to return home and take up residence in a historic dwelling. They each have assured me they will preserve the exteriors. There is no preservation ordinance at present, and we are fortunate that folks voluntarily and with pride choose to preserve the historic charm of the residences in Homer.

As a result of attending a history lecture on January 21, at the CNY Living History Center, I deemed it time for me as a local public historian to become a member, which I will ask the Town/Village to renew annually for me at a senior citizen level.

On Feb. 6, went to the History Center at Key Bank to determine if a newly acquired portrait from an attic in the Town of Homer was by Frank Carpenter. It was not, in my opinion. The conservators at Westlake have been unable to definitively solve that mystery for its owner, The Landmark Society of Cortland County.

On Feb. 14, by two invitations, I attended the public announcement by the NYS Sec. of State of Homer Village being the recipient of the \$10 million DRI grant from NYS. The application emphasized "Building on History."

On March 23, by invitation, I became a member of the Homer Fire Department's planning committee for their Sesquicentennial Celebration on July 22. I was asked to emcee the Celebration on the Green and attended every planning session through July except one.

On March 24, delivered to the History Center at Key Bank a box of colored lights found at the Town Hall during interior renovation. They were likely part of the Capitol Theatre that showed movies at the Town Hall.

On May 4, at the Village's request, I spent time being interviewed by a reporter from Spectrum News as we walked around the Historic District and discussed how heritage tourism could be a focal point of the DRI projects.

On May 4, I attended the annual Homer Business Association Full Membership Dinner Meeting and heard Deputy Village Mayor Clune's explanation of what the DRI process would entail over the next several years.

On June 1, I attended the first meeting open to the public of the DRI Planning Committee and I have attended each monthly meeting thereafter to monitor any impact on the historic charm of the village and to advocate for heritage tourism.

On June 8, I attended per invitation the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner of the Homer Center for the Arts.

On June 8, received emailed request to provide a Homer high school teacher with information on Homer and the Underground Railroad, and it was provided then and the next day.

On June 9, received a phoned request for the name of the university Homer's Erastus Cravath presided over by 1875. Answer: Fisk University.

On June 21, I went to peek through the window of the new “Exchange” restaurant next-door to the Town Hall. Its developer, Dan McNeil III, saw me and invited me in to have a personal tour of what he has done to preserve as much of the original building as possible and to keep with the 19<sup>th</sup> century ambiance in the interior. The very costly efforts are most impressive, and I expressed my gratitude.

On June 21, I went to do personal business at Valley View Gardens in Cortland. I picked up a poster showing the “History of Firefighting in America.” The owner would not let me buy it for the Homer Fire Department’s 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. She, Patricia Mones, said she wanted to donate it to the HFD in appreciation for the remarkable way the Dept. responded to a melting plastic situation in the rear of a refrigerator at her home on Foster Road. I thanked her and said I would be glad to convey it and the reason for the donation.

On June 28, I delivered donated items to the CCHS that seemed better suited to be archived with them.

On June 30, I took the latest Carpenter painting to come to Homer to the History Center at Key Bank to show the top two officers of The Landmark Society. Also, I delivered Lions Club items donated by Barbara Gebhardt, and conversed with a man at the Center with a genealogical research problem.

On July 10, I went to the site of a future historic marker on S. Main and received a thorough, cellar to attic tour of “Wisdom’s Gate,” an early 19<sup>th</sup> century tavern used now as an Airbnb.

On August 7, I met with Deputy Mayor Pat Clune at the early 1900s building believed to have been connected to the railroad and most recently used as the office of the Superintendent of Glenwood Cemetery. The goal was for the two of us to process the contents of the building to identify any furniture or ephemera of historical value. I returned on August 23, for another inspection and determined a small writing desk and a large rolltop desk may be worth keeping.

On Sept. 11, in response to a letter from Ms. Ruth Lewis of 2 Preston Avenue in the village, I paid a visit to acknowledge information she provided for the archives on her residence.

On September 11, met with Dan McNeil and Fran Casullo at the Exchange Restaurant to discuss his development plans under the DRI and ways to maintain the historical charm of the sites. A proposed structure to connect a building from 1825 with one next door from 1850 poses a problem, but I offered ways to mitigate the issue, including placing the monument in bronze to our Lincoln connections close to the front sidewalk.

On Oct. 5, attended the monthly DRI Committee meeting and the following Public Workshop at the Town Hall for which I represented the Village in welcoming attendees and introducing Emma Phillips who conducted the opportunity for public input on DRI projects up for consideration.

On Oct. 10, was given an hour-long tour of the octagon house and octagon carriage house on Clinton Street by its owner and a former student, David Lee. Simply amazing historic architecture with a central narrow stairway in the style of Orson Fowler. It is rare for a village to have three octagonal structures. The Circus House is the third, and I hope it can be preserved for its unique historical value.

On Oct. 26, attended via zoom the DRI LPC when projects were eliminated including the proposed tribute in bronze to Homer’s connection to the life and iconography of President Lincoln. The opportunity to capitalize on heritage tourism, though steadfastly supported by the Mayor, was nixed. Unfortunately, the “Cortland Voice” inaccurately reported online that I was a member of the Planning Committee and had voiced opposition to the proposed monument project. Neither of those statements was/is true. Isn’t life in the age of misinformation fun?

**Exhibits:** On Jan.23, small artifacts on the stage in the Town Hall were replaced with other artifacts: an electric switch to operate projection equipment for the Capitol Theater, a David Harum Cigar box, a Sheffield Farms cheese box, and a Burgett’s Grocery Store lard bucket.

**School Classroom Lectures/Presentations:** None, but I have provided scripts for walking tours given fourth grade pupils by teachers and Morgan DuBois.

**Public Lectures/Presentations:** On Feb. 20, Presidents’ Day, the local public library hosted a book talk/reading/signing regarding my book *The Heart of Central New York*.

On August 2, I gave a talk on my published biography of Albert Haskell Jr. to the Cortland Rotary Club which the man co-founded in 1919. I was a member of the club for five years.

On Oct. 15, per invitation by David Lee I portrayed William Stoddard at the Homer Center for the Arts prior to the Homer Harvest Ramble. Dave Quinlan was Francis Carpenter and Pam Poulin was Amelia Jenks Bloomer. It was a great opportunity to promote Historic Homer, NY.

**Historical Publications:** I continue to run a column on Homer history in *The Homer News*, which is published every other week.

In May, my biography titled *The Remarkable Life of Albert Haskell, Jr.: The King of Crown City* was released. Haskell was the County District Attorney in the 1920s who drove the KKK out of the county, an Assemblyman during the violent milk strikes of the 1930s, made Cortland “the typewriter capital of the world,” and lobbied for Interstate 81 to pass through the county instead of further east. He was the father of my late aunt, Jean Haskell Sweeney. He impacted Homer, as the book reveals.

On August 18, I was informed *The Heart of Central New York: Stories of Historic Homer, New York* was among the nominees for the CNY Book Award in non-fiction sponsored by the YMCA of Downtown Syracuse. It did not win the award, but I am pleased it was a nominee.

**Historical Events/Celebrations:** Sesquicentennial of the Homer Volunteer Fire Department. Attended several meetings of the planning Committee and MC'd the two hour Ceremony on the Green on July 22 and the narration of the historical fire apparatus parade after that.

**Historic Preservation Projects:** Two applications for grant money from the Pomeroy Foundation were filed in early December. One was for a marker for the temperance tavern at Albany and Main Street and the other was for the one-room schoolhouse on Rte. 281 in Little York. Both markers were approved for funding in March after a series of emailed correspondences. Both markers arrived in Homer in June. The marker for "Wisdom's Gate" temperance tavern was unveiled in a little "photo-op" ceremony at 10 AM on Wednesday, August 9. The Little York marker has yet to be installed. The property owner wishes to repaint the old school first.

**Heritage Tourism Projects:** On May 16, I was asked by "Bud" Jermy if I would like to prepare a one-page history of William Sherman's "Homer Exchange" building to be displayed in the restaurant Dan McNeil was opening. I submitted the document before the day was done. I have yet to see it posted at the restaurant.

On August 3, I was asked by Ty Marshall of the Center for the Arts to provide a brief history of Homer's 1958 version of the "Cardiff Giant." Did so before the day was over.

The *Cortland Standard* of Sept. 9 reported that the Finger Lakes National Heritage Area designation I had worked upon with others from several counties was to move forward through efforts of Senator Gillibrand. This promises benefits for Homer, especially if it becomes "another Lincoln mecca" with the tribute in bronze to our connections to Lincoln. Ty Marshall has suggested an alternative site for the monument near the Little White Church Community Center at the edge of the Green but not on Green property.

On Oct. 19, I gave a walking tour in 19<sup>th</sup> century garb for Diana Reisman the Director and a Board member of the group in Ithaca working to preserve the Wharton Brothers' silent film studio in Stewart Park. Over coffee and scones at the Exchange Bakery at the end, they voiced delight in the two-hour excursion and said they will urge their Ithaca friends to come over for a similar tour of "an unknown gem." As historical preservationists, they strongly endorsed the effort to install a tribute in bronze to Homer's connection to President Lincoln and to set up an interconnection with area museums to promote "a heritage trail" with places to visit and places in which to dine like the "Exchange." They learned from me about a Wharton Bros. film made in Homer using Sig Sautelle's tent and performers and starring Pearl White, a legendary star of the silent film era when Ithaca was "the Hollywood of the East." This demonstrates the mutually beneficial professional connections made through conferencing like I had done in Ithaca.

On Oct.26, I had a table at the "Cortland Cabinet of Curiosities" event held at the Center for the Arts and discussed with folks the true and fictional accounts I had published about the murder of Patrick Quinlan in 1894. The true narrative remains a mystery. Notices were distributed at the event about an upcoming "Historians Trail Week" to foster heritage tourism in the county.

**Conferences/Workshops Attended:** Attended the highly informative Association of Public Historians of New York State held in Ithaca, NY on Sept.18-20. Besides the formal presentations, a benefit of this conference was talking informally with fellow practitioners from Manhattan, Long Island, Ithaca, and other locations across the state.

#### **Acquisitions:**

In early November, with the Historian's funds, I acquired a floor plan of the main floor of Sig Sautelle's Circus House in Homer and a post card showing Sautelle's Circus pony wagon that is now in a museum in Florida.

In late November, Police Chief Pitman emailed me items: an article and a photo circa 1936 from a newspaper showing "George the Cop" Venum ushering school children safely across the street to the Academy and an article and photo showing Police Chief Tom Davis posing with a murderer from out of state being arrested.

On Dec. 21, David Quinlan of Homer donated a real copy of the March 7, 1861, issue of *The Cortland Gazette*. It has content regarding Lincoln and the Cabinet he was putting together of political rivals. Quinlan said he wanted this "Christmas present" placed in the archives, and I have honored his request.

In February, the Village purchased a circa 1900 Sig Sautelle Circus Program for its archives and a picture postcard of the David Harum Hotel after it was destroyed by fire.

In March, the Village received from Stacey of Sinfully Sweet Bakery in Homer a 49" panoramic view of the Green in winter. With the help of Dave Quinlan on March 22, the framed photo was placed in the back entranceway to the Town Hall. Earlier in the day, I installed near the flag in the Boardroom of the Town Hall, a framed image of Washington and one of Lincoln, the father of the country and the savior of the country, respectively.

In mid-June, 93-year-old Mrs. Barbara Gebhardt donated a bag of items (photos, ephemera, news clippings) for me to discern how they should be dealt with. Included were photos of when her grandfather Kenneth Little was the mayor; photos and ephemera related to the milk plant managed by Ken Little where the school is now on Clinton

Street; and other items of interest for the archives and for the History Center on Main Street and the Cortland County Historical Society.

On July 7, retired newspaper reporter and historian Richard Palmer emailed me information and photos pertaining to the early plank road that passed through Homer to Syracuse. They have been archived, as have other primary sources from Palmer about early taverns and turnpikes in the area he has donated.

On July 11, received a significant cache of Little York photos and ephemera from Tacie Anderson's late mother's estate (Jean Stoker). Makes a wonderful addition to the archived file on the hamlet for both Homer and Preble.

In July, I received two Homer Fire Dept. baseball caps and a 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary polo shirt which will likely be donated to the History Center at Key Bank. On the 22nd, Doug VanEtten handed me a souvenir booklet for the Celebration and the CNY Firefighters Association Convention. It will go to the Municipal Archives.

On July 28, David Quinlan dropped off an enlarged image of Academy faculty from c. 1893 and then emailed the names of the individuals appearing on the reverse side. The original photo was part of a time-capsule unearthed awhile back at the Elementary School.

On August 3, received via mail a booklet describing the early life of Leo Bailey of Pennsylvania before he served as a doughboy in WWI, moved to Preble, and taught grade 7 science in Homer Central School. The booklet was donated by Phil Swarr of Phelps Drive, Homer. This was useful in my preparing an upcoming Veterans Day tribute for the Homer newspaper.

On August 9, the Town received a unique, kidney-shaped desk donated for the Historian's Office by Barbara Stoker Kopley Crandall. It was the desk of Homer realtor/auctioneer William G. Crandall and was transported by Karen Prince and relatives to its new, appropriate location for continued service in the village.

On August 23, received a photocopy of the "Homer-Cortland Plank Road Company Records" (Minutes) from Richard Palmer, who made two sets from a collection housed at the Syracuse University Library. During the summer, Mr. Palmer forwarded several images and copies of primary sources on the subject of early transportation. I am indebted to him.

In Sept., received a unique FOR SALE sign once used by realtor William G. Crandall. The donor was the daughter of Barbara Crandall. It goes with the desk from Crandall's home office and indicates one should reach him via "Phone 3." It is displayed in the Historian's office.

On Sept. 28, received a mailed letter from Mike McMahon with additional information about Factory Brook and implements used in harvesting ice from fields flooded by the Brook in the winter months.

On October 24, I received from Homer's Ed Raus a copy of his book *The Cortland County, New York, Homefront During the Civil War*. It is a stupendous piece of research information on the county's political and social scene during the war. It contains brief biographies on the over 1600 males in the county who enlisted and that of the men drafted who avoided service by paying the \$300 commutation fee or obtained a substitute. I am donating my signed copy to the municipal archives and wish I had had this resource when I was teaching U.S. history.

### **NYSLRS THANK-YOU LETTER**

Supervisor Forbes informed the Town Board that NYSLRS sent a thank you letter to the town for allowing them to utilize the Senior Center for their training. They informed Supervisor Forbes they would like to return to Homer to host additional future trainings. The NYLRS employees complimented the Town Hall and the town and stated the Town Historian had done an excellent job compiling the stage. Supervisor Forbes recognized Mr. Sweeney on behalf of the Town Board for his work on the stage with the various displayed artifacts.

### **DMV DROP BOX-TOWN HALL**

Supervisor Forbes was contacted by the County Clerk and was informed that the county will be removing the DMV drop box located at the Homer Town Hall, as it is rarely being utilized. The County Clerk will contact Supervisor Forbes when she has further information about when it will be removed.

### **TOWN BOARD ROOM**

Supervisor Forbes stated he would like to purchase three additional tables for the Town Board room to help accommodate larger meetings. The chairs that are currently in the Town Board



room are no longer available for purchase but would like to research additional chairs to purchase in the future.

On motion by Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Deputy Supervisor Park and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: To approve up to \$750.00 for the purchase of additional tables for the Town Board room.**

### **COMMERCIAL SHELVING- RECORDS ROOM**

Supervisor Forbes stated when the renovations of the basement begin, they will need to relocate the records from the basement to the Town Hall balcony. He posed purchasing commercial shelving to store the records.

He also updated that the seniors have done an outstanding job cleaning the Town Hall basement and held a very productive sale.

### **INVESTMENT POLICY**

The investment policy will not be completed until next month and will need to be added to the agenda. Supervisor Forbes stated that all investments need to be held through a bank. Last month he shared with the Town Board that there are other opportunities such as floating investments and T-Bills, which are totally guaranteed for government.

### **NO PARKING SIGNS**

An unattended parked car has been in the Town Hall for three or four months. The Town Board discussed whether the Town Hall should post no overnight parking signs in the parking lot. There have been some issues with the parked, unmoved car. The car is obstructing the neighbors from being able to trim their tree and additionally, was in the way when the parking lot lines at the Town Hall were being repainted. The car is inconveniently parked, and the Homer Police Department was consulted, and they suggested posting no overnight parking signs.

The Town Board also discussed posting a *Park at Your Own Risk sign* and discussed how posting no overnight parking signs might assist in the winter months with plowing. Supervisor Forbes asked Attorney Snyder's input, and he stated it was not a requirement, but it would not hurt the town if a sign was posted.

Supervisor Forbes stated the town could make the decision on how to proceed but would rather allow the police to handle it. Councilmember Williams inquired if there have been any issues prior to this parked car. Williams stated he did not find it necessary to post the Town Hall parking lot and did not want to create an issue. No decision was made.

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) FUNDS ACCOUNT**

Supervisor Forbes informed the Town Board two Discharge of Mortgage letters will need to be approved and signed. One letter is for 13 Elm Avenue and the other is for 32 Grove Street and these were through the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG).

On motion by Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Councilmember Warren, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: To authorize the Town Supervisor to sign and send mortgage release letters to 32 Grove Street and for 13 Elm Avenue.**

### **CLEANING QUOTE**

Supervisor Forbes stated he would like to discuss this at the next Town Board meeting.

### **2024 PRELIMINARY BUDGET**

Supervisor Forbes stated this was his last and final Town of Homer budget and the Town Board thanked Supervisor Forbes for all his hard work.

On motion by Supervisor Forbes, seconded by Deputy Supervisor Park, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: To accept and approve the 2024 Town of Homer budget.**

### **HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT**

Deputy Supervisor Park updated the Town Board on Superintendent's behalf and said the highway garage has all the sand mixed and in storage and all the equipment is ready. They are still working on one truck and waiting for parts but should be in soon.

The highway department has been busy mowing along the roads and trimming the branches of the trees, which is a head start on the spring work. The highway department had to rent a mower with a longer deck. The gear box on their mower needs to be replaced. Superintendent has his part-time help for the upcoming winter.

### **ATTORNEY FOR THE TOWN**

Attorney Snyder informed the Town Board that the application for the proposed Brake Hill solar project was submitted over a month ago and still requires a lead agency to be assigned. A corrected Environmental Assessment Form is still needed. The applicants indicated they would be submitting that requested form, but no form has yet been submitted.

The process has been dormant for the last month or so, but as soon as they make the correction, all the other potential lead agencies will need to be notified to see if they want to carry out the Environmental Review Process. Once the lead agency is designated, that lead agency will decide if an Environmental Impact Statement is needed.

Snyder said typically the state agencies do not want to be lead agencies and it is very possible the Town Board, the Planning Board, and the Zoning Board of Appeals will have jurisdiction. At some point, one of those three agencies will get lead agency, and recommended the Town Board consider whether they would like the role of carrying out this Environmental Review Process.

Attorney Snyder also updated that he has combined the Town of Homer's original 2008 Zoning Law with the various amendments made which makes it more easily accessible. Snyder stated he has incorporated the five main amendments since 2008, which include manure storage, farm breweries, solar energy projects, raising poultry, and events centers. He will distribute a copy to the Town Board, even though it is not an official version yet.

### **OTHER**

Zoning Board Member- Supervisor Forbes stated there is a need for three new Zoning Board of Appeal members. One member is needed now, and two members will be needed starting in 2024.

Deputy Supervisor Park said he contacted Chris Mauler to see if he was interested in serving on the ZBA board and would like to bring his name forward to the Town Board.

On motion by Deputy Supervisor Park, seconded by Councilmember Warren, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: To approve Chris Mauler as a new Zoning Board of Appeals member.**

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Brooke L. Poli  
Deputy Town Clerk

