

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Town of Homer Town Board held on Wednesday, April 10, 2024, in the town board room, was called to order by Supervisor Michael R. Park at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Michael R. Park, Supervisor
Barry E. Warren, Deputy Supervisor
Caleb J. Leach, Councilmember
Kevin M. Williams, Councilmember
Sarah E. Head, Councilmember
Daniel J. Ellis II, Attorney for the Town
Heather M. Hill, Town Clerk
Brooke L. Poli, Deputy Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT

Martin Sweeney, Town Historian
Piere Beaudry, resident, Village of Homer
Karen Dudgeon, resident, Town of Homer
Jack Eves, X101 News
Emmanuel Pothos, resident, Cortlandville
Margaret Mellott, Cortland Standard
Tim Malchak, resident, Town of Homer
Victor Siegle, resident, Village of Homer
Linda Underwood, resident, Town of Homer
Lois Haas, resident
Patrick Clune, Village Trustee
Linda Jones, Cortland County Legislator
Larry Jones, resident, Town of Homer

ABSENT

John R. Phelps, Highway Superintendent, Town of Homer

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES

On motion Deputy Supervisor Warren, seconded by Councilmember Leach, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: The regular meeting minutes of the March 10th, 2024, meeting were approved as presented.**

BILLS TO BE PAID

Councilmember Leach suggested the town might investigate the cost-effectiveness of purchasing mats versus renting to potentially save money for the town.

General bills were approved as audited by Councilmember Head, motioned by Councilmember Head, seconded by Deputy Supervisor Warren, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: That General Fund vouchers #57 through #72 totaling \$8,268.42 are approved for payment.**

Highway bills were approved as audited by Councilmember Williams, motioned by Councilmember Williams, seconded by Deputy Supervisor Leach, and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: That Highway Fund vouchers #30 through #40 totaling \$30,979.67 are approved for payment.**

MONTHLY REPORTS

Presented for audit by the Town Board were:

1. The Town Clerk's report of all receipts and disbursements for March 2024.

2. The Supervisor's reports on all financial activities for March 2024.
3. The Code Enforcement Officer's report on all building permits issued for March 2024.

On motion by Councilmember Head, seconded by Councilmember Leach and carried unanimously: **RESOLVED: The Town Clerk's monthly report for March 2024, the Supervisor's monthly report for March 2024, and the Code Enforcement Officer's monthly report for March 2024, are received, accepted, and filed.**

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Supervisor Park asked if anyone would like to speak or have any questions for the town board. A resident posed a few questions concerning the part time clerk position.

County Legislator- Legislator Jones updated that the county has installed a methane gas collection system at the landfill, costing \$2 million, to reduce methane emissions and odor. Two flow control officers have been hired to address issues with equipment loading and trash disposal and officers will be on an on-call basis.

A new spice-packing company is investing \$25,200,000 in renovating a building on Central Avenue through the IDA and will create new job opportunities. She stated Governor Hochul's pro-housing communities' initiative to address housing shortages, with millions in grants available for municipalities to apply for. Municipalities are encouraged to sign up for the pro-housing community programs to access future grants. Legislator Jones orally read the resolution for the town board. Municipality leaders are urged to actively collaborate with the HCR and other relevant stakeholders to be eligible for DRI and New York Forward programs. Jones distributed a copy of the application to the town and village.

A new elevator was installed for over \$60,000 to aid handicapped access at the Dwyer Memorial Park Building and a sidewalk is being added, at Sheriff Helms' request, to improve safety during large events, with an estimated cost of \$9,000 to \$12,000. They also received a CREST grant of \$200,000.00 for self-contained air machines for firefighters.

CORTLAND COUNTY LETTER

There was some discussion on the Cortland County Legislature's Highway Committee letter regarding their recommendations to municipalities for prohibition of ATV/UTV usage on county and municipal roadways. Insights were shared on the local rider community's practices, highlighting responsible behavior and insurance coverage. There was emphasis on the community's long-standing tradition of riding and the minimal issues encountered.

There was further discussion on whether ATVs can legally cross-town roads in Homer, with the conclusion that there is no current law prohibiting this, if it aligns with vehicle and traffic laws. There was mention of agricultural vehicles' rights to use roads with proper signage.

Further discussion occurred on the county's stance against ATV riding on county roads. The Sheriff's Department will enforce the law in the Town of Homer, issuing tickets to violators. Municipalities are authorized under specific circumstances to allow ATV usage, with requirements such as club membership and insurance.

The consensus of the town board stated not to take action regarding the legislative letter, with a preference to let county law enforcement handle any legal matters related to road usage by riders.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

Councilmember Leach updated that the highway department is still waiting to hear on the backordered four-door Dodge truck they are hoping to purchase by the upcoming winter. The highway department has completed sweeping ninety-five percent of the roads with the rental of sweepers for road maintenance which is cost-effective. Supervisor Park stated they are starting road maintenance projects on Monday and are ahead of schedule.

ENTRANCE BIDS

Supervisor Park stated they received two bids to refinish the front entrance of the town hall. The first bid submitted was in the amount of \$19,995.00 and a second bid submitted was in the amount of \$35,700.00. Attorney Ellis reviewed the bids and Supervisor Park recommended accepting the bid from Rivers Painting Inc., CNY.

A decision was made to go with Rivers Painting Inc. of Central New York to refinish the front entrance of the town hall. Legislator Jones recognized Rivers Painting for contributing to the community, including repainting posts at Dwyer Park. The company's proposal has been vetted and approved with conditions on the provision of insurance certificates. Starting in June, the front entrance of the town hall will be closed for the renovations to be completed.

On motion by Supervisor Park, seconded by Councilmember Leach, and carried unanimously:
RESOLVED: To accept Rivers Painting, Inc. of CNY submitted proposal in the amount of \$19,995.00, with fifty percent down and remaining balance due upon completion.

TOWN CLERK/PART-TIME CLERK

Town Clerk Hill acknowledged and thanked the town board for all the support during the town clerk's absence. She reported the tax season is nearing the end and the town clerks have collected 92.71% of the 2024 tax season. Settlement with the county for taxes is scheduled for June 11th at 3:30 p.m. There was discussion on the part-time clerk position and developing a precise job description for the position for next month's agenda.

REAPPOINT BOARD OF ASSESSMENT REVIEW MEMBERS

Supervisor Park stated Nancy Richards and Leclar Dennis need to be reappointed to the Board of Assessment Review (BAR), due to not complying with the ninety-day oath of office stipulation period. Supervisor Park stated that he in is hopes to have the town clerk's office complete the reporting in the future.

On motion by Supervisor Park, seconded by Councilmember Leach, and carried unanimously:
RESOLVED: To reappoint Nancy Richards and Leclar Dennis to the Board of Assessment Review (BAR).

AFR (AUD) EXTENTION

Supervisor Park stated the AFR (AUD) is due March 31st and informed the town board that he applied and was granted an extension until April 30, 2024, which will allow more time for our CPA to complete.

ART COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY/HISTORIC COLLECTION/ART LOAN AGREEMENT

Supervisor Park asked Historian Martin Sweeney for any feedback on the proposed Town of Homer Historian Collection/Art Agreement. Sweeney suggested adding the word *artifacts* alongside the word *art* to distinguish the difference for loaning purposes and clarification.

There was further discussion on how to ensure reasonable care and security for any requested items and who would have the authority to approve any requests for loans. The consensus of the board was to follow the historian's suggested changes and to include dual signatures for loan approvals.

Supervisor Park stated they would table this until next month and the attorney for the town will work on the revisions to the agreement before final approval and bring them to the next town board meeting.

COURT AUDIT

Supervisor Park reminded the town board that the court audit still needs to be completed and is due by April 15th, 2024. Councilmember Williams stated the court audit would be completed by May 6th.

BRIDGE GRANT UPDATE

Supervisor Park updated the town board on the bridge grant application status. The grant has not been launched yet and may take until July to know the outcome. The cost for the bridge project is now \$2.1 million.

ENERGY AUDIT

The town has applied for an energy audit grant to improve the town board's energy efficiency, with a good chance of receiving a \$15,000 grant. The town is waiting for confirmation of the grant award and planning the implementation of energy efficiency improvements for the Town of Homer Highway Garage and are in hopes to hear within the next month or so.

APRIL FIREMEN DINNER REPRESENTATIVE

Supervisor Park inquired if there was a town board member that would like to attend the April Fireman's dinner. Councilmember Williams and Councilmember Leach will attend the dinner as representatives for the Town of Homer.

BILLBOARDS

Supervisor Park reviewed a draft outline of the process and stated the town board would need to vote on whether to move forward or not with the process of the billboards. Legal counsel was sought from Attorney Ellis and Attorney Snyder.

If the town board votes to move ahead in the process, there would be numerous steps involved. The first step would be to complete a full SEQR form and to compose a local law. The SEQR form and local law would then need to be sent to the county for review. The town would also have to establish a lead agency and contact DOT. There would be public meetings held and after all the steps are completed, a final vote to approve or deny the billboards would need to take place by the town board.

Historian Sweeney made a statement and asked for the two new town board members to do their homework on the pros and cons of the proposed billboards. He suggested comparing the advantages and disadvantages billboards would bring the town. Supervisor Park stated the town is committed to doing their research and are being transparent.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

The grant application for updating the comprehensive plan was approved last month, with THOMA Development Consultants writing the grant. The state is supportive of updating comprehensive plans, indicating a high likelihood of receiving the grant. The update process is expected to take one to two years with outside help and involvement from the local community.

ATTORNEY FOR THE TOWN

Attorney Ellis reported he has been working through proposed amendments to the personnel policy and has it 90-95% completed. Ellis stated he should have a draft available soon for the town board's review.

Supervisor thanked Attorney Ellis for his work revising the town's Procurement Policy and personnel policy which has been a process.

OTHER

Supervisor Park asked if there was any other comments before they went into executive session. A village resident handed out an informational paper that he composed concerning billboards to the town board members.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On motion by Supervisor Park, seconded by Deputy Supervisor Warren, and carried unanimously: the Homer Town Board entered an executive session at 7:20 p.m. to discuss a personnel item.

On motion by Councilmember Williams, seconded by Councilmember Leach, and carried unanimously: the executive session adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Brooke L. Poli
Deputy Town Clerk