

The Regular Meeting of the Homer Town Board was held at the Town Hall located in the Village of Homer, on Wednesday, October 9, 2024, in the senior center, with Supervisor Park presiding.

Members Present:

Supervisor, Michael R. Park,
Deputy Supervisor, Barry E. Warren
Councilmember, Sarah E. Head
Councilmember, Caleb J. Leach
Councilmember, Kevin M. Williams

Others Present: Town Attorney, Daniel J. Ellis II; Town Clerk, Heather M. Hill; Deputy Town Clerk, Brooke L. Poli; Town Historian, Martin A. Sweeney; Village Trustee, Patrick Clune; Deputy Fire Chief, Doug VanEtten; Residents: Paul Rachetta, Marilyn Huery, Bill Campbell, Karen O'Neill Covell, Andy Covell, Duane Reynolds (Homer West Hill Cemetery), Kelly Geremski, Jarrett Regard, Marie Ferro, Brooke Keeney, Karen Dudgeon, Barb Gregg, , Emmanuel Pothos, Chris Rockwell Norton, Tim Malchak, Michael Broughton, Nancy Dafoe, and Miles Dudgeon.

MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

Councilmember Williams made a motion, with the modification of adding his attendance of the 911 Memorial Service, representing the town, seconded by Councilmember Leach, to approve the Draft Regular Town Board Meeting Minutes of September 11, 2024. All voting aye, the motion carried.

MONTHLY BILL PAY

General bills were approved as audited by Councilmember Leach, motioned by Councilmember Leach, to approve the general fund vouchers for payment, seconded by Councilmember Williams; All voting aye, the motion carried: **RESOLVED: That General Fund vouchers #226 through #256 totaling \$71,601.04 are approved for payment.**

Highway bills were approved as audited by Deputy Supervisor Warren, motioned by Deputy Supervisor Warren, to approve the highway fund vouchers for payment, seconded by Councilmember Head; All voting aye, the motion carried: **RESOLVED: that Highway Fund vouchers #121 through #136, totaling \$48,060.99 are approved for payment.**

WRITTEN DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Councilmember Leach made a motion, seconded by Deputy Supervisor Warren, to receive and file the following monthly reports as presented:

1. Town Supervisor – September 2024
2. The Code Enforcement Officer- September 2024
3. The Dog Control Officer- September 2024

4. Town Clerk- September 2024

5. Fire Chief- September 2024

All voting aye, the motion carried.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Several speakers expressed concerns about the impact of adding billboards and changing zoning laws on property values. One speaker presented a petition for additional signatures against the billboards, while another thanked the board for their efforts to develop the town and offset rising taxes. Another resident expressed concerns about billboards and their impact on the community growth, emphasizing the importance of attracting residents who will invest in the community rather than transient visitors.

Village Trustee Patrick Clune discussed the postponement of a decision on county sales tax negotiations and that there will be a public hearing on the county's strategic plan on November 21st at the legislative chambers.

Trustee Clune mentioned Senator Leah Webb is proposing a bill (S770) to redo the AIM formula, which would increase municipal aid to local governments and the senator encouraged municipalities to pass resolutions in support of the bill.

Trustee Clune also highlighted the decreasing number of volunteer firefighters and the increased training requirements. The village has proposed a Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) retirement program to encourage and retain younger volunteers which will be up for a permissive referendum in November.

AGENDA ITEMS

Town Historian Martin Sweeney reported on the donation of two framed portraits of Gideon and Electa Hobart to the Town of Homer. He provided a detailed history of the Hobart family and the significance of the portraits. He proposed having the portraits evaluated for potential conservation work.

The board discussed adding security cameras to monitor the historical portraits displayed in the building and Supervisor Park contacted Beard Electric to obtain a quote for the installation of two additional security cameras.

Deputy Supervisor Warren made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Leach, to approve up to \$200.00 per portrait for evaluation and potential conservation work. All voting aye, the motion carried: **RESOLVED: to approve up to \$200.00 a piece for the two framed portraits of Gideon and Electa Hobart to be assessed by West Lake Conservation Center for potential conservation work.**

Duane Reynolds discussed the history of the Simmons family cemetery and the transition to a public cemetery in 1864. He provided an update on the activities and financial status of the

West Hill Cemetery, including changes in leadership and improvements in account interest rates. Mr. Reynolds reviewed and submitted his annual report.

Councilmember Head made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Williams, to receive and file West Hill Cemetery's annual treasurers report. All voting aye, the motion carried: **RESOLVED: to receive and file the submitted treasurer's report from West Hill Cemetery.**

Councilmember Leach provided an update for the highway garage on snow preparation, including the installation of snowplows on the highway trucks and mixing and sand preparations. All materials are on-sight, and the work is expected to be completed within a week and a half. The newly purchased truck has arrived and will serve as a mainline truck, with another truck as a backup.

Supervisor Park discussed the approval of a \$5,000.00 energy grant and a pending \$10,000.00 grant. An audit team will visit on November 4th, 5th, or 6th to provide recommendations on how to spend the grant money for the updates at the highway garage.

Town Clerk Hill updated the town board on Deputy Clerk Kotas's progress of filing dog licenses and reorganizing the code enforcement office, which has been an asset to the office and a tremendous addition to the team.

The Town Clerk's office recently updated the copier in their office. There was discussion on donating the old copier to the Homer Fire Department who had expressed interest in the copier. Supervisor Park also mentioned there was a request from the fire department for an increase in their annual payment from \$100.00 to \$500.00 and will be reviewed and discussed later.

Deputy Supervisor Warren made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Leach, to designate the old copier machine as surplus and to donate it to the Homer Fire Department. All voting aye, the motion carried. **RESOLVED: to donate the surplus property of a copier machine to the Homer Fire Department, which has no monetary value.**

Councilmember Head made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Leach, to approve the *NYSLRS Standard Work Day Resolution (RS 2418)* form and the *NYSLRS Standard Work Day and Reporting Resolution for Elected and Appointed Officials (RS 2417-B)* form. All voting aye, the motion carried. **RESOLVED: to approve the NYSLRS Standard Work Day Resolution for Employees (RS 2418) form and the NYSLRS Standard Work Day and Reporting Resolution for Elected and Appointed Officials (RS 2417-B) form and to authorize the town clerk to sign and submit both forms.**

Councilmember Williams stated he attended the Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium Board of Directors meeting and provided information on the increase in insurance rates for 2024 and 2025.

Supervisor Park presented the preliminary budget for 2025, highlighting an increase in total appropriations and revenues, with no increase in the tax rate due to increased assessment

value. He thanked Frederick Forbes and Bonnie Johnson for their work composing the preliminary budget. There was further discussion on concerns of potential losses in sales tax revenue, which could impact the budget significantly in the future.

Supervisor Park made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Williams, to hold a public hearing to adopt and review the 2025 preliminary budget. All voting aye, the motion carried. **RESOLVED: to hold a public hearing on November 13, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. to review and adopt the 2025 preliminary budget for the Town of Homer.**

Attorney Dan Ellis stated he had a pending subdivision request and would also follow up with Kevin McMahon on the event center issue that needs resolved. He had nothing further to report.

Councilmember Leach made the motion, seconded by Deputy Supervisor Warren: All voting aye, the motion carried to go into executive session to discuss a personnel issue at 7:30 p.m.

Councilmember Head made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Williams; All voting aye, the motion carried to adjourn the executive session at 7:45 p.m.

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke L. Poli
Deputy Town Clerk