

Town of Fowler March 14th, 2022, Bookkeeper Audit and Regular Scheduled Board Meeting at 6PM.

The Town of Fowler Bookkeeper Audit and Regular scheduled Town Board meeting was held on the above date with 4 Board members present. Also present were Town Clerk Tami Gale, Town Justice Tim Knowlton, Highway Superintendent Randy Durham, Pavilion Committee member Richard Clement, Ethics Committee Member Vivian Goodman, John and Deb Walsh, Dan Fifield, Maintenance worker Byron Woodward, and attending via teleconference were Rachel Hunter, Editor of the Gouverneur Tribune Press and Councilperson Lynn Bishop.

Supervisor Newvine called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM then proceeded with the pledge of allegiance and led a moment of silence to honor our military men and women, and all healthcare workers.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 14, 2022, Justice Audit & Town Clerk Audit, and regular scheduled board meeting. A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons, seconded by Councilperson Cleveland. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 28, 2022, Special board meeting with a presentation by Assessor Chair Kathleen Besaw. A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons, seconded by Councilperson Andrews. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

MOWING CONTRACT

Supervisor Newvine reported he would like to discuss the mowing contract, and to have it in place when the weather turns nice. It was discussed the amount of the contract would need a price adjustment to cover the increased cost of fuel, as well as compensation to be added for the cleaning up of trees and trash at the locations being mowed, which is not included in previous mowing contracts, but has been being done without compensation, and will be added to the 2022 contract. Supervisor Newvine asked Dan Fifield if he had an amount in mind for the 2022 mowing contract taking into consideration the increased cost of fuel and clean-up of the mowing locations. Mr. Fifield asked for an increase of \$1,000. Supervisor Newvine asked the board members their pleasure on increasing the 2022 mowing contract, for a total of \$11,000. After some discussion, a motion was made by Councilperson Simmons seconded by Councilperson Cleveland to adjust the 2022 mowing contract to \$11,000. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED. Supervisor Newvine reported the contract would be updated to reflect the change and would be signed at the April 11th regular scheduled board meeting.

Town Department Reports

Justice Department

Town Justice Tim Knowlton reported:

- Everything in the court is in order and doing well.
- It has been slow in the court with few cases right now.

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie:

- Reported she had provided Town of Fowler Cash Balance Reports for Month Ending February 28, 2022, to the board members for their review.
- Reported the general fund is 19.25% spent and the highway fund is 22.77% spent.
- Reported 40% of revenue has been received for the general fund and 82% has been received for the highway fund.
- Money is coming in and is being spent slower than it is coming in, which is good.
- Reported on the fund balances at 2021 years end. The general fund added an additional \$94,000 bringing the fund balance to \$782,000, and used \$10,000 of that to balance the budget, bringing the total to \$771,000. The highway fund added an additional \$150,000 and used \$192,000 to balance the budget bringing the total to \$275,000.
- Reported it is good that we are adding to the fund balance, and this will help with next year's budget.

Assessors

Assessor Chair Kathleen Besaw and Assessor Robert Theriault were not in attendance.

Historian

Historian Karen Simmons reported:

- It has been very quiet in the Historians Office.

Animal Control

Councilperson Simmons reported for Dan Moyer who was not in attendance:

- He had received complaints of dogs running at large on the California Rd, Emeryville Rd, and Little York Rd.
- He handled an incident involving a dog that was found in Fowler which was either lost or stolen from its owner in the Town of Gouverneur.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Besaw was not in attendance.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Tami Gale:

- Reminded everyone about the training opportunity on April 19th for the 31st Annual NYS Tug Hill Commission Local Government Conference being held at the Turning Stone Event Center. She reported she had class schedules if anyone else wanted to be signed up and the price will increase the closer it gets to the conference.
- Reported she had a town resident bring in a flyer on HPAI in poultry (bird flu) and has copies available if anyone would like one.
- Reported she had completed her tax renewal warrant with the County Treasurer's Office and taxes are 75.42% collected. The amount left to be collected is \$523,977.76.

- Asked the board their pleasure on setting the fee for 2nd notices for taxpayers who haven't paid any tax at all this year. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the board to set the 2nd notice fee at \$2.00.
- Reported Barkley's Safe and Lock will be at the Town Hall on Wednesday to make some repairs.
- DEC Gross sales for the month were \$50.00 with the Town of Fowler Commission being \$2.76. She had licensed 22 dogs, processed 6 death certificates, and \$3.50 was taken in for photo copies.
- Reported she had received \$100.55 in bottle donations.
- Reported \$217.00 was received from the soda machine at the highway department.
- Presented the board with a rough draft of an application to use the pavilion and asked the board to review and make the necessary changes to the application so it can be ready when the time comes.

Maintenance

Maintenance Worker Byron Woodward reported:

- There is water in the basement of the Town Hall. He suspects that there is something in the side yard, be it a leech field or septic tank, and he isn't going to know until it is dug up. He reported the new pipe in the basement, that was installed to replace the old pipe that was plugged with sand, ran for a week and a half, but is now filling right back up.
- He reported the water is coming up and pumping out of the ground and stops at the new blacktop.
- He reported when it gets dug up, they could try to snake it out to the drainage hole, avoiding having to dig up the new blacktop.
- Reported there has never been a problem like this in previous years.

Supervisor Newvine stated it is strange that it occurred since the parking lot has been paved. Maintenance worker Byron Woodward stated he is hoping that the pipe isn't collapsed. Hwy. Superintendent Durham stated his theory, from the type of material (schedule 40), that he is seeing in the basement, is that a pipe was broken when the top was removed in the paving process, and heavy trucks drove over it for a week or more, reporting typically (schedule 80) material would be used. It was discussed retired maintenance worker Don Seaman would be contacted to see what may be buried in the ground at the location and when it dries up, they would utilize shared services with the Village of Gouverneur to diagnose and repair the problem.

- Asked the board where they would like the new signs installed at the playground and pavilion area. It was discussed to install 1 sign facing the playground and 1 sign at the edge of the blacktop.

Highway Department

Highway Superintendent Randy Durham reported:

- Tom Peck will return to work as summer help on April 6th for a period of 6 months.
- All insurance money that he is aware of has been received in the matter of the burned-up plow truck for a total of \$164,330. He and bookkeeper Finnie have established a couple of accounts for the use of the insurance money as some of the money has to be spent.
- He has spent some of the money on the purchase of a 2-stage plow system for Truck 5.
- He has talked to Dave Spilman Jr, Supervisor of the Town of Gouverneur, regarding the purchase of a new plow truck. He reported, what they are doing is providing a non-binding letter of intent to get on a list for ordering a new plow truck.

Supervisor Newvine stated it meant that we weren't really guaranteeing a price, and that we could look at it when it becomes available, and he had no problem with that. Supervisor Newvine stated he felt we should stay with Beam Mack as we have had good luck with their trucks. After further discussion, it was the consensus of the board to have Hwy. Superintendent Durham draw up a non-binding letter of intent addressed to Beam Mack, and he and Supervisor Newvine would sign it.

Councilmembers

Councilperson Karen Simmons:

- Reported 29 people had benefited in February from the HAP Program on Thursdays.
- Thanked Tripp Fuel for a big box of food items that they have been collecting for the HAP program received this week.
- The next SOS Program delivery will be made on April 8th for Easter.
- Fowler family day meetings have started in preparation for the event to be held on July 16th and are going well.

Councilperson Lynn Bishop:

- Asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham to take a look at a spot on the Sylvia Lake Rd near where 2 black pipes are located going under the road to check for erosion of the road, with concerns that a car may go off the road at this location. Hwy. Superintendent Durham stated he would check the area out as he has other roads with shoulder wash out areas to work on next week.
- Reported he had read the rough draft for the pavilion use application included in his board meeting packet over thoroughly and asked Town Clerk Gale if "no smoking allowed" should be added to the pavilion application.
- Asked if Hwy. Superintendent Durham could get a count on the County roads as to how many miles the men plow per season.

Supervisor Newvine asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham if he could figure out the cost per mile, on plowing the County roads, to include the time, benefits, products used and vehicle expense to determine what the Town spends on plowing the County roads, in comparison to what we are paid by the County to do the job.

Councilperson Jeff Andrews:

- Asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham about the expense this year for paving with the increased cost of fuel. Hwy. Superintendent Durham replied the paving projects would likely be thinned out this year. He reported he would like to do the River Rd, and a piece on the Country Club Rd and hold off on the culvert replacement this year. He reported he has lots of roads ready to go if fuel prices come down.

Councilperson Cleveland:

- Asked if he was correct with the amount of the playground/pavilion budget being \$1,1700.94. Bookkeeper Finnie reported so far, that is the correct balance.
- Reported he felt the wood chips needed to be replaced and asked where they were obtained originally. It was discussed the wood chips came from Seaway Timber in Massena and they would need to be certified wood chips.

- Asked if the family day committee has determined the day the event will be held on, as he has his first request for the use of the pavilion. Supervisor Newvine reported the date is set for July 16th.
- Asked if July 16th will be the grand opening of the pavilion. Supervisor Newvine reported it would be and plans for the grand opening will be incorporated into the family day event on the 16th.
- Mentioned perhaps the anonymous donor of the funds for the pavilion would want to be there for the grand opening event.

Supervisor Ricky W. Newvine:

- Reported he had received a complaint from an individual on the Smith Rd. Hwy. Superintendent Durham reported the individual making the complaint wants him to start plowing the Smith Rd at 4:30AM and he starts the route at 2:30AM due to school bus schedules. He reported the mailbox discussed in the complaint had been hit 3 times by 3 different plow drivers.
- Reported he will be going to the St. Lawrence County Emergency Services building tomorrow to pick up the Town of Fowler's allotment of COVID-19 supplies. The Town of Fowler is set to receive 400 KN95 masks, 100 cloth masks, 250 test kits (2 tests per box), 6 oral thermometers, 100 2 oz hand sanitizers, and 5 gallons of hand sanitizer which is free and available to residents of the Town of Fowler.
- Reported he had received notification the St. Lawrence County Self-Insurance Plan will be offering an annual OSHA/PESH refresher training class on Saturday, April 9th at the Norfolk Fire Department if anyone in the highway department is interested in attending.
- Reported he had made an inquiry pertaining to available grant money that was asked about at the February board meeting. He reported there was \$400,000 in grant money, but it was for all of St. Lawrence County. He reported he had contacted the North Country Housing Council and has been advised in April, New York State would announce if they were going to release any funds, and if they do, the Town could hire the North Country Housing Council, or DANC to be an administrator. Supervisor Newvine reported if they do release any funds, we could see about getting another grant for the Town of Fowler.
- Reported he had received a notice from Liberty Gas Company about reporting the smell of gas and instructions on leaving the premises if you encounter the smell of gas.

Public Comment

- Vivian Goodman stated the County needed to come back and refill some of the spots they fixed on State Highway 812 as well as the dips in the road. Hwy. Superintendent Durham reported he has been in contact with the County. He stated they went up the road half way and never came back, stating County Route 22 was just as bad. Supervisor Newvine asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham to call them to discuss the matter again.
- Deb Walsh thanked the board for the food delivery after John's accident.

AUDIT OF BOOKKEEPER'S 2021 BOOKS

Supervisor Newvine noted the 2021 books and records of Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie were presented to the board for review this evening and remained open for public inspection during the regular board meeting. Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to audit the Bookkeepers 2021 books.

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION # 11 of 2022

Audit of the Bookkeeper's 2021 Books

A motion was made by Councilperson Andrews seconded by Councilperson Cleveland to adopt a resolution to allow the Town Board to audit the bookkeeper's 2021 books. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

AYES: 4 NEWVINE, SIMMONS, ANDREWS, CLEVELAND

NAYS: 0

(ATTENDING VIA TELECONFERENCE & NOT ABLE TO PHYSICALLY TAKE PART IN THE AUDIT OF THE BOOKS): 1 BISHOP

The 2021 books and records of bookkeeper Barbara Finnie were presented for review. The board examined the bookkeeper's records including the deposits, bank statements, and payroll documentation and all funds were determined to be in order.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to audit the bills. A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons seconded by Councilperson Cleveland to audit the bills. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

The bills audited for the General and Highway Fund were # 48 to # 82, with a total of \$ 29,734.31.

The next regular scheduled board meeting will be held on April 11, 2022, at 6:00PM.

With no further business, on a motion of Councilperson Andrews, seconded by Councilperson Cleveland, the March Bookkeeper Audit & Regular Town Board meeting was adjourned at 6:41PM. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tami Gale; Town Clerk