

Town of Fowler Regular Board Meeting Minutes for March 5, 2019 at 7PM

The Regular scheduled board Meeting for the Town of Fowler was held on the above date with all Board Members present, excluding Councilperson Lynn Bishop, who was not in attendance due to work, and Supervisor Cappellino, who was not in attendance due to illness. Also present were Town Clerk Tami Gale, Deputy Town Clerk Debbie Tupper, Highway Superintendent Randy Durham, Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie, Assessor Chair Sherry Geer, Assessor Phyllis Shaw, Planning Board Member's Daniel Kingsley and Larry Streeter, Amanda Dox Bobbett, Richard Clement, and Rachel Hunter of the Gouverneur Tribune Press.

Deputy Supervisor Rick Newvine called the meeting to order at 7PM then proceeded with the pledge of allegiance. Deputy Supervisor Newvine reminded those in attendance that the meeting was being recorded.

A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons, seconded by Councilperson Andrews to approve the minutes of the February 5th Regular Board meeting and Justice Audit Meeting. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

A motion was made by Councilperson Andrews seconded by Councilperson Simmons to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting with the Town Board, Planning Board, and Code Enforcement Officer held on February 20th, 2019. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons, seconded by Councilperson Andrews to appoint Dan Moyer as Beaver Control Officer for the Town of Fowler for the 2019 year. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

A motion was made by Councilperson Andrews, seconded by Councilperson Simmons to advertise the mowing bids for the 2019 mowing season with no changes needed to the bid advertisement. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Town Department Reports

Assessors

Assessor Chair Sherry Geer reported that the State has been mailing worksheets to some taxpayers. Assessor Chair Geer asked that they make sure that they fill the worksheet out and either fax it or mail it back in to the State. Assessor Chair Geer stated that if anyone needed help that she could fax it for them from the Town Assessors Office. Deputy Supervisor Newvine asked if the worksheet was just informational. Assessor Chair Geer reported that it was just informational, that taxpayers did not have to prove anything for income, just record their income on the worksheet, sign it and send it in. Deputy Supervisor Newvine asked what

the maximum Enhanced Star income was. Assessor Chair Geer stated that it was \$86,300, and \$17,999 for the senior exemption. Taxpayer Richard Clement stated that he would like to thank Assessor Chair Geer for taking care of his tax papers for the enhanced star program for him and for calling him to make sure he didn't miss the deadline. Deputy Supervisor Newvine asked when the Assessors' were going to Tug Hill for the Government Conference. Assessor Chair Geer stated that the conference was March 28th, 2019. Deputy Supervisor Newvine stated that the assessors' office was progressing well and asked what the next step was. Assessor Chair Geer stated that they would be working on the tax-roll. Deputy Supervisor Newvine asked about the Data Collection and how that was going. Assessor Chair Geer stated that Phyllis Shaw has been going out doing some Data Collection, and that with the weather it has been challenging.

Historian

Historian Karen Simmons reported that she has been working on genealogy and has been working on scrapbooks. Historian Simmons stated that she has been thinking of new ideas to bring to Fowler Family Day from the Historian Department this year.

Dog Control

Animal Control Officer Dan Moyer reported that he had one dog in the pound that was picked up earlier in the day. The animal was checked to see if it had a microchip and it did not. Councilperson Simmons stated that the dog was picked up from the Northwoods Road. Mr. Moyer stated that he has put pictures up on face-book and the website and has had no hits on it yet. Mr. Moyer stated that he has issued tickets for dogs running at large.

Code Enforcement

Deputy Supervisor Newvine stated that Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw was not in attendance as he was in Lake Placid attending Code Enforcement Training.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Tami Gale reported that she had taken in DEC gross sales for the month of \$50.00 with a commission of \$2.76, had completed 2 certified marriage transcripts, 5 certified death certificates, had licensed 25 dogs, handled 2 building permits, and that the 2019 taxes are 76% collected. Town Clerk Gale reported that Deputy Town Clerk Debra Tupper had been in for more training during the month and has been doing a great job. Town Clerk Gale stated that her office had taken delivery of a new filing cabinet. Town Clerk Gale reported that she had a taxpayer who came in earlier in the day asking if the Town had any grants to offer at this time.

Deputy Supervisor Newvine stated that he had some information he would share with Supervisor Cappellino regarding possible grants. He stated that the Office of Renewal Housing currently has 4 million dollars for mobile and manufactured home replacement. He stated that he had called the County to see if they would be able to administer a grant for the Town of Fowler, as the Town didn't have much luck with the housing council on previous grants. Deputy Supervisor Newvine stated that the County now has a \$300,000 income based septic replacement program. He stated that it is through St. Lawrence County and the Housing Council and stated a phone number to call if interested in finding out more is 386-8576. Deputy Supervisor Newvine stated that he would like to see the Town of Fowler provide another grant for the townspeople. He would like to see it handled differently this time with community members serving on a board that would have direct input on who would receive the grants. He stated that some people slipped through the cracks last time, and the grants are meant to provide help to the people who really need it. Assessor Chair Sherry Geer agreed with Deputy Supervisor Newvine. Deputy Supervisor Newvine reported that he would give the information to Supervisor Cappellino to follow up on.

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie discussed the Towns cash balances. Bookkeeper Finnie stated that we are building our cash balances back up with all of the taxes coming in. The General Fund has a balance back up to \$629,000, the Highway Fund has come back up to \$650,000. Bookkeeper Finnie stated that we don't want to spend it all either. Bookkeeper Finnie stated that all of the Towns revenue is pretty much in for the year. Deputy Supervisor Newvine stated that the Town has \$12,000 in the Playground Fund. Deputy Supervisor Newvine thought maybe the fund would have enough in it to pay for a pad to be poured this year for the Playground's Pavillion to show that we are making some progress.

Highway Department

Highway Superintendent Durham reported that the highway department had been working at the Hailesboro ballfield earlier in the day to prepare for a new section of fence to be installed in the spring. Highway Superintendent Durham reported on the 1999 New Holland tractor. He stated that it was previously discussed that the Town would possibly trade the tractor, or sell it at an auction, but it has since been determined that the tractor has no value. Highway Superintendent Durham stated that it was overfilled with oil when they unloaded it from the truck upon return from where it had been looked at. He stated that it went there bad and it returned bad. Councilperson Simmons asked Highway Superintendent Durham what the Town was going to do with the tractor. Highway Superintendent Durham stated that he had talked to

a few farmers about putting a broom on the front of the tractor, but that it was very bad for the tractor's engine. Highway Superintendent Durham stated that the Town was also offered \$5,000 for the tractor as a trade in towards a tow behind broom. Highway Superintendent Durham stated that he felt the Town should just table everything for now. He stated that if he were to order the broom now that they would not have any use for it. Deputy Supervisor Newvine stated that it would be too late that if it were to be ordered it wouldn't be here in time. Highway Superintendent Durham stated that the Town has the boom mower, and that they would just have to keep a good operator on it so it doesn't get wrecked. Councilperson Andrews asked about attachments for the loader. Highway Superintendent Durham stated that they could go that way, but that it was expensive. He stated that the highway department had a tech class earlier in the day and they had learned about different attachments that can be purchased for the loader. Highway Superintendent Durham stated that it wasn't recommended for a broom attachment for the front of the loader. Deputy Supervisor Newvine stated that it would run the risk of all of the dust coming back into the mower. After discussion, Highway Superintendent Durham stated that he felt that the tractor should be put on the back burner for now.

Councilmembers

Councilperson Andrews stated that he had spoken to Town Clerk Tami Gale and that the new wiring project has begun. Town Clerk Gale reported that NCC Systems had been at the Town Hall and Highway Department for repairs but due to defective equipment the work was not completed. Deputy Supervisor Newvine asked if the Town had gained access to the cameras and recording devices at the Town Hall and Town Highway Department. Town Clerk Gale reported that both Court Clerk Ashley and Supervisor Cappellino had been taught how to utilize the cameras. Councilperson Andrews stated that he saw there were a lot of repair bills in the purchase orders for the month. Councilperson Andrews asked Highway Superintendent Durham if all of the equipment was fixed now. Highway Superintendent Durham stated that every time they plow something breaks. Highway Superintendent Durham stated that we have to have trucks and that no one was wasting parts in the highway department.

Councilperson Simmons stated the keyless entry to the Town Clerk office had gone offline and wondered what company takes care of the key fob system. Town Clerk Gale stated that it was Barkleys who installed the system, and she had been in contact with Travis at Barkleys concerning the matter. Town Clerk Gale stated that Travis had walked her through a correction to fix the problem by phone, as he was in another state at the time. Town Clerk Gale reported that Travis from Barkleys stated he would need to come to the Town to diagnose the problem however it has occurred before when an update does not complete on the computer.

Councilperson Simmons reminded everyone about Fowler Family Day. Councilperson Simmons stated that the date is set for Saturday July 13, 2019 from 9AM to 3PM. There will be a chicken barbeque, as well as everything that has been at the previous years' Family Day. Councilperson Simmons stated that Tonya Nichols is going to be in charge of the kids' games and activities again this year, commenting that Tonya had done a wonderful job last year.

Deputy Supervisor Newvine stated that the Fowler Family Day Committee was hoping to do something new this year regarding the raffle ticket sales and hoped for some feedback. Deputy Supervisor Newvine stated that the committee would like to mail some taxpayers in the Town 3 tickets to either sell or purchase themselves. He stated that it was a way for some folks to contribute to Fowler Family Day and the pavilion project if they couldn't make it to the event. Deputy Supervisor Newvine stated that even if only half returned their tickets we would still be further ahead. Planning Board member Dan Kingsley stated that he would like to help sell tickets for the raffle. Deputy Supervisor Newvine extended an invitation to Dan and anyone else who would like to assist with the committee to come to the meetings held every two weeks at the Town Hall.

Deputy Supervisor Newvine read a thank you letter from the American Cancer Society to the Town for the donation it made in memory of Councilperson Simmons sister Nancy Hall. Deputy Supervisor Newvine stated that the board was going to set the wages for Jack Woodward as Custodial Worker in a previous Executive Session and they had decided it would be \$20.00 / hour. Deputy Supervisor Newvine wanted it to be read into the official minutes that it had been discussed.

Deputy Supervisor Newvine discussed the New York State Cancer Benefit Program for Firefighters. He stated that he had been given the information on the Benefit Program from Dave Spilman Jr. Currently at the Gouverneur Fire Station there are 8 firefighters that are eligible. The total premium is \$1450.00. The Fire Department has split the premium up amongst the 5 communities that the Gouverneur Fire Department services. The Town of Fowler's share is \$261.00, which Deputy Supervisor Newvine felt was not a lot of money to protect our firemen. Bookkeeper Finnie stated that the premium was already paid by the Gouverneur Fire Department, and that this would be a reimbursement to them. Bookkeeper Finnie stated that it will be a yearly payment that will need to be included into next years budget.

Deputy Supervisor Newvine discussed the AIM Funding (Annual Incentive Maintenance) He stated that the Town is going to stand to lose \$8511.00 in the annual funding. He stated that he had placed a call to Senator Patty Ritchie's office on the matter. Deputy Supervisor Newvine

mentioned the Town of Fowler Health Officer position. He expressed that the Town of Fowler needs to be prepared for having to replace the present Health Officer in the event that Dr. Twining may not be available to retain the position in the future.

Public Comment

Assessor Chair Sherry Geer introduced Town of Fowler resident Amanda Dox Bobbett to the Board. Ms. Dox Bobbett stated that she was fairly new in town and wanted to stop in and see what goes on at Town board meetings. Planning Board member Dan Kingsley commented that the Town roads look nice and he felt that the Highway Department had done a good job this winter.

At 7:20 PM a motion was made by Councilperson Andrews seconded by Councilperson Simmons to go into Executive Session. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

At 7:30 PM a motion was made by Councilperson Simmons, seconded by Councilperson Andrews to return from Executive Session. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED. Deputy Supervisor Newvine stated that the Executive Session was called to discuss a couple of sticking points in the highway department contract negotiations. Deputy Supervisor Newvine stated that he thought we were there now, and he felt that soon it would be settled. He stated that there was some discussion concerning funeral leave, and the departments concerns about being able to grieve their families.

A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons seconded by Councilperson Andrews to audit the bills. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

The bills audited for the General and Highway Fund were # 58 - # 103, with a total of \$ 46,984.01.

The next regular scheduled board meeting will be on April 2, 2019 at 7PM at the Fowler Town Hall.

With no further business, on a motion of Councilperson Andrews, seconded by Councilperson Simmons, the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 PM. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tami Gale; Town Clerk

