

Town of Fowler October 3, 2024, Minutes of Regular Scheduled Board Meeting at 6PM.

Presentation of preliminary/tentative budget to board members for fiscal year 2025.

The Town of Fowler regular scheduled Town Board meeting was held on the above date with all board members present. Also present were Town Clerk Tami Gale, Highway Superintendent Randy Durham, Town Justice Timothy Knowlton, Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw, Assessor Chair Kathy Besaw, Planning Board Member John Walsh, Debra Walsh, and Rachel Hunter, editor of the Gouverneur Tribune Press.

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, all healthcare workers, and to give our sympathies to the families of those who have been lost Gloria Andrews, Town of Fowler Tax-Collector for 31 years, Robert Legacy, and Margaret "Maggie" Hill, mother of Deputy Town Clerk Kimberly Reed.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 9th, 2024, regular scheduled board meeting. A motion was made by Councilperson Cleveland, seconded by Councilperson Bishop to approve the minutes. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

DISCUSSION ON THE 2% TAX-CAP

Supervisor Newvine discussed we needed a motion to stay within the 2% tax-cap, reporting we won't have any problem doing that. A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons seconded by Councilperson Knight to stay within the 2% tax-cap. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

PRESENTATION OF PRELIMINARY/TENTATIVE BUDGET

Supervisor Newvine reported the town clerk had presented the board members with the preliminary/tentative budget for fiscal year 2025, a formality that must be done by October 5th each year. Supervisor Newvine discussed the budget is very preliminary, as described by Bookkeeper Finnie, as the fund balance has not been included in it at this stage of its preparation.

Set 2nd Budget Workshop in preparation of the Preliminary Budget

Supervisor Newvine reported a 2nd budget workshop is necessary in preparation of the 2025 preliminary budget. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the board members present to set the budget workshop to be held on Thursday, October 17th at 4:00PM.

NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING DATE SET

Supervisor Newvine reported a date needed to be set for the November board meeting. After some discussion, a motion was made by Councilperson Knight seconded by Councilperson Cleveland to set the November Town board meeting for Thursday, November 7th at 6:00 PM. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

SET DATE FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to make Thursday, November 7, 2024 the date to hold a public hearing on the proposed 2025 preliminary budget. A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons seconded by Councilperson Bishop. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

DISCUSSION ON AWARDING HEATING CONTRACT FOR THE TOWN BARN

Supervisor Newvine asked the board members if they have had the opportunity to look over the quote for a new heating system for the town barn that he had presented them with at the September 9, 2024 board meeting. Supervisor Newvine discussed if the board wants to approve the quote it would need to be approved in two sections as it is being provided by two separate companies.

AWARDING OF LABOR QUOTE

A motion was made by Councilperson Cleveland seconded by Councilperson Bishop to award the labor portion of the installation of the new heating unit at a cost of \$18, 500.00 to E.N.I. Mechanical, Inc. DBA Empire Northeast. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

AWARDING OF EQUIPMENT QUOTE

A motion was made by Councilperson Knight seconded by Councilperson Cleveland to award the purchase of the new equipment at a cost of \$14,908.00 to G.M. Hewitt, Inc. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

DISCUSSION ON NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Supervisor Newvine reported the purpose of the creation of the Town of Fowler's Non-Discrimination Policy was that it needed to be included with this year's paperwork in applying for the yearly beach grant. Supervisor Newvine discussed that the policy was provided to all board members this evening.

TEAMSTERS CONTRACT AMENDMENT

Supervisor Newvine reported an amendment has been made effective immediately to the Teamsters Local Union Contract. The Town will begin paying the monthly health insurance premiums and funding the deductible on new hires the month after they are hired, and all other benefits shall commence at the employee's one year anniversary. Supervisor Newvine discussed that the contract previously stated otherwise, and because both parties were unaware that this wasn't consistent with the New York State Teamsters Council Health and Hospital Fund rules, there will be no repercussions for the error.

Supervisor Newvine reported that also effective immediately, a typo had been amended to correctly list the maximum of eighty hours of comp. time and not 120 hours of maximum comp. time that was incorrectly listed.

ADVANCED BUSINESS SYSTEM PROOFPOINT QUOTE

Supervisor Newvine discussed that town clerk Tami Gale had provided a quote from our IT provider for an enhanced email security program which would cover the 6-business email addresses the town currently has set. Town Clerk Gale discussed the service offers protection from malware-based threats like emails that contain malicious attachments and links, email fraud, and credential phishing, as well as secures sensitive data like credit cards and social security numbers. Supervisor Newvine reported the cost to be \$388.78 to install and a monthly recurring \$30.78 fee for the service. It was the consensus of the board to approve the purchase, allowing Supervisor Newvine to sign the quote.

Town Department Reports

Justice Department

Town Justice Tim Knowlton reported:

- Everything is going well in the court.
- Court Clerk Ashley has completed her yearly 6 hours of training.

- A lot of tickets are being dismissed due to the State Police putting the wrong court date and time to appear on the tickets. Three out of five tickets issued on one day last week had incorrect dates and times and were all dismissed, per State law.

Supervisor Newvine asked if we could contact the police to make them aware of this problem. Justice Knowlton reported that he has called Matt Chivers, contacted the justice court ethics board, and there is not a thing he can do about it. He can't even call them and tell them about it. After further discussion, Supervisor Newvine reported he would make the State Police aware of the correct court date and time for the Town of Fowler.

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie was not in attendance.

Assessors

Assessor Chair Kathy Besaw reported:

- It has been business as usual.

Historian

Historian Karen Simmons reported:

- Nothing has been going on in the Historian's Office.

Animal Control

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

- One dog had been picked up running at large near Bob's Market. It was placed in the kennel and retrieved by its owner the same day.

Beaver Control

Councilperson Karen Simmons reported for Moyer's Wildlife Control:

- He is still working on beaver control near Grace Barbarito's residence. He has recommended placing a grate in the culvert at this location. The matter will need to be discussed further between Moyer's Wildlife Control and Hwy. Superintendent Durham.
- He submitted a bill this month for beaver control on the upper and lower Stone Road.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw reported:

- One burning complaint was received.
- There are some nice houses being built in the town.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Tami Gale reported:

- The ABS ProofPoint package that was discussed earlier would apply to all the business email addresses that were previously set up. In her office in particular, it will provide additional security with credit cards and other sensitive information and provide added protection from malware-based threats that exist in email attachments and links, for another level of protection.
- She has received a juror summons for the week beginning October 21st.
- DEC Gross sales for the month were \$4,639.00 with the Town of Fowler's Commission being \$222.06. She had licensed 40 dogs, issued 1 death certificate, 1 certified marriage transcript, handled 5 building permit applications had collected \$5.00 for the sale of a bicentennial book and collected \$45.00 in kennel and miscellaneous dog fees.
- Pepsi machine money collected was \$240.00.
- A scrap metal check was received in the amount of \$254.60 for 2.94 tons of metal.
- There will be a proposed local law allowing the town to have up to three deputy town clerks prepared for the November board meeting.

Maintenance

Maintenance Worker Byron Woodward reported:

- He is preparing the facilities for winter.

Supervisor Newvine asked maintenance worker Byron Woodward to look at the library box, as it has been reported that it is leaking. It was discussed that it may need to be moved to the inside of the pavilion as it is located underneath the eaves.

Highway Department

Highway Superintendent Randy Durham reported:

- 107 tons of pavement was put down today, on six roads, by Bill's Paving.
- He needed help with updating the Excel program on his computer. It was discussed he would contact the Town of Fowler IT department at ABS.

Supervisor Newvine discussed there had been a complaint received earlier in the day when paving was being done. Supervisor Newvine discussed that we seem to be receiving many safety complaints and asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham if we had enough proper bright visible signage to use when roadwork is underway. Hwy. Superintendent Durham stated the set up was good during the paving project. It was discussed that the highway department "flagger training" is being held on October 10th and everyone has been signed up to take the training.

Supervisor Newvine spoke for the board stating no matter the cost, if the highway department needed to purchase new safety equipment, the board is all for it, giving examples of brighter, taller and more visible signage to demarcate the work area.

- Shoulders and guard rails still need to be completed but the paving is finished for the year.

Supervisor Newvine asked about a bill in this evening's purchase orders for striping roads from St. Lawrence County Highway Department. Hwy. Superintendent Durham reported the bill was for the striping of the newly paved roads and the bill that was questioned at last month's meeting was for the dotting of the roads, in advance of the striping.

Councilmembers

Councilperson Lynn Bishop:

- Discussed, the mowing contract is going to be extended until there is no longer a need to continue mowing.

Councilperson Cleveland:

- He is expecting to have an estimate for the re-paving of the new basketball court in two weeks.

Councilperson Leo Knight Jr:

- Had his questions answered earlier in the meeting and had no further commentary.

Councilperson Karen Simmons:

- The month of September had 50 visits to the HAP Program. She thanked Marcia Cleveland, Ed Dowling, and John Dickey for donations to the program last month.
- On September 20, she and Supervisor Newvine delivered 104 care packages to senior citizens in the Town of Fowler.
- The next SOS care package delivery will be made in December.

Supervisor Ricky W. Newvine:

- Reported the beach is officially closed and he had completed the necessary paperwork for the yearly youth bureau grant.
- Reported he has also applied for a SWIMS grant, which should we receive it, would cover the cost of any increase in wages for the lifeguards next year.
- Discussed he would be attending a virtual meeting on the 8th of October which explains the process of applying for assistance with FEMA for damages to the roads caused by tropical storm Debby. Supervisor Newvine asked Town Clerk Gale to sign up to attend the FEMA training and confirmed that Hwy. Superintendent Durham was going to be taking the aforementioned FEMA training.

- Reported he had contacted DANC to inquire about any available housing grants and had learned that North Country Housing of Jefferson County would be reaching out to him to discuss any housing grant opportunities.

Public Comment

- Byron Woodward reported that the culvert on Little York Rd is full of water, that is over the top of it and is starting to wash out the road. He stated the beaver that is causing this issue, is located on CR 22, a County road, however this has now become a town issue. It was discussed that the County likely isn't going to do anything, as it is not hurting the County road. It was discussed Supervisor Newvine would make some calls to see what is able to be done regarding the ongoing beaver issue that is now affecting the road.

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

The bills audited for the General and Highway Fund were #381 to #417, with a total of \$55,142.48.

Supervisor Newvine reminded everyone that the Town Clerk's Office will be closed on Monday, October 14th, in observance of Columbus Day.

Supervisor Newvine reminded all to remember to vote in the General Election on November 5th.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be held on November 7th, 2024, at 6:00PM.

With no further business, on a motion of Councilperson Bishop, seconded by Councilperson Cleveland, the October 3rd, 2024, Regular Town Board meeting was adjourned at 6:27PM. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tami Gale; Town Clerk