

Town of Fowler December 11, 2023 Regular Scheduled Board Meeting Minutes at 6PM.

The Town of Fowler Regular scheduled Town Board meeting was held on the above date with three Board members present, and with Councilperson Bishop and Councilperson Cleveland attending by teleconference. Also, present were Town Clerk Tami Gale, Highway Superintendent Randy Durham, Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie, Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw, Planning Board Chair Stephen Gale, Councilperson Elect / Planning Board Member Leo Knight, Code of Ethics Committee Member Vivian Goodman, John and Deb Walsh, Richard Clement, Debra Andrews, 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.

Supervisor Newvine led a moment of silence to honor our military members, our healthcare workers, and people who have passed since the last meeting: Edna Gates, Bill Whitaker, and Roy LaMay.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 9, 2023, Town Board Meeting. A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons, seconded by Councilperson Andrews. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

RESIGNATION

Supervisor Newvine read aloud a letter of resignation from Francis Cole, Town of Fowler Highway Department employee.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to accept Francis Cole's resignation. A motion was made by Councilperson Andrews, with regret, seconded by Councilperson Simmons, with regret, with Supervisor Newvine stating Fran had been a good employee of the Highway Department. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

YEARS OF SERVICE RECOGNITION

Supervisor Newvine presented Jeff Andrews with a plaque for his 6 years of service, 2017 – 2023 as Councilperson for the Town of Fowler. Supervisor Newvine reported prior to Jeff's Councilperson seat, he had served on the Town's Planning Board and had worked as a highway department employee for a time.

Supervisor Newvine presented Debra Andrews with flowers, during the years of service recognition.

Supervisor Newvine reported a plaque for Francis Cole for his 22 years of service 2001 – 2023 with the Town of Fowler Highway Department will be presented at a later date, as Francis was not in attendance.

1998 INTERNATIONAL PLOW TRUCK BID OPENING

Supervisor Newvine reported that no bids had been received for the 1998 International Plow Truck.

DISCUSS/AWARD 2 YEAR FUEL BID TABLED ON 11/9/2023

BID RECEIVED/ACCEPTED/TABLED AT NOVEMBER 9, 2023 BOARD MEETING

Tripp Fuel, a Division of Glider Oil

Item #1 Low Sulfur Diesel : .17 cents reference today's price is \$3.506/gallon

Item #2 Regular Grade Gasoline: .17 cents reference today's price is \$2.452/gallon

Item #3 No.2 Heating Fuel for the Town Barn (50/50 Fuel Oil & Kerosene Mix)

Heating Oil: .17 cents reference today's price is \$3.408/gallon

Kerosene: .17 cents reference today's price is \$4.340/gallon

Item #4 No.2 Heating Fuel Oil for Town Hall: .17 cents reference today's price is \$3.408/gallon

All prices do not include any applicable taxes. A non-collusive bidding certificate was attached to the bid.

Supervisor Newvine reported that clarification had been garnered on the Fuel Bid that was accepted and tabled at the November 9, 2023 board meeting, stating the .17 cents will be what the Town will pay for each item over the bidder's cost. After some discussion, a motion was made by Councilperson Cleveland, seconded by Councilperson Bishop to award the 2 Year Fuel BID to Tripp Fuel, a Division of Glider Oil. All in Favor.
MOTION CARRIED.

YEAR END TRANSFER MEETING

Supervisor Newvine discussed the need to set a year- end transfer meeting date for budget amendments, budget transfers and to pay any bills received. After some discussion, the meeting was scheduled to be held on December 27, 2023 at 4:00PM.

TOWN DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Town Justice

Town Justice Tim Knowlton reported:

- The last court was full with every seat filled.
- He attended the Magistrates meeting in Canton, which are held on the 4th Monday of each month. Also in attendance were District Attorney Gary Pasqua, the Conflict Defender's Office, the ADA, and the Sheriff's Office. The discussion was on having assigned council present during night time arraignments, and discussion on proposed centralized arraignments.

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie:

- Provided Town of Fowler Cash Balance month ending November 30, 2023, and Budget Balance month ending November 30, 2023 reports to the board for their review.
- Reported 97.61% of the General Fund has been spent and 160.07% of revenue has been received.
- Reported 64.32% of the Highway Fund has been spent and 88.99% of revenue has been received.
- Reported everything looks good. There is a possibility we will need to use a little fund balance for the General Fund.

Assessors

Supervisor Newvine reported for Assessor Chair Kathleen Besaw was not in attendance:

- The assessors are closing out their valuations for 2023 and going over building permits for the year 2022. They have found several properties whose assessments are way too low, after having found buildings which are not recorded in property records.

Historian

Historian Karen Simmons reported:

- It has been quiet in the historian's office right now.
- She is still working on names for people who lived in the Town of Fowler when they were enlisted in the service, during the Korean Conflict. She would like to have a plaque made this year.

Animal Control

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

- 1 dog was picked up from County Route 22 and spent 1 day in the kennel, incurring a \$10.00 kennel fee.

Beaver Control

Councilperson Karen Simmons reported for Moyer's Wildlife Control who was not in attendance:

- There have been no beaver concerns for the month.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw reported:

- He will be spending time in late December, and early January entering all of his code enforcement paperwork into his computer.
- He had received correspondence from Jonathan M. Bingaman, Trinicanna LLC of Ashland, Ohio, who states his intent is to install multiple small turbines on the banks of the West Branch of the Oswegatchie River, on parcels of land between the Sand Road and Pitcairin/Stone Road, to generate electricity for the Towns of Fowler, including Balmat, as well as Edwards, using a hydro system called Turbulent Hydro based out of the UK.
- He reported Mr. Bingaman has made inquiries at the County, and at the DEC on the project. CEO Besaw reported he didn't know too much in regards on to how to proceed, so he is going to email the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, to ask what their requirements are.

It was the consensus of the board to invite Mr. Bingaman to attend a future board meeting with a presentation on his proposed project in the Town of Fowler, which will be scheduled through the Code Enforcement Office.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Tami Gale reported:

- The gross DEC sales for the month were \$229.00 with the Towns commission being \$12.61. She had processed 2 death certificates, 1 Marriage License, 1 Certified Marriage Transcript, licensed 36 dogs, handled 2 building permits, collected \$10.00 in kennel fees, collected \$5.00 for the sale of a St. Lawrence County Map, and had taken in \$3.00 in photocopies.
- She had received a scrap metal check in the amount of \$223.00 from NorthStar Auto & Salvage for 2.33 tons of scrap metal at \$100.00/ton minus a \$10.00 fuel charge.
- Bottle & Can money was received in the amount of \$91.40.
- Oaths of Office will be given to anyone needing to take one at the December 27th Transfer meeting after the appointments are approved, at the January 9th board meeting, or they can take it with her at the office anytime, within 30 days of taking their office.

Highway Department

Highway Superintendent Randy Durham:

- Asked the board if they would approve the yearly Highway Department Christmas breakfast, stating he would like to invite recently retired highway department employee John Walsh to attend the breakfast this year. It was the consensus of the board to approve the request. It was announced the breakfast would be held on December 20th at Bob's Market.
- Reported he has received a couple of applications for the advertised position in the highway department who have their CDL licenses, and their interviews will be conducted within the next few days.
- The 2024 Mack Plow Truck is expected to be in Harrisville this week.
- Reported he would like to discuss the maintenance of the Battle Hill Road with the Town of Hermon, stating there is a new Highway Superintendent taking office, and now is the time to re-discuss the issue with the care of the road, and the Town of Fowler not receiving any highway tax money for its maintenance. Supervisor Newvine reported he would contact the Hermon Town Supervisor for discussion on the matter and to work something out.

Councilmembers

Councilperson Lynn Bishop: Had no further commentary.

Councilperson Scott Cleveland:

- Discussed the recent events where children were asked to leave the area behind the Town Barn and Dog Kennel, stating he thought it might be a good idea to remove the basketball court and basketball hoop from that area and re-locate it to the other side of the facilities near the playground/pavilion where it is safe for the children to be, and there would no longer be any reason for anyone to be behind the highway buildings. He reported the signage may also need to be changed to clearly state "no one beyond this point", it currently states "Employees Only". He reported moving the basketball court and basketball hoop to the pavilion area, would also have any goings on recorded by the security system cameras.
- Supervisor Newvine thought this was a good idea, Councilperson Bishop stated he felt it was a great idea, and Highway Superintendent Durham stated this would be the year to do it, as they are planning on paving the Little York Road next year, and they would have pavement trucks here anyway. Supervisor Newvine stated they will get the plans going for it after the first of the year.

Councilperson Karen Simmons:

- In the month of November, the HAP food pantry had a total of 31 visits.
- Thanked Dave and Shelley Fackler and Mike and Melissa Tersmette for donations of food.
- Thanked Judy Brown, Fowler Baptist Church, the Jeff Andrews family, Tim Knowlton, and Sue Porter for their monetary donations for the food programs.
- The next SOS delivery will be made this Friday and there are 97 households expected to receive the delivery.

Councilperson Jeff Andrews:

- Thanked everyone for the last six years of working with them, stating it had been an honor.

Supervisor Ricky W. Newvine:

- Reported the Fowler Hydro court date has been extended for an additional 60 days allowing for complete records to be supplied to the appraiser hired by the Town of Fowler for the contested tax years.
- Reported the Town Board had received a thank you letter from the Gouverneur Breast and Ovarian Cancer Fund for a donation that was made in memory of Henry Lutz.
- Reported the Town of Fowler had received their yearly bill from Town Attorney, Henry Leader, for providing Professional Services in the amount of \$6,845.10.
- Reported he had received a call from State Senator Mark Walczyk's Office to learn of any new board members in the Town of Fowler in 2024
- Congratulated Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie on her 35 years of dedicated service to the Village of Gouverneur.
- Reported he had spoken to Fire Chief Tommy Conklin on the possibility of having a controlled burn for the property on County Route 22, but had learned the building must be standing, and therefore will not be able to be burned.
- Asked the board members if they would like to do another chicken barbecue to raise money for the SOS Program. It was discussed a date would be looked into for the month of February.

- Reported Bruce Green, Director of the Real Property Department in Canton, is tentatively scheduled to attend the January 8th Town Board meeting to discuss the pros and cons of the Town of Fowler having a re-valuation completed, before the State mandates it be done.

Public Comment

- Tim Knowlton stated he had discussed tickets for dogs running at large at the last magistrates meeting, as the Town of Fowler has had a lot of people failing to show up for court to take care of their tickets and had learned there is nothing that the court can do.
- Tim Knowlton reported the County mediator who performed mediations for evictions and summary proceedings for the court and was very successful in finding resolutions in the matter much of the time, will no longer be available as there is no more funding. He reported this is a huge loss to the court.
- Stephen Gale reported the Town had received the proposed Local Law to include dock regulations from the Town Attorney if the board would like to discuss it at the transfer meeting in December for consideration. It was stated that the County Planning Board had recommended placing the new dock regulations and all of the previous amendments to the existing land use law, into a comprehensive new land use law. It was the consensus of the board to discuss the proposed Local Law at the Transfer Meeting. Town Clerk

Gale reported she would have the public hearing advertised in the paper for a couple of weeks prior to the meeting.

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

The bills audited for the General and Highway Fund were #467 to #507 with a total of \$119,282.28.

The Year- End Transfer Meeting will be held on December 27, 2023 at 4:00PM.

The January Organizational Town Board Meeting will be held on January 8th, 2024 at 6:00PM.

With no further business, on a motion of Councilperson Andrews, seconded by Councilperson Simmons, the meeting was adjourned at 6:36 PM. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tami Gale; Town Clerk