

Town of Fowler November 7, 2024 Regular Scheduled Board Meeting Minutes and Public Hearings on the Proposed 2025 Town Budget and Proposed Local Law No. 3 of 2024 at 6PM.

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, Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie, Assessor Chair Kathleen Besaw, Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw, Town Justice Tim Knowlton, Planning Board member John Walsh, Code of Ethics Committee member Vivian Goodman, Laurina Greenhill, Deb Walsh, and Rachel Hunter, Editor of the Gouverneur Tribune Press.

Supervisor Newwine called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM then proceeded with the pledge of allegiance.

Supervisor Newwine led a moment of silence to honor our military men and women, our local health care workers, and for the family of Aunt Mary Spilman, who was recently lost at 108 1/2 years old.

Supervisor Newwine asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 3, 2024, Town Board Meeting. A motion was made by Councilperson Cleveland, seconded by Councilperson Simmons to approve the minutes. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED LOCAL LAW No. 3 OF 2024 ALLOWING FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF UP TO THREE (3) DEPUTY TOWN CLERK'S

At 6:01pm Supervisor Newwine asked for a motion to open the Public Hearing on proposed Local Law No. 3 of 2024, . A motion was made by Councilperson Cleveland seconded by Councilperson Bishop to open the Public Hearing on proposed Local Law No. 3 of 2024. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Supervisor Newwine asked Town Clerk Gale to explain the purpose of the proposed local law. Town Clerk Gale reported she had received an email from St. Lawrence County who is working on a request to change Civil Service rules to allow for additional Deputy Clerk positions for all Towns. The State has asked for a local law allowing for up to three Deputy Town Clerk's for any Town that is participating in this rule change. Town Clerk Gale reported that the Town of Fowler did not have a local law already, and thought it was a good idea to participate in the change.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED 2025 BUDGET

At 6:02pm Supervisor Newwine asked for a motion to open the Public Hearing on the proposed 2025 Town budget. A motion was made by Councilperson Knight seconded by Councilperson Simmons to open the Public Hearing on the Proposed 2025 Town budget. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Supervisor Newwine asked Bookkeeper Finnie to discuss the proposed budget. Bookkeeper Finnie reported there would be a 2% increase and pay raises were 2%, with the town employees being more as they were previously set in negotiations. Supervisor Newwine discussed the Public Hearing on the proposed 2025 Budget would be left open for as long as anyone needs for questions or for clarification and stated there were copies of the proposed budget available for the public to view.

DISCUSSION ON UPGRADING TOWN OF FOWLER BUSINESS CELL PHONES

Supervisor Newwine reported there was a proposal made at the October 17 budget workshop involving a possible need to upgrade the business cell phones in the Town of Fowler. The following information was supplied to the board regarding the matter:

VERIZON INFORMATION FOR UPGRADE OF PHONE(S)

THERE ARE 4 LINES AND 4 FLIP PHONES CURRENTLY. BEACH, DOG CONTROL, CODE ENFORCEMENT AND HIGHWAY. PRESENTLY DOG CONTROL, CODE ENFORCEMENT, AND HIGHWAY HAVE THE TOWN OF FOWLER CALLS FORWADED FROM THE VERIZON PHONES TO THEIR PERSONAL PHONES.

<u>PHONE</u>	<u>UPGRADE COST</u>
1. i-PHONE SE (SMALLER DEVICE)	FREE
2. i-PHONE 14 (6.1 INCH SCREEN)	\$29.99
3. i-PHONE 15 (6.1 INCH SCREEN)	\$49.99
4. I-PHONE 15+ (6.7 INCH SCREEN)	\$149.99

THE COST FOR THE PHONE IS A ONE-TIME FEE AND EACH PHONE THAT IS UPGRADED TO A SMART PHONE WILL HAVE A RE-OCCURRING MONTHLY FEE OF \$39.99.

It was discussed that presently the town pays a \$17.09 monthly re-occurring fee for the business lines.

APPLE POWER ADAPTERS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE AND WILL BE AN ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF \$18.73 EACH.

It was discussed that the code enforcement, highway, and dog control phones presently use call forwarding to their personal cell phones and that the beach phone is used only two months of the year.

Highway Superintendent Durham reported he had done a lot of research on emails, stating the department heads are now using business emails, and on his current iPhone that he owns, he had learned he can have two emails, and the issue that he had is now solved.

Supervisor Newvine asked the board members their thoughts on upgrading the four business cell phones to smartphones. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the board that the cell phone upgrade was not needed at this time.

DISCUSSION ON TOWN OF FOWLER BUILDING SECURITY

Supervisor Newvine discussed the need to investigate additional building security in light of recent events at the Town Hall. It was discussed Supervisor Newvine would contact Barkley's Safe & Lock in Canton to discuss furthering the town's building security and the cost of doing so.

Justice Tim Knowlton suggested the court security officer could be asked to work on occasions such as election days, when there are a high number of visitors to the Town Hall. Supervisor Newvine discussed he would contact the board of elections to inquire about the suggestion.

Supervisor Newvine further discussed the potential need to have a wall built to provide a door entrance into the courtroom. He will contact maintenance worker Byron Woodward to see if he thinks it would be feasible.

Supervisor Newvine thanked election workers Jane Dodds, Bonnie Seaman, Larry Streeter, James Wranesh, Sue Cartwright, and Jo Ann Whitford for their professional handling of the incident that took place at the Town Hall during the November 5th, 2024 General Election.

Supervisor Newvine thanked Marcia Cleveland for notifying members of the Town Board and thanked the Town of Fowler voter, who called the authorities to report the incident. Supervisor Newvine thanked Hwy. Superintendent Durham, who was close by, for arriving on scene to offer his assistance. Supervisor

Newvine thanked the State Troopers for their terrific job handling the incident and for their presence throughout the day.

Supervisor Newvine reported there is a stay away order in place for this individual until May reporting he can be nowhere near the town hall building. This stay away order may be extended depending on how this case progresses

TOWN DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Town Justice

Town Justice Tim Knowlton:

- He and Court Clerk Ashley have completed their yearly online training.
- Court has been slow.

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie:

- Provided Town of Fowler Cash Balance month ending September, 2024 and Budget Balances month ending September, 2024 to the board for their review.
- 84.61% of the General Fund has been spent with 110.11% of revenues received.
- 70.02% of the Highway Fund has been spent with 82.01% of revenues received.
- Reported the sales tax was received in the amount of \$179,000.

Assessors

Assessor Chair Kathleen Besaw:

- Reported there is nothing new and it has been business as usual.

Historian

Historian Karen Simmons reported:

- There has been nothing going on in the historian's office, and it has been quiet.

Animal Control

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

- DCO Moyer picked up a female Husky in Hailesboro, which will be ready for adoption on Tuesday.

Beaver Control

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

- Beaver control is being conducted on Shantyville Rd, and Fullerville Rd.
- He will be investigating beaver sites located on CR 22 on Saturday, in his canoe.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw:

- Construction projects are being completed.
- He received a building permit for another new home that will be built in the Town of Fowler.
- Attended a FEMA webinar and reported the new Flood Plain Maps will be received in mid-2025.
- Received and handled one complaint.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Tami Gale reported:

- The gross DEC sales for the month were \$889.00 with the Towns commission being \$49.06, she had issued 1 marriage license, issued 2 certified marriage transcripts, collected \$3.00 in miscellaneous dog fees, licensed 40 dogs, handled 4 building permits, issued 5 certified death certificates, processed 1 genealogical services request, and had taken in \$7.25 in photocopies.
- She had received a scrap metal check in the amount of \$516.10 from NorthStar Auto & Salvage for 3.97 tons of scrap.
- Bottle & Can money was received in the amount of \$140.28.

- She has received 2 FOIL requests this month requesting information from the assessing department that were completed.
- Correspondence was received from the USDA announcing the availability of low-interest loans for agricultural operations who had suffered loss from hurricane Debby 8/5/2024-8/10/2024. The information is available on the town website: fowlerny.com and the deadline to apply is July 1st.
- She has been working on the 2025 newsletter that will be mailed to taxpayers with their tax receipts, and is waiting on information from a few department heads so that it can be sent out to be printed by Coughlin Printing Co.
- Yearly sexual harassment training has been completed by ½ of town employees and will need to be completed by December 31st.

Highway Department

Highway Superintendent Randy Durham:

- Reported the Town of Fowler needs to declare its seasonal roads, as is done every November. A motion was made by Councilperson Cleveland seconded by Councilperson Bishop to declare the following roads as seasonal roads from December 1, 2024, to April 1, 2025. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

SEASONAL ROADS DECLARED

Stone Road, from the bus turn around to Orebed Road.

Sibley Road from bus turn around to State Land.

Fire Falls Road from Luke Gates home to Town of Fowler Line.

Lamb Road from Country Club Road to Town of Fowler Line.

Shantyville Road from the Besaw Farm to the plow turn around on Byrns Road end. (Corral)

- Reported the new heating system in the Town Barn will be completed next week and asked the board's approval for maintenance worker Byron Woodward to hook up one of the old furnaces as a backup. It was the consensus of the board to approve the request.
- Reported there is a closing date set for the 2024 MACK plow truck on December 11th.
- Reported he was given the task by Supervisor Newvine, of finding out why the town hadn't received the grant of \$30,000 yet for the 2024 MACK plow truck, and he had learned the bond council had sent the wrong information to the USDA, and when the information was re-sent to the USDA, bond council had forgotten to send a needed attachment. (The issue was previously discussed at the October 17th budget workshop with Town Clerk Gale reporting the USDA loan for the 2024 Mack was "hung up" at Bond Council).
- It was discussed that the 2024 Mack truck had been paid for in December of 2023, and the grant that we will receive after the closing, on December 11th is money that was not in this year's budget and that we could use.
- The new 2026 MACK Plow truck has been ordered .
- Town bookkeeper Finnie has been working on getting paperwork from Community Bank stating their interest rates are higher than the USDA interest rates to complete the necessary application for the new 2026 Mack plow truck loan and has encountered an issue obtaining it. Supervisor Newvine reported he would call Community Bank to discuss the matter.

Storm Update

- Discussed he wasn't providing figures this evening, but that all of the assemblyman and senators, now know who he is. He has talked to the County, and the County has relayed that they have no

help for us. He stated good luck with FEMA, reporting FEMA is a great thing if you have a few million dollars in hand, because what they want is to repair the areas that received damage and repair them to a level that would never receive damage again. He gave Country Club Rd as an example, reporting it was repaired after it was washed out by the storm, using two sluice pipes, and if FEMA was involved, he can guarantee that it would have had to be repaired with a bridge. A bridge repair would cost 3-4 million dollars with a \$300,000 fee to apply the last time he had investigated it through Bridge New York. He stated all of this comes out of our pocket, with a 75% reimbursement. He reported he has discussed the matter with Supervisor Newvine several times. It was reported that the Town of Fowler has not received their first call from FEMA yet, since signing up for FEMA 4825-DRNY, disaster assistance.

- Reported he has been working with Assemblyman Ken Blankenbush who might have something more to assist the town.
- Reported all of the damage was paid out of the equipment fund, so there will be no new equipment this year.
- Asked the board to approve the purchase of hooded class 3 sweatshirts for the highway department workers. It was the consensus of the board to approve the purchase.
- Reported he would probably be putting the highway department back on 8 hour shifts next Wednesday.

Supervisor Newvine communicated to Hwy. Superintendent Durham that there had been a couple of compliments received on the improved safety set up of the highway department work zones since the highway department workers attended flagger training. Hwy. Superintendent Durham reported that the highway department workers are all certified now in flagger training, and he has been ordering new safety equipment to use.

Councilmembers

Councilperson Scott Cleveland:

- The new basketball court upgrade won't be scheduled to be done until next year.

Councilperson Lynn Bishop:

- Asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham if the plows and sanders are ready for the season. It was discussed the sanders are all ready to go, but the plows take only 10 minutes to put on, and the weather is not calling for snow.

Councilperson Leo Knight Jr:

- Reported he has received lots of compliments of the painted lines on the Sylvia Lake Rd.
- Discussed different guard rail options for roads.

Councilperson Karen Simmons:

- In the month of October, she served a total of 61 people in the HAP Program, reporting 14 had visited the HAP Program today.
- Thanked Dr. Robert Saidel, who has been donating 50 lb. bags of potatoes to the HAP Program, that she places into smaller portions.
- The next SOS delivery will be made on December 20th and there are 106 households expected to receive the delivery.

Supervisor Ricky W. Newvine:

- Reported, unfortunately, National Grid has put in for an increase with the Public Service Commission and the new bill is expected to be \$18.92 a month and the new gas bill is expected to be \$18.34 a month, beginning April 1 if is approved.

- Reported he had received correspondence that the Ampersand Hollow Dam is not going to be renewing its FERCA license, and asked assessor chair Besaw if she had heard anything further. It was discussed that she hadn't.
- Gave an update on the "Even-Year Election Bill", that was adopted by New York State in 2023, reporting it has been found to be "unconstitutional" and will no longer be happening.
- He continues to work on obtaining a tax- exempt warranty for the generac generator.
- Asked Town Clerk Gale to notify maintenance worker Byron Woodward that the light switch in the bathroom of the Town Hall needs to be fixed.
- Read aloud a thank you card that was overlooked at the last board meeting from Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie for our thoughts, prayers and flower arrangement, during her hospitalization.
- Read aloud a thank you card from Deputy Town Clerk Kimberly Reed and family, for the donation that was made in memory of her mother Margaret "Maggie" Hill, to the American Cancer Society.
- Thanked Shari Barnhart for the donation of 2 folding picnic tables to the Town of Fowler.

CLOSING THE PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED LOCAL LAW No. 3 OF 2024 ALLOWING FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF UP TO THREE (3) DEPUTY TOWN CLERK'S

Supervisor Newvine asked if there were any questions on proposed Local Law #3 of 2024. With no questions received, at 6:36PM, a motion was made by Councilperson Simmons seconded by Councilperson Knight to close the public hearing on proposed Local Law #3 of 2024 allowing for the appointment of up to three (3) Deputy Town Clerk's. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION #16 OF 2024

Adopting Local Law #3 of 2024 Allowing for (3) Deputy Town Clerk's

Supervisor Newvine submitted Resolution #16 of 2024, a Resolution, allowing for the appointment of up to three (3) Deputy Town Clerk's to the board for adoption. A motion was made by Councilperson Cleveland seconded by Councilperson Simmons. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

AYES: 5 NEWVINE, SIMMONS, BISHOP, CLEVELAND, KNIGHT

NAYS: 0

CLOSING THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED 2025 BUDGET

Supervisor Newvine asked if there were any questions on the proposed 2025 Town budget.

With no questions received, at 6:37PM, a motion was made by Councilperson Cleveland seconded by Councilperson Bishop to close the public hearing on the proposed 2025 budget. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION #17 OF 2024

Adopting the Town of Fowler Budget for Fiscal Year 2025.

Supervisor Newvine submitted Resolution #17 of 2024, a Resolution, approving and adopting the operating budget for the Town of Fowler for Fiscal Year 2025 to the board for adoption. A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons seconded by Councilperson Knight. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

AYES: 5 NEWVINE, SIMMONS, BISHOP, CLEVELAND, KNIGHT

NAYS: 0

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION #18 OF 2024

USDA Loan Resolution for the acceptance of the 2024 Mack Plow Truck and Authorization to make the final payment of the 2024 Mack Plow Truck

Supervisor Newvine submitted Resolution #18 of 2024, a Resolution, that the Town of Fowler hereby agrees to accept the 2024 Plow Truck and authorize final payment on the Plow Truck to the board for adoption. A motion was made by Councilperson Knight seconded by Councilperson Bishop. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

AYES: 5 NEWVINE, SIMMONS, BISHOP, CLEVELAND, KNIGHT

NAYS: 0

Public Comment

- Tami Gale asked to have Marcus Moe added to those who were being remembered this month.
- Laurina Greenhill expressed the potential concern for using private cell phones to conduct public business, as records from a private cell phone used to conduct public business would be subject to a public record request and were foitable.
- Glen Besaw asked if any board members recalled if the town had ever placed any drainage lines where the old ball diamond was located at the town hall, as there is a landowner on Little York Rd having flooding issues. Supervisor Newvine will check with retired maintenance worker Don Seaman.
- Glen Besaw asked the board to check with the Town of Fowler's legislative representative to inquire about a new mandate from Governor Hochul that would intercept money that was earmarked to go to the County for drug treatments for the incarcerated. Supervisor Newvine reported that he would call Legislator Sheridan and inquire into the matter.
- Rachel Hunter announced that the Fowler Baptist Church appreciates everyone who came to the election night roast beef dinner, reporting they had sold over 200 meals.

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

The bills audited for the General and Highway Fund were #418 to #469 with a total of \$132,270.45.

The next regular scheduled board meeting will be held on December 9, 2024 at 6:00PM.

With no further business, on a motion of Councilperson Bishop, seconded by Councilperson Cleveland, the meeting was adjourned at 6:47PM PM. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tami Gale; Town Clerk