

Town of Fowler December 9, 2024 Regular Scheduled Board Meeting Minutes 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, Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw, Town Justice Tim Knowlton, Planning Board member John Walsh, Maintenance Worker Byron Woodward, and Deb Walsh. Rachel Hunter, Editor of the Gouverneur Tribune Press, attended via teleconference.

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 members, our healthcare workers, and for the families of those who have been recently lost, Marcus Moe, Ralph House, and Robert F. Paro Jr., father-in-law of Councilperson Leo Knight Jr.

Supervisor Newwine asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 7, 2024, Town Board Meeting. A motion was made by Councilperson Cleveland, seconded by Councilperson Bishop. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

YEAR END TRANSFER MEETING

Supervisor Newwine 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 Monday, December 23, 2024 at 3:00PM.

DISCUSSION ON SECURITY UPGRADE FOR THE TOWN HALL

Supervisor Newwine asked board members if they had received the estimate from Barkley's Safe & Lock for the installation of a back door locking unit. Supervisor Newwine reported that the upgrade would give both the court clerk and the town clerk the ability to lock and unlock the door at any time. Supervisor Newwine discussed he felt the upgrade was a very valuable one, noting the recent incident occurring during the general election at the town hall. Supervisor Newwine asked board members their thoughts on the upgrade. After some discussion, a motion was made by Councilperson Cleveland seconded by Councilperson Knight and carried approving the security upgrade for the town hall.

TOWN DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Town Justice

Town Justice Tim Knowlton reported:

- It has been a busy month with many arraignments.
- He has been contacted by Matt Chivers, of the Unified Justice Court System, and had been asked to fill in for Fred Finley, the town justice for the Town of Edwards and the Town of Clare, while he recovers from a recent injury. It was discussed he anticipates he will be substituting as town justice for each of the aforementioned towns through April of next year.

Bookkeeper

Supervisor Newwine reported for Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie who was not in attendance:

- She had provided Town of Fowler Cash Balance month ending October 31, 2024, and Budget Balance month ending October 31, 2024 reports to the board for their review.
- Reported 92.12% of the General Fund has been spent and 111.64% of revenue has been received.
- Reported 75.70% of the Highway Fund has been spent and 82.19% of revenue has been received.
- Reported everything looks good.

Assessors

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

- It has been business as usual.
- She has accepted an assessor position with the Town of Hermon.

Historian

Historian Karen Simmons reported:

- She had delivered the names of the individuals from the Town of Fowler who had served during the Korean Conflict to Bradley's Military and had learned that currently they do not have a carpenter, so they don't have a plaque to put them on.
- Maintenance worker Byron Woodward was contacted to see if he could help.
- Glen Besaw has offered to help with the plaque, and she will deliver it to Bradley's Military when one is made to have the names added.
- The cost to have the names put on the plaque will be \$25.00.
- She has been working with a gentleman from Albany who has contacted her about having a plaque made for a headstone located in the Gulf Cemetery.

Animal Control

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

- Two dogs have been in the kennel since the last meeting, and both dogs have been adopted. One dog was adopted by Terrell Ferrer, and the other was adopted by a resident of Gouverneur.

Beaver Control

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

- He has been doing beaver control on the Little York Road and on the Fullerville Road.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw reported:

- He has received many calls from people trying to button up their building projects.
- He has received a building permit for another high dollar home to be built in the Town of Fowler.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Tami Gale reported:

- The gross DEC sales for the month were \$306.00 with the Town's commission being \$16.85. She had processed 5 death certificates, licensed 15 dogs, handled 1 building permits, collected \$35.00 in kennel fees, and had taken in \$1.00 in photocopies.
- She had received a scrap metal check in the amount of \$279.00 from NorthStar Auto & Salvage for 3.10 tons of scrap metal.
- Notification was received from the Public Health Department to schedule the rabies clinic for 2025, with the paperwork needing to be turned in by January 21st.

Highway Department

Highway Superintendent Randy Durham:

- Asked if the town was going to have another chicken BBQ this winter. It was the consensus of the board to have another chicken BBQ, possibly on the first Saturday in February.
- Reported the lights and the heat are now completed in the town barn and notified maintenance worker Byron Woodward that the area is now ready to be painted.
- Repairs to the old furnace will be looked at next year, for its use as a back up source of heat for the town barn.

NEW TRACTOR MOWER AND BROOM DISCUSSION

Highway Superintendent Durham provided information to the board on equipment that he would like to purchase. He reported he would like to solicit quotes on a tractor mower and broom. After some discussion, a motion was made by Councilperson Knight seconded by Councilperson Bishop and carried, to advertise the invitation to bid. Town Clerk Gale asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham to clarify if he wanted one total amount on the bid sheet or if he wanted individual pricing. It was discussed that the invitation to bid should be the complete total and would be advertised to come in by 4:00 PM on January 13, 2025.

- Asked the board if they would approve the yearly Highway Department Christmas breakfast to include inviting the retired members of the highway department to the meal. It was the consensus of the board to approve the request.
- Reported the sweatshirts have been ordered for the highway department workers.
- Reported Assemblymen Ken Blankenbush and Scott Gray will be at the next Highway Superintendents meeting.

DISCUSSION ON SAFETY POSITION FOR HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Hwy. Superintendent Durham asked Supervisor Newvine how he felt about having one person within the highway department be put in charge of the safety requirements for all highway department worksites. It was discussed that the safety position would be filled internally and the person who fills it would receive an additional 20 hours of vacation time. After receiving consensus from the board, Hwy. Superintendent Durham reported he will move forward with it.

After further thought on the matter, Councilperson Cleveland asked if the safety position receiving 20 additional hours of vacation, in consideration for holding the position, would be acceptable in regard to the union contract. After further discussion, Supervisor Newvine asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham to contact the union to garner their opinion and amend the contract to include the newly created position.

Maintenance

Maintenance Worker Byron Woodward:

- He will begin painting inside the highway department in January, 2025.
- He is looking for steel lockers for the highway department. Supervisor Newvine discussed that he would contact past councilmember Jeff Andrews to inquire if the school may have any old lockers that we could obtain for the highway department.

Councilperson Simmons asked maintenance worker Byron Woodward to remove 2 protruding screws from the top of the food storage closet shelf that are an injury hazard.

Councilmembers

Councilperson Scott Cleveland:

Recommended that the board take another look at adding onto this place. He reported that when he came to unlock the town hall over the weekend, which was reserved for a birthday party, the town justice had just finished an arraignment upstairs. He stated we don't run into this situation very often, however, questioned how it could be handled if someone had reserved the town hall for a party and had arrived with all of their party supplies and party attendees, and there is an arraignment that needs to be done. Councilperson Cleveland suggested long term that maybe a community room could be added on to the town hall. He stated the space is small, we have a food pantry in here, and he doesn't feel that there is

enough space. Supervisor Newvine agreed it was a good idea and brought up the possibility of expanding the pavilion, and the need for a storage building.

Councilperson Lynn Bishop: Had no further commentary.

Councilperson Leo Knight Jr:

- Thanked the board members on behalf of his family for their thoughtfulness during their recent loss.

Councilperson Karen Simmons:

- Reported in the month of November, the HAP food pantry had a total of 37 visits.
- The next SOS Program delivery will be made on December 18th. There will be 106 deliveries made.
- Thanked Rob Saidel, Mike and Melissa Tersmette, the Presbyterian Church, Glen and Kathy Besaw, and Dave and Shelley Fackler for their grocery donations.
- Thanked Leo Knight, Jeff and Debbie Andrews, and the Fowler Baptist Church for their monetary donations.
- Discussed that bottle and can money received through donations and scrap metal checks for the town currently get split evenly between the playground fund and the food programs, but asked the board members, if the money could instead all go to just the food pantry, as things are getting tighter for the food pantry.
- She reported the cash balances as listed in the month ending October, 2024 report received from the bookkeeper this evening showed the SOS/HAP fund to have \$6,106.40 and the pavilion/playground fund to have \$23,650.33.

Supervisor Newvine asked Councilperson Simmons how much is spent on a delivery for the SOS Program. It was discussed that \$2,000 is spent on the gift cards alone, and each delivery has three other grocery items included in the delivery. Supervisor Newvine stated that he did not feel that it was an issue, as the playground/pavilion receives all of the money that is raised during family day. Highway Superintendent Durham stated that when he solicits bottles and can donations and scrap metal donations, he lets people know that the money is helping kids, and a lot of people donate their bottles and cans and scrap metal because of the kids getting something out of it.

After further discussion, it was the consensus of the board to have bookkeeper Finnie deposit all can and bottle donation money and all scrap metal donation money to only the SOS/HAP Programs for a trial period of one year. Supervisor Newvine reported he would make bookkeeper Finnie aware of the change approved by the board members. Councilperson Simmons thanked the board for their approval.

Supervisor Ricky W. Newvine:

- Reported December 16th through mid-January Gage Cornell will be an intern in the highway department.
- Reported the 2025 town and city chargebacks had gone down this year by \$500.00.
- Received a call from the hwy. department that they weren't paid for their overtime. It was discussed that payroll was completed early due to vacations.
- Asked about the port a pot bill in this evening's purchase orders. Supervisor Newvine discussed the service may get put out to bid next year as he can't remember it ever being put out to bid.

- Reported he had received notification from the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau that we were going to receive \$5,000 grant money towards the beach.
- Asked Town Clerk Gale if there was a new public official's book put out this year. Town Clerk Gale reported she would check with the Association of Towns and get some on order if there were a new publication.

Public Comment

- Deb Walsh discussed her concerns about animals not being cared for properly on the Fullerville Road. Code Enforcement Officer Besaw reported the Sheriff Department handles this type of complaint, but that he would visit the location and report what he has viewed to the Sheriff Department.
- Tim Knowlton reported that Matt McDougal, one of our own, has become a St. Lawrence County Sheriff.

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 #470 to #506 with a total of \$64,818.39.

The Year- End Transfer Meeting will be held on Monday, December 23 , 2024 at 3:00PM.

The January Organizational Town Board Meeting will be held on January 13th, 2025 at 6:00PM.

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

Tami Gale; Town Clerk