**Colton Regular Monthly Town Board Meeting, March 8, 2023**

**County of St. Lawrence, State of New York, 94 Main St., Colton NY 13625**

Present: Ronald Robert, Town Supervisor Councilpersons: Lisa Fisher

Kevin Hawley, Highway Supt. Jacob Poste

Darren Richards, Code/Safety/DPW Supt.

Jennifer Cole, Town Clerk Kevin Beary

Meeting attendees: Nancy Robert, Diane Wood, Jeff Tubolino, Jim Durham, Patti LaRoc, Stephen Knight, Mary Rutley, Shelley Rayner, Raindi-Lee Planty, Matt Planty, Rick Perkins, Grace Hawley, Anne Townsend, Ed Fuhr

Zoom attendees: John Gray, Peggy Shea, Mary Jane Watson, Eleanor Menz, Cynthia Hennessy, Dennis Eickhoff, Judy Fuhr, Michael Hayes, Peggy Mousaw, Joanne Fisher

Supervisor R. Robert led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Meeting opened at 6pm as scheduled.

Motion #1

**Approve the agenda for this meeting**

Mr. Poste made the motion to approve the agenda for this meeting, seconded by Ms. Fisher.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Motion carried

Motion #2

**Approve 2023 Regular Town Board Meeting Minutes**

Motion made by Ms. Fisher seconded by Mr. Poste to approve the minutes from the February 2023 regular monthly meeting and Executive session.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Motion carried

Motion #3

**Authorize Bank Recon, Transfers & Bills in Warrant #3, 2023**

Ms. Fisher brought it to the boards attention that when signing the vouchers/bills, please be more careful to double check the bill amount matches what is on the voucher. One of the vouchers had a typo on it, the voucher was more than the bill and Supervisor Robert and Councilman Beary had signed off on it.

Ms. Fisher also brought it to the boards attention that that there was a Norfolk and Beier Invoice from Attorney Norfolk with a charge on it showing Councilman Beary had called the attorneys office. Mr. Beary did not sign off on the bill when it was time for board signatures. Ms. Fisher asked why Mr. Beary would not sign off on the bill. Mr. Beary stated that he felt the invoice was incorrect in what Mr. Beary was requesting from the attorney and that is why he did not sign the voucher. Ms. Fisher asked that in the future the board be made aware of phone calls to the town attorney not placed by the Supervisor.

Motion made by Mr. Poste, seconded by Ms. Fisher to authorize payment of bills labeled Warrant #3, do a budget amendment and a transfer as indicated below.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Motion carried

General Fund………………………………………………………………………...$54,814.59

Highway Fund………………………………………………………………………...27,658.55

Library Fund…………………………………………………………………………....1,603.99

Colton Light Dist…………………………………………………………………………899.17

S. Colton Light Dist………………………………………………………………………839.91

Sewer Fund #1…………………………………………………………………………..8,194.95

Water Fund #1…………………………………………………………………………..2,434.16

**Transfers**

To: A1355.20 Assessor Equip…………………………………………………………..$1,850.00

A1420.40 Attorney Contr………………………………………………………….....5,000.00

From: A1990.40 Contingency…………………………………………………………..$6,850.00

**Courtesy of the Floor:**

Peggy Mousaw asked about Zoom? Is the board going to continue with the service? Ms. Mousaw stated that $144,000.00 in COVID federal funding was received for vital services. Zoom should be considered a vital service for our elderly population and for residents who are physically unable to attend board meetings. Ms. Mousaw stated that if the town board does away with zoom, that could leave us open to a possible lawsuit/claim against Colton. Ed Fuhr spoke up and stated that he also wrote a letter to the town in regard to keeping zoom. Anne Townsend stated that she did the same.

Mary Jane Watson asked about the secretary/keyboard specialist for the town supervisor. She stated that a civil service exam is needed for such a position. Mrs. Shelley Rayner the towns bookkeeper and assessor spoke with the county previously on the position. Because the position is part-time and only 8 hours per week, a civil service exam is not required.

Mary Rutley asked the about following: 1- The ZOOM access is one of the most important avenues of communication for taxpayers who do not get out to these meetings. I support the continuation of ZOOM in allowing them to tune in to what is happening in Colton. Ten users tuned in to listen and interact with tonight’s Board. 2- The minutes of the February meeting and tonight’s agenda list the position of Key Board Specialist for what was discussed at the February meeting as Secretary. From my experience on the Board of Directors for the St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District, I recall that Key Board Specialist and other specific titles means that this would be a Civil Service position. Candidates for the

position would be required to take a Civil Service Exam and those applying for such a position need to be in the top three

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*Courtesy of the Floor cont’*

names on posted exam results. Please explain why the Board deviates from these guidelines for Ronnie’s secretary. 3- This

comment is directed at the Highway Superintendent. We have observed that on the Windmill Road signs prohibit snowmobiles from traveling on sidewalks. In years past these signs were also posted at ends of the sidewalk on the bridge on State Route 56. Those signs are needed. 4- I support reaching all households in the Colton township that lack cable internet services. We were able to hook-up to SLIC last year and it was an immense improvement over the problems of the satellite dish. Some 20 households have been identified in the Higley area including part of Gulf Road to Back Woods Road. The support for those residents and property values for those homes would enhanced by the Town Board working toward providing the services. 5- When I viewed the list of Town accomplishments on the Town website, I noted that a thank you is

in order for the accomplishments of former Supervisor George Cayey for the Town projects of the building a salt barn, updating the sewage treatment plant in Colton hamlet, and enabling the construction at the transfer station this year. Thanks to Penny Cayey his wife for her efforts in behalf of the Kathryn Hayes Kitchen. Lorraine Gowing obtained funding for and implementing the library project for children. Dennis Eickoff found grant funds to replace the Hepburn Library roof. Cynthia

Hennessy and Dennis led efforts to assure the replacement of the Museum roof. And our retired judge Dale Robar supported the improvements at the JR Watson Community Center in South Colton. I need to review the website posting to acknowledge any other individuals who contributed to finding money and seeing work to completion of all these improvements.

Thank you for moving the Courtesy of the Floor to the beginning of your meetings.

**County Legislators Report: Legislator Rick Perkins**

At the March 6th Full Board Meeting -

We had 34 resolutions.

We had 9 modifications to the budget.

We had 11 Agreements/ Contracts to be signed.

We had a resolution authorizing the filling of 14 vacancies positions.

We had a resolution authorizing the write off for bad debt in the probation department.

We had a resolution opposing the imposition of unfunded mandates in the NYS FY 2024 Budget and calling on the

Governor of NYS to remove Part M of the article VII revenue bills from the 2024 Executive budget.

We had a resolution setting a date for a Public hearing on proposed local law A (no.) for the year 2023 “Exemptions for

certain members of volunteer fire companies and ambulance services in St Lawrence County pursuant to section 466-A of the real property tax law” and repealing local law no.2 for the year 2005 in St. Lawrence County.

We had a resolution calling on the NYS to continue to Pass-Thru Federal Affordable Care Act Enhanced Federal Medicaid

Assistance Percentage Funds.

We had a resolution amending Resolution No.21-2003 Depositories and investment of County funds.

We had a resolution rescinding the Hiring Freeze established in resolution No. 281-2008.

We had a resolution Proclaiming March as Women’s History month in St Lawrence County.

We had resolutions changing the application of the Salary plan for non-union graded and management employees as

recommended in the 2022 annual vacancy review analysis.

We had a resolution accepting the recommendations of the 2022 annual vacancy review analysis for insurance benefits

and leave accruals for non-union part time employees.

We had a resolution accepting the recommendations regarding the continuance of creating temporary positions to train

with employees prior to retirement or when the need arises.

We had a resolution requesting the enactment of Senate Bill N0. S4567 and Assembly Bill No. A5021 to extend the

authorization of St Lawrence County to impose an additional 1% of Sales and compensating use taxes.

We had a resolution authorizing the chair to issue a revocable license to NYS Senate for space located at 48 court St.

Canton.

**Town Engineer:** Jeff Tubolino

The transfer station committee had a meeting just before this board meeting. More site work and site clearing to be done. We will be reaching out to Hwy Supt Kevin Hawley to go over the paving that needs to be done. Advertising for bids for the compactors and the improvements to be done on March 20th 2023. Pre-bid meeting on April 3rd. Open bids on April 17th. Potentially we can award at the May 2023 town board meeting. Mr. Tubolino to send Mrs. Cole the information to be advertised.

Motion #4

Ms. Fisher made the motion to advertise the bids for the Transfer Station in the Watertown Daily Times on March 20, 2023, seconded by Mr. Poste.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Motion carried

**Highway Report:**

* Since the last board meeting, we have been focusing on snow and ice. We also have been doing vehicle maintenance. All equipment has been working well.
* Asphalt pricing for this year will be available next week when the county bid opens. I'll have my item 1 agreement for your review and approval directly after that.
* The new village truck still has not arrived however it is now at Stadium Int. in Watertown for their final inspection so it should be delivered soon.
* This is the time of year that the spring road posting occurs. The board normally directs the town clerk to make the appropriate posting in the paper, as well as instruct me to post the roads when appropriate.

Motion #5

Ms. Fisher made the motion to post an advertisement in compliance with Section 1660 of the Vehicle and Traffic Law – all roads in the Town of Colton will be closed to vehicles having a gross weight in excess of 6 tons, seconded by Mr. Poste.

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*Hwy Report Cont’*

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Motion carried

* Also, I would like to ask the boards permission to advertise bids for the purchase of a flow boy trailer as we budgeted. I wish to advertise and receive and open bids prior to next month's meeting, so I can hopefully have a recommendation for your final approval.

Motion #6

Ms. Fisher made the motion to place an ad in NCN for open bids on the Flowboy trailer budgeted for the Hwy Dept., seconded by Mr. Poste.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Motion carried

* Hwy Superintendent Hawley received a stern complaint regarding sidewalks in South Colton. The complaint stated

that Mr. Hawley is not doing a good enough job, Colton’s sidewalks are much better maintained. Mr. Hawley stated that Colton’s sidewalks are cleared early and more often due to children walking to school. He also stated that the State plows are the reason most of the snow is on the sidewalks. A majority of Colton’s sidewalks are not right next to the road, there is a decent amount of space between the road and the sidewalks. In South Colton, the sidewalks are right next to the road. Mr. Hawley does not have enough man power to clear the sidewalks every time the State plow goes through. Perhaps the Town can hire someone to clear sidewalks?

**Code Enforcement Report:**

Transfer Station

The Transfer Station design is almost complete. A few questions must be made on who is doing preliminary site work and control shack construction for example.

Water/Sewer

Mike, Justin, Chad and I attended a conference at the Best Western in Canton hosted by Rural Water. It was a really good conference about water/wastewater sustainability. We are ahead of many other townships for sure, but many advancements must be continued for our districts. As soon as the transfer station design and finalized, Blueline and myself will start the

movement on the wastewater upgrades for the WWTP. I would like permission to send in Justin Johnson’s wastewater license update certificate with the early bills next week. The fee is $160.00 and also submit a conference bill of $240.00 for early bills for another conference for water and sewer licenses. These are the most affordable classes for renewing licenses.

Motion #7

Motion made by Ms. Fisher to send Mr. Johnsons wastewater license renewal in for payment, $160.00 and approve and pay for DPW D. Richards, J. Johnson, M. Schwartfigure, C. Moore to attend NNY Water Works Conference in Canton, $60.00 each with the early bills, seconded by Mr. Poste.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Motion carried

Building and Grounds

The skating season has shown great numbers for the rink. Mike is doing a fantastic job and runs the rink program quite well. Broomball and free skate have really good numbers going into March and the colder conditions are making for a steady crowd. The museum ceiling damage from the roof leaking claim is into the insurance and they are conducting the claim process currently. Snow removal is going smoothly and equipment has been maintained throughout the season.

Safety

We have had a busy month for safety. I conducted a safety meeting with the highway with topics such as snow plow truck defensive driving and setting up a safe work zone especially for spring cleaning. The crews have been asking for the board to reconsider 2 high visibility sweatshirts for each of the guys working on the roadside. I am asking the board on their behalf to reconsider their request.

Motion #8

Ms. Fisher made the motion to order two high visibility sweatshirts per employee for DPW and Highway, seconded by Mr. Poste.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Motion carried

Code Enforcement Office

9 permits for the new year. Working on a 1204 Department of State report for 2022 due by April 1st. I attended the Northern Zone Conference and am completely recertified for another year of code enforcement. We have a ZBA application coming soon and a Conditional Use permit on a new business coming soon as well.

**Town Clerk Report:**

* The upcoming NYSTCA Clerks conference is scheduled for April 23-26, 2023. This year it is being held in Syracuse. Some of the subject classes that will offered are: NYS Assessors (the connection between town clerks and assessors), marriage, birth and death, municipal ethics, retirement reporting and much more. These conferences are key to keeping updated on new policies and laws as well as a great networking tool to gain knowledge from other clerks, vendors, AOT etc.

Motion #9

Motion made by Mr. Poste to allow Colton Town Clerk Jennifer Cole to attend the NYSTCA conference in Syracuse April 23-26 2023, seconded by Ms. Fisher.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Motion carried

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*Town Clerk Report Cont’*

* NYSAMCC membership for Michelle our court clerk – full annual membership dues are $60.00. Requesting board permission payment of this fee.

Motion #10

Mr. Beary made the motion to pay the NYSAMCC membership dues of $60.00, seconded by Mr. Poste.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Motion carried

* At the last board meeting, Ms. P. Mousaw requested that the February 2022 Emergency Meeting minutes be corrected stating that proven through a FOIL request, she did not apply. After much research, it was found that, no there was not an application process, however there were several parties that showed interest through email or verbal communication. Ms. Mousaw sent an email to myself - the town clerk as well as the town supervisor, various board members for the ZBA, BAR, and Planning, and CEO/DPW Sup Darren Richards stating that she was interested in any openings on any boards for the Town of Colton. In this email she also requested a copy of the formal announcement for the open position of assessor for the Town of Colton so she may apply. Since there was no announcement placed, I took her email as a “person of interest” for the open vacancies on the various boards and assessor position and informed the Town Board of her interest. At this time, I am requesting the boards permission to change the wording from “applicants” to “interested parties” for the February 18, 2022 Emergency meeting for all open positions.

Motion #11

Ms. Fisher made the motion allowing Colton Town Clerk Jennifer Cole to change the February 18, 2022 Emergency meeting minutes wording “applicants” to “interested parties”, seconded by Mr. Poste.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Motion carried

* Second notice fee for tax collection. Charge - $2.00, $1.00, nothing.

Motion #12

Ms. Fisher made the motion to send out the reminder land tax collection bill with no extra fee added, seconded by Mr. Poste.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Motion carried

* Stipend/allowance for registrar fees. As the town registrar, I am able to get back fees collected from certified copies of birth and death. Currently I am filling out a voucher for reimbursement of these fees. Would the board consider a yearly allowance for the registrar fees? This is just something for the board to consider. I am doing more investigating on this.

**Bookkeeper/Assessor Report:**

Bookkeeper

Interest earned last month for NYCLASS - $12,610.33

Assessor

I attended the monthly SLC Assessor meeting today and learned about “Image Mate Online”. It is a link on the SLC website that will allow people to view their assessment, tax map and other information as well as others and is free to use. The link can be found at **stlawco.org** and is on their home page. Bruce Green was instrumental in getting this going in SLC. He worked with Warren Wheeler to get this implemented.

**BTI Report:**

* I received the amended aquatic permit for black fly control, expanding the treatment area. We will still prioritize the original area, adding additional streams when we can.
* The potential new crew member is still completing pre-employment requirements. The rest of the crew will be starting when the weather breaks.
* I will begin treatments next Monday, March 13th just to get us started. DEC requires an exact start date 7-14 days in advance.

**Planning Board Report:**

Anne Townsend stated that the board has been working on a comprehensive plan. Its been 45 years since Colton’s last comprehensive plan was put together. The Planning board has been meeting with county officials and Potsdam officials regarding this. There is still lots of work to be done, as it is a several-year project. The Planning board would like to hire two summer interns for this project. They will be posting this with St. Lawrence University and with Clarkson University. One intern for design, surveys etc., and another intern for technical work. These interns should be at no cost to the taxpayers of Colton other than the possibly mileage reimbursement.

**Dog Warden Report:**

Nothing to report at this time.

**Library Report:**

Recently hosted a successful coffee hour. Coffee hour at the library will be the 2nd and 4th Wednesday every month. The grant the library has been working on is currently under budget. We need to spend more to get the grant monies. There is an upcoming library board meeting where this subject will be brought up.

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**Correspondence:**

Ms. Fisher wanted to reiterate on the ARPA funds received. The town has been getting a lot of emails and questions have been asked about the APRA funds and what the monies were spent on and what the monies could have been spent on. When awarded the APRA funds, the town could only apply those funds to certain areas. One being sewer plant upgrades, the other to broadband.

**Unfinished Business:**

* The town received one application and letter of interest for the position of Keyboard Specialist to the Town Supervisor. Donna Buckley solely applied for the position.

Motion #13

Ms. Fisher made the motion to hire Ms. Buckley as Keyboard Specialist to the Town Supervisor at $26.10 per hour maximum 8 hours per week, seconded by Mr. Poste.

Ayes 3-Fisher, Poste, Robert

Noes 1-Beary

Motion carried

Councilman Beary wanted the minutes to reflect that he feels this position is a terrible misuse of taxpayers money. Mr. Beary stated that 8 hours per week at $26.10 per hour equals approximately $10,857.00 yearly.

* Museum repairs – Insurance representative is coming Friday, 03/10/2023 to take a look at the damage. Getting an estimate from Bonno Builders.
* Letter to Spectrum/SLIC for internet services in Colton for residents with no internet connection. Currently Supervisor Robert is working on this.

**New Business:**

* Town audits for court, town clerk, bookkeeper and water & sewer – Ronnie cannot be involved in the audit for the bookkeeper. Supervisor Robert to schedule these next week at the latest.
* On February 13, 2023 the Town received at letter of resignation at the town hall. Effective immediately Mrs. Randi-Lee Planty resigned from the Colton town board.
* Colton Town Clerk Jennifer Cole received three letters of interest for the open town board seat. Supervisor Robert received one. Interested parties for the open town board seat are: Ed Fuhr, Stephen Knight, Peggy Mousaw and John Gray. The remaining town board members voted to appoint one of the interested parties to the open board seat. The vote is as follows:

3 -Stephen Knight – Fisher, Poste, Robert

1 - Ed Fuhr – Beary

Mr. Stephen Knight is the newest member of the Colton Town Board, filling the vacant seat of Randi-Lee Planty. Mr. Knights term ends 12/2023.

**Adjournment:**

Motion #14

With no further business to discuss Ms. Fisher made a motion to close the regular monthly meeting at 7:24pm, seconded by Mr. Beary.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Motion carried

Meeting minutes by Colton Town Clerk Jennifer Cole

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