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

Present: Ronald Robert, Town Supervisor Councilpersons: Lisa Fisher – *absent*

 Kevin Hawley, Highway Supt. Jacob Poste

 Darren Richards, Code/Safety/DPW Supt. - *absent* Stephen Knight

 Brittney Gravlin, Deputy Town Clerk Kevin Beary

Meeting Attendees: Jennifer Cole, Ed Fuhr, Kirke Perry, Nancy Robert, Rick Perkins, Anna Green, Grace Hawley, Andrew Cochran, Alexis Cochran, Mike Schwartfigure, Randa Mitchell, Matthew Mitchell, Linda Shaver, Shelley Rayner.

Zoom Attendees: Peggy Shea, Michael Hayes, Judy Fuhr, Cynthia Hennessey, Elenor Menz, Joe (unknown), Mary Jane Watson, Dennis Eickhoff.

Supervisor Ronald Robert opened the meeting at 6:04pm, immediately following the Public Hearing for Solar Law. The pledge took place prior to the Public Hearing.

Motion #1

**Approve the Solar Law**

Motion made by Mr. Poste, seconded by Mr. Knight to approve the final draft of the Solar Law.

Ayes 3

Noes 1 – Beary

Absent – Fisher

Motion carried

Motion #2

**Adopt the Meeting Agenda**

Motion made by Mr. Poste, seconded by Mr. Knight to adopt the agenda.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Absent – Fisher

Motion carried

Motion #3

**Approve November 2023 Regular town Board Meeting Minutes**

Motion made by Mr. Poste, seconded by Mr. Knight to approve the November 2023 Town Board Meeting Minutes.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Absent – Fisher

Motion carried

Motion #4

**Authorize Bank Recon, Transfers, & Bills in Warrant #12, 2023**

Motion made by Mr. Knight, seconded by Mr. Poste to authorize payment of bills labeled Warrant #12, do a budget amendment and a transfer as indicated below.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Absent – Fisher

Motion carried

 *December:*

 General Fund …………………………………………………………………………… $ 369,598.29

 Highway Fund …………………………………………………………………………… 94,763.75

 Library Fund …………………………………………………………………………… 6,664.75

 Colton Light ………………………………………………………………………….… 896.56

 South Colton Light District ……………………………………………………….…… 839.57

 Sewer Fund #1 …………………………………………………………………….…… 13,066.08

 Water Fund #1 …………………………………………………………………….…… 7,075.00

 TRANSFERS:

 General Fund – A1355.400 Assessor Contr. …………………………………………………… $ 1,200.00

 A1620.100 Building PS ………………………………………………………... 11,000.00

 A3989.120 Safety Secretary …………………………………………………… 500.00

 A5132.400 Garage Contr. ……………………………………………………… 1,800.00

 A7140.400 Recreation Contr. ………………………………………………….. 2,000.00

 A8160.120 Transfer Station PS ……………………………………………….... 2,000.00

 A8160.130 Transfer Station Secretary …………………………………………. 1,000.00

 A9035.800 Medicare …………………………………………………………… 100.00

 A599 Fund Balance ………………………………………………..................... $ 9,600.00

 A1420.400 Attorney Contr. ………………………………………………......... 5,000.00

 A4068.130 Mosquito PS ……………………………………………….............. 5,000.00

 Highway Fund – DA5130.400 Machinery Contr. ………………………………………………… $ 10,000.00

 DA5142.400 Snow Contr. ………………………………………………………. 5,000.00

 DA5130.200 Machinery Equip. ……………………………………..................... $ 15,000.00

*Cont’ Transfers:*

 Library Fund – L7410.428 Reading Program ……………………………………………………. $ 106.00

 L7410.200 Library Equip. ……………………………………………………….. 600.00

 L7410.122 Library Clerical ……………………………………………………… 200.00

 L9030.800 Social Security ………………………………………………………. 100.00

 L9035.800 Medicare …………………………………………………………….. 100.00

 L7410.430 Office Supplies ……………………………………............................ $ 106.00

 L7410.450 Library Fuel ……………………………………................................. 1,000.00

 Sewer Fund – SS8110.13 Sewer Clerk …………………………………………………………. $ 1,000.00

 SS8110.200 Sewer Equip. ……………………………………............................. 1,000.00

 Water Fund – SW8310.130 Water Clerk ……………………………………………………….. $ 1,000.00

 SW8310.200 Water Equip. …….………………………………........................... 1,000.00

 Light Districts – SL1-5182.400 Colton …….………………………………................................... $ 1,000.00

SL2-5182.400 South Colton …………………………………………………….. 1,000.00

 SL1-599 Fund Balance …………………………………….................................. 1,000.00

 SL2-599 Fund Balance …………………………………….................................. 1,000.00

**Courtesy of the Floor:**

Ms. Randa Mitchell announced the dates of Colton Winterfest, February 9 - 11, 2024. Ms. Mitchell requested guidance on conducting outdoor activities on the Main Street bridge and how those activities will coincide with any necessary plowing. The Town provided guidance that the road has to remain passable but the Highway Department will remain aware of the festivities if any snow plowing should need to occur. The Town Clerk will provide a letter in support of Winterfest and the closing of Main Street bridge during the Saturday, February 10, 2024 festivities.

**County Legislators Report:** Rick Perkins

Report on file.

**Engineer Report:** Jeff Tubolino

Solar Law

The SEQR documentation was published on the Environmental News Bulletin on November 1, 2023. The 30-

day public comment period ended on December 1, 2023.

Transfer Station

Since the last Town Board meeting the following major items have been completed on the project:

1. Truss installation.

2. Roof sheathing.

3. Gable sheathing.

4. Exterior and interior ceiling sheathing.

5. Exterior wall air barrier.

6. Exterior wall rigid insulation.

7. Exterior masonry wall insulation.

The General Contractor is working on fiberglass ceiling insulation and closed cell spray foam wall insulation.

Interior wall panels will be installed after the closed cell spray foam insulation is complete. Metal roof panels

are expected to be delivered next week.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements

We are working out the final details on the clarifier drive replacement and aeration access platform. We’ll schedule a meeting with DPW staff by the end of the year for a final review session.

Pedestrian Improvements

No updates.

**Dog Warden Report:** Mike Gilbo

Nothing to report / not present.

**Bookkeeper/Assessor Report:** Shelley Rayner

* Focusing on year end and capturing as many bills as possible against the current 2023 budget.
* Requested three bills be approved by the board to avoid late fees.

*(Motion pended until Clerk’s report to capture the additional invoice for approval.)*

* + MX Fuels $678.38
	+ Campany Diesel $648.75
	+ Guilley’s $37.90

**BTI Report:** Andrea Malik

The two new BTI crew members completed their pre-employment requirements and have been put on payroll.

* The BTI training course will be Jan 22-25, 2024.
* In a previous board meeting this fall, the Board approved $20hr for first season BTI crew members. There was no motion made on hourly rates for 2nd year and beyond BTI technicians. For your review these were the previous hourly rates:
* 1st year $15.50
* 2nd year $16.75
* 3rd year $17.75
* 4th year $18.75
* 5th year $19.75
* 6th year $ 20.75
* 7th year and beyond +\_\_\_%
* Proposed hourly rates for 2024:
	+ - * 1st year $20.00
			* 2nd year $21.50
			* 3rd year $22.00
			* 4th year and beyond +\_\_\_\_%

In 2024 I will have two first year technicians. One will be away for 2-3 weeks in March/April. I have been in touch with a previous crew member who still is certified, 2024 would be his 3rd season. He will try and fill in if he can. (he doesn’t know his work schedule for next spring yet) I am still waiting on my other crew member; this would be her 8th season. She has a full-time job and is hoping to be able to work part-time on BTI. She is negotiating with her current employer for flexibility in her schedule so she can do this. Her last season, 7th was $21.31hour.

* The two experienced crew won’t be starting until March.
* Requesting a motion be made regarding BTI technician wages.
	+ Supervisor Robert advised that any change in wages be tabled until the Union contract has been approved.

**Code Enforcement/DPW Report:** Darren Richards

Transfer Station:

Roof System is on the new Transfer Station. The building is almost completely enclosed. We are discussing commercial locks and changing out the cores when the contractor is finished. Our discussions are usually staging ahead to keep the project moving smoothly.

Water/Sewer

Currently we are working on a project that will decrease the harmonics which is occurring in our intake of the blowers. Parts are coming in and this will increase our efficiency at the plant and solve a noise complaint. This upgrade is being done in-house currently. The designs are getting close to being finished as well for the complete upgrade.

Building and Grounds

First snow falls have given us reasons we are prepared for winter. Plows harnessed grounds prepared, etc. Rink liner goes in this week coming up. Hoping for a good season.

Safety

Clearinghouse has changed again. CDL registration and monitoring has become more complex and there isn’t an end in sight on the red tape. Our Transfer station canopy will offer a safer design for non-slippage and a better design for our citizens. A few rails must be added in our designs for the Spring. Discussions on a crosswalk from Snell to Cold Brook Dr. are still being discussed.

Code Enforcement Office

86 building permits this year. Nothing this month for Planning Board permit-wise. ZBA approved a variance last month. Code Officer is signed up for annual recertification conference the first week in March. Can I get approval from the Board to attend?

**Highway Report:** Kevin Hawley

* We are currently focusing on snow and ice. Our new village truck is having some problems - the sander had a circuit board burn out. The replacement can take up to 90 days, at a cost of $1,400. Campany Diesel is currently working on it to bypass the circuit board with old school solenoids. All other trucks are currently working as they should.
* I have obtained a few quotes on a replacement loader and new sidewalk machine, but I have not decided what machine / machines best fits our needs and budget. I will have a proposal next month.
* I have an invoice from Campany Diesel for repairs on our 2018 international that I would like paid with the early bills, $648.75. Requesting a motion and approval from the board to do so.

**Library Report:** Dennis Eickhoff

Provided an update on the library’s back wall project, including that the needed amendment has been submitted. Anticipating hearing back and being able to start work in the spring.

Provided personnel update: Resignation of Library Board Member Cindy Dusharm, replacement of Ms. Dusharm by Mr. Ronald Gotham via recommendation from the Library Board Secretary, and renewal of Olivia Parker as the Library Board Secretary. A request for approval of the replacement and renewal was requested.

Motion #5

**Approve Mr. Ronald Gotham as Replacement for Ms. Cindy Dusharm on the Colton Library Board**

Motion made by Mr. Knight, seconded by Mr. Poste to approve Mr. Gotham into a Colton Library Board position.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Absent – Fisher

Motion carried

*Cont’ Library Report:*

Motion #6

**Renew Ms. Olivia Parker as Colton Library Board Secretary**

Motion made by Mr. Poste, seconded by Mr. Knight to approve the renewal of Ms. Parker’s position on the Colton Library Board.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Absent – Fisher

Motion carried

**Planning Board Report:** Kirke Perry

Jeff Rousell successfully obtained a $74,000 comprehensive plan grant from the New York Smart Growth Program. This grant will cover our expenses for hiring an outside agency to help us build a comprehensive plan, which is 90% funded by the state. The Town is not required to spend the whole amount available. The Comprehensive Plan Committee will meet with the Clarkson team to finalize the questionnaire next Tuesday, December 19, 2023. This questionnaire will then be sent out to the residents of Colton to gain input on what they would like to see within the plan.

**Town Clerk Report:** Brittney Gravlin

* January 2024 Organizational Meeting, to confirm salary and wages for 2024, to be held on the first business day of the year: Tuesday, January 2nd, 2024 at 6 pm.
* Local law establishing alternates to the ZBA? Previously I sent the Town of Pierrepont’s local law regarding this. Is this a law the Town of Colton would like to consider adopting?

Motion #7

**Approve the Creation of a ZBA Alternate Policy for the Town of Colton**

Motion made by Mr. Beary, seconded by Mr. Knight to approve the creation of a ZBA Alternate Policy.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Absent – Fisher

Motion carried

* Increase Town Clerk petty cash from $50.00 to $200.00. Currently for the town clerk petty cash there is $5.00 (dog licensing, building permits, etc.) and $45.00 set for DEC (hunting, fishing etc.). People will often come into the clerk’s office using large bills to purchase their licenses. I have a difficult time breaking the large bills. Also, if a certified letter or another larger parcel of mail needs to be sent out, an increase in the petty cash would make this task easier. I would like the board to consider increasing the Town Clerk petty cash to $200.00 pursuant to

town law §64(1-A), page 75 of the AOT Town Law manual. Please keep in mind that there is no bank locally for me to request change; once I’m out, I’m out.

Motion #8

**Increase the Town Clerk Petty Cash**

Motion made by Mr. Poste, seconded by Mr. Knight to approve increasing the Town Clerk’s petty cash from $50.00 to $200.00.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Absent – Fisher

Motion carried

* Board Updates:
	+ Zoning Board of Appeals: Reappoint Mrs. Judy Fuhr
	+ Board of Assessment Review: Reappoint Ms. Shirley Sochia
	+ Planning Board: Reappoint Mr. Kirke Perry as Chairman

Motion #9

**Approve Reappointments of the Zoning Board, Board of Assessment Review, and Planning Board**

Motion made by Mr. Poste, seconded by Mr. Knight to approve the reappointments of Mrs. Judy Fuhr (ZBA), Ms. Shirley Sochia (BAR), and Mr. Kirke Perry (PB).

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Absent – Fisher

Motion carried

* Payment of Ferrelgas bill with the early bills, $682.15, to avoid late fees.

Motion #10

**Approve Payment of Four Additional Invoices to be Included within Early Bills**

Motion made by Mr. Poste, seconded by Mr. Knight to approve the following payments: Ferrelgas ($682.15), MX Fuels ($678.38), Campany Diesel ($648.75), and Guilley’s ($37.90).

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Absent – Fisher

Motion carried

* Brittney is doing very well with her role as Deputy Town Clerk. She has shown me some new ideas that make the office flow much easier. Brittney is truly an asset and I have confidence that she can run the office professionally and smoothly if I need to be away.
* We are gearing up for tax season. We have made some changes to office hours for the month of January that we hope will benefit the residents. We are considering the same office hours for the first two weeks in February as well.

**Correspondence:** Supervisor Robert spoke to the thank you card received from the Swafford family regarding the flowers sent to their family service.

**Unfinished Business:**

FOIL Policy

No questions or concerns regarding the draft FOIL Policy, Town Clerk requested approval to implement.

Motion #11

**Approve Adopting Draft FOIL Policy into Final**

Motion made by Mr. Knight, seconded by Mr. Poste to approve and implement the FOIL Policy for the Town of Colton as written.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Absent – Fisher

Motion carried

Town Cleaner

Request made by Supervisor Robert to make Ms. Stacey Coleman the permanent cleaner for the Town heading into 2024. This discussion was tabled until verification from the Town Labor Attorney takes place.

Transfer of Land: Walt Paul to Town of Colton

Discussion took place amongst the board members, verifying the contents of the agreement. No further questions or concerns were raised, motion was made to accept the terms and allow the Paul Family to sign the agreement, the Town’s signatures will follow.

Motion #12

**Acceptance of Land Transfer as Written**

Motion made by Mr. Beary, seconded by Mr. Poste to approve the land transfer document as written in regards to the land parcel located at the end of Morgan Road, ready to obtain signatures.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Absent – Fisher

Motion carried

Sidewalk Projects: Mr. Beary requested further clarification on the McKabe Road sidewalk project being referenced in the November Supervisor report regarding budget, timeline, and contractors. Supervisor Robert stated the project was on hold until spring due to weather, only preliminary discussion had taken place. Mr. Beary and Supervisor Robert agreed to amend the November Supervisor report to accurately reflect the project’s “preliminary” stages and that no official contracting or board movement had been made on the project.

**New Business:**

Lewis & Greer Law Firm Joining with Whiteman Osterman and Hanna LLP

Discussion of transition took place, no immediate implications for the town. The new engagement letter and retainer agreement need approval for Supervisor Robert to sign off.

Motion #13

**Approve Engagement and Retainer of Whiteman Osterman and Hanna LLP**

Motion made by Mr. Knight, seconded by Mr. Poste to approve the replacement of Lewis & Greer Law Firm by Whiteman Osterman and Hanna LLP, and the signature thereof by Supervisor Robert.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Absent – Fisher

Motion carried

Employee Handbook: New Hire Physical Exams

Discussion took place regarding the current Employee Handbook language of a new hire’s physical exam be completed through a physician of the Town of Colton’s choosing. Currently, there is no contract in place for the Town to absorb this cost as stated. This discussion is tabled until further research can take place on the options of establishing said contract in accordance with any new hire physicals, current employee physicals, or return to work physicals.

Colton Court Justice Salary

Mr. Knight provided comparable compensations for Justice’s within St. Lawrence County of similar size towns, as researched by Town Justice William Reed. As shown through the comparables, the Town of Colton Justice is well below average. The conversation is tabled until the January 2nd Organizational Meeting.

Credit Card Limit Increase

Current credit line is $5,000 total. With the drastic inflation over the last few years, bill payment timing, and operations of the economy being primarily online/electronic (ensuring the Town is getting the best price on items), an increase in the credit limit is requested. Discussion took place, Mr. Knight recommended $10,000.

*Cont’ New Business:*

Motion #14

**Increase the Credit Card Limit to $10,000**

Motion made by Mr. Poste, seconded by Mr. Knight to approve the credit card limit increase from $5,000 to $10,000.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Absent – Fisher

Motion carried

Memorial Service Flower Fund

Mr. Beary stated the correspondence with the Association of Towns that provided guidance on purchasing flowers for employees, board members, and former board members with Town funds – such purchase is authorized. The guidance stated “of nominal value” and that each board should establish the parameters of such. Discussion took place.

Motion #15

**Approve the Creation of Memorial Recognition Policy**

Motion made by Mr. Knight, seconded by Mr. Beary to create a policy that will allow the use of Town funds, up to $100, for the passing or services of a past employee and elected person or current employee or elected person.

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Absent – Fisher

Motion carried

Tank Safe Insurance

Current fuel, diesel, and used oil tanks are nearing life expectancy. The Highway Department is notifying the board they’ll be looking into insurance quotes to protect these tanks. Tank insurance is standard and used throughout Towns within St. Lawrence County. Further research will take place on quotes, county policy for guidance, and containment regulations / recommendations.

**Announcements:**

Nothing to report.

**Adjournment:**

Motion #15

 With no further business to discuss, Mr. Knight made a motion to close the regular monthly meeting at 7:38pm, seconded by Mr. Poste.

 Ayes 4

 Noes 0

Absent – Fisher

 Motion carried

*Meeting minutes get approved at the following/next month’s town board meeting.*

*Meeting minutes by Colton Deputy Town Clerk Brittney Gravlin.*