**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. Stephen Knight

Brittney Gravlin, Deputy Town Clerk Kevin Beary

Hearing Attendees: Jennifer Cole, Kirke Perry, Andrea Malik, Nancy Robert, Rick Perkins, Shelley Rayner, Ed Fuhr, Grace Hawley, Linda Shaver, Bill Swafford, Linda Shaver, Jeff Rousell, and Nancy Robert.

Zoom Attendees: Peggy Shea, Mary Jane Watson, MH Hayes, Cynthia Hennessy, Judy Fuhr, and Dennis Eickhoff.

Supervisor Ronald Robert opened the meeting 5:59 pm, immediately following the Public Hearing for ZBA Alternates Local Law #1-2024. The pledge took place prior to the Public Hearing.

Motion #1

**Approve LL #1-2024: Alternates for the ZBA board**

Mr. Knight made a motion to move forward with the filing of Local Law #1-2024, ZBA Alternates.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

Motion #2

**Adopt the Meeting Agenda**

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

Ayes 4

Noes 0

Motion Carried

Motion #3

**Approve 2023 December Public Hearing and Regular Town Board Meeting Minutes**

Motion made by Ms. Fisher, seconded by Mr. Knight to approve both sets of December 2023 Meeting Minutes.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

Motion #4

**Approve 2024 January Organizational Meeting Minutes**

Motion made by Mr. Knight, seconded by Mr. Poste to approve the January 2, 2024 Organizational Meeting Minutes.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

Motion #5

**Authorize Bank Recon, Transfers, & Bills in Warrant #1, 2024**

Motion made by Mr. Poste, seconded by Mr. Knight to authorize payment of bills labeled Warrant #01, complete budget amendment, and a transfer as indicated below.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

General Fund ………………………………………………………………………………….. $ 178,828.68

Highway Fund …………………………………………………………………………………. 20,921.47

Hepburn Library Fund ………………………………………………………………………… 1,649.23

Colton Light …………………………………………………………………………………... 850.57

South Colton Light District …………………………………………………………………… 910.31

Sewer Fund #1 …………………………………………………………………………………. 17,369.71

Water Fund #1 ………………………………………………………………………………….. 2,495.04

$ 223,025.01

TRANSFERS: none for January 2024 Regular meeting.

**Courtesy of the Floor:**

Nothing presented at this meeting.

**County Legislators Report:** Rick Perkins

At the January 2nd Full Board/Organizational Meeting:

Dave Forsythe was elected as Chairman, and I was elected as Vice Chairman.

We had 31 resolutions.

We had 11 modifications to the budget.

We had 10 Agreements/ Contracts to be signed.

We had a resolution authorizing the filling of 8 vacancies positions.

We had a resolution adopting the Rules of Procedure.

We had a resolution correcting and refunding erroneous taxes.

We had a resolution authorizing the use of County owned machinery.

We had a resolution authorizing the St Lawrence County Solid Waste Department to formally adopt a credit policy.

We had a resolution authorizing the transfer of an exclusive option for the lease of county owned mineral rights on two certain parcels of land in the Town of Edwards.

We had a resolution authorizing a blanket bond in lieu of individual sureties for county officials and employees.

*Cont’ County Leg. Reort:*

We had a resolution designating bank depositories and investment of county funds.

We had a resolution authorizing petty cash account and departmental cash drawers.

We had a resolution designating newspapers for 2024.

**Engineer Report:** Jeff Tubolino

Absent, accepted report as written.

Transfer Station

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

1. Fiberglass ceiling insulation.

2. Closed cell spray foam wall insulation.

3. Interior fiberglass wall panels.

4. Metal roof panels.

5. Exterior doors and hardware.

6. Interior doors.

7. Exterior ceiling sheathing.

The General Contractor will be working on exterior metal siding/trim and interior painting. Electrical, Plumbing, and Mechanical work can follow when interior painting is complete.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements

We had a final review session with DPW staff on January 10th to go over the design drawings. Based on feedback from DPW, we are incorporating final details on the clarifier drive replacement, aeration tank access platform, blower piping, and aeration system.

I’d like to request the Town Board to authorize the project for public bidding. If authorized, I’ll coordinate with Jennifer Cole and Darren Richards on advertisement and bidding opening dates.

Water Treatment Plant

On January 10th, I met with DPW to discuss instrumentation improvements for the water treatment plant. The installation of Variable Frequency Drives (VFDs) for the well pumps was identified as a potential energy savings measure in New York Rural Water Associations Energy Assessment conducted in May 2023. In addition to the VFDs, we are getting pricing on a new well pump controller with alarm notification capabilities, flow paced chlorine feed system, flow meter, and online chlorine residual analyzer.

Pedestrian Improvements

No updates.

**Dog Warden Report:** Mike Gilbo

Nothing currently.

**Bookkeeper/Assessor Report:** Shelley Rayner

Bookkeeper

Interest earned last month $13,113.09

General Fund – Fund Balance 12/31/2021 - $2,276,112.41

*Decrease of $398,254.32*

12/31/2022 – $1,877,858.09

*Decrease of $350,956.11*

12/31/2023 - $1,526,901.98

In 2022 $669,794.47 was spent on the Highway Garage Salt Barn.

In 2023 the Town received $316,125. Grant reimbursement for the Salt Barn.

In 2023 the Town spent $895,492.23 on the Transfer Station.

Considerations going forward: What will 2024 final expenditures be? What grant refund is expected?

Assessment

* Taxable status date is 03/01/2024 – no changes after that date for 2024.
* SCAR Hearing 02/06/2024.

**BTI Report:** Andrea Malik

* I will be teaching the 30-hour BTI course next week Jan 22-25, 2024. DEC requires that I modify it each time I teach it, so I have been working on that. The new crew will take their exams in Ray Brook on Feb 6th.
* The mosquito permit applications will be mailed out this week and we are on our last year of our 5-year black fly control permit.
* I will be doing landowner notifications once I get an updated riparian list from my Paul Smiths College contact. He has been doing these updates for me, free of charge, for many years.
* I will be attending The Annual North American Black Fly meeting in PA, Feb 6-9th. I was asked to make a presentation, so I am preparing for that.
* I was also asked if I might consider hosting a future meeting, possibly next year, in Colton or somewhere in the North Country. I spoke to the Town Clerk about the possibility of using the Town Hall.
* I am having issues with the bike shop in Potsdam, Cycles Endurance &amp; Sports, completing the e-bike accessories order that were already paid for. I am currently texting back and forth with them. This is just one of many issues I have had dealing with this shop.

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

Transfer Station

Construction is still going well. It will be very soon where only weather permitting things will be left, i.e.. Cultured stone, paving, landscaping with topsoil and grass and exterior painting, etc.

*Cont’ Code/DPW report:*

Water/Sewer

Our run your water campaign has started. If our water customers have had freeze-ups in the past, call the office and let us know you are running your water, and we will adjust.

The DPW is asking the board to put out to bid the new plant upgrade. We would like to bid it out before the next board meeting and have board approval on the project early Spring. We are currently doing an in-house plant upgrade on intake silencers.

Motion #6

**Authorize Advertising for Waste Water Treatment Bid**

Motion made by Mr. Beary, seconded by Ms. Fisher to authorize the advertisement for bid on the Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

Building and Grounds

The sander is upgraded with a few new parts and is working smoothly. Snow removal operations are doing well so far. I am in favor of the highway’s proposal of a new sidewalk machine and attachments.

Safety

We put out to bid new fire hydrants and would like to purchase 2 more hydrants to keep up with our hydrant replacement program. We would like to purchase 2 hydrants, Mullers 5.5 bury, from Ferguson Water Works who were the lowest bidder. We can secure last year’s pricing if we purchase this month. These were the only two quotes we could procure. I am asking the board to purchase two hydrants from Furguson with the funding to be split 50% Safety, 50% Water please?

* Furguson: $7,811.58
* Blair: $8,191.10

Motion #7

**Authorize the Purchase of Fire Hydrants**

Motion made by Ms. Fisher, seconded by Mr. Beary, authorizing the purchasing of two budgeted replacement fire hydrants through Furguson as part of the Hydrant Replacement Program.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

Code Enforcement Office

I am all signed up for the annual codes conference the first week in March in Lake Placid to renew my Code Enforcement license. I also request to go to the APA conference on Planning on April 24, 25th. A few home builds are currently looking for plan review for the upcoming building season.

Motion #8

**Authorize Code Enforcement Supervisor’s Conference Attendance**

Motion made by Ms. Fisher, seconded by Mr. Knight, authorizing Mr. Richards to attend the April 2024 APA Conference.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

**Highway Report:** Kevin Hawley

* Since the last meeting we have been working on snow and ice.
* The wind event caused numerous trees to fall. The Leary Road remained closed for four days as primary power lines were across the road. The crew opened the seasonal end of the road for the affected residents. The wires have been repaired and the seasonal end has returned to “winter no maintenance” status.
* Our new village truck has an issue with the headlights shutting off. I sent it to Syracuse International where it was determined the trouble is with the Viking side. I've talked with them, and they are hopefully making arrangements to come to our shop to repair it.
* I have two quotes for the board’s consideration: Ventrac Tractor - Sidewalk Snow Removal and a new 938 Caterpillar Front End Loader.

o Some of the crew attended the public works expo in Syracuse to view the latest in available equipment for our application. With their recommendations, I spent a lot of time speaking with various vendors and researching equipment reviews along with pricing.

o The ventrac is very economical to purchase and the reviews are good. The machine along with all attachments are all in stock at the dealer in Rochester. Yesterday afternoon (01/16/2024) I received an updated quote listing a $2,500 rebate good thru January 31, 2024.

▪ The Ventrac can be fully funded from my rollover balance from last year's chips if the board chooses. DPW has shown interest in splitting the cost as one of the attachments is an 8 ft finish mower for Swift field. If you decide to fund this fully with CHIPs I would recommend removing the mower from the quote.

Motion #9

**Authorize Purchasing of Ventrac**

Motion made by Mr. Knight, seconded by Ms. Fisher, authorizing the purchase agreement of the Ventrac through 2023 Chips rollover funds.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

*Cont’ Highway report:*

o The cat loader is right in line price wise with all of the competitors I talked with. Cat has always made top of the line equipment, and they service our area exceptionally well.

▪ The Cat loader down payment is covered by my budget in the equipment line, down payment is due upon delivery.

Motion #10

**Authorize Purchasing of Cat Loader**

Motion made by Mr. Knight, seconded by Ms. Fisher, to approve the purchase of the Cat Loader up to the total base price of $236,707.08. With this authorization, the following conditions are implemented and expected for review at the February Board Meeting: updated quote including higher down payment options, amortization schedule for all options, and payment options based on the approved 2024 budget.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

* Requesting approval from the board to list surplus equipment for sale through Auction International.

Motion #11

**Authorize Advertisement of Excess Equipment**

Motion made by Ms. Fisher, seconded by Mr. Poste, for the Highway Department to advertise their excess equipment with Auction International.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

**Library Report:** Bill Swafford

Requesting the board approve advertisement for bids to complete the wall woodwork within the library.

Motion #12

**Authorize Advertising for Woodworking Bids**

Motion made by Ms. Fisher, seconded by Mr. Poste, for the Colton Hepburn Library to advertise for bidding on their wall woodworking project.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

**Planning Board Report:** Kirke Perry

The planning board met on 01/16/2024. We didn’t have any subdivisions or conditional use applications. We met with the Clarkson group and Karen Bage before our regular meeting. The survey questionnaire is complete, and just needs to be put online. The advertising flyer just needs a couple of minor changes. We are planning on publicizing the information gathering process with flyers, the town’s website, and Facebook page, reaching out through organization email contacts, the Friends of Higley Flow State Park, the Higley Association, etc. We also plan on having a table at the Winterfest Craft Show, and to solicit responses at the Transfer Station on a Saturday. We would like to reach as many people as possible

throughout February and into March.

There is a new grant opportunity from DEC for the Town. Monies are available up to $125,000 for Adirondack and Catskill towns. Since part of Colton lies within the Blueline we are eligible to apply for monies to be spent anywhere in the Town. Most awards are measured against a Comprehensive Plan; however, we can apply as a Grant or to provide funds to grantees, (usually businesses) within the Town. Jeff Rousell will complete the application. We are requesting a resolution of support from the Town Board.

Motion #13

**Authorize a Resolution in Support of the DEC Grant Application for Adirondack + Catskill Towns**

Motion made by Ms. Fisher, seconded by Mr. Poste, to move forward with the grant opportunity as outlined by the DEC.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

The APA has a land use training session on April 24th and 25th. We are looking for permission to send two people to the conference at a cost of $106 per person. There should be enough in our budget to cover this.

Our next meeting will be on February 13th.

Motion #14

**Authorize Planning Board Chair’s Conference Attendance**

Motion made by Ms. Fisher, seconded by Mr. Poste, authorizing Mr. Perry to attend the April 2024 APA Conference.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

**Town Clerk Report:** Jennifer Cole

* BTI Department Early Bill Requests:
  + NYS DEC Aquatic Pesticide General Permit $110.00 inv #1005292.
  + NYS DEC Pesticide management permits. Two separate permits, both in the amount of $100.00.

Motion #14

**Authorize Payment of NYS DEC Pesticide management permits**

*Cont’ Town Clerk report:*

Motion made by Ms. Fisher, seconded by Mr. Knight, to include the three BTI Department invoices/permits to be paid with early bills.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

* We have been updating the town website. Adding links where necessary, information for different departments. There is a section on FOIL now. Dept heads, if there is anything you would like to see on your specific section, please contact the Clerk’s Office.
* Schedule audits for the court, water and sewer, bookkeeper, and town clerk books.
* An astronomer from the University of Idaho, Dr. Nicholas Kutsop will be visiting the Potsdam area on April 8th during the eclipse. He did some research and found that the best location to view the eclipse is Fox Marsh. Fox Marsh is on Route 56, halfway to Sevey’s Corners. Dr. Kutsop is wondering if the town would like to do some kind of collaboration for the eclipse. Perhaps a presentation before.
* Winterfest – Previously Randa, the owner of Raquette River Pub, requested closing down the bridge in front of the pub for a day during Winterfest. We are asking that the Town Board lift the open container law on that day, February 10th.

Motion #15

**Authorize Lifting the Open Container Law for Winterfest 2024**

Motion made by Mr. Knight, seconded by Mr. Poste, to approve the lifting of the open container law for Saturday, February 10th, 2024 from 8am – 11 pm in support of the 2024 Winterfest.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

**Correspondence:**

An astronomer from the University of Idaho, Dr. Nicholas Kutsop will be visiting the Potsdam area on April 8th during the eclipse. He did some research and found that the best location to view the eclipse is Fox Marsh. Fox Marsh is on Route 56, halfway to Sevey’s Corners. Dr. Kutsop is wondering if the town would like to do some kind of collaboration for the eclipse. Perhaps a presentation before.

Mr. Perkins provided additional information regarding St. Lawrence County and the Solar Eclipse – the majority, if not all, hotels within SLC are currently booked for the event, leaders are expecting such an influx that the county is currently working through Emergency Response adjustments for the influx of people.

Mr. Fuhr added that NYS has reached out regarding the possibility of opening the State Park for the event.

Motion #16

**Authorize the Research and Connecting of Resources for the Solar Eclipse – April 8th, 2024**

Motion made by Ms. Fisher, seconded by Mr. Poste, for the Clerk’s Office to continue conversations with Dr. Kutsop regarding the opportunity.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

**Unfinished Business:**

Resolution to Dispose of Certain Parcels of Town Land

This resolution is to be used in conjunction with the land transfer regarding Mr. Walt Paul (and parties), providing easement to said parties through Town of Colton land.

Motion #17

**Authorize the Signing for Disposal of Certain Parcels of Town Land**

Motion made by Mr. Knight, seconded by Mr. Poste, to sign the resolution to be used in conjunction with the land transfer agreement. This resolution shows the acceptance of the donation by the Town of Colton Board.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

Physician for the Town of Colton

Ms. Cole reached out to St. Lawrence County Clerks in order to receive guidance on how their new hire physicals are completed, as well as how return to work physicals are completed. Approximately five clerks responded to the inquiry, all stating that new hires or current employees all see their primary physician for physicals. The employees are reimbursed for the visit. *This subject was then tabled for the February Meeting in order to conduct additional research.*

Tank Safe Insurance

Ms. Cole reached out to the Town’s insurance representative inquiring if Tank Safe is included in our blanket policy coverage, no response as of the time of the meeting. *This subject was then tabled for the February Meeting.*

Judge Reed’s Salary

Recapped information provided at the December 13th, 2023 Board Meeting on Justice salary rates throughout the County and how Judge Reed’s salary compares to such.

Motion #18

**Authorize the Increase of Judge Reed’s Salary**

Motion made by Mr. Knight, seconded by Mr. Poste, to increase the salary of Judge Reed to $18,000 per year, effective as of January 17th, 2024.

Ayes 4

Noes 1 – Beary

Motion Carried

*Cont’ Unfinished business:*

DPW Temporary Position

An employee was temporarily adjusted to a Manager pay rate during an extended absence of the Manager, Ms. Rayner is requesting the Board authorize the return to normal rate of pay as both parties have returned to their hired positions.

Motion #19

**Authorize the Return of all DPW Personnel Receiving Contracted Rate of Pay**

Motion made by Ms. Fisher, seconded by Mr. Knight, that all DPW Personnel will follow the contracted rate of pay, as outlined within the contract they’re operating under.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

**New Business:**

Keyboard Specialist

Supervisor Robert requested to move forward with interviews of two personnel for the Keyboard Specialist position.

Motion #20

**Authorization of Keyboard Specialist Interviews**

Motion made by Ms. Fisher, seconded by Mr. Knight, to interview the two applicants for the Town Supervisor’s Keyboard Specialist. Parameters of no more than $19 per hour and to not exceed eight hours per week were set.

Ayes 4

Noes 1 – Beary

Motion Carried

Agreement with Development Authority of the North Country (DANC)

This agreement provides the landscaping details of our Town, to include streams, mosquito treatment areas mapped, noting evasive species, etc. This is a digital “layered map” system to see multiple factors at once and is of essential use for the Water and BTI Departments Operations.

Motion #21

**Authorization to Renew the DANC Contract**

Motion made by Ms. Fisher, seconded by Mr. Poste, to renew the contract with DANC for a term of five years, same as previous contract.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion Carried

Winterfest 2024 Update

Ms. Fisher provided an overview of events throughout the Town and how local businesses are getting involved in the events.

Professional Conduct

Mr. Beary asked the board to consider establishing a policy to keep language professional for all board members, employees, and meeting attendees during board meetings, executive session, and general meetings. During proposal, Supervisor Robert excused himself from the board meeting and conversation. Discussion took place with the remaining Board members, after which the Board agreed to consider such a policy and requested policy examples, guidance on the legality of enforcing such, type of verbiage to include, etc. from Mr. Beary. Mr. Beary initiated a motion to implement such policy as of the Board meeting, such was not seconded, motion did not carry. *This subject was then tabled for the February Meeting. Supervisor Robert returned to the meeting.*

**Announcements:**

Nothing at this time.

**Adjournment:**

Motion #22

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Beary made a motion to close the regular monthly meeting at 8:15 pm seconded by Ms. Fisher.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion carried

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

Meeting minutes by Colton Town Deputy Clerk.