

# Town of DeKalb Board Meeting

At a regular meeting of the Town Board, of the Town of DeKalb, St. Lawrence County, New York, held on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of February 2024, at the Town Hall in DeKalb Junction NY, there were present:

|               |                        |                    |                  |
|---------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Jordan Deleel | Supervisor             | Michael Livingston | Council Member   |
| Ed Newcombe   | Council Member         | Connie Elen        | Council Member   |
| Andrew Fenton | Council Member         | Kelly Davis        | Town Clerk       |
| Wayne Holland | Highway Superintendent | Bill Chambers      | Building & Codes |

Members of the community present: Larry Denesha: SLC Legislator, Jerry Leone-Alex Yager-Jim Muscato-Kyle Winkler: New Leaf Energy Reps, Preston Santimaw: County Planning Office, Gary Renyolds, Kendall Lawrence, Tammy French.

Supervisor Deleel opened the regular meeting at 7:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Supervisor Deleel, followed by a moment of silent prayer and/or reflection.

Constance Elen moved that the minutes of the Regular Meeting, of the Town Board, held on January 17, 2024, as submitted by the Town Clerk, be and hereby approved. Seconded by Michael Livingston and adopted unanimously.

## Public Forum:

### Larry D Denesha, SLC Legislator

- Resolution was passed to distribute the additional sales tax collected between all the municipalities.
- Resolution was passed to increase the 2024 highway paving budget by an additional 33 miles bringing the total from 44.3 miles to 79.23 miles. This is due to ongoing commitment of the legislators to keep the fund balance at 15%. It is currently at 19% so the funds above the 15% are being used for this.
- Resolution was passed to protest the NYS Governor's consideration of removing the Save Harmless Clause as it could adversely affect several school districts funding locally.
- RDA community development grants available. Applications due April 15, 2024. Up to \$20,000. Hermon Library applying. SLCIDA can be reached at 315-379-9806.
- Emergency Services renovations have begun in Canton with an approximate timeline to completion of nine months.
- A proposal was presents to the commissioner of Social Services to add one more satellite office in St Lawrence County in Gouverneur. There are already satellite offices in Ogdensburg, Massena, and Star Lake; all of which are seeing high numbers of people utilizing these offices. Taking the services where they are needed instead of making people come a central office.
- Currently Hermon-DeKalb, Edwards-Knox and Heuvelton have resource officers in the school. Other area schools would like to have them as well but don't have the funds in the budget to support the hire. Talks ongoing on how to provide a resource officer at a price the district could afford.
- A meeting has been scheduled for March 8, 2024 to discuss the East DeKalb Rd and Route 11 intersection at the Hermon-DeKalb School to try and get a speed zone of 45 MPH ½ mile north and south of the intersection due to the recent fatality that occurred there two weeks ago.
- Presented a resolution to the board, looking for support, urging Governor Hochul to double the amount of funding in the state budget for 2024-2025 for critically needed aging services for older adults so that they may stay safely in place.

A motion was made by Michael Livingston to accept and support the resolution, 24-2, urging Governor Hochul to double the amount of funding in the state budget for critically needed aging services, seconded by Constance Elen. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Jordan Deleel yes.

**New Leaf Energy Solar Project; Jerry Leone, Alex Yager, Jim Muscato, Kyle Winkler**

- New Leaf is developing a solar project located in Bigelow. The company is located in Latham, NY and have two other projects in the area. One is at 8963 CR 27 Lisbon, NY which is complete and up and running. The second one is at 77 Scotch Settlement Rd in Gouverneur, NY and is being built.
- The Bigelow site is 200 acres that is fenced in. It will be a 60-megawatt project. All the field work was completed in November of 2023.
- ORES, Office of Renewable Energy Site, has strict steps to follow on a project which brings us to the next step which is a community meeting that consists of 25 public exhibits with story boards to explain what has been and will be done with general time lines. New Leaf would like to hold the public meeting in March.

**Tammy French:** Would like to host a community appreciation day in DeKalb on March 9<sup>th</sup> from 11-2 pm and is asking that Ridge Street be closed off so that a sledding party could occur on the hill there and the kids would be kept safe from traffic. The hair salon will be open for restrooms and serving hot cocoa, be a warming center if needed. If the weather doesn't cooperate, alternative activities will be scheduled. Council members approve the closing of Ridge Street. Ms. French informed the board that March 24<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am the Easter Egg hunt is on with 3000 eggs to be filled and hidden for the event at the Fire Hall. The Easter bunny will be on site and fire trucks available for the kids to look at.

-The town park committee which consists of Jordan Deleel, Andrew Fenton, Constance Elen, Tammy French; will meet soon to set up criteria for community events at the park/pavilion.

**Supervisor Deleel:**

**Financials:**

Constance Elen made the motion to accept the Town Clerk Audit for the Clerk's water & sewer accounts, seconded by Michael Livingston. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Jordan Deleel yes.

Constance Elen made the motion to accept the Town Justice Report, seconded by Michael Livingston. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Jordan Deleel yes.

Clerk Report: Kelly Davis

- A total of \$579.10 was collected for the month of January with the town retaining \$559.10.
- Property tax collection is at 75.12% as of 2/21/2024.

The monthly financials from the accountants did not arrive in time for the meeting approval. Supervisor Deleel informed the town board that he will be distributing the abstract of bills for their review of the bills that are being paid going forward. If council members want to look at every voucher, they will be made available at 6:30 pm, prior to the monthly meeting. Then if there are any questions, they can be discussed at the meeting.

**Sewer Update:** No update.

**Water Update:** There is 300 feet of line that needs to be replaced. Do we keep waiting on the grant, do we wait for an emergency or just repair the lines if they break before the grant comes?? Discussion led to waiting for grant approval.

Supervisor Deleel and Andy Fenton met with Hermon to discuss our costs in the Hermon water project. Initial estimates are at more than \$283,000. There are two options. One, raise the per gallon rate and pass it on to the users. Two, charge a monthly fee and pass that cost on to the users. There is no money in the water fund so we may need to bond the cost of the project if the interest rate is low enough, Hermon's is at 2% or we could borrow the funds from ourselves and pay it back. The water agreement with Hermon was last updated in 2019 so it should be reviewed again now.

**Highway Report:** Wayne Holland reports

- Same general repairs occurring, sanding and plowing as needed.
- Signs being fixed, brush cut.
- fixing dirt roads, cold patching.

- Typically trade in the loader every two years, which would be this year. Trade in value around \$50,000.
- A new grader is running \$315,000 at state bid. Ours is a 1995. May need to replace.
- Nothing critical to purchase this year. A new pickup is 2-3 years out if ordered now.

Supervisor Deleel spoke with Danny Moyer about his contract. His salary is \$4500 for the year. There is \$6000 budgeted for services provided, picking up dogs, vet bills, shelter, food, etc. The stipend he receives for mileage is not the correct term for that reimbursement. A stipend is an amount granted for performing services above and beyond your regular duties.

Motion made by Ed Newcombe and seconded by Michael Livingston to approve the dog control salary of \$4500 for 2024. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Jordan Deleel yes.

**Code Enforcement:** Bill Chambers reports

- Has a couple building permits to issue.
- Filed state paperwork
- Completed some public inspections
- Will be at training the week of March 3-6, 2024 in Lake Placid.

**Assessor Report:** Susanne Arquette None

**Historian Report:** Bryan Thompson None

Board mentioned that an annual report should be forthcoming.

**Communications:**

\*Report was received from the DeKalb Hermon Senior Citizens.

\*Sexual Harassment training is available online on March 19<sup>th</sup>. Flyer handed out with sign up info on it.

\*ARPA funds available:

- There was \$205,000 total received with a remaining balance of \$18,000.
- The town just received a bill for \$49,481.70 in regard to the pavilion project.
- The generator at the town barn was purchased with ARPA funds which put the pavilion available balance in a deficit. The town will need to take money from unclassified funds to pay this pavilion invoice.
- The invoices are coming from Brooks and Washburn, but Northern Tier is doing the work now. Why are we paying Brooks and Washburn? There will be another \$50,000 invoice coming in the spring. Can we stop the project now without the electricity being put in and look at other, cheaper options such as an alternative route for the electric, adding crusher run to complete it? Monies should have been set back in last year's budget to cover these expenses not coming out of this year's budget.
- The survey was in last year's budget but the funds were not kept out to pay for it so it is coming out of this year's budget as well.

**Discussion**

Motion by Constance Elen, seconded by Michael Livingston, to permit Supervisor Deleel to handwrite a check pending clarification of why Northern Teir isn't billing us for services and Brooks and Washburn are. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Jordan Deleel yes.

Supervisor will reach out to the board after he receives more information.

\*The Honorable Howard Putney informed the town board that beginning April 2, 2024 the town court will only be meeting twice a month, on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday evening. This is in line with what the surrounding towns are doing.

**Secondary Shelter:**

The town barn needs to be classified as a secondary shelter because the generator it has was bought with ARPA funds.

Motion by Andrew Fenton, seconded by Constance Elen, to pass resolution 24-3 to approve usage of the town barn and pavilion as a secondary shelter if or when needed. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Jordan Deleel yes.

Motion made by Andrew Fenton, seconded by Michael Livingston to pass resolution 24-4 in support of preventing Governor Hochul from closing two north country prisons. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Jordan Deleel yes.

**250 Year Celebration:** Darcy Waugh is still waiting for more information from the county.

**Grants:**

Supervisor Deleel met with people from the SLC Arts Grant. The town can apply for up to \$5000 to be used for entertainment or music only performers. He's going to apply for a \$2500 grant to be used at the pavilion for entertainment in the community.

**Other:**

Discussion on use of land at CR17, aka the old dump, that may be a viable area for an alternative habitat with the solar project. Money may be involved for the usage and relocation of animals. Or is the town interested in selling it? There are around 80 acres left. The town owns all the road frontage. We need to find alternative sources of money to cover the 2024 budget. More discussion next month.

Beginning in March, the individual vouchers and checks will be made available for review if desired at 6:30pm before the regular monthly board meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:39 PM on a motion made by Constance Elen and seconded by Michael Livingston. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Jordan Deleel yes.

Motion made by Ed Newcombe and seconded by Constance Elen to pay the bills in abstract 2-2024. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Jordan Deleel yes.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kelly Davis, Town Clerk

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