

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 20th day of December 2023, at the Town Hall in DeKalb Junction NY, there were present:

John Frary	Supervisor	Michael Livingston	Council Member
Ed Newcombe	Council Member	Connie Elen	Council Member
Andrew Fenton	Council Member	Barbara Creazzo	Town Clerk
Wayne Holland	Highway Superintendent	Bill Chambers	Building & Codes

Members of the community present: Larry Denesha, SLC Legislator, Kelly Davis, Town Clerk Elect, Shain Brunet, Charles Prior, EDR, Ginger Thomas, Jerry Leone, New Leaf Energy, Jordan Deleel, Town Supervisor Elect.

Members of the community attending via ZOOM: St. Lawrence Agency, Janice Brabaw

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

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

Andrew Fenton moved that the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Town Board, held on November 15, 2023, as submitted by the Town Clerk, be and hereby approved. Seconded by Michael Livingston and adopted unanimously.

Actions

1. John Frary and Andrew Fenton to meet with Jeffery Matott regarding his well. **Completed 11/16/23.**
2. Decide placement for 3 of the new Christmas Decorations. **Completed 11/27/23.**

Public Forum:

Lana Storie, V.P., and Wayne Storie, C.O.B., from St. Lawrence Agency, Inc., (New York Municipal Insurance Reciprocal (NYMIR)), addressed the Insurance Proposal for the town, which will be in affect from 01/01/2024 – 01/01/2025. Many of the budget lines show an increase from last year, with the most increases involving structures owned by the town. The proposed cost for 2024 is \$38,811.74, which is up from \$32,451.90 for 2023. The Agency provided the board with some options that offer a higher deductible and lower premium.

Jerry Leone, New Leaf Energy, addressed the board regarding the proposed solar farm in Bigelow. An archaeological study has been conducted and there were no artifacts discovered. A total of twenty-six (26) studies has either been conducted or are continuing to be conducted. An example of the studies includes but is not limited to, birds, wildlife, water sources, etc. These must be completed before the permitting process and filing with the state can be done. Once this process has been established, the company intends to provide a website for the public to view and to look at all the studies that have been conducted. The company will also be reaching out to the community for town meetings. These must be established within sixty (60) days of filing with the state.

St. Lawrence County IDA will do the negotiating for a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes). Monies must be set aside for decommissioning the site when the site is no longer productive. These monies are to be used to dismantle the site and return the land to its original state.

It is estimated they are about a year from the permits being granted. A building permit for the project will be submitted after the permitting process is completed. This project will automatically provide approximately a one-twelfth reduction in electricity cost for town residents.

Questions asked by the board include:

- Are they fixed panels, or do they move with the movement of the sun? They will be fixed panels but use the sunlight from front and back surfaces.
- Where are the materials produced? Unable to answer with certainty, as New Leaf Energy is the developing company. The production company is the one to ask this question too.

Charles Prior, EDR, updated the board with the permitting process for the wastewater treatment plant upgrades. He believes it is at the end zone for final review and approval. It is hoped that bidding will be able to advertise for bids sometime in February. Funding is at eighty-four cents (\$0.84) on the dollar, which is a good place for the Sewer District to be with its funding.

Larry D Denesha, SLC Legislator,

- The 2024 Budget for SLC passed this past week as it was presented. Property owners should see a 5.9% reduction or forty-five cents less per one thousand dollars.
- Mortgage Tax checks have been sent to the townships.
- The legislators passed a resolution to move the highway department administration and maintenance garage to the Potsdam Outpost. There is plenty of land to accommodate the building of the necessary structures for the move to occur. This will eliminate the need for the maintenance area in the Village of Canton. More information will be shared as it develops.
- The Town of Dekalb's portion of the Community College Chargeback is \$18,961.66.
- Sales Tax is 8½ % higher than last year at this time and is contributed to on-line shopping.
- Bids for the renovation of the Emergency Service Building were opened. Northern Tier was awarded the general contract. Others that were awarded portions of the contract are S&L Electric, Northern Mechanical, Empire Northeast Inc., all from St. Lawrence County. The estimated cost of the renovations was 6.5 million but is now expected to be 7.2 million. The cost will be covered by 5 million from ARPA Funds and the remaining 2.2 million will be covered by Fund Balance. When the project is complete, it will be paid for in full, with no direct cost to the tax payers.
- The County now collects the taxes for the City of Ogdensburg. Their re-levies were received and for water and sewer alone, the re-levy amount is \$321,965.42.

Financials:

Michael Livingston made the motion to accept the Town Clerk Audit for the Clerk's general account, seconded by Constance Elen. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, John Frary yes.

Clerk Report: Barbara Creazzo

- A total of \$612 was collected for the month of November with the town retaining \$339.62. The breakdown of the collections are as follows: NY DEC, \$205.38, town, \$14.62, Ag & Markets, \$22, town \$79, the town also received \$215.40 for building permits, and \$30.60 for copies made.
- Deputy Clerk, Wanda Law, worked a total of eleven (11) hours during the month of November.

Standard Work Day and Reporting Resolution for Elected and Appointed Officials has been completed for Suzanne Arquette and Wayne Holland. Ms. Arquette's was established at 3.33 hours and Mr. Holland's at 10.

A motion was made by Michael Livingston and seconded by Ed Newcombe, to accept the Standard Work Day and Reporting Resolution as presented. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, John Frary yes.

Mr. Harry Moulton's term for Board of Assessment Review ended in October. This writer contacted him and asked if he was willing to serve another five-year term. His response was yes.

A motion was made by Andrew Fenton and seconded by Michael Livingston, to appoint Harry Moulton to a five-year term as a member of the Board of Assessment Review. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, John Frary yes.

Board members were informed that the clerk has the information regarding upcoming training for Newly Elected Town Officials School. Anyone who is interested in attending, please let her know.

Supervisor Frary distributed the monthly Year-to-Date Budget for review. In a quick review, nothing is noted as way out of line. However, members of the board were asked to review and let him know if they have any questions or concerns.

Supervisor Frary distributed the handout that St. Lawrence Agency provided, showing different variations of insurance cost, using different deductibles. There was a total of eight (8) options to choose from.

A motion was made by Andrew Fenton and seconded by Ed Newcombe, to accept the option that reduces the proposed 2024 cost by \$1657. This option has a property deductible of \$2500 and an auto deductible of \$1000. Thus, the total cost for this proposal is \$37,154.74. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, John Frary yes. Supervisor Frary informed the members that the cost for the coming year for the services of Hoffman Eels CPA group will be \$2,750 per month. Mr. Eels has provided several suggestions to aid in reducing this monthly fee. The board will need to examine these options further to see which, if any, can meet their needs at a lesser cost to the town.

Water & Sewer Reports:

DANC's monthly water report for November indicates that 732,500 gallons of water were metered during the month with a daily average flow of 24,417 gallons. A total of seven (7) gallons of sodium hypochlorite were used in the treatment of the water produced. All daily, weekly, and monthly inspections and maintenances were conducted as scheduled. The full report contains a record of the daily flow charts.

The monthly sewer report for November indicated that 1,093,000 gallons of wastewater were treated for the month with a daily flow of 36,433 gallons. There were no SPDES permit violations. All daily, weekly, and monthly inspections and maintenances were conducted as scheduled. The full report contains a record of the daily flow charts. There was only call-out due to a power outage.

A presentation was done by a company named Zenner, regarding water meters. It was well presented and is certainly worth investigating further if the board moves forward with replacing meters.

The Annual Manhole Inspection Report has also been received from the Development Authority of the North Country. The highway department will address the ones that they can. Others will be addressed during the upgrades that will be occurring. There is one that is in the road and covered by blacktop. This should be uncovered.

The annual calibration of the Isco 4210 Ultrasonic Flow Meter at the wastewater treatment plant was conducted by CPE Service Systems Solutions. It is reported that the meter is operating per the manufacturers' specifications.

Supervisor Frary informed the board that he had the water turned off at a residence on Caroline Street, as they had had an extremely high-water usage recorded during the last meter read. And, according to the daily flow of water, there was an indication that an unusual amount of water was being used. Signage was placed on the home owner's doors informing them of the water shut-off and the number they needed to contact. There was no one home at the time of the notice. It was determined that there was a major water leak at the home. It was repaired and water was restored to the home. They do, however, have a large water bill for this past billing cycle and will most likely have another with the next cycle, as several days went by prior to the shut-off.

Highway Department Report: Wayne Holland 11/15 – 12/20/23

-Sanded roads six (6) times

- Continue to cold patch as needed
- Installed sixty (60) feet of culvert
- Grading dirt roads as needed
- Cutting brush
- Completed some ditching on the Colton Road
- Skidster is supposed to be in this month
- Installed Christmas decorations in the hamlet, as well as placed the lights on the tree next to the gazebo
- Removed the banners in Richville and installed their Christmas decorations

Building & Codes Report: William (Bill) Chambers

Four permits were issued during the month of November for a fee amount of \$684.60 and a project cost of \$21,300. The permits issued are for one addition, one pole barn, one septic and new residential construction, and one garage. To date, fifty-three (53) permits were issued for a fee amount of \$8,047.75 and a total project cost of \$1,280,782. For the past three years, there has been a total of 212 permits issued at a fee amount of \$90,942.28 and a total project cost of \$30,888,027.

Communications:

- Pavilion is almost completed. The final touches will be completed in the spring.
- Committee on banners for veterans – waiting for the school to complete their portion.
- 250-year celebration committee, Darcy Matthews to chair – waiting for information from the County
- Site Plan Review Board – two (2) members have resigned, Louis LeBarge and Jordan Deleel. Eric Yager and Darcy Matthews have both been asked to sit on the board.

A motion was made by Michael Livingston and seconded by Constance Elen to appoint Eric Yager and Darcy Matthews, each to a five (5) year term to the Site Plan Review Board. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, John Frary yes.

- Supervisor Frary and Councilman Fenton, Met with Jefferey Matott regarding his well water. Scott McConnell collected a water sample for analysis. Three (3) well drillers have been contacted for recommendations. Currently, only one (1) has responded. No action at this time; however, further discussion will be had as more information becomes available.

The Organizational Meeting for 2024 is scheduled for January 3, 2024, at 7 PM at the De Kalb Town Hall.

After reviewing all bills presented, and signing all bills over \$500.00, a motion was made by Andrew Fenton and seconded by Michael Livingston to approve payment of the bills as entered on Abstract #12-2023. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, John Frary yes.

A motion by Constance Elen to adjourn, seconded by Edward Newcombe. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, John Frary yes.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Barbara A Creazzo, Town Clerk

ACTIONS

1. Post Standard Work Day Information for thirty (30) days and submit to Albany.
2. Inform SLC Real Property of Mr. Harry Moulton’s appointment to the Board of Assessment Review.
3. Notify St. Lawrence Agency regarding the board’s decision on policy option. **Completed 12/21/2023.**
4. Advertise the Organizational Meeting. **Completed 12/22/2023.**