

Town of Newfield  
Regular Town Board Business Meeting  
May 13, 2021

The May 13, 2021 regular business meeting was held via Zoom in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order 202.1. Meeting instructions were on the Town website.

Present via Zoom: Michael Allinger, Supervisor, Councilmembers- Joanne James, Christine Laughlin, Heather McCarty, Casey Powers, Highway Superintendent Kevin Berggren, Town Bookkeeper Blixxy Taetzsch, Town Attorney Tom Smith, Town Clerk Karen Miller Kenerson and 7 others.

Supervisor Allinger called the Town Board Meeting to order at 7:00 PM, Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilperson Laughlin.

Agenda Approval- no additions

Privilege of the Floor-

Mark Smarr spoke to the Board asking for their support the authorization for youth 12 years old and up to be allowed to big game hunt while being accompanied by a licensed adult hunter with shot gun, muzzle loader or crossbow to the Tompkins County Legislature. Supervisor Allinger and Councilperson Laughlin will work on this.

J.T. Tompkins spoke to the Board regarding the Mill Park Music Series. Music events are scheduled: July 14, July 28, August 11, and August 25 this year.

**Approval of April 8, 2021 and April 22, 2021 Minutes**

Motion was made by Councilperson Laughlin to approve the April 8, 2021 Business Meeting Minutes and April 22, 2021 Board Meeting minutes, seconded by Councilperson McCarty.

Vote	AYES	5	Allinger, James Laughlin, McCarty and Powers
	NAY	0	

Carried

**Approval of Audit and Claims of Abstract 5 Vouchers**

Motion was made by Councilperson James to approve the payments, seconded by Councilperson McCarty. The Board authorized the payments of the following amounts:

General and Lighting Fund Vouchers 104-134	\$27,808.38
Highway Fund Vouchers 59 -82	\$77,416.87
Recreation Fund Vouchers 6-7	\$62.68
Sewer Fund Vouchers 19-26	\$10,546.06
Water District 1 Fund Vouchers 33-44	\$11,026.13
Water District 2 Fund Vouchers 25-36	\$8,378.60

Trust & Agency Vouchers 11-14

\$3,754.41

Vouchers were audited by Councilpersons James and McCarty.

Vote AYES 5 Allinger, James, Laughlin, McCarty and Powers

NAY 0

Carried

### **Reports**

*Highway Department-* Highway Superintendent Kevin Berggren reported salt for the next season has been brought in and sand will be coming in next. The Burdge Hill Road paving project is complete and shoulders will be put in another week. Superintendent Berggren reviewed the roads being cut back along with intersections that will be replaced. Superintendent Berggren voiced concerns regarding negative comments on the Newfield Community Facebook page regarding a recent project. Supervisor Berggren invited members of the Town Board to ride with him to view town roads to see which roads he has slated for improvements and why.

*Water/Sewer Department-* Water Supervisor Berggren reported fire hydrants have been flushed. Water Supervisor Berggren stated the Town is still waiting for water withdraw permit from the DEC for the Pine Circle well. The home with the well issue seems to have been resolved with the Town flushing the well.

*Recreation-* Recreation Supervisor Austin Kuzcek reported spring programs were underway- T ball, Coach Pitch, Minors, Track and a girls' softball clinic. Fall programming is being discussed. Sumer Camp counselor applications will be closing soon with TC Personnel, interviews and hiring will begin soon. Mr. Kuzcek stated the safety walk thru with Tompkins County Health Department will take place next week. Counselor and camper applications are being accepted. Mr. Kuzcek commented the Van Kirk Road grass is looking good and that the basketball courts are being used.

*Code Enforcement-* Code Enforcement Officer Alan Teeter reported for the month April- 16 building permits were issued: roof replacement- 4, Decks- 2, single wide mobile homes- 5, Pool- 1, Demolition- 1, Additions- 1, Shed- 1, and 1 conversion. The Burdge Hill solar project is almost complete pending inspection from Tompkins County Soil and Water. Mr. Teeter reported New York State is rewriting section of law giving the Code Enforcement Office the authority to enforce the law. He will be coming to the Town Board in the future to amend and update the local uniform code law currently used in the Town of Newfield. Mr. Teeter stated he had completed his in-service online code training.

*Planning Board-* Leo Tidd reported the final presentation by Cornell Design Connect will be May 26<sup>th</sup> via Zoom at 7:00 pm. The Solar Law revision draft recommendations is scheduled to be presented to the Town Board for review on May 27<sup>th</sup> as well.

*Tompkins County Legislature-* Representative David McKenna reported on the current Legislature happenings and stated he is willing to help with the recommendation to the County supporting youth big game hunting.

*Finance and Personnel-* Bookkeeper Blix Taetzsch reported the April 21 financial report reflect revenues that show increases that were not anticipated. Ms. Taetzsch also noted she has posted positions on the Tompkins County Personnel website for summer workers for Hamlet Beautification and summer camp. The fleet inventory for the greenhouse gas inventory has been uploaded. Ms. Taetzsch also reported she attended a webinar for drinking and wastewater funding and reported on possible grant possibilities for our community.

*Van Kirk Road Park-* Highway Superintendent Berggren reported the department has mowed the field and that the new mowing tractor cannot mow the hillside due to the cab, the old mowing tractor may be retained for that purpose. Supervisor Allinger stated the neighbor of the Mill Park has offered to mow the Mill Park. Due to liability issues the offer was declined.

*Climate Smart Communities-* Councilperson McCarty reported the greenhouse gas inventory has been submitted. Councilperson McCarty stated the committee is recommending the Town Board to adopt the New York Stretch Energy Code, looking into charging station grants for electric cars, the Power House open house demonstration will be Sunday, May 16 and a mini grant application has been submitted to the Newfield Community Council for a Clean Energy Heat Smart post card Campaign.

*EMC-* Michelle Henry reported on the EMC meetings and events.

*Supervisor's Report-* Supervisor Allinger reported the Bridge New York application has been submitted, the DEC application for the well #4 was incomplete and has been resubmitted and that Rowell Hill, Carter Creek Rd now have availability to Clarity Connect internet. Supervisor Allinger commented Junk Code Officer Randy Brown has sent out letters of concern. Councilperson James asked if it was the intent to continue having a Junk Code Officer if or when Mr. Brown were to step down from the position. Councilperson James asked if a stipend could be proposed for the position in the future. This will be discussed in the future.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### *Approval of May 2021 Budget Modifications*

RESOLUTION NO. 32-2021 – Approval of May 2021 Budget Modifications

WHEREAS, it is necessary to modify the 2021 budget based on updated estimates of revenues and expenses in 2021, and

WHEREAS, a detailed listing of each budget adjustment by Fund has been provided below, be it therefore

RESOLVED, that the Newfield Town Board approves the budget modifications as outlined below.

Account #	Account Name	Original Budget	Increase/ (Decrease)	Modified Budget
HIGHWAY FUND EXPENSES				
DA 5130.463	Machinery - Repairs	\$ 60,000.00	\$ (25,000.00)	\$ 35,000.00
DA 5130.46	Machinery - Parts	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Total Expenditure Adjustments			\$ -	

Motion was made by Councilperson Laughlin approving the May 2021 budget modification as presented. Motion seconded by Councilperson Powers.

Vote           AYES 5                   Allinger, James, Laughlin, McCarty and Powers

NAY 0

Carried

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### ***Adoption of the NY Stretch Code***

Planning Board Chair Leo Tidd spoke on behalf of the Planning Board supporting the Town Board to adopt the NY Stretch Code. Councilperson McCarty commented if the Town were to adopt the NY Stretch Code there is \$5,000.00 incentive grant as well as points towards other grants. Councilperson McCarty will present a draft law at the May 27, 2021 meeting.

### ***Board Room AV Equipment***

Supervisor Allinger and Rene Carver reviewed the proposal to upgrade the Board Room with AV equipment to further enhance the room for video conferencing. Because of the door the room will need to be reconfigured to best use the proposed equipment. The proposal quote is \$3,079.87.

Motion was made by Councilperson James to approve the video conferencing solution as proposed by Mr. Rene Carver, seconded by Councilperson Powers.

Vote           AYES 5                   Allinger, James, Laughlin, McCarty and Powers

NAY 0

Carried

### ***Tentative- I & I Results and next steps***

May Sharif from Hunt Engineering gave an overview of the inflow and infiltration study report and recommendations with cost summary. Recommendations included septic tank rehabilitation, septic lid lift or replacement, seal replacement, adding an enhanced flow monitoring system with added billing for that user's use, home inspections to confirm sump pumps are not being discharged to the septic tank, possibly adding a master meter to the system and adding manholes enabling the use of televising for problems. It was suggested to send letters to property owners regarding the inspection findings and recommendations.

## NEW BUSINESS

*Discussion of Bull Hill Cemetery* – Councilperson James reported she had received correspondence from Rudy Schwoeble regarding the condition of the Estabrook Cemetery. Mr. Schwoeble stated he has mowed the cemetery for many years and feels it is unsafe for him to do so any longer due to the conditions of the property. This matter will be looked into further.

*Appointment of Justin Chandler to fill Planning Board Vacancy*

Motion was made by Councilperson McCarty to approve Justin Chandler for appointment for the 5-year Planning Board term, seconded by Councilperson Powers.

Vote            AYES 5                    Allinger, James, Laughlin, McCarty and Powers  
NAY 0  
Carried

*Discussion – Court Ruling on “Public Officials Can’t Block Critics on Facebook” and what this means for Newfield*

Attorney Smith reviewed the Court opinion. The Town of Newfield Facebook page lists rules for content to be followed. The new ruling objects to public officials deleting critical posts due to the negative nature of content. The Newfield Community Facebook page is not sanctioned by the Town.

*Discussion – Independent study of Broadband in Newfield to identify where the underserved and unserved areas are*

Supervisor Allinger commented that Clarity Connect is estimating a cost of \$150,000 for broadband expansion and is asking the Town of Newfield to share in the cost. Supervisor Allinger is going to reach out to TCCOG about this. Chuck Bartash from Clarity has suggested the Town hire and independent contractor to conduct a survey coverage in Newfield.

At 9:59 pm motion was offered by Councilperson McCarty to discuss an update about a personnel issue, seconded by Councilperson Powers

At 10:04 pm Motion was offered by Councilperson James to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted,

May 21, 2021

Karen Miller Kenerson, RMC  
Town Clerk