

The August 26, 2021 regular work session meeting was held in person at the Newfield Town Hall, and remotely via Zoom.

Present were: Michael Allinger, Supervisor, Councilmembers- Joanne James, Christine Laughlin, Heather McCarty and Casey Powers, Town Bookkeeper Blix Taetzsch, Town Clerk Karen Miller Kenerson and 1 other attendee.

Supervisor Allinger called the Town Board Meeting to order at 7:04 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Agenda Approval- approval of Resolution No. 37-2021 was requested for New Business.

Privilege of the Floor- Robert Lynch stated the County Broadband study by FUSITSO has been paused. A future TCOOG meeting will discuss why the pause and what would allow the study to move forward.

Communications- Councilperson McCarty reported the TCOOG Energy small groups were working on the Community Choice Aggregation and that a Sustainability Director has been hired by the Town of Ithaca. Legislation regarding Community Choice Aggregation is being put on hold for now.

Supervisor Allinger reported the county is moving forward with a plan to require employees to be vaccinated or covid testing 2x a week. Covid testing will remain at no charge until December 2021 through Tompkins County. Supervisor Allinger also reported the Tompkins County Sheriff's Department will be holding a negation training in the Town of Newfield, at Town Hall and surrounding area on September 1st.

ACTION ITEMS

Approve Donation from Newfield Central School 2021 Senior Class

Motion was offered by Councilperson Powers to accept the donation of benches for the Community Park, from the Class of 2021 Senior All Night Party Committee, seconded by Councilperson McCarty.

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

NAY 0

Carried

OLD BUSINESS

Tompkins County Sheriff Department Satellite Station in Newfield

The Tompkins County Sheriff Department has shown interest to have a satellite station in the Town of Newfield. It was determined Town Hall does not have available space. Other possible locations will be suggested to the Sheriff Department.

Review of the Draft Solar Law

Motion was offered by Councilperson Powers to hold a Public Hearing, September 23, 2021 for public comment and opinion regarding Local Law No. 4 of 2021 at 7:00pm at the Newfield Town Hall, seconded by Councilperson James.

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

NAY 0

Carried

Health Care Consortium Update- Councilperson Laughlin reported 7 more counties have joined the Health Care Consortium. The Budget vote will be September 23rd. with a 5% increase expected.

Community Park Ribbon Cutting is scheduled for Saturday September 18th with a 3 vs. 3 basketball tournaments to take place.

NEW BUSINESS

A Resolution Urging Limited Suspension by Executive Order of the New York Open Meetings Law

RESOLUTION #37-2021

Whereas, on March 12, 2020, in an effort to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus, otherwise known as COVID-19, New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo issued Executive Order 202.1 which, in part, suspended portions of Article 7 of the New York Public Officers Law and did so "to the extent necessary to permit any public body to meet and take such actions authorized by the law without permitting in public in-person access to meetings and authorizing such meetings to be held remotely by conference call or similar service, provided that the public has the ability to view or listen to such proceeding and that such meetings are recorded and later transcribed;" Governor Cuomo successively extending such suspension by Executive Orders on a monthly basis through June 25, 2021; and

Whereas, on June 24, 2021, by Executive Order 210, Governor Cuomo rescinded Executive Orders 202 through 202.111, including Executive Order 202.1, effective June 25, 2021, the Governor concluding at that time that "the State of New York [has] successfully flattened the curve of COVID-19 cases in New York," and that, therefore, the Executive Orders were "no longer necessary;" and

Whereas, since the issuance of Executive Order 210, the increased prevalence of the Delta Variant

of COVID-19 has caused a resurgence of coronavirus cases throughout the United States, New

York State and Tompkins County, said resurgence prompting local governments to reinstate public health advisories that call for the indoor masking of individuals, whether vaccinated or not, and recommend limitations on the size of indoor gatherings, including municipal meetings; and

Whereas, the Governor's rescission of Executive Order 202.1 now requires that the Newfield Town Board, as well as all municipal governing boards throughout New York State, convene in-person meetings at a central location and allow full public attendance and participation therein; and

Whereas, the Town of Newfield, like many municipalities throughout New York State, finds itself with limited meeting facilities that may not provide adequate social distancing for either Board members or meeting attendees, and further, that the Newfield Town Board senses among both its own members and the Town's other residents a serious and growing concern regarding the public's health and safety amid the coronavirus' resurgence; and

Whereas, no legislative remedy to this problem through amendment of Article 7 of the New York Public Officers Law is likely to occur before January 2022; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Newfield Town Board respectfully requests that the Governor of the State of New York immediately re-impose through Executive Order those portions of previous Executive Order 202.1 that suspended portions of Article 7 of the New York Public Officers Law-commonly referred to as the "Open Meetings Law" -so as to permit municipal governing boards and other, similar municipal bodies to conduct public meetings remotely in a manner similar to, and with like restrictions, as Executive Order 202.1 permitted, and that such suspension continue until such time as the Delta Variant and any similarly-lethal variants of COVID-19 have successfully been controlled; and be it further

Resolved, that a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to The Hon. Kathy C. Hochul, Governor of the State of New York; the Hon. Thomas F. O'Mara, New York State Senator; Dr. Anna R. Kelles, New York State Assembly member; the Hon. Leslyn McBean-Clairborne, Chair, Tompkins County Legislature; and the Secretary of the Tompkins County Council of Governments.

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 37-2021 Urging Limited Suspension by Executive Order of the New York Open Meetings Law was offered by Councilperson Powers, seconded by Councilperson McCarty.

At 7:54 PM motion was offered by Councilperson Laughlin to adjourn, seconded by Councilperson Powers.

Respectfully Submitted,

September 8, 2021

Karen Miller Kenerson, RMC
Town Clerk