

# 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 15th day of March 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: Charles Prior, EDR, Janice Brabaw, community member, Larry D Denesha, SLC Legislator, Scott Thornhill, DANC.

Members of the community attending via ZOOM: No one joined, as there were technical difficulties in the beginning of the meeting.

Supervisor Frary opened the Public Hearing regarding storm drainage ditching meeting, at 6:46 PM.

Charles Prior, EDR briefly discussed some of the potential issues regarding the storm drainage ditching.

-the length of the pathway which begins at Josephine Street and continues through the railroad culvert, leading to the wastewater treatment plant.

-property that the ditch traverses, need to know about easements and right of ways. Need to determine if any of these have ever been established in the past.

-need to communicate with DEC.

-what are the specific bottlenecks or other blockages that need to be addressed.

-it is noted the area of ditch between School Street and County Route 17, seem to have few issues if any.

-will need to do a walk along the ditch once weather is permitting to get the lay of the land.

Public Hearing was closed at 7:12 PM

## Actions

1. Notification of dog enumeration to be sent to *Watertown Daily Times*. **Completed 02/16/2023.**
2. Notification of dog enumeration to be sent to *North Country Now*. **Completed.**
3. Send letter of no objection for temporary Beer, Wine, and Cider licenses for events at Tanner Creek Farm. **Completed 02/16/23.**

Supervisor Frary opened the regular meeting at 7:12 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 February 15, 2023, as submitted by the Town Clerk, be and hereby approved. Seconded by Michael Livingston and adopted unanimously.

Ed Newcombe moved that the minutes of the Regular Meeting, of the Town Board, held on January 18, 2023, as submitted by the Town Clerk, be and hereby approved. Seconded by Constance Elen and adopted unanimously.

## Public Forum:

Larry D Denesha, SLC Legislator

-Passed a resolution asking the Governor not to pass the cost of Medicare onto the Counties, as it will become a burden. The Federal monies should continue to be utilized as intended. The State did rescind and this in the budget.

-Passed a resolution, again, asking the Governor not to take tax money received by the County from delinquent tax sales.

-Biosolid study concluded that it is not feasible to develop such a project at this time with just St. Lawrence County. The cost for such a project is too costly. However, I am glad the study was done. It may be considered again in the future by including Jefferson and Franklin Counties.

-New York State's budget is larger than Texas and Florida combined, and it is equal to all of France's budget.

-Have begun discussion regarding offering an exemption for volunteer firefighters and rescue personnel. One of the main points that must be well defined, is what constitutes an active member.

Janice Brabaw, community member

I have established a HD Community Facebook Group, and they have come up with a list of activities and community programs that they would like to see within the town, as well as, to help revitalize downtown.

Three areas they would like to focus on are:

- Incentives to bring a gas station and a bar/restaurant back to town
- Creating a Community Center to give kids things to do and provide a gathering place for local groups and social events (dances, crafting, book clubs, etc.)
- Bring back community events such as field days, sport tournaments, picnics, etc.

There are many other ideas that the group believes would be beneficial to the town.

The members of the board, commend the enthusiasm that Ms. Brabaw has for these projects.

-Multiple attempts have been made in trying to bring a gas station to town, with no success.

There is a chance that the new fuel company EV Energy may at some point, install a gas pump. While there is no bar, the new PT's Deli is a new addition to the town.

-Plans are in the works for a pavilion to be built at Pipeline Park this summer. It will have electricity, picnic tables, along with a storage area.

-Community events can be planned, just need to speak with the town's insurance carrier to adjust the insurance plan to cover such events.

Supervisor Frary asked if she would be willing to work with Constance Elen's committee, which is working on designing a new Welcome to the Town of De Kalb sign. Ms. Brabaw's response was yes.

The board is willing to work with a group of people to bring such ideas to fruition; however, they stated that many attempts have been made in the past for such things. People are willing to say what they want, but few are willing to put time into such events.

If a group is willing to work toward such events, Supervisor Frary stated he would be willing to meet with them to listen, advise, and report to the board, if they would like.

### **Financials:**

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

### **Clerk's Report:** Barbara Creazzo

A total of \$861.20 was collected for the month of February, with the town retaining \$420.66 of the collection. The breakdown is as follows: DEC-\$380.54, town-\$4.46 for licenses sold, Ag & Markets-\$60, town-\$195 for dog licenses, the town also received \$50 for a building permit, \$10 for a Certified Birth Certificate, \$100 for Certified Death Certificates, \$20.20 for copies made, \$16 for faxes sent, and \$25 for a junk permit.

Deputy Clerk, Wanda Law, worked a total of 24.5 hours for the month of February.

Water and Sewer Collections for the month of February, water collection totaled \$190.57 and sewer collection totaled \$220.50.

Tax Collection, to date, \$1,545,500.43 of the \$1,994,344.89 warrant has been collected. A surcharge check for \$4,893.24 has been written to the SLC Treasurer, along with a payment check of \$620,000.00.

There have been multiple occasions where tax payments that were appropriately postmarked for January 31<sup>st</sup> did not reach my office until late February and early March. As each one was postmarked appropriately, I can postdate and process the payments, but believe this is being coming an issue that is a result of poor postal service.

Since the dog enumeration has been posted, there has been significant increase in people coming in to license their dogs. I have ordered new dog license tags and hope I have enough on hand to continue to license until the new order arrives. I have licensed over 50 new dogs, during the past weeks.

Flags for our deceased veterans have been ordered and received. The cost has almost doubled since last year. We have approximately 506 flags that are placed on the veterans' graves, over eight cemeteries. I did learn from another clerk, that she receives them at a much lower cost through a veteran's group. I will check into this for next year.

Supervisor Frary distributed the budget report covering January through March. Everything continues to look good with nothing out of line as we approach the end of the first quarter.

Supervisor Frary informed the board that he was recently informed, that he and his appointed deputy, must sign and file with Community Bank, a Financial Resolution on an annual basis.

Constance Elen motioned the Board approve the Resolution required by Community Bank, and that Supervisor, John Frary, and Deputy, Michael Livingston, sign such document. Seconded by Andrew Fenton. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, John Frary yes.

#### **DANC Report:**

Water, a total of 465,800 gallons of water were metered in the month of February, with an average daily flow of 16,636 gallons. A total of 6 gallons of sodium hypochlorite were used in the treatment of the water produced. The full report consists of all daily flow charts. All daily, weekly, and monthly inspections and/or maintenance were completed as scheduled. One random distribution sample for bacteriological testing was completed with a satisfactory result. Quarterly meter reading was conducted in February.

Sewer, a total of 2,016,000 gallons of wastewater were treated in the month of February, with an average daily flow of 72,000 gallons. There were no SPDES permit violations. The full report consists of all daily flow charts. All daily, weekly, and monthly inspections and/or maintenance were completed as scheduled. Continue to reverse the RBC for one hour each day.

#### **Wastewater Plant Update:**

Charles Prior, EDR

-Continuing to move forward as planned; however, the project is going to be behind schedule from what was originally planned, due to filing requirements.

-Must submit design to DEC again, as they are asking for a few areas of clarification. This will require to update the project schedule.

-Bidding is now going to be later than planned, will not be ready for about 2 months, which will put the entire project behind schedule. Due to this, some construction will be suspended during the winter months.

-The Bond process with Greenfield Bank has now been completed and an account with Community Bank has been established. This will allow for money to be deposited and disbursed as needed.

Scott Thornhill, DANC

-Continuing to address all funding sources for the project. The sewer district is still in good shape with funding and monies will be able to be disbursed as needed.

Supervisor Frary notes the extreme difference between the water distribution and the wastewater treated. This is a clear indication that there is a large amount of surface water entering the system. Another indication as to why it is important not only to upgrade infrastructure at the wastewater treatment plant, but also with the collection system.

#### **Water District update:**

Supervisor Frary reports that the cost the town must contribute to the Town of Hermon, for their water upgrade is not going to be as expensive as previously thought. He has requested quotes for

the meter reading system for our water district to be updated. It would be in the districts best interest to go to radio read, as there are more and more meters all the time that are not reading with the handheld system. There are monies available for water system upgrades and we should go after such funds to upgrade the district.

**Highway Department:** Wayne Holland (2-15-23 to 3-15-23)

- Plowing and sanding.
- Completing patching as weather permits. Using the hotbox and it is doing a great job.
- Continue to cut brush and trees.
- Have received word that the new truck that was ordered in 2020 is to be built in March.
- Also received word that the new excavator has a build date in May.
- Have purchased a used bucket truck from the Town of Hammond for \$3,000. Works well for putting up and taking down decorations, as well as, as tree trimming and cutting.
- CHIPS should be coming in soon.
- Have been checking prices for a new truck and the cost is running around \$142,000. The current truck that we are waiting for, was purchased at a cost of \$118,000.

After some discussion regarding the purchase of a new truck, the board believes that Superintendent Holland, should move forward as soon as possible with the bids.

A motion was made by Andrew Fenton and seconded by Constance Elen, giving permission for Superintendent Holland to choose the truck he believes is the best purchase for the town, once three bids have been received. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, John Frary yes.

**Dog Control:**

- Mr. Moyer has been given information regarding the dogs that are licensed in the township, as he is doing a dog enumeration for the town.
- Notification of the dog enumerations was published in the *Watertown Daily Times*, 1-day per week for 4-weeks, published with *North Country Now*, and published on the town's website.

**Building & Code Report:** William (Bill) Chambers

- Eleven permits have been issued this year, for a fee amount of \$1,250.00 and project cost for the permits is \$228,500.00. The new permits for the past month include a single-family home, septic for new residential construction, solar power, an alteration, camp, addition, siding & facia, and a storage shed.
- The garbage situation is being addressed. The time frame for cleanup has had an extension given due to the weather.

**Assessor Report:** Suzanne Arquette

-Have been reviewing building permits as well as receiving exemption renewals. The following is a breakdown of the exemptions:

- Senior Star: postcards were sent out from the Real Property office to all Enhanced Star applicants per NYS Law as of this year. Within my office, 20 renewal exemptions were mailed out and 11 renewals were approved. There were 26 applications sent in, however only 3 new applications were approved.
- Religious & Non-Profit: the exemption renewals for the churches and Non-Profit organizations were all sent out and all were received back in a timely manner.
- Disability: the income limit for the Low Income and Disability is at \$18,399.99 for the county portion of the taxes. Out of the 4 that were mailed out, only 1 qualified. Two new applications were sent in, but only 1 qualified.
- Fireman/Rescue: there were nine exemption renewals that were sent out. Seven renewal applications were received. The other two properties were sold.
- Agriculture: sent out 193 renewal applications with a letter to all property owners requesting that they send in their income (schedule F or other proof of Ag/Farm income). To date, 17 exemptions have been removed, as those property owners do not qualify. Have received other renewal applications, still waiting on their income. Will have a final count for next month's meeting. There were five new applications, and one modified one, as there was a property split.

Supervisor Frary has received a salary breakdown of assessors for the county, from Real Property. The town of De Kalb is just about in the middle of salary scale.

**Communications and other business:**

-The NYMIR Insurance inspection for the town went well. Items/areas that need a bit of tweaking are: 1. Highway should be recording snowfall, did they plow one half inch, 2 inches, etc. 2. Record all maintenance work on equipment. 3. The contracts between the three volunteer rescues squads need to be rewritten to include, "holding the town harmless". 4. Anyone who is requesting their water to be turned on or off, should be completing an application. Should not accept telephone calls to turn water on. These turn-ons and shut-offs, should only be occurring with the home owner present. A form will be developed.

-Plan installation of five new outlets along U.S. Highway 11, in the Junction for holiday lights next year. We will contact National Grid to request installation.

Superintendent Holland has provided information regarding the purchasing of AEDs for the town. He is requesting one for the town barn and would like to have one at the town hall as well.

Andrew Fenton made the motion to purchase two AEDs, one for the town barn and one for the town hall, at a cost of approximately \$1,795 each. Seconded by Michael Livingston. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, John Frary yes.

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 #3-2023. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, John Frary yes.

A motion was made by Ed Newcombe and seconded by Constance Elen, to adjourn.  
Meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM

Respectfully submitted by

Barbara A. Creazzo  
Town Clerk

**Actions**

1. Supervisor and Deputy Supervisor to sign resolution paperwork for Community Bank. **Completed 03/16/23.**
2. Superintendent Holland to receive 3 quotes for new truck and order as agreed.
3. Highway department to develop maintenance documentation form.
4. Water district to develop water turn-on and shut-off application form. **Completed 3/22/23.**
5. National Grid to install five new outlets for pole decorations.
6. Two AEDs to be ordered. **Completed 3/21/23.**