

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 May 2024, at the Town Hall in DeKalb Junction NY, there were present:

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

Members of the community present: Larry Denesha: SLC Legislator, Ginger Thomas, Charlene Allen, Angela Gray.

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.

Andrew Fenton moved that the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Town Board, held on April 17th, 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

- SLC Public Health is warning about lime disease and tick bites. Last year there were 250 reported cases. This year they are expecting 2 or 3 times as many cases. They are urging anyone to seek immediate medical attention when bitten, do not wait for the bullseye. There is a preventative course of treatment available.
- There is a resolution calling for NYS to reimburse all DA salaries as the salary is set by the state.
- Resolution passed to declare May 15 Peace Officer Memorial Day in St. Lawrence County.
- State Budget: There have been 11 nursing home closures since 2020 which means 14,518 beds are no longer available. There is an \$810 million annual gap between Medicaid reimbursement and actual costs. Shortage of people to hire, minimum staffing per shift which doesn't always meet state requirements which then leads to fines...and there is still no money to hire anyone.
- The hold harmless provision for school aid has been restored to last year's numbers.
- CHIPS money is staying the same.
- Passed a resolution to reduce the speed limit near the HD school. DOT is following their guidelines and sticking to them. They have no grey area to operate in.
- The new Assistant Director is Rick Russo from Star Lake.

Constance Elen brought to the board's attention the EMS report for the county. It shows that funding is going to run out by 2026 and that the board should be budgeting for it now.

Supervisor Deleel:

- Nothing new on the solar project except that the solar projects do have funds set aside to aid the towns they are building in so the highway department or the fire department may benefit from these funds.
- Richville solar field is online. Now we need to find out how the towns individuals can sign up to benefit on their electric bills.
- Wayne Holland received a bid to seal and repair the basketball area at the park as Larry Denesha brought it to the board's attention how bad the condition of the pavement is. Jeremy McGaw from Top of the Hill paving gave a quote of \$2500 to clean, fill, repair, seal and paint the court. This is a all-in-one, one stop shop quote. Wayne talked to other companies but no one else does it all, only one or two pieces. Constance Elen questioned why there were not three bids and Supervisor Deleel because the cost of the project fell under the procurement policy limit, three bids were not necessary. Also, no other company would do all of the necessary repairs. Discussion on who had paved the town parking lot years ago which was American Paving, but they don't paint the court lines.

Motion was made by Ed Newcombe, seconded by Andrew Fenton, to hire Top of the Hill Paving to clean, fill, repair, seal and paint the court. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Jordan Deleel yes.

Financials:

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

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

Justice Report: was unavailable due to bank statement not arriving.

Clerk Report: Kelly Davis

-A total of \$192.30 was collected for the month of April with the town retaining \$144.80.

-Property tax collection is at 85.26% as of 5/15/2024.

The monthly financials were signed off on by the council after reviewing the documented expenses. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Jordan Deleel yes.

Sewer Update: Bidding has been pushed back to next Wednesday, May 22, 2024 as Charles Prior advised that there were not enough bids in to look at. At the Open bid meeting on May 7,

there was only one electrical contractor that showed up. At this point, all the finances have been approved.

Water Update: The Annual water report was received with no major issues to worry about. Council members were given a copy of the report.

- We are still looking for funds to replace the water meters.
- The lead survey being conducted by C2AE asked if the town has any local sewer or water laws. Constance Elen has been going through the old laws on record and is hoping to complete the task in another week. It is believed that the sewer district was put in in 1969-1970 but unclear on the year the water district was established.
- Route 11 project main line is still holding.

Hermon water project: We still have no idea of the cost to us. The project is going forward and did not stop even with the upheaval of the Hermon town offices. The quote received previously was \$283,000 but nothing definite.

Highway Report: Wayne Holland reports

- General work being done includes:
 - Hauling stone for the dirt roads
 - Made mulch for the shoulders
 - Began shared services for paving
 - Installed 200' of culvert pipe
 - Town wide clean up, 2 days at the town barn
 - 2 BOCES students working on internship
 - Cold patching
 - Mowing town properties
 - Weed whacking signs and guardrails
- Bids received on a new pick-up truck: Dodge \$55,000, Chevy \$57,000, Ford \$53,000
All trucks had the same package: 1 ton, crew cab, regular gas, white paint. Blevin's Ford was the most helpful and assisted us in getting an FIN# which saved us \$6000 (equates to a state price rate) All looking at a six-month delivery timeframe.

Motion made by Michael Livingston, seconded by Andrew Fenton, to order the Ford 1 ton pick-up, crew cab, gas engine from Blevin's Ford, Gouverneur at \$52,635. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Jordan Deleel yes

- Plow truck that has been already agreed to order is 2 ½ years out, \$25,000 more, & model HV is getting a different motor that's new to the market. The next level model HX has current proven motor, is only \$10,000 more in price, still an International version, Cummings motor and less wait time to get.

Motion made by Constance Elen, seconded by Jordan Deleel, to order the HX model truck.

Discussion: The oldest town truck currently in the fleet is 2003.

We usually pay for the truck one year and then the following year pay for the harness.

Need to get ahead of the game as 2026 the state is looking at mandating all vehicles are to be electric. Everyone will be looking to still get a gas truck.

Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Jordan Deleel yes

- Wayne presented that the town is currently paying \$4700 for providing uniforms to the highway guys and most do not wear them. He is suggesting that the town instead give the employees a \$500 check per year for clothing expense. This would save the town a couple thousand dollars every year. The highway contract would have to be reopened and amended. A check for this year would be pro-rated as we are already half way through the year.

Motion made by Constance Elen, seconded by Michael Livingston, to table the discussion until next month after Wayne has a chance to talk to the union rep about the contract amendment.

Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Jordan Deleel yes

- CHIPS money has arrived in the amount of \$434,796.71. Currently looking to pave River Rd, Jenkins Rd, Coloton Rd.

Dog Control: Dan Moyer - No report

Code Enforcement: Bill Chambers reports

- The new CloudPermit program is in the process of being installed. Not functional yet.
- Tanner St property will be going to court for failure to clean up the property. Bill will meet with Mr. Nash to get that process started.
- There are several bigger projects starting or starting soon.
 - EV -large office building with a 3 bay garage this year. Next year 4 25,000 tanks & 3 300,000 tanks all above ground, overfill tank between for spillage, and plans for self-serve gas pumps.
 - Dollar General Market open by October this year.
 - Storage shed building on Route 11 towards Richville.
 - Storage building on corner of the Orebed Road.
 - Corning expansion towards end of this year.

Assessor Report: Susanne Arquette

- Has been helping gather info for the sewer project.

Historian Report: Bryan Thompson No report

Communications:

Pavilion: The easements have been signed except for Clark Porter so that National Grid can set the pole. Once Mr. Porter signs off, National Grid will come and set the pole.

Supervisor Deleel brought to the Board's attention that currently the town is paying two different gas companies at different prices for gas at the town barn, town hall and sewer plant. Farrell Gas supplies the town hall and sewer plant at \$2.19/gallon. AmeriGas supplies the town barn at \$1.64-1.75/gallon.

Supervisor Deleel, currently employed by Superior Propane, can set all three buildings up at \$1.59/gallon for the next 12 months. After discussion by board members, Constance Elen would like to get other quotes and table the discussion until next month. Board members agreed to revisit next month.

Jeff Matott's well Update: Has been paid as agreed and the town has a signed agreement releasing the town from any further damages.

Veterans' Banners: The brackets and hardware have been ordered by Wayne Holland at the request of Supervisor Deleel. Hoping to be hung up in time for Memorial Day. Some of the flags will be replaced with the banners. Brackets cost \$600 which will be taken from unclassified funds. Constance Elen asked where the CBDG funds are in the budget. Supervisor Deleel placed them in General A, unclassified funds.

CPA Firm:

- Supervisor Deleel sent all board members the contracts he received via email for the members review before the meeting tonight.
- Basic differences are one is a flat rate, the other is a monthly base rate with extra fees for any out of scope work.
- Angela Gray was present to introduce herself and answer questions. She deals with several other municipalities and is very comfortable with taking on the town.
- Supervisor Deleel expressed his concerns with how much out of scope work was going to cost, especially as the town begins the sewer project construction. Is it all going to be billable? Ms. Gray said that Gray & Gray gave a quote for basic, regular monthly scope of work. Most items out of that scope would be billable by the hour or by a flat rate agreed upon at the start of a project between the Board and her office. AUD, now known as AFR is labor intensive and would be an additional \$2500 per year. (Our current accountant includes this service)
- Ms. Elen stated that the current quote shows a timeframe of change over to be May 15- May 31. Today is May 15 so would the date be pushed out to accommodate the change over? A. Yes, and it would depend on how cooperative the current accountant will be with the transfer of information.
- Ms. Elen asked if there was anything the town could do in-house to save on costs. A. The town would need to purchase software programming, for example to print checks in-house.
- Supervisor Deleel asked about the budget process. It needs to be overhauled. What does Gray & Gray's quote cover? The first 15 hours are covered in the monthly fee. Anything over that is billable at \$160 per hour. Ms. Gray is available to attend board meetings.
- Andrew Fenton pointed out that the budget this year is likely to go over the allotted 15 hours due to the much needed overhaul. The town would be looking at extra fees on top of the \$2275 monthly fee.

- Mr. Fenton also pointed out that all of the sewer project hours will be billable above the \$2275 monthly fee.
- Roughly looking at \$32,000 for the year plus all sewer project billable hours and any extra budget billable hours.
- Ed Newcombe asked if she has enough staff to cover adding another municipality to her work load. A. Ms. Gray stated that she has 13-15 on staff, so yes, staffing is adequate.
- Hoffman & Eels, current accountant, charges a flat rate which includes AUD now AFR, all budgeting, and all sewer project hours.
- Hoffman & Eels is a flat rate of \$2750 / month, all work included. Gray & Gray is \$2275 per month with any extra out of scope work billable at \$160/hour, AUD/AFR an extra \$2500/ year.
- Ed Newcombe mentioned that Ms. Gray just sat through a 2-hour meeting, Hoffman just raised the price and doesn't really seem to want our business.
- Michael Livingston pointed out that the unknown with the sewer project is going to costly.
- Supervisor Deleel commented that Hoffman said we could use QuickBooks to do some stuff in-house.
- Ms. Elen stated that the 5 board members are held accountable and responsible for all the town's finances, not the accountant. Last year's budget process was not done the way it should have been. Numbers were not shared.
- Supervisor Deleel remarked that it all comes down to the money, that's why we are having this conversation. Hoffman & Eels will be \$32,000 this year. Gray & Gray is going to run \$40,000 minimum per year.
- Mr. Nash commented that the board is liable, not the accountant.

Motion made by Constance Elen, seconded by Michael Livingston to change accounts to Gray & Gray. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton abstained, Ed Newcombe yes, Jordan Deleel refrained from voting as the board was already three yes votes. Majority passes.

250 Year Celebration: No report

After reviewing all bills presented, and signing all bills over \$500.00, a motion made by Ed Newcombe and seconded by Andrew Fenton to approve the payment of the bills as entered in abstract #5-2024. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Jordan Deleel yes.

A motion was made by Constance Elen, seconded by Michael Livingston, to adjourn the meeting. Vote: Michael Livingston yes, Constance Elen yes, Andrew Fenton yes, Ed Newcombe yes, Jordan Deleel yes.

Meeting adjourned at 9:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kelly Davis, Town Clerk