

**REGULAR MEETING
SHELDON TOWN BOARD
March 20, 2024**

The Regular Meeting of the Sheldon Town Board held March 20, 2024 at the Sheldon Town Hall, 1380 Centerline Rd., Strykersville, NY 14145 was called to order by Town Supervisor Brian Becker at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Supervisor Brian Becker
Councilmen: Jim Fontaine, Joe Meyer
Absent: Vince Kirsch, Councilman Mike Armbrust (Councilman Armbrust video called in for the meeting but did not participate in voting)
Recording Secretary: Town Clerk Carol Zittel
Also present: Highway Superintendent Luke Metz

Minutes

A motion was made by Joe Meyer and seconded by Jim Fontaine that the minutes from the February 21, 2024 regular meeting be approved.

Ayes: (3) Becker, Meyer, Fontaine Nays: (0) Absent: (2) Armbrust, Kirsch Motion Carried.

Communications

The Town Clerk Carol Zittel reported the following:

Reports

The Town Supervisor financial reports, highway payroll, energy report, cash flow report, Town Clerk report and Town Justice reports were distributed.

WYOMING COUNTY ZONING MONTHLY REPORT

Date: March 2024 – Report for February 2024

Town: Sheldon

Open Projects:

- **Patrick & Melody Almeter (2514 Route 20A)** – submitted an application for deck/porch with roof. The applicant has applied for a variance to construct a porch that will not meet front or side setback. The proposed front of the porch will be 10' setback instead of the required 50' and side setback will be 15' instead of the required 25'. The Sheldon Zoning Board of Appeals will have a public hearing on Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at 6:00 PM.

Permits Issued:

- **Adam Gestwick (3928 Humbert Road)** – submitted an application for 12'x 27' remodel/addition off of rear of dwelling.
- **Doug Hyman (3868 Main Street)** – submitted an application for 30'x 15' roof over deck

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- **Breezy Hill Farms, LLC (2705 N. Sheldon Road)** – submitted an application for 80' x 60' barn

Special Use Permits Renewed & Inspected: No SUP permits renewed or inspected

Property Maintenance Violations:

- **Dennis Mills - 1907 Route 20A (SBL: 56.-2-26)** **Dennis Mills - 1907 Route 20A (SBL: 56.-2-26)** Decision of order was received and within order it stated that Don Roberts was to go out to the property and take inventory of the unlicensed unregistered motor vehicles. Don Roberts did the inspection on February 2, 2024. This matter was heard in Court on February 27, 2024, and because Don Roberts was denied access to the entire property on February 2, 2024, Don Roberts is working with Judge Kibler on the next steps.

Highway Superintendent Report

Superintendent Luke Metz reported the following:

Ditching & Plowing

The first two weeks of March the department was ditching roads. As of this week, the department has been busy plowing snow.

Pickup Truck

The pickup truck from Van Bortel is ordered and a delivery date should be available in approximately five weeks.

Mill Head

The mill head was delivered on February 23rd and the Superintendent is happy with it. It still needs teeth installed. The department has used East Aurora's machine on Creek Road to test it out and get highwaymen familiar with how to run it. The Superintendent is optimistic that the equipment will help to keep the roads in Sheldon in great shape for years to come.

Plow Truck

The new plow truck is now at Valley Fab awaiting the install of the plow equipment.

Highway School

A motion was made by Jim Fontaine and seconded by Joe Meyer to authorize the Town Highway Superintendent to attend highway school in Ithaca on June 3-5 at the registration cost of \$120 plus hotel and mileage.

Ayes: (3) Becker, Meyer, Fontaine Nays: (0) Absent: (2) Armbrust, Kirsch Motion Carried.

Skid Steer/Loader

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Superintendent Metz and the Town Board reviewed budget numbers and costs associated with the purchase of a new skid loader. The Superintendent received quotes from Milton Cat and Kubota, both of which were state prices on NYSOGS. (Office of General Services) The department's 2019 John Deere 320G Skidsteer will get \$31,000 on a trade. The Town paid \$39,271 for the 2019 John Deere. The quote from Milton CAT is \$74,193.00 minus the trade value of \$31,000 = \$43,193.00 balance. The Superintendent explained that the highway department is on track to save on overtime hours and salt/sand due to the mild winter which would cover most of the surplus cost of \$43,193.00.

A motion was made by Jim Fontaine and seconded by Joe Meyer to authorize the purchase of a 2024 CAT 255 compact track loader from Southworth-Milton at a cost of \$74,193.00 minus the trade in of a John Deere 320G skidsteer for \$31,000.00.

Ayes: (3) Becker, Meyer, Fontaine Nays: (0) Absent: (2) Armbrust, Kirsch Motion Carried.

Supervisor Report

Supervisor Brian Becker reported the following:

PILOT Payment – High Sheldon Wind Farm

Breakdown:

Attica Schools = \$131,097.93

Wyoming County = \$63,707.33

Pioneer Schools = \$13,812.88

Town of Sheldon = \$49,336.85

Total PILOT payment for High Sheldon Wind Farm = \$257,954.99

NYCLASS

Supervisor Becker met with Kathy Saville from NYCLASS last week.

From the NYCLASS website: New York Cooperative Liquid Assets Securities System (NYCLASS) is a short-term, highly liquid investment fund, designed specifically for the public sector. NYCLASS provides the opportunity to invest funds on a cooperative basis in short-term investments that strive to prioritize safety, liquidity and yield. Supervisor Becker reported that the Town will look into moving the money in our one-month CD to NYCLASS on its renewal date.

Business Growth in Varysburg

Supervisor Becker met with new business owners in the hamlet of Varysburg: Gerald Haitz, Keith Berlinksi, Ben Kibler and Jeremy Dominesey and County officials Jim Pierce, Scott Gardiner, Rob Jines and Don Roberts. All are excited for the potential of new business enterprises.

NYSDOT – Traffic Concerns on Route 20A

Supervisor Becker spoke with a representative from the finger lakes region of the NYSDOT regarding the traffic concerns on Route 20A. Supervisor Becker explained that google maps sends traffic to/from Toronto, NYC and NJ via Route 20A. The representative was not aware of

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this so he mapped the directions while on the phone with Supervisor Becker and was able to see the directions himself.

Acceptance of Reports

A motion was made by Jim Fontaine and seconded by Joe Meyer to accept all reports as presented.

Ayes: (3) Becker, Meyer, Fontaine Nays: (0) Absent: (2) Armbrust, Kirsch Motion Carried.

Old Business:

ARPA Funding

Balance = \$14,489.04

A motion was made by Jim Fontaine and seconded by Joe Meyer to use the remaining ARPA balance of \$14,489.04 towards the purchase of the CAT skid loader as approved earlier tonight.

Ayes: (3) Becker, Meyer, Fontaine Nays: (0) Absent: (2) Armbrust, Kirsch Motion Carried.

Varysburg Water Income Survey Update

Surveys were mailed March 7th. The Town Clerk has received six back in the mail that were addressed to apartments. Supervisor Becker will hand deliver these mailings.

Varysburg Water Engineering RFOs

The Town Clerk has fielded numerous inquiries from engineers interested in submitting an RFQ. The Town Clerk has supplied those inquiring with a copy of the PER submitted by B&L. Those with technical questions are given Supervisor Becker's cell number.

Varysburg Water Engineering RFQ Committee Formation

The replies to the RFQ should be received by April 8, 2024.

A motion was made by Jim Fontaine and seconded by Joe Meyer to establish a RFQ review committee consisting of Supervisor Becker, Councilman Meyer, and the Varysburg Water Board. A meeting date will be set before the next regular board meeting.

Ayes: (3) Becker, Meyer, Fontaine Nays: (0) Absent: (2) Armbrust, Kirsch Motion Carried.

Mills Zoning Violation Update

Supervisor Becker reported that since Mr. Mills would not allow Don Roberts to complete his inventory that Mr. Mills is in contempt of court.

Schoolhouse Museum

Supervisor Becker and Councilman Fontaine will attend the Historical Society meeting on Thursday night to assess the Schoolhouse needs.

Acceptance of Audit

A motion was made by Jim Fontaine and seconded by Joe Meyer to accept the audit report of the Town Clerk, Town Supervisor and Town Justice Court records as prepared by Don Przybyl.

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Ayes: (3) Becker, Meyer, Fontaine Nays: (0) Absent: (2) Armbrust, Kirsch Motion Carried.

New Business:

Town Finance School – Permission for Bookkeeper to Attend

A motion was made by Joe Meyer and seconded by Jim Fontaine to authorize the Town Bookkeeper, Katie Chmura, to attend Town finance school in Geneva, NY May 7-8, 2024 at an approximate cost of \$200 for registration, \$107 per two nights hotel, plus meals and mileage.

Ayes: (3) Becker, Meyer, Fontaine Nays: (0) Absent: (2) Armbrust, Kirsch Motion Carried.

Court Security Agreement with Wyoming County Sheriff

A motion was made by Joe Meyer and seconded by Jim Fontaine to authorize the Town Supervisor to sign the court security agreement with the Wyoming County Sheriff's office.

Ayes: (3) Becker, Meyer, Fontaine Nays: (0) Absent: (2) Armbrust, Kirsch Motion Carried.

Historian Report

Supervisor Becker commended the Town Historian, Jeanne Mest, for her amazing work. The Town Board was in agreement.

Below is a copy of the Historian's report:

Dear Brian and the Sheldon Town Board,

I want to thank you for keeping me on as town historian; I really enjoy it. I am sorry to be late in thanking you for all your support during the past year. Much was accomplished in 2023; beginning with the amazing cleanup of the Strykersville Pioneer Cemetery. In May we unveiled and dedicated the historic roadside markers from the Pomeroy Foundation at the Pioneer Cemetery and the Sheldon Schoolhouse Museum. It was made even more special with the program put on by the Honor Guard from the American Legion, who have decided to include our Pioneer Cemetery with the others in their Memorial Day schedule. So people will gather there and see the Honor Guard and that will show respect for the veterans buried there and bring more attention to the cemetery and to our history. I was so happy to hear that and I feel like that made all the hard work everyone put in even more meaningful. Thank you all again for your support in that cleanup project, especially Jim who gave so much of his time and hard work. Throughout the year I have worked at the Schoolhouse Museum on Tuesdays during the months we are regularly open, but I start coming on Tuesdays in the spring before we are open and often I'm there on whatever days I have some time. I have been able to make plans with people who contact me for research, and meet them there when it suits their schedule, so I am liable to turn up there on almost any day. It has gone very well working at the museum and together with the historical society. Everything I do there is for the town and for the museum together, like we are one unit most of the time. Publishing the historical society newsletters benefits the town, as it reaches near and far and seems to make a good impression for us. I spend a lot of time at home working on the newsletters as well as research, so when I'm not at the museum, I'm likely to be working on something at home. Since the Sheldon Historical Society took charge of the Wyo. Co. Federation of Historical Societies for the year, we had extra responsibilities, but all went very well. I helped the people at Attica Historical Society when they hosted the Spring

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Workshop. We set up a unique display in the historical house at the Wyo. Co. Fair about flax, which was grown in Sheldon in early days, and we arranged for coverage at the Federation booth there. We planned a fall luncheon meeting rather than an evening, which made it easier for those who don't like driving at night. Our speaker was retired Attica history teacher Mark Herman who did a great presentation to the over 50 guests from throughout the county. At that meeting we agreed to take the responsibility for one more year, in 2024, and then another town will have to step up. I served as a Co-President of the Federation along with Barbara Logel and Paul Rambino, with Donna Kirsch Vice President and Laury Lakas as Treasurer. On April 6, the Java Historical Society will be hosting the Federation Spring Workshop, so I've been helping their historian with the paperwork and will help out that day. At the Schoolhouse Museum, we greeted many visitors throughout the year, helped them with their research and often arranged for them to find their ancestors in various cemeteries. At times, Barbara Logel or Laury Lakas or myself accompanied them to the cemeteries and PJ Almeter gave them tours at St. Cecilia's whenever we asked him to. In November we were able to join the celebration of St. Cecilia's 175th Anniversary by dedicating the historical roadside marker we received for the site from the Pomeroy Foundation. The markers are the result of extensive applications, which I do on behalf of the town, as your historian. Currently I am working on two new applications to the Pomeroy Foundation, for historic markers for two more of our cemeteries, the Persons Pioneer Cemetery and the Johnsonburg Cemetery. There is at least one Revolutionary War veteran at each of the cemeteries, and more from the wars that followed. I'm also researching to see what other Rev. War soldiers are in the rest of the cemeteries in Sheldon. There are lists, but I have found that there are always some missing from the lists, as more information becomes available, especially that which is found on Fold3.com, a website with military records that are indisputable. The year was a little difficult for me personally, as I had some surgery, but I still went to the museum in a wheelchair and then in a walker. I'm hoping for a healthier year in 2024! Recently on a Sunday afternoon, I had a meeting with some guests from out of town who were here researching and I was able to find and invite some other descendants of their ancestors, so they could meet and all share their family history research. We had two archival boxes of photos and memorabilia that had been donated previously from a family member, so I was able to share a lot with them. I got some good news a couple of weeks ago. I had sent an application to get an intern, to Professor Oberg at Geneseo College, for the Gardiner Foundation Semiquincentennial Summer Fellowship Program. Their goal is to present history to as large an audience as possible by having the students work with local historians to plan programs that will commemorate the 250th Anniversary of our country, in 2026. This program is offering fellowships to 50 students from seven colleges and universities, and we have been chosen! The Gardiner Foundation will pay the students to work with us for 150 hours. This week I had a Zoom interview with Prof. Oberg and our new student intern, Emma Johnson, a sophomore at Canisius College, so we could meet and begin to make plans. This will be Emma's summer semester, so she can start as soon as the spring semester ends, about mid May. This is really an honor to have them choose us twice for an intern. The main focus will be on projects that relate to the upcoming 250th Anniversary, which we will coordinate to benefit us as well. The milder winter has made it possible to be at the museum earlier than usual and we had our first meeting of the year. We now have a small cemetery committee of volunteers who are planning to clean and try to repair some more of the

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graves at the Pioneer Cemetery. As we had mentioned last year, we would prefer to have some of our volunteers mow the grass with their smaller mowers, so as to not damage any of the headstones that are being worked on or that we hope to work on. Mr. LeMieux mowed it at least twice last year and someone mowed it once with their push mower. We are hoping to have enough volunteers to take care of it this year, but it is normally the responsibility of the town to care for abandoned cemeteries. Our cemetery was actually deeded to the town by the founders, so I'm not sure if it is considered abandoned, since the town has owned it since that time. But either way, the town took care of the mowing up until now and at some point they may have to resume that care, if we cannot continue to take care of it. The APHNYS Board of Directors meets monthly on Zoom. They asked me to participate, along with being their local coordinator for Region 12. Looking ahead, we will have another meeting of the historical society in March. Our intern should start at the end of May and then it will be time for the town-wide sale when we will be open all weekend. Following that we will be open every Tuesday afternoon. In June we will have a Federation meeting to plan for the Pike Fair and the Fall Luncheon Meeting. Please let me know if you have any suggestions for a speaker or location. My long term plans, along with helping visitors and the public, are to continue working on the archival records and start creating a book with our best newsletter articles and town history. I am looking forward to a great year and I hope you are, too. Sincerely, Jeanne Mest

Authorization to Spend Town Highway Funds

A motion was made by Jim Fontaine and seconded by Joe Meyer to authorize the agreement with Wyoming County Highway to spend Town highway funds.

Ayes: (3) Becker, Meyer, Fontaine Nays: (0) Absent: (2) Armbrust, Kirsch Motion Carried.

Authorization for Town Supervisor to sign Accounting Software Contract

A motion was made by Joe Meyer and seconded by Brian Becker to authorize the Town Supervisor to sign the contract with Williamson Law Books for the accounting software \$1,051 April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025.

Ayes: (3) Becker, Meyer, Fontaine Nays: (0) Absent: (2) Armbrust, Kirsch Motion Carried.

Bills:

Town Supervisor Becker confirmed that the Board had a chance to review the abstracts.

A motion was made by Jim Fontaine and seconded by Joe Meyer that the General Bills #43 to #63 for a Total of \$136,985.02 (Invenergy deposited the tax payment to the wrong Town account), the

Highway Bills #29 to #41 for a Total of \$10,098.75, the

Lighting District Bills #3 to #3 for a Total of \$615.42, the

Trust & Agency Bills #4 to #4 for a Total of \$241.00, and the

Varysburg Water District Bills #11 to #15 for a Total of \$379.04 be paid.

Ayes: (3) Becker, Meyer, Fontaine Nays: (0) Absent: (2) Armbrust, Kirsch Motion Carried.

Comments from the Floor

No residents in attendance. No comments from the floor.

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Adjournment

At 8:00 p.m. a motion was made by Jim Fontaine and seconded by Joe Meyer to adjourn the March 20, 2024 meeting of the Sheldon Town Board.

Ayes: (3) Becker, Meyer, Fontaine Nays: (0) Absent: (2) Armbrust, Kirsch Motion Carried.