**County of St. Lawrence, State of New York, 94 Main St., Colton, NY 13625**

Present: Ronald Robert, Town Supervisor Councilpersons: Lisa Fisher

Kevin Hawley, Highway Supt. Jacob Poste

Darren Richards, Code/Safety/DPW Supt. Stephen Knight

Jennifer Cole, Town Clerk Kevin Beary

Meeting Attendees: Rick Perkins, Patti LaRock, James Durham, Kirk Perry, Ed Fuhr, Jeff Tubolilno, Shelley Rayner, Brittney Gravlin, Andrea Malik, Nancy Robert, Grace Hawley, Matt Ryan

Zoom Attendees: Jean Fallon, Dennis Eickhoff, Anne Townsend, Mary Jane Watson, Peggy Shea, Cynthia Hennessy, Judy Fuhr, Ellie Menz

Supervisor Ronald Robert opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6pm, as scheduled.

Motion #1

**Adopt the Meeting Agenda**

Mr. Knight made the motion, seconded by Ms. Fisher, to adopt the agenda for this meeting.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion carried

Executive session request by Supervisor Robert for Attorney/Client privilege.

Motion #2

Ms. Fisher made the motion to move the meeting to executive session, seconded by Mr. Poste.

Ayes 4 Fisher, Knight, Poste, Robert

Noes 1 Beary

Motion carried

Meeting moved to executive session at 6:01pm

Motion #3

Ms. Fisher made the motion to move the meeting back to regular session, seconded by Mr. Poste.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion carried

Meeting returned back to regular session at 6:40pm.

\*\*\*\*\*\* no results of executive session\*\*\*\*\*\*

Motion #4

**Authorize Bank Recon, Transfers, & Bills in Warrant #4, 2024**

Motion made by Mr. Knight, seconded by Mr. Poste to authorize payment of bills labeled Warrant #4, complete a budget amendment, and a transfer as indicated below.

Discussion on attorney invoices from Pease & Gustafson and Roemer & Wallens.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion carried

General Fund ……………………………………………………………………………$116,426.90

Highway Fund …………………………………………………………………………… 30,032.38

Library Fund …………………………………………………………………………… 31,649.23

South Colton Light District …………………………………………………………….... 1,708.90

Sewer Fund #1 …………………………………………………………………………… 6,253.00

Water Fund #1 …………………………………………………………………………… 8,182.84

$194,253.25

TRANSFERS:

To: A1910.4 Unallocated Insurance…………………………………………………………………..$3,500.00

From: A1990.4 Contingency………………………………………………………………………….$3,500.00

**Courtesy of the Floor:**

Ed Fuhr spoke to the board about working together for the salary increases. Mr. Fuhr also gave an update on the handicap accessible ramp being put in at Higley. It’s here, it just needs to be assembled and installed.

**County Legislators Report:** Rick Perkins

At the April 1st Full Board Meeting

* We had 30 resolutions.
* We had 5 modifications to the budget.
* We had 11 Agreements/Contracts to be signed.
* We had a resolution authorizing the filling of 15 vacancies positions.
* We had a resolution authorizing supporting Emergency Service Communication towers for Star Lake and Cranberry Lake in the Adirondack Park.
* We had a resolution Proclaiming Earth Day April 22, 2024, in St Lawrence County.
* We had a resolution designating April 2024 as Fair Housing month.
* We had resolutions declaring April as sexual assault awareness month
* We had a resolution approving bad debt write off for the Probation Dept.
* We had a resolution advocating for the adoption of farm friendly policies within the State of NY.
* We had a resolution proclaiming April 21-27, 2024, as National Volunteer appreciation week in St Lawrence County.
* We had a resolution approving the rates for related services for the pre-school special education program.
* We had a resolution proclaiming April 1st- 7 as Nation Public Health week with the theme of “Protecting, Connecting, and Thriving: We are all Public Health”.
* We had a resolution Adopting Local Law B(no.\_) for the year 2024, “Rescinding all previous ethics laws and amendments and adopting the St Lawrence County Ethics Law”.
* We had a resolution urging Governor Hochul to make appointments to the Hermon Town Board, St Lawrence County.
* We had a resolution proclaiming April as National County Government month in St Lawrence County and the theme, “Forward Together”.
* We had a resolution updating the authorized fees for Indigent Burials through the Department of Social Services.

Mr. Perkins stated that the Office of the Aging is struggling to find volunteers for food delivery purposes and other services to the community. The contact person is Andrea Montgomery at the Office of the Aging if interested.

**Engineer Report:** Jeff Tubolino

Transfer Station

Since the last Town Board meeting the following items have been worked on.

1. Exterior Stone Veneer.

2. Main building HVAC.

3. Main building Plumbing.

Major items that still need to be completed under contract include:

1. Open bay canopy ceiling painting.

2. Operator building general, electrical, and HVAC work.

3. Main building HVAC and Plumbing work.

4. Signage at entrances.

5. Site restoration.

Whitton Construction provided an estimate for a concrete slab for the transfer station, instead of black top. Concrete would last longer and hold up better than the black top over time. Whitton Construction estimate came in at $31,538.19.

Motion #4

Mr. Knight made the motion to accept the estimate from Whitton Construction, $31,538.19 and move forward with a concrete slab instead of black top, seconded by Mr. Poste.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion carried

Councilman Beary wanted to publicly apologize to the citizen taxpayers of Colton. Mr. Beary didn’t realize stone would be placed all around the transfer station. This is not appropriate siding for a transfer station.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements

We opened bids for the project today at 10:00 am.

Town of Colton, Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements Project Cost Summary 4/17/2024

SLC ARPA $400,000.00

Total Town ARPA $144,614.95

Sewer Budget $20,000.00

Total Funds Available $564,614.95

Sludge Pump and Blower Work $70,681.00

WWTP Concrete $18,000.00

Clarifier Scraper $20,554.00

Engineering $43,500.00

Remaining Funds for Aeration and Catwalk Improvements $411,879.95

Bid Recv’d (Aluminum Handrail) Potential Deduct (carbon steel handrail)

Base Bid $390,600.00 $370,600.00

Allowance $10,000.00 $10,000.00

Alternate 1 $99,000.00 $59,000.00

Total $499,600.00 $439,600.00

Over Budget $87,720.05 $27,720.05

We have prepared a resolution to award the project.

Water Treatment Plant

Instrumentation Improvements: We have a meeting with Jim Rogers on 4/29/2024 to discuss the scope of the

improvements.

Pedestrian Improvements

No updates.

**Dog Warden Report:** Mike Gilbo

Nothing at this time.

**Bookkeeper/Assessor Report:** Shelley Rayner

Assessment

Can no longer make changes to exemptions. The B.A.R. meeting is scheduled for the 1st week in June for grievance day.

Bookkeeper

Waiting for the union contract and salaries to get settled.

**BTI Report:** Andrea Malik

* All streams have been treated for their first round.
* Sections of the river, Five Falls bypass, South Colton Bypass were treated 3/26/24, Stone Valley (Colton Bypass) and the main river in South Colton were treated 4/5/24.
* I am now finding lots of tiny sized larvae in most sections of the river so, am continually monitoring and will treat again when I start seeing large larvae. Every day more black fly eggs hatch into larvae so I wait until there is a range of sizes so we get, “more bang for our buck”, killing a larger number of larvae with a single treatment.
* We are finding small larvae coming back in the first streams we treated so, also keeping tabs on them as we simultaneously start working on mosquito control.
* All the crew are working extremely hard and are doing an excellent job.
* The E-bike has been working out well. I did have two falls, once in the snow which resulted in a relatively minor gash to my knee---I learned the bike does not work well in snow and just this past Friday, my bike pedal caught on a rock and pitched me off. I landed on my left side/shoulder. The injury wasn’t serious, I kept working and just feel sore and a bit banged up. Another lesson learned—keep mindful of pedals snagging on rocks and roots.

MOSQUITOES

* I heard a few reports of people being swarmed by mosquitoes just after the eclipse. These are Anopheles mosquitoes, that have overwintered as adults in protective shelters like hollow trees or sheds. We are treating for the immature, larval stage.
* I started treatment for mosquitoes April 3 to fulfill a DEC notification requirement but because of the relative cold and not finding many mosquito larvae, I got the entire crew working on mosquitoes April 10th.
* Attached is a checklist for the homeowner to do their part in reducing mosquitoes in their own yard.

**Code Enforcement/DPW Report:** Darren Richards

Transfer Station

Whitton Construction started dumping topsoil around the grounds of the transfer station. Blue Line is doing the final calculations on binder and asphalt top. The highway is targeting May for paving. We are ordering parts for the water hook up to the new building. Skelley and Cornerstone are finishing the mechanicals. The Compactors will be installed once the ceiling is painted for the canopy.

Water/Sewer

The wastewater upgrade bids are opened on 4/17/24. We hope to have the upgrades started at the Wastewater Treatment Plant in August and finished no later than September with a lot of components being built off site. Water upgrade with variable speed drives will have a kickoff project meeting on April 29th with calibrations from Tri-nova and engineering on site at the water plant.

Building and Grounds

Currently we are managing 7 grants whether applying for, administering current ones, or deciding what energy projects to do with the existing grant dollars awarded. The DPW has cleaned the rink building for softball, lacrosse, pickleball and cornhole tournaments. Swift is busy this Spring. The DPW is doing maintenance projects for water and sewer. Transfer station water hook up, fire hydrant replacement planning, lift station upgrades and maintenance,

Safety

The cameras are installed at both Swift and Transfer Station and have already caught two vandals. Working great. MSHA training is less than 2 weeks away for the highway crew. Water/Sewer continuing credits with safety training occurred today at Potsdam State University and Andy and Mike attended. I intend to attend Verona NY American Water Works Conference in May.

Code Enforcement Office

Returning from Codes Class, I am completely certified for another year. We have had 10 permits in the last couple days, 17 total and more permits this week coming.

**Highway Report:** Kevin Hawley

* Since the last meeting we hopefully have finished snow and ice. I do currently still have the 3 big trucks harnessed and ready for snow.
* We have been patching potholes, picking up roadside litter and tree and brush debris in the right of way.
* We are 2/3 of the way done sweeping back roads. Next week this will be done, then we will be starting our spring street clean up in the two hamlets.
* Our front-end loader has a major problem causing the brakes to stay applied. The machine was at United in Gouverneur for repairs. It was picked up today. To repair it, the total cost is $13,944.07. I would like the boards permission to pay this bill with the early bills for May.

Motion #6

Ms. Fisher made the motion, seconded by Mr. Poste, to pay the United bill in the amount of $13,944.07 with the early bills for May.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion carried

* I still haven't received my Chips letter informing us of our allocation for the year, so I am not able to complete my agreement to spend highway funds form. As soon as I get the letter, I will fill it out and leave it with Jenn for your review and approval.
* I talked with Maine land surveyors last week and the survey for a proposed highway realignment is 95% complete. He hopes to have it to me in the very near future. After I have this, I will speak again with the two effected landowners, and I will submit a proposal to the board.

**Library Report:** Dennis Eickhoff

The construction for the library will be starting soon. May 13th, the librarian office needs to be cleared out. May 20th demolition will start, then memorial weekend reconstruction will begin. Mr. Eickhoff recently received an email from From the Heart Cabinetry regarding the specialty knives. Library board member Ellie Menz stated that on April 27th there is a book recycling event happening at the library. May 8th through June 5th there is a student art show happening at the library as well. Then on June 15th there will be a live owl presentation.

**Planning Board Report:** Kirke Perry

The planning board met on Tuesday, 04/16/2024. We did not have any subdivisions or conditional use applications.

We hear a proposal from Joe Graves, a representative of Blue Wave Energy, for the solar project on the fireman’s field, and on the adjoining property of Joe and Debra Daprile. They must redo their plans and downsize the project because National Grid will only allow them to produce 6MW, not their original plan of 10MW. All other aspects of the project are in line to meet the requirements of our solar law.

We have made some changes to our zoning regulations. We added cannabis dispensary the community center, we added some definitions to the list of definitions, and we added Public, Private Utility to the Residential Recreation zone if 500’ from a body of water. We will have a full list of the changes available to the board soon. These changes will have to be approved by the county planning board and the APA, as well as having a SEQR done. We are asking the board to approve having Blue Line Engineering start the SEQR process.

We talked to Darren about where and what signage was needed at the new transfer station.

Jeff Rousell and Darren met with a State Department representative from Watertown. This should be a good contact. As a bonus she is also a grants program administrator.

We have the results back from our Walkability survey. We had responses from 194 individuals, age 18 and over.

**Town Clerk Report:** Jennifer Cole

Clerk’s Office

* + - * We are still waiting to hear back from Gray & Gray on auditing. My most recent email went out to them yesterday.
  + As a reminder, I’ll be attending the Clerk Conference in Albany next week, from April 21-24. Brittney will be available during normal office hours.
  + The Paul family has signed the land transfer agreement. I emailed Attorney Gustafson the signed agreement today.
  + A donation was received from the previous Winterfest Committee in the amount of $2,023.80. correspondence was received from Ms. Judy Fuhr that the donation is to be used for upgrading and/or adding to the existing lights throughout the Town.
    - Holiday lights are currently at better prices than what we’d anticipate seeing this fall, how would the Board like to proceed on spending this donation?
  + Michelle Oehler, Court Clerk, has requested attendance at this year’s Court Clerk Conference.

Motion #7

Mr. Beary made the motion, seconded by Mr. Poste, for the Court Clerk to attend the September 29 – October 2, 2024 conference with associated registration, room/meal, and mileage fees paid for.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion carried

Tax Collector Update

* + It was brought to my attention that our tax warrant had a calculation error. The $30,000.00 portion of school taxes for the library was added into the land tax portion of Colton’s local warrant. Clerical error on my part. I have discussed this with SLC Deputy Treasurer Emily Wilson as well as Shelley. What needs to be done to fix this error is a check written to myself, Jennifer Cole Tax Collector, I will then deposit that check back into my tax account. That money will go to the county in the beginning of June once land tax collection is over.
  + As of today 1,889 payments have been processed, approximately $4.2M has been collected.

FOIL Officer Update

* Thus far, I feel the FOIL tracker that Brittney established has been a success. We can keep better track of timelines for due dates as well as keep track of the amount of time being spent on each request.
* NYS Committee on Open Government is hosting a FOIL and Open Meetings webinar on May 6, one at 10a and one at 2p. Deputy Director and Counsel Kristin O’Neill is the presenter for these webinars. I have attended many in the past. She does a great job. Mr. Knight, myself, and Brittney are signed up to attend the information sessions, if any additional board members would like to attend, I can send you the information.

**Correspondence:**

Donation

A donation of $2,023.80 from the previous Winterfest Board was made to the Town of Colton in order to upgrade or add to the existing holiday decorations throughout the town.

**Unfinished Business:**

Sidewalk Project – McKabe Road

Bids from Bonno Builders and Fisher Builders were reviewed, discussed, and considered for the five-foot wide, 381 feet in length sidewalk to be placed on McKabe Road from State Highway 56, headed east to the first intersection.

Motion #8

Mr. Knight made the motion, seconded by Ms. Fisher, to accept the bid from Fisher Builders for the McKabe Road sidewalk project.

Ayes 4

Noes 1 – Beary

Motion carried

Union Contract

Motion #9

Mr. Beary made the motion, seconded by Mr. Knight, to accept the resolution in order to finalize the tentative union agreement.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion carried

Executive Session request by Supervisor Robert for discussion on individual employee salaries, Mr. Matt Ryan, Town of Colton’s Union Attorney, was invited to attend the Session.

Motion #10

Mr. Knight made the motion to move the meeting to executive session, seconded by Mr. Poste.

Ayes 4 Fisher, Knight, Poste, Robert

Noes 1 Beary

Motion carried

Meeting moved to executive session at 8:06pm

*Note: Mr. Beary came out of Executive Session at approximately 8:30pm.*

Motion #11

Mr. Knight made the motion to move the meeting back to regular session, seconded by Ms. Fisher.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion carried

Meeting returned back to regular session at 8:58pm

Results: Adjust all employee salaries 6%, with the exception of the BTI Director who will receive her proposed raise.

Discussion took place in which Mr. Beary stated there should be no salary increases at this time due to the Transfer Station cultured stone costly addition. Mr. Knight responded that the Transfer Station was an already approved project, to reprimand salaried employees is inappropriate. Additional commentary was provided by Ms. Cole that no salaried personnel were able to vote on the Transfer Station, it would be unfair to punish them for something out of their control.

The Bookkeeper was provided clarification from the Board regarding the Executive Session results: summer help to be excluded at this time, no minimum employment requirement to be eligible for the raise, and all personnel (besides Boards) would receive retroactive pay.

Motion #12

Mr. Knight made the motion, seconded by Ms. Fisher, to adjust all employee salaries 6%, with the exception of the BTI Director, who will have a new salary of $51,150. These adjustments will be as of January 1, 2024.

Ayes 4

Noes 1 – Beary

Motion carried

**New Business:**

None at this time.

**Announcements:**

**Adjournment:**

With no further business to discuss, Ms. Fisher made a motion to close the regular monthly meeting at 9:18 pm, seconded by Mr. Knight.

Ayes 5

Noes 0

Motion carried

Meeting minutes get approved at the following/next month’s town board meeting.

Meeting minutes by Colton Town Clerk Jennifer Cole.