

Regular Town Board Meeting February 27, 2024

Supervisor Votra opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance at 5 PM.

Roll Call: Supervisor Votra, Councilwoman Tremper, Councilman Cook, Councilman Demo, Highway Superintendent Hart, Maintenance Supervisor Jacot Town Clerk Maguire

Absent: Councilwoman Jacot

Others Present: Madeline Pennington, Luke M. Martin, Robert Hall, Legislator Rick Perkins, Elbridge E. Randall, Joseph McGill

A motion was made by Councilman Cook and seconded by Councilwoman Tremper to accept the minutes of the regular meeting on December 28, 2023, January 03, 2024 and January 23, 2024 as submitted by the Town Clerk.

All in favor.

A motion was made by Councilman Demo and seconded by Councilwoman Tremper to approve the 2023 Year End Report from the Town Clerk as submitted.

All in favor.

A motion was made by Councilman Demo and seconded by Councilwoman Tremper to table the Year End Report from the Town Justice.

All in favor.

Legislator Report:

Legislator Rick Perkins read his monthly report from the regular meeting of the St. Lawrence County Legislators on March 4, 2024. Mr. Perkins asked for questions or comments from anyone present and none were offered.

Code Enforcement Officer Report:

The written report submitted by Code Enforcement Officer Burl was reviewed.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Tremper and seconded by Councilman Demo to accept the Code Enforcement Officer report as submitted by Code Enforcement Officer Burl and to be kept on file in the Town Clerk's Office.

All in favor.

Assessor's Report:

The written monthly report submitted by Assessor Burl was reviewed.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Tremper and seconded by Councilman Demo to accept the Assessor's report as given by Assessor Burl.

All in favor.

Historian Report:

Historian Joseph McGill and Historical Association Vice President Madeline Pennington gave a brief report of what was going on at the museum. The CAP grant has been finished and submitted. The awards should be announced in May. Councilman Demo reported that the installation of the furnace and duct work is 90% complete. He also stated that weatherization needs to be addressed very soon. He will look into getting some estimates on insulation and windows before heat is actually used in the fall. Mary Gilbert has been working on organizing the scrapbooks in the museum. Richard Snell made a wonderful rack to store these scrapbooks and donated it to be used. The museum has approximately 10,000 items within the building and outbuildings in the collection. It is an ongoing project to get all this catalogued and organized.

Water District Report:

A *motion* was made by Councilman Demo and seconded by Councilwoman Tremper to accept the Water District report and Annual Hydrant and Valve Inspection Report as submitted by DANC and kept on file in the Town Clerk's Office.

All in favor.

Recreation Report:

Maintenance Supervisor Ryan Jacot reported a busy month at the park with lots of clean up from the wind. He thanked Joe McGill and the volunteers he brought from Clarkson College that helped with the clean-up. Looking ahead at the weather forecast it looks like the ice rink is done for the year. There has been some regular maintenance within the building that has been done. Councilwoman Tremper suggested that maybe we could utilize the park for people who would like to use it for campers or tents for the Eclipse event on April 8th. Legislator Perkins said that it is predicted that there will be a huge influx of people since we are in the optimum viewing area. He suggested residents stock up on fuel and basic necessities since they will be in short supply for that weekend. Councilwoman Tremper suggested \$100 per night for that weekend only. She will work with Maintenance Supervisor Jacot to get a form to be filled out with information by persons who wish to use the park space. There are no electric hookups or septic dumping available. Councilwoman Tremper and Supervisor Votra will meet with Mr. Jacot to get a plan in place. Town Clerk Maguire will check on the availability of portapotties for the weekend.

A *motion* was made by Councilman Demo and seconded by Councilman Cook to accept the Recreation report as given by Maintenance Supervisor Ryan Jacot.

All in favor.

Business:

1. Congratulations to Councilwoman Jacot and her husband Joe on the birth of their first child. Baby and mother are doing well.
2. A *motion* was made by Councilwoman Jacot and seconded by Councilman Demo to approve the Highway Department Holding Harmless Agreement for 2024 with St. Lawrence County.
All in favor.
3. A *motion* was made by Councilwoman Tremper and seconded by Councilman Demo to approve Town Clerk Maguire's appointment of Jolene Rosenbarker to Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector/Registrar at the hourly rate of \$17.00 per hour to commence immediately.
All in favor.
4. A *motion* was made by Councilwoman Tremper and seconded by Councilman Demo to adopt Resolution 02-2024 as follows:

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES IN ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY

WHEREAS, St. Lawrence County has a long history of seeking, welcoming, and supporting New York State Correctional Facilities, and

WHEREAS, this support of the New York State Correctional system enabled the State to find locations for its facilities at times when other communities were not willing to accept these facilities, and

WHEREAS, the New York State Correctional Facilities in St. Lawrence County continue to enjoy unmatched local support from not only the host communities of Gouverneur and Ogdensburg, but also from the greater St. Lawrence County and North Country regions, and

WHEREAS, the New York State Correctional Facilities in St. Lawrence County have distinguished themselves for decades due to the safety, efficiency, programming for incarcerated individuals, and the overall high standards of their operations, and

WHEREAS, in addition to academic and vocational programming, therapeutic programming services offered at Gouverneur and Riverview Correctional Facilities include Transitional Services, Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment, Aggression Replacement Training, Trauma, Addictions, Mental Health, and Recovery, Strategies for Parenting from Prison and Beyond, Veterans Residential Program, and Video Visitation, and

WHEREAS, the two correctional facilities combined provide over \$60 million in payroll and provide for over 700 jobs in St. Lawrence County, and

WHEREAS, St. Lawrence County has a history attracting corrections officers and other members of the workforce for the Department of Corrections, and

WHEREAS, closing facilities that are in low-cost areas where employees overwhelmingly transfer to, as opposed to from, at time when the Department of Corrections is struggling to find workers, will ultimately result in less efficient facilities with more overtime and increased training and retention costs, and

WHEREAS, employees of the local correctional facilities reside in the North Country, make purchases here, support our local businesses, hospitals, and schools, and contribute to the local economy and making our region a better place to live and raise a family, and

WHEREAS, with higher property values and more robust environments for commercial activity other areas of the State offer more opportunity for the adaptive reuse of closed facilities, and

WHEREAS, such facilities, in more expensive areas of the State, have historically been easier to redevelop, in so doing add to the tax base and economic vitality of the State, and

WHEREAS, there are already 500,000 square feet of abandoned State-owned buildings in St. Lawrence County which were formerly part of the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center as well as another 500,000 square feet of vacant space at the recently closed Ogdensburg Correctional Facility, and

WHEREAS, these buildings, left abandoned and unused, provide no economic value either locally or to the State and, along with an additional six other closed state prisons in the North Country, are a clear demonstration of the difficulty repurposing closed State facilities in this region, and

WHEREAS, the additional loss of jobs and payroll if another State correctional facility were to close in St. Lawrence County would be another devastating blow to what is already one of the most economically distressed areas of New York State, and

WHEREAS, the operation of New York State correctional facilities in St. Lawrence County has been beneficial both to New York State and to St. Lawrence County,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Parishville strongly supports the continued operation of the Gouverneur and Riverview Correctional Facilities and urges New York State to actively maintain, market, and redevelop the numerous other correctional facilities which it has closed in the North Country, including the former Ogdensburg Correctional Facility, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to New York Governor Kathy Hochul, New York Senators Stec and Walczyk, and New York Assembly Members Blankenbush, Gray, and Jones.

Supervisor Votra- Aye

Councilwoman Tremper- Aye

Councilman Cook- Aye

Councilman Demo- Aye

Councilwoman Jacot- Absent

Resolution Adopted.

Correspondence:

1. Dog Officer inspection report from NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets- good report
2. Email from taxpayer Hilary Clayton expressing appreciation of annual newsletter
3. Email Cypress Creek Renewables- solar farm update- nothing planned as of yet

Highway Report:

Highway Superintendent Hart reported an usually warm month which meant the highway department was fixing signs and potholes and cutting brush. Highway Superintendent Hart expressed the need for a new welder. The one he has is 21 years old and would be costly to repair. It was discussed and agreed that a new one should be purchased since he has money in his budget to do so. Councilman Cook asked if Mr. Hart could look into who should fix the very large pothole at the end of Route 72 where it meets Route 56. Mr. Hart will look into it.

A motion was made by Councilman Demo and seconded by Councilwoman Tremper to accept the Highway report as given by Highway Superintendent Hart.

All in favor.

Recreation Committee Report:

Councilwoman Tremper reported a quiet month with baseball registration being done this month.

A motion was made by Councilman Demo and seconded by Councilman Cook to accept the Recreation Committee report as given by Councilwoman Tremper.

Bills:

A motion was made by Council and seconded by Council to accept the bills as follows:

1. General Account Bills –
2. Highway Account Bills –
3. Water District No. 1 Bills -
4. Payrolls:

Payroll 05 – 01/27/24 (General \$5,118.83, Highway \$16,251.64, Water \$182.47)

Payroll 06 – 02/03/24 (General \$4,854.01, Highway \$12,053.21, Water \$140.35)

Payroll 07 – 02/10/24 (General \$9,549.90, Highway \$ 9,443.80, Water \$161.41)

Payroll 08 – 02/17/24 (General \$4,538.33, Highway \$13,758.84, Water \$ 93.27)

Payroll 09 – 02/24/24 (General \$9,865.31, Highway \$13,545.83, Water \$.00)

All in favor.

Privilege of the Floor:

Councilwoman Tremper said that there is a Restore NY grant she would like to apply for to help with the demolition of the old fire station. There may be money available after the removal of the building that could help with addition of a pavilion to be put in the old building site..

A motion was made by Councilman Demo and seconded by Supervisor Votra giving approval to Councilwoman Tremper to apply for the grant being offered by Restore NY Grant.

All in favor.

Councilman Demo thanked the Town for allowing the Fire Department to do ice rescue and air boat training on the river behind the old fire station. There were 3 other departments along with the New York State Police. There were approximately 30 in attendance and it was on the local news which was great publicity for the Fire Department.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Tremper and seconded by Councilman Cook to adjourn the meeting at 5:37 PM.

All in favor.

Meeting Dates:

March 26, 2024 @ 5 PM

Auditors: Councilwoman Jacot and Councilman Demo

Connie Maguire
Town Clerk