

**TOWN OF HOWARD
TOWN BOARD MEETING
NOVEMBER 13, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Howard Board was called to order by Town Supervisor Donald Evia at 7:00pm.

Present: Town Supervisor Donald Evia, Councilman Ed Frey, Councilman Ed OBrochta, Councilman Gary Rice and Highway Superintendent Lee Pyer

Absent: Councilman Ron Dyer

Also Present: Richard Stewart, Jack Bossard, Atty. Aaron Mullen

The Pledge to the flag was led by Town Supervisor Don Evia.

Previous Minutes: The minutes for the previous meeting was reviewed by the Board.

A Motion was made by Councilman Rice and seconded by Councilman OBrochta to accept the October minutes.

Carried: Councilman Frey, Aye; Councilman OBrochta, Aye; Councilman Rice, Aye and Supervisor Evia, Aye.

Budget Workshop Minutes: The minutes for the Budget Workshop meeting was reviewed by the Board. Highway Superintendent Lee Pyer commented on his department getting a new upgraded computer for 2025, he did not believe he needed a new computer. The Board disagreed and believes all the departments including his should have new upgraded computers. **A Motion** was made by Councilman Frey and seconded by Councilman OBrochta to accept the Budget Workshop minutes.

Carried: Councilman Frey, Aye; Councilman OBrochta, Aye; Councilman Rice, Aye and Supervisor Evia, Aye.

Public Hearing: Supervisor Evia asked if there is a motion to call the Public Hearing on the 2025 Preliminary Budget to order.

A Motion was made by Councilman Rice and seconded by Councilman Frey to open the meeting on the 2025 Preliminary Budget at 7:10pm.

Carried: Councilman Frey, Aye; Councilman OBrochta, Aye; Councilman Rice, Aye and Supervisor Evia, Aye.

Supervisor Evia discusses the 2025 Preliminary Budget, he explains that the town taxes with this budget went down by 1 cent per/thousand and fire taxes went down by 4 cents per/thousand and that it comes from assessed value changing. He believes that it is a good budget that meets the needs of the town and allows the town to keep moving forward and holds the property taxes virtually flat. Supervisor Evia asked if there were any questions. Richard Stewart asked what the change was in the assessed value and how he came up with the fund balance? Supervisor Evia responded that he decides what the town can get along with without holding in reserve. Mr. Stewart also questioned why there was a change on the Appropriated Fund Balance line of \$38,000 from the Tentative Budget Workshop to \$30,000 on the Preliminary Budget. Supervisor Evia and Councilman Rice explained that there was a glitch in the program

that Williamson Law uses to put this budget together. Richard questioned why the fund balance of \$30,000 wasn't raised to \$50,000 and help the taxpayers. Supervisor Evia explained that this budget is helping the taxpayers by keeping it flat and not creating a down one year and up the next like it was in the past. Supervisor Evia and the Board Members explained that it is good to have some money on hand to be able to fund expenses such as equipment, natural disasters, inflation etc.

The Board thanked Mr. Stewart for his opinion. Jack Bossard, resident of the town, commented that he feels this budget is a good budget that works for the town and commends the Board and the Highway Department for a job well done. Councilman Frey commented Budget wise the importance of keeping the town equipment under a warranty situation, that way they know what their expenditures are going to be, which helps the maintenance budget stay level.

A Motion was made by Councilman Rice and seconded by Councilman OBrochta to close the Public Hearing on the 2025 Preliminary Budget at 7:25pm.

Carried: Councilman Frey, Aye; Councilman OBrochta, Aye; Councilman Rice, Aye and Supervisor Evia, Aye.

A Resolution (#19 – 2024) was made upon a motion by Councilman Rice and seconded by Councilman OBrochta to adopt the 2025 Town Budget as presented.

Adopted: Councilman Frey, Aye; Councilman OBrochta, Aye; Councilman Rice, Aye and Supervisor Evia, Aye.

Public Comment: Richard Stewart asked if the Annual Financial Report for 2023 was complete and filed in the Clerk's Office and Supervisor Evia responded that it was done and sent in. Mr. Stewart questioned if a report of his results of his F.O.I.L. Appeal was sent to the Open Government Committee. Supervisor Evia's responded that it was not.

Department Reports:

- A. Monthly Highway Report-** Highway Superintendent Lee Pyer reports that the department has been cleaning ditches, replacing pipes, working on winter equipment. Lee asks the Board Members to sign the Daggett Gravel (Steve Hess) crushed gravel prices for 2025, 2026 and 2027. A motion to accept these prices was done at the October 9, 2024 meeting.
- B. Monthly Planning Board Chairman Report-** Aug. & Sept. Minutes in Board packets
- C. Monthly Fire Department Report-** No report
- D. Monthly Assessor's Report-** No report
- E. Monthly Building Inspector's Report-** No report

- F. Monthly Town Justice Report-** Written report consisting of cases and fines for the month of October. Justice Cornell wrote a check to the town in the amount of \$386.00 for fines in October 2024.
- G. Monthly Animal Control Report-** Written report for October, nothing to report.
- H. Monthly Library Report-** Written report consisting of a letter to the Town Board Members, Expense Sheet, Miscellaneous attendance sheet and November and December Program Calendars. In the letter they express their gratitude and give they're thanks to the Town Board for the repairs to the front of the building. They comment that it looks fantastic and they have gotten lots of compliments.
- I. Monthly Town Clerk's Report-** Written report for October 2024 consisting of revenue brought in from 2 Building Permits (\$272.00), 17 Dog Licenses (\$156.00).
Disbursements: Paid out to Town Supervisor (\$428.00) and to NYS Animal Population Control Program (\$19.00) totally \$447.00.
- J. Monthly Town Supervisor's Report-** Supervisor Evia reports that the town received a sales tax check in the amount of \$73,000.00 and Town Clerk's check of \$428.00 and have been deposited in the bank. He also reports that Atty. Aaron Mullen will be coming in to go over some things regarding the Wind Project. He also mentioned that he and Councilman Rice went to a supervisor's meeting for the Wind Project up in Prattsburg, NY. He reports that from speaking with a Rep. of the Wind Project they will be starting to clear access roads in the late spring into the fall to start erecting towers in 2026 and there was still not have a turbine type selected.

Old Business:

Atty. Aaron Mullen speaks to the Board regarding the Prattsburg Wind Project. He mentions the fact that the Board had previously approved and signed the "Road Use Agreement". He notes that there were some language changes done to the agreement and hands out to the Board Members the pages with those changes and stated that he was able to get the Wind Company to add a \$3,000 donation for Project Construction Activities.

A Motion was made by Councilman Frey and seconded by Councilman OBrochta to accept the changes on page 8 and 9 revisions of the "Road Use Agreement".

Carried: Councilman Frey, Aye; Councilman OBrochta, Aye; Councilman Rice, Aye and Supervisor Evia, Aye.

Highway Superintendent Lee Pyer asked Aaron if he knew if the Wind Company would be giving the town 60 days prior notice to pre-construction and Aaron responded yes and they will have to provide a list of the roads and routes they will be using in this time frame and then the town would need to agree to them.

Atty. Mullen handed out the newly drafted Host Community Agreement to the Board Members and he believes that it is about ready to roll and goes over the agreement with the Board Members. He states that it is not a lot of difference than what was in place for about the last

year. He directs the Board to the pages with the changes and explains them. He explains the term period of the Host Agreement and talks about some language changes that Aaron says does not change the substance at all and the legalities in the Agreement. He explains if after 20 years and there is a new Pilot Agreement that is entered in with the IDA, they could end the Host Agreement. It was discussed that the Pilot has not been updated and the Host payments have not changed. Aaron explains the reasoning for this is because the town had lost some footing with this because the State changed the tax formula. Aaron asked the Board if they agree with terms of agreement and if they were ready to sign. The Board decides to hold off from signing until all the towns involved have met and there is a consensus. Atty. Mullen advises the Board not to wait too long to get this agreement signed, he explains that it is harder to go back once the parties have agreed if the Wind Companies start to get nervous with the direction of the change in leadership in the Government. Supervisor Evia and Councilman Rice believe they will know what the other towns are going to decide on within a month. Supervisor Evia said he would reach out to the other Town Supervisors. The Board decides to hold a special meeting if necessary to sign the Host Community Agreement.

Jack Bossard asked the Board if the Greenbacker's re-powering of the existing wind project has any effect on the money the town gets. Atty. Mullen explains that the Pilot that the town has on that project has a term and at the end of the term, the company may do a new Pilot.

Councilman OBrochta follows up with an update on the library repairs. He reports that the front of the library is done and they still have to come back and seal up to hole in the wall, the fascia and the kitchen ceiling. He reports that Marcia Patrick (Historian) asked about the progress on the upstairs. Councilman OBrochta explained that Bullfrog construction had to wrap up prior contracts and then they would be back to complete the work on the library. They agreed to go ahead with the cleaning of the upstairs and close off the area to the kitchen for now so she could start moving Howard's history from her home and get it moved to its new home in the old Masonic Hall. Fran Sharp (3 Generation Clean) reports they can get started with the cleaning on the week of November 18th (pending approval of the Board) and will notify Marcia Patrick of this information.

New Business: Supervisor Evia reports they approve the quote from 3 Generation Clean.

A Motion was made by Councilman OBrochta and seconded by Councilman Frey to approve 3 Generation Clean cleaning services to clean the entire upstairs of the library.

Carried: Councilman Frey, Aye; Councilman OBrochta, Aye; Councilman Rice, Aye and Supervisor Evia, Aye.

Regular Business: The regular bills were presented to the Board for Audit.

Highway Fund	(Abstract 470 – 481)	\$63,182.36
General Fund	(Abstract 470 – 490)	\$71,037.36
Street Lighting	(Abstract 483)	\$165.64

A Motion was made by Councilman Frey and seconded by Councilman OBrochta to approve and pay these bills.

Carried: Councilman Frey, Aye; Councilman OBrochta, Aye; Councilman Rice, Aye and Supervisor Evia, Aye.

Executive Session: None

Town Board Discussion: None

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Councilman Frey and seconded by Councilman Rice to adjourn the meeting at 8:50pm.

Carried: Councilman Frey, Aye; Councilman OBrochta, Aye; Councilman Rice, Aye and Supervisor Evia, Aye.

Frances Sharp
Howard Town Clerk