

**TOWN OF HOWARD
TOWN BOARD MEETING
SEPT. 10, 2025**

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

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

Absent: Councilman Ron Dyer

Also Present: Desiree Cady (Hunt Engineering, Grant Writer) via Microsoft Teams, Bridgett Marshall (Howard Library), Mallory Richman (Howard Library), Richard Stewart, Andrew Burdin, Jim DuQuette.

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

Previous Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed by the Board. Councilman OBrochta pointed out that in the Dog Control Officer's report, the no-vote comment was supposed to be a non (abstain) vote.

A Motion was made by Councilman Rice and seconded by Councilman Frey to approve the August 2025 Minutes with the correction.

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

Public Comment: Jim DuQuette (Smith Pond) congratulated the Howard Fire Department on winning the National Grain Bin rescue contest. He also commented that it was on the front page of the Corning Leader. Councilman Rice commented that there are a lot of grain bins in the Town of Howard area and that the rescue equipment for this will be housed in our local fire department station and in some of the surrounding departments and stations will be able to share with one another. He also states that the preparations for this training had been in the works for about 2 years and that there was a really good turnout for this training. Richard Stewart commented on the upcoming Howard Old Home days on Saturday 13, 2025 and that the weather was looking good for this event and that the Church and Museum are looking forward to it. He also commented that on Steuben County History week it would be held at the Howard Museum. He mentions the NYS Division of Cemeteries is putting on a meeting in Almond on September 11 at 6:00pm at the Almond Fire Hall and the topics they will be covering.

Department Reports:

- A. Monthly Highway Report-** Highway Superintendent Lee Pyer reports the department has been putting gravel down, grading roads and doing some ditching. He also reports that roadside mowing has started. He reports that on Landers Road there was a problem with the transition from County Route 70A onto Landers. The problem is, cars are scrapping bottom. He suggests digging down 6 - 8 inches and going about 60ft. up the road than blacktopping it. He got a quote of \$10,000.00 from Blades. Councilman Frey asked if it was a complaint from one individual and Supervisor Evia commented that there more than the one that complained. Lee asked the Board if they would want to go with the blacktopping or stay with the gravel. Supervisor Evia commented that with the gravel it's not good becomes like wash board trying to get speed up to go up the hill. Councilman Rice asked if plowing

would be a problem with the transfer from gravel to blacktop and when would Blades be able to get to it. Lee said there shouldn't be a problem and Blades would get to it in October. Councilman OBrochta commented about putting down blacktop this late in the year and close to winter. Superintendent Pyer responded that he understands the concern however, there is a problem and he has to address it. Councilman Frey and Councilman OBrochta suggests fixing it with gravel this year and do the blacktopping in the spring using CHIPS. Superintendent Pyer agrees to this solution. Lee talks about FEMA, he said they have been obligated for \$250,803.55 for townwide damages which is 75% and NYS would be 25% which he hasn't seen yet. Lee tells the Board that he signed off on the West Buena Vista Rd. project and that was for \$320,861.88 which totals out to \$571,665.43 (FEMA's 75%). He reports that the CHIPS funding has been put in to NYS and should receive that in December totally approx. \$568,000.00.

- B. Monthly Planning Board Report-** No report
- C. Monthly Fire Department Report-** July and August Minutes
- D. Monthly Assessor's Report-** No report
- E. Monthly Building Inspector's Report-** No report
- F. Monthly Town Justice Report-** A written report consisting of cases and fines for the month of August 2025. A check was written to the Town in the amount of \$636.00.
- G. Monthly Animal Control Report-** A written report was submitted with nothing to report for the month of August 2025. The Town has sent the new Dog Control Office Debra Matthews a town roads/town line map to help her with the Town of Howard roads.
- H. Monthly Library Report-** A written report consisting of a letter addressed to the Town Board Members, Expense sheet, Miscellaneous attendance sheet and the libraries 2026 Budget sheet. Bridgett Marshall addresses the Board with their 2026 library budget. She comments that they kept their spending estimates pretty conservative. She explains that they adjusted for the electric and heat due to the rising rates. She explains her reasons for the budget amounts. Councilman Frey asked her what kind of percentage she used for her increase. She responded with about a 20% increase but actually focused off the actual spending from 2024. Councilman OBrochta asked what the libraries expected to spend by the end of this year 2025. She responded the last year 2024 expenses were \$37,794.00 and the 2025 up to date expensed are \$26,239.90, she estimates end of year 2025 would be around \$37,000.00. Councilman Rice asked if there were any other funding sources or individual donations that the library gets other than just from the town. Bridgett comments that they get the LLSA which is state funding amounting to approx. \$1,500.00 and Steuben County Aid which amounts to approx. \$1,300.00. She comments that they are not guaranteed to get this and there is talk that they may not get this aid. She states that any individual donations are memorial donations and they amount to \$25 to \$100 and they may get around 2 to 3 of those each year. Supervisor Evia asked Bridgett if they have any reserves and she

responded that they do have a savings reserve which is earmarked and they are getting a 50/50 grant from the state to do some upgrades inside the building. She was asked how much the savings account reserve was and she said it was about \$80,000.00 which they are planning on using. Councilman Frey asked what it was going to be used for. Bridgett said it was earmarked for updates in the building (carpeting, ceiling, children's area and a chair lift so some of the library patron can utilize the upstairs when they have public presentations and when Marcia Patrick, Historian is in to be able to visit the Historical side of the library. The Board thanks her for her time answering their questions.

- I. Monthly Town Clerk's Report-** A written report for August 2025 consisting of revenue brought in from 1 Certified Copy (\$10.00), 5 Building Permits (\$370.50) 24 Dog Licenses (\$222.00) totally \$602.50

Disbursements: Paid out to Town Supervisor (\$602.50) and to NYS Animal Population Control Program (\$28.00) totally \$630.50.

Also included in the reports for marriages in August and handicap permits issued.

Fran Sharp, Town Clerk presented the Board with an idea on improving the office with free standing 12'L x 30"H x 24" W counter being built to make it more comfortable to perform standing jobs in the office. She offered that her husband Joe and herself would build this unit free of cost if the Board would purchase the materials to built it. The cost was discussed and the Board suggested that an amount of \$500.00 would suffice.

A Motion was made by Councilman Frey and seconded by Councilman OBrochta authorizing the counter to be built for the clerk's office and not to exceed the cost of \$500.00.

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

- J. Monthly Supervisor's Report-** Supervisor Evia reports that he received the clerk's check in the amount of \$602.50 and \$636.00 for the Justice Department. He states the he went to a County Hazard Mitigation meeting which he said they update every 5 years. The purpose of the meeting was for the towns to identify problems in their municipalities and it could help them be eligible for FEMA grants, not FEMA handouts. H2O Partners is working with the County on this. He was also surprised that hardly anyone was there from other towns. He announced that they would going into Executive Session to discuss Union Negotiations and that he had started working on the budget. He also mentioned that he was going to remind Superintendent Pyer about putting down gravel in the potholes in the driveway between the library and the church.

Old Business: Desiree Cady (Grant Writer) from Hunt Engineering spoke to the Board regarding the Park Improvement Project Grants that were applied for. She gives a snap shot presentation and the game plan moving forward. She reports that Phase I (Pavilion roof and Playground Equipment) it was submitted to the Municipal Park and Recreations Grant in May 2025. Unfortunately, that grant was not awarded. She states that Town Clerk, Fran Sharp requested a De-Brief which includes an explanation of missed points and so on the next round the would be more opportunity to get awarded. The plan is to do that next round if the Town would want them to move forward with that. Desiree explained that with a re-submittal there would be no charge if it follows the next consecutive grant cycle. She explained that this grant was very competitive and had a really low match and a lot of towns participated. She goes on to explain that she believes that because of playground isn't in that bad of shape while other towns had equipment in really bad shape is one reason for the denial. Councilman OBrochta comments that the town was not seeking to have the equipment replaced, the town was looking to have equipment added

that would target children with special needs. He further comments that if awarded the town would have been the only town within 30 – 40 minutes that could accommodate these children. Desiree comments that there possibly was a mis-communication regarding this and at the next grant cycle they would make an area for the special adaptive equipment closer to the pavilion. She continues on with talking about Phase II the Walking Path going around the perimeter of the park with some benches and trash receptacles spaced around. That grant is part of CFA's that was submitted in July 2025 and they typically release those awards in December. That one is part of the Office of Park and Recreation Historical Preservation Environmental Protection fund grant. She believes there is a really good chance of being awarded this one.

She explains that we can ask for the pointers on the pavilion and playground grant after December once it has been decided to re-apply in the next consecutive grant cycle. Desiree stated that there is no time line as of yet for the next grant cycle and she will be watching for the date. She discusses Phase III which was for bathrooms and running water. Councilman OBrochta explained the Board decided not to go that route but instead put in a Pickleball/basketball court instead. He describes it would be one full court with 2 pickleball courts inside it. Councilman OBrochta asked if we were to scale down on the Phase I project if that would make a difference and Desiree said that it would not because the projects the town is applying for are not that expensive. However, it could be considered when it comes to re-applying for Phase I. Councilman Frey asked if the town were to put extra money in, would it help with getting a grant. She explains that if the town is able to throw in more than the match it is very helpful and favorable and shows the town is invested in the project. Desiree mentions that they will be looking out for any other grant opportunities for the town's specific needs for the park. She comments that the main focus for these grants is get children off the electronic and get them outside. She said that they will meet with the town again after the 1st of the new year. She thanks the Board for having her speak and the Board thanks her for their work.

New Business: Councilman OBrochta suggests getting a new truck for the Highway Superintendent because of the 5 starters that was put in the truck and the fact it is out of warranty, then go to a 5-year plan. Councilman Frey was concerned about the number of starters that was replaced so far with this truck and questioned about the problem causing the issue with starters and it does not give cause to purchase a new truck. Councilman Rice and Supervisor Evia both explained to Councilman Frey that it was taken to Maple City Dodge and they couldn't fix it for 6 to 8 weeks and Eric OBrochta's in Avoca could not get it in for 6 weeks. They took it to Niche in Hornell and he found the problem, the truck is fixed. Supervisor Evia suggests looking at that after they get a budget and waiting another year.

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

Highway Fund	(Abstract #610 - 623)	\$24,726.70
General Fund	(Abstract #644 – 656)	\$7,393.73
Lighting District	(Abstract #653)	\$204.89

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

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

Executive Session:

A Motion was made by Councilman Frey and seconded Councilman OBrochta to move into Executive Session to discuss Union Contract negotiations @ 8:05pm.

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

A Motion was made by Councilman Frey and seconded Councilman OBrochta to come out of Executive Session at 9:10pm.

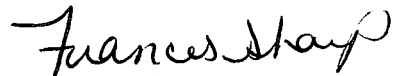
Carried: Councilman Frey, Aye; Councilman OBrochta, Aye; Councilman Rice, Aye and Supervisor Evia, Aye.

Town Board Discussion: None

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Councilman Rice and seconded by Councilman Frey to adjourn the meeting at 9:23pm.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frances Sharp". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Frances" and the last name "Sharp" clearly distinguishable.

Frances Sharp

Howard Town Clerk