**REGULAR MEETING, TOWN OF COLUMBUS, June 12, 2025**

A Regular Meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Columbus, County of Chenango

and the State of New York was held at the Town Courtroom, 4340 State Hwy 80 in Columbus on

**June 12, 2025**

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Diane Scalzo, Supervisor, with the Pledge of Allegiance; and the Clerk called the roll.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Diane Scalzo Supervisor

Jane Prohaska Board Member

Judith Lowe Board Member

Gretchen Robinson Board Member

ABSENT: Alexis Wilcox Board Member

ALSO PRESENT: Elizabeth Vermeulen Town Clerk

Kevin Cross Highway Superintendent

OTHERS PRESENT: Joanne Smith Gates Cole Insurance agent

Charles Edmonds

Neil Palmer

Joyce VanWagner

**Presentation of Insurance Program renewal:**

JoAnn Smith, our Gates-Cole Insurance agent, reviewed the proposal for the Aug 9, 2025 renewal of our Municipal Insurance program with Glatfelter Public Entities; providing an overview of our various coverages, the individual limits and how they apply. They have included a proposal for cyber coverage for us to consider. Our premium has gone down this year. The address for Norton Park should be corrected to 323 Bell Rd. Our policy covered the loss on 10-8-24 for the vandalized sign at Norton Park.

**Supervisors Report by Diane Scalzo:**

* Diane reviewed the month’s deposits for sales tax, court fees, interest on property tax, clerk fees, and planning board fees; and transfers.

**Board of Health:** nothing to report

**REVIEW OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES:**

May 8, 2025

Motion was made by Jane and seconded by Gretchen to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2025 meeting.

* Diane would like to clarify the first item under Legal & Finance on page 3 regarding possible open seats after the upcoming election.

The sentence should read: “If there is a failure to elect a new Supervisor or Town Board member, the current officer would hold over as needed to establish quorum and appoint a new officer.”

4 Ayes. 1 absent

Motion carried and minutes were approved with noted changes.

**Communications**:

* Information from the State Comptrollers’ Office that return on pension fund balance was lower than expected. Our required contribution may be higher than we had projected.
* Special franchise certificate was received for utilities in the Town’s right of way. Since the Town’s assessment rate dropped from 89%, which was the highest in the county, to 80%, the tentative assessment roll may get some adjustments to the special franchises.
* Commerce Chenango Open House will be June 25, at 4:30
* Supportive Housing forum will be June 25 at 10 am.
* “Get Here” program is a volunteer transportation service. We should try to get some flyers from County Planning Board.

**Public Comment:**

Joyce VanWagner expressed concerns about tractor trailers driving down Davis Rd after a recent close call. Kevin will look into options for signs. GPS often directs drivers onto seasonal roads.

**Highway Superintendent’s Report by Kevin Cross**

* Update on equipment repairs.
* Road work handling water issues and filling potholes.
* Installation of fabric, cobble, and culverts in problem areas.
* There is a gravel shortage locally.
* CHIPS work.
* No update on FEMA payment.

**Dog Control Report –** There was an incident with a dog bite and the Department of Health had asked Carol about status of the dog’s rabies vaccination. The dog is not currently licensed. Carol will contact owner and Liz sent out letter with license application.

**Committee Reports:**

**Communications/Community Engagement:** no report

**Park:** by Jane Prohaska :

* The thorn plants have been removed from around the gazebo, and hosta and daylillies have been planted.
* The park is still very wet; hopefully playground border can be started soon.
* Mats under swings will get pinned down.
* Diane asked whether any highway employees would be willing to work at the park on Fridays as overtime.

**Highway:** Kevin has started roadside mowing and will have highway workers rotating through over the summer.

**Infrastructure, Buildings and Facilities** by Judy Lowe

* A new mailbox has been purchased.
* Hosta and daylillies have been planted around office area.
* A flag banner has been put on our sign by the road; will be secured better.

**Legal & Finance** by Diane Scalzo

**Resolution #40– 2025 Budget Modifications and Adjusting Journal Entries**

**Whereas**, budget modifications are required from time-to-time to ensure adequate budget funding for necessary expenditures, and

**Whereas**, adjusting journal entries are required from time-to-time to correct prior entries for accuracy;

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the budget be modified to increase A1640.1 Building Custodian $612.00 and decrease A1620.4 Buildings Contractual $612.00;

**Resolved** that adjusting journal entries be made to increase A2397.1 ConnectALL Grant Revenues $136,709.56 and increase ConnectALL Grant Account Receivable $136,709.56.

* Moved by Diane and seconded by Gretchen.
* Discussion: Correction of a data entry error.
* Roll call vote:
  + D. Scalzo Aye
  + J. Prohaska Aye
  + A. Wilcox Absent
  + G. Robinson Aye
  + J. Lowe Aye
* Motion carried and Resolution passed.

**Public Health & Emergency Preparedness** by Gretchen Robinson

* Public Health warnings about fentanyl lacing in cannabis vapes.

**ConnectALL Fiber Broadband**

* Neal Palmer, who has been working on the social media for the ConnectALL project, provided an update of what they have been doing to increase awareness for the Broadband project.
* Discussion of fiber broadband as compared to satellite and other types of internet services.
* The empty fiber spools weigh 200 lbs. and 1000 lbs.
* BAN renewal date is 1-26-26. Depending on project timing, it may have to be renewed. Less interest is being earned on the account, since the balance is going down as more expenses are paid.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**New Berlin EMS**

Diane and Jane had met with the mayor of New Berlin regarding possible needs for their ambulance service: equipment, coats, uniforms, training.

Gretchen made a motion which was seconded by Jane to provide support to the Village of New Berlin for the recent exhaust leak repair on their ambulance which totaled approximately $778.

All Ayes. Motion passed.

**Town Road Names**

Reviewed and discussed town road names. More information is required before making any decision on some road names.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**2026 Highway Budget -** Reviewed historical reports of highway staffing, wages and benefits, and began discussions for the 2026 budget.

**Potential Local Laws**

Motion to schedule a Public Hearing on Proposed Local Law entitled **“A Local Law Affecting a Temporary Moratorium Within the Town of Columbus on the Development and Construction of Solar Energy Systems”** for July 10th at 6pm.

* Moved by Judy and seconded by Jane
* Discussion: This would allow time for our Planning Board to fine-tune our Solar Law.
* Roll call vote:
  + D. Scalzo Aye
  + J. Prohaska Aye
  + A. Wilcox Absent
  + G. Robinson Aye
  + J. Lowe Aye
* Motion carried and Resolution passed.

Motion to schedule a Public Hearing on Proposed Local Law entitled **“A Local Law to Opt-Out of Section 487 of the New York State Real Property Tax Law”** for July 10th at 6:15pm.

* Moved by Gretchen and seconded by Jane.
* Discussion: This would require that all solar, wind, or other projects be subject to real property taxes.
* Roll call vote:
  + D. Scalzo Aye
  + J. Prohaska Aye
  + A. Wilcox Absent
  + G. Robinson Aye
  + J. Lowe Aye
* Motion carried and Resolution passed.

The clerk will have the necessary Legal Notice published and posted.

**REVIEW OF EXPENDITURES**:

Motion to Pay bills made by Gretchen and seconded by Jane. All Approved.

GENERAL FUND – Abstract #6, Vouchers #155 - #185 for a total of $56,468.52

HIGHWAY FUND – Abstract #6, Vouchers #75 - #87 for a total of $74,526.21

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Gretchen and seconded by Judy.

All Approved.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Vermeulen, Town Clerk

NOTE: The Audible recording of the Town Board meeting is available from the Town Clerk as a FOIL request.