

A regular meeting of the Town Board of Thurston, County of Steuben, and the State of New York was held at the Town Hall, 7578 County Route 333 on the 18th day of June 2025.

Present: Town Supervisor: Michael Volino

Town Board: Jennifer Hargrave, Daniel Gee, Holly Chase, Noel Sylvester

Highway Superintendent: Ben Smith (Zoom)

Code Enforcement Officer: Nick Nolton

Assessor: Diana Dixon

Visitors: Rosalyn Renner, Elizabeth Donderewicz, Lisa Hargrave, Timothy Hargrave, Marge Taft, Jeff Sweeney, Eva Turner, Reggie Rice

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:00 p.m.

Public Comment: There being no public comment, motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Jennifer Hargrave that public comment be closed. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

Minutes from prior meetings: Motion was made by Noel Sylvester and seconded by Daniel Gee that the minutes from May 21, 2025, public hearing and regular meeting be approved as presented by the Town Clerk. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

Action on Bills: Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that the bills listed on Abstract 6 be paid as follows: General \$6313.45 as listed on Vouchers A118 – A135; Highway \$39,542.91 as listed on Vouchers DA83-DA103; Trust & Agency \$165.00 as listed on Voucher TA6. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried. Michael noted we should be receiving reimbursement of \$18041 from CHIPS which will go back into the Highway Account.

Town Clerk's Report:

- Sue Conklin noted she received a total of \$786 for the month of May. Of this, \$718.50 was paid out to the Town Supervisor which included: \$150 Town Hall Rentals; \$361 for Dog Licenses; Landfill Tickets \$40.00; Vital Records, \$17.50; and Building permits \$150.00.
- The Town Clerk said she received two certificates of completion of Board of Assessment Review training for Karen Warner and Willard Caudill.

Historian: Nothing currently

Assessor:

- Diana Dixon noted she is now the Chairman of the Board of Assessment, taking over from Gordon Foster.
- Diana said the Assessors will still be doing some road work checking assessments over the summer

Justice: Darlene Smith, Town Justice, collected \$83 in fines for the month of May.

Dog Control: Randy Akins reported he was in court for two running at large tickets issued to a resident. The resident was fined \$25.00 each for the two tickets and additionally ordered to pay restitution of \$250.00 each for two goats that her dogs killed as well as \$15.00 for two chickens the dog killed. She was ordered to construct a kennel in which to confine the dogs. Another local resident was in court for failure to build a structure to confine his dogs and must return to court on July 1st to check on the progress. The amount of \$7.00 was collected from another resident for one dog license.

Code Enforcement: Nick Nolton reported he issued eight building permits and collected \$625.00 in permit fees. He said he made one court appearance for a ticket issued.

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Highway Superintendent: Ben Smith reported on the following activity:

- cleaned up ditch dirt from an area on Knowles Road
- repaired a blown high-pressure hose on the loader
- did pothole repair on Smith Road, Hanrahan Road, Tucker Road, and Starr Road
- graded, raked, rolled, and brined the top of South Hill and Knowles Road
- attended a three-day highway training school in Ithaca
- changed out two driveway pipes and graded on Hanrahan to prepare for oil and stone
- repaired Hanrahan after the storm
- completed the Hanrahan Road project with oil and stone
- changed out cross pipe on Rising Road and raised the road in the dip to help with low spots, rebuilt new head walls on both ends of the cross pipe,
- Graded on Knowles Road, Wood Road, and Rising Road. Also was able to get half of Wood Road (seasonal part) brushed back
- reported full-time crew and Ben responded to the storm. We worked on getting plugged crossovers and driveway pipes open the best we could, we worked with 911 calls and the Fire Department to help assist in closing roads and making sure roads were passable as best we could. Part of Starr had to be closed due to excessive washing and was reopened the following day with only one lane in a few spots. We worked on filling washed out spots on Starr Road the following week
- cleaned out the ditch on Smith Road and make sure all crossovers there were open
- need to replace a rotted driveway pipe at Sam Dick's which became visible after the water washed the driveway away
- fixed a ditch on Helms Road and cleaned the stone and gravel that had washed across it
- still need to replace the driveway pipe on Shauger Road and Tucker Road. The owners called after the storm to report on this and upon checking, they are in bad condition and need to be replaced.
- need to replace a crossover pipe on the seasonal part of Hamilton and rebuild the culvert above it as it was washed away
- Michael Volino reported that a State of Emergency was declared for Thurston following the last storm. He said there was one residence in Risingville that had extensive damage due to flooding in the area. This caused the family to be displaced. The State of Emergency will help us qualify for FEMA if it becomes available.

Supervisor:

- reported an in person meeting with Brian Toy and Chelsea Robertson, STC. Chelsea will be taking over from Brian
- month end closing completed and sent to Town Board
- have been having bi-weekly check-ins with Labella and STC
- attended a Multiyear Financial and Capital Planning Webinar hosted by the Office of the State Comptroller
- noted we have been approved for the USDA loan but feels we should wait for two years before taking advantage of this low interest loan and purchasing a new grader; feels we should pay off the 2 ten-wheelers first since the current grader is working fine but will need new tires next year at a cost of \$10,000 to \$12,000.
- said NYS has changed the CHIPS program as it relates to new equipment purchases and we can no longer use CHIPS money to make principal payments on new equipment. It can be used to make a down payment or pay in full. He suggested we budget for debt owed on equipment or set up a Capital reserve and put money into it each year in anticipation of new equipment purchases. If we continue to work on setting up a 5-year Capital Plan this will ensure that most, if not all our CHIPS money can go towards road improvements.

The motion was made by Dan Gee and seconded by Jennifer Hargrave that all reports be accepted as submitted. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

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Unfinished Business: Michael commented that NYS recently passed a 5-year Moratorium Bill on Commercial Sewage Sludge Composting Facilities. The following resolution was duly offered:

Resolution #13 of 2025 of the Town Board of the Town of Thurston approving a SEQRA Determination of Non-Significance for the Enactment of Proposed Local Law No. 5 of 2025 and Enacting Proposed Local Law No. 5 of 2025, A Local Law Prohibiting Commercial Sewage Sludge Composting Facilities:

WHEREAS:

1. The Town Board introduced proposed Local Law No. 5 of 2025 at our meeting on April 16, 2025. This proposed law would regulate the construction, operation, or maintenance of a commercial sewage sludge composting facility within the Town of Thurston.
2. The Town Board determined to classify the adoption of a proposed local law regulating the disposal of sewage sludge as an Unlisted Action under SEQRA, declared itself to be the Lead Agency for the conduct of the environmental review of the proposed action under SEQRA, and identified the Steuben County Planning Department as an involved agency at our meeting on April 16, 2025. The Town Board further identified the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets as interested agencies.
3. At the Town Board's direction, on April 18, 2025, the town's attorneys sent the proposed Local Law No. 5 of 2025 to the Steuben County Planning Department for its review and for an advisory opinion pursuant to Section 239-m of the New York General Municipal Law.
4. At the Town Board's direction, on April 18, 2025, the town's attorneys sent a SEQRA Notice of Intent to Serve as Lead Agency regarding the adoption of Local Law No. 5 of 2025 to the Steuben County Planning Department, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets.
5. On May 16, 2025, the Steuben County Planning Department replied that Local Law No. 5 of 2025 was not subject to review under Sections 239-l and 239-m.
6. At the Town Board's direction, the town's attorneys have prepared Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF) Parts 2 & 3 and presented the FEAF forms to the Town Board by email for our review and consideration tonight.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

- Section A. The Town Board hereby identifies the Steuben County Planning Department as an agency involved in the Town's SEQRA review and acknowledges that the town has engaged in a coordinated review with the Department.
- Section B. The Town Board hereby accepts the FEAF Part 2. A copy of the FEAF Part 2, together with the other FEAF forms, is attached as Exhibit A to this Resolution.
- Section C. That for the reasons set forth in the Determination of Significance in Part 3 of the FEAF, and in accordance with the criteria of significance set forth in the SEQRA regulations, the Town Board finds that adoption of Local Law No. 5 of 2025, A Local Law Establishing a Prohibition on the Construction, Operation, or Maintenance of a Commercial Sewage Sludge Composting Facility will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and that a Negative Declaration should be issued. A copy of the Negative Declaration, FEAF Part 3, together with the other FEAF forms, is attached as Exhibit A to this Resolution.
- Section D. That upon due consideration by the Town Board, proposed Local Law No. 5 of 2025, introduced on April 16, 2025, is hereby enacted. A copy of the proposed Local Law No. 5 of 2025 introduced on April 16, 2025, and enacted today is attached as Exhibit B to this Resolution.
- Section E. The Town Board directs the Town Clerk to file the law enacted with the New York State

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Department of State.
Section F. The Town Board hereby directs the town's attorneys to send the Negative Declaration and the filed law to the Steuben County Planning Department and to send the Negative Declaration to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets.

Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Dan Gee that this resolution be passed as presented and Local Law # 5 of 2025 be adopted and duly filed as required. Put to roll call vote: Michael Volino, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Holly Chase, aye. Unanimously Carried.

Town .gov Website: The Board recently received a quote from IB Design Studios in Hornell, NY to assist with setting up the mandatory .gov website. It was noted this company has assisted other Steuben municipalities with setting up and making the required changeover. Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Jennifer Hargrave that the Town Clerk be authorized to begin working with IB Design Studios to start this transition. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

There being no further unfinished business, motion was made by Noel Sylvester and seconded by Daniel Gee that unfinished business be closed. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

New Business:

- **Fire Alarm and 911 at Town Hall:** Michael said that on June 5th he received a call from the Fire Department that they had received a 911 call because of a smoke detector going off in the building. Upon entry they found it was in the Supervisor's Office and appeared to be a faulty alarm. He realized at that time that none of the detectors were linked to 911 like the panic buttons are. Eastern Security was called, and they came the following week on June 12th and installed two smoke detectors, one on each level that are now linked to 911 at a cost of \$230.00. There are no additional monitoring charges.

- An estimate to install these in the highway shop (currently none there) was requested and Eastern Security said they would recommend 4 heat detectors, one above each bay and one smoke detector in the upstairs break room. They would also have to install a control panel and back-up battery. The total installation estimate would be \$706 with an annual monitoring charge of \$491.40. CPE was also asked for an estimate, and they said around \$3000 - \$3500. The motion was made by Jennifer Hargrave and seconded by Noel Sylvester that we have Eastern Security install the noted heat and smoke detectors in the highway shop at a cost of \$706. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

- It was also noted that the Fire Department should have a way to get into the building should there be future alarms. Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Jennifer Hargrave that the current Fire Chief be authorized to sign out one key to the Town Hall (upstairs) entrance and one key to the Highway Shop. Put to vote, all those present, aye. When there is a turnover of the Fire Chiefs, the keys would have to be returned to the Town Clerk, and the new Chief would then have to sign them out.

Local Law # 6 of 2025 – Best Value

- Michael Volino said the Town might consider having a Local Law which would explain actions when we choose a bid that is not the lowest bid because it is better value for the Town. A proposed Local Law was presented to the Board. Motion was made by Noel Sylvester and seconded by Daniel Gee that we hold a public hearing on July 16 at 6:45 p.m. to present this to the public and hear their comments. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

5-Year Financial and Capital Plan

- Discussion was held on the development of a Five-Year Capital Plan. Michael said we should include equipment replacement, building repairs, road projects (this will help with the 284 agreement) and the State has worksheets to assist with this. Possibly we can send survey forms to the community to ask for their input on the needs they

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see. The Board developed to work on this could include the Highway Superintendent, Town Supervisor and one board member. Holly said she can set up a google survey for people to go on-line and respond to. This could be included in the Fall newsletter.

There being no further new business, Holly Chase made a motion which was seconded by Jennifer Hargrave to close the new business. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

A Motion was made by Dan Gee and seconded by Holly Chase that the meeting be adjourned at 8:05 p.m. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

The next meeting will be on July 16 with a public hearing at 6:45 and the regular meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sue Conklin, Town Clerk.

DRAFT