

Town of Thurston Board Meeting Minutes
Held: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 at 7:00 P.M.
Location: 7578 County Route 333, Thurston, New York

Present: Michael Volino, Town Supervisor
Town Council: Holly Chase, Daniel Gee, Noel Sylvester
(By Zoom) Jennifer Hargrave
Town Highway Superintendent: M. Ben Smith
Code Enforcement Officer: Nick Nolton
Assessor: Diana Dixon

Visitors: Jeff Sweeney, Dolores Crooker, Alan Crooker, Marge Taft, Sam Dick, Cal Hoad, Lamora Hoad, Tim Hargrave, Lisa Hargrave,
Visitors By Zoom: Chris Volino, Sarah Volino, Mary Rieski, Gary Abraham

Supervisor Volino called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Jeff Sweeney gave to those present a written statement regarding his views on the regulation of solar energy systems in the Town of Thurston. There being no further public comment, motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester to close public comment. Put to vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom. Unanimously Carried.

MEETING MINUTES: Motion was made by Dan Gee and seconded by Noel Sylvester that the minutes from December 18, 2024 Public Hearing on Solar Energy Systems and the regular Board meeting be accepted and approved as presented. Put to vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom. Unanimously Carried.

BILLS PAYABLE: Motion was made by Noel Sylvester and seconded by Daniel Gee that Michael Volino be authorized to pay all claims in the General Abstract dated January 22, 2025, totaling \$61,964.06; the Highway Abstract totaling \$66,887.73; and the Trust and Agency Account totaling \$158.00. Put to vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom. Unanimously Carried.

CLERKS REPORTS: Sue Conklin said December 2024 monthly receipts were \$257.00 with \$9.00 of that going to Ag and Markets and said the year-end report was also received; noted that we received 5 room use requests, noted that she received the Code Enforcement Officer Reports and his yearly summary of Continuing Education Credits, noted receipt of the Fire Department incident report for 2024 and the posting of it on our web pages, noted the 2024 audit of the Clerk's books was completed by Holly Chase and Noel Sylvester with no errors.

HISTORIAN: There was nothing to report from December 2024 to date.

ASSESSORS: Diana Dixon noted all Assessors have completed the December training. She said they will start their "drive arounds" to review properties now and a notice will be posted on the website indicating such. They will have signs on their cars.

JUSTICE REPORT: There was nothing to report from December 2024.

DOG CONTROL: Mike reported there were 16 tickets issued for unlicensed dogs. 10 of these have come to court so far. There were 4 dog complaints issued over the past month. He noted that the Dog Kennels for boarding any running at large dogs passed the state inspection.

CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER: Nick Nolton submitted his report for December and his year end reports.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT: Ben Smith noted the following from the town highway department:

- Roads were checked daily, and plows were called out approximately seven times. Said he is learning where the trouble spots are,
- Wilbri is checking the new truck, and we expect it to be ready for inspection by Peterbilt in a couple of weeks,
- Our old 2005 Volvo 10-wheel dump truck is not worth putting money into as the repairs are excessive. He feels we should auction it "as is" now and just get rid of it,
- Furnaces in the Town Shop are not working. The temp was 42 in the shop this morning. The ceiling heater was purchased in 2008 and was used when we got it. It operates at 55-70% efficiency and uses dyed kerosene for fuel. He would like to see the Town purchase new heaters that run on propane as they are 83% efficient and would cut our heat bill in half. The other heater has also been down. Does the board wish to repair them or move forward with the purchase of new furnaces? Ben is looking for estimates to give to the Board. If he can get a decent rate, he feels we should change them out this year. He talked to Morabito about lowering the cost per gallon for propane for the Town Hall and was able cut the cost by 80 cents per gallon. Shorts is competitive on prices on all fuels except propane.
- Said we need to clean and paint the floors in the shop to protect the concrete. Cleaning and painting will also make it easier to see leaks from equipment if they occur. The lights also need repair.

TOWN SUPERVISOR:

- Completed the annual PESH (Public Employee Safety & Health) Core Training on December 19, 2024
- The Q4 PERMA Audit was submitted on December 28, 2024
- The Q4 NYS 45 was completed and web filed on December 28, 2024
- The Q4 Federal 941 was completed and mailed on December 30, 2024
- All W-2s have been mailed and distributed to town officials and employees on January 2, 2025
- Mike met with the Fire Chief, Matt Tuller and Ben Smith with the hopes of developing a good working relationship between the Fire Department and the Town
- The end of the month closing for November is complete and was sent to the Town Board on January 5
- Mike attended the Emergency HazMat Awareness Training on January 22, 2025. This is required for Highway workers.
- PERMA returned to do a follow up audit from January of 2024

Motion was made by Dan Gee and seconded by Holly Chase that the reports from Town Officers be accepted as presented. Put to vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom. Unanimously Carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Local Law # 1 of 2025 - A public hearing was held in December to discuss Local Law # 1 of 2025 regulating Solar Energy Systems. The County Planner has approved of this local law with some corrections. Reactivate gave us modifications to the law. The clause noting that ongoing fire training was needed was removed. Mike Volino read the resolution to those present. Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that a Resolution of the Thurston Town Board, adopting Local Law Number 1 of 2025, A Local Law Regulating Solar Energy Systems, be adopted as presented with a copy of said resolution attached to the official minutes. Put to roll call vote: Michael Volino, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Danie Gee, Aye, Jennifer Hargrave, (Zoom). Unanimously Carried.

The motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Dan Gee that Local Law # 1 of 2021 and Local Law # 2 of 2024, both for the purpose of regulating the installation, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of Solar Energy Systems in the Town of Thurston be rescinded and replaced with **Local Law # 1 of 2025**. Put to vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom.

Local Law # 2 of 2025 - A public hearing was held tonight, January 22, 2025, to discuss this Local Law which is a continuation of the Establishment of a Solid Waste Management Facilities One Year Moratorium. Motion was made by Noel Sylvester and seconded by Holly Chase that Local Law # 2 of 2025, Establishing A Solid Waste

Management Facilities Moratorium, be approved as written. Put to roll call vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom. Unanimously Carried.

ANNUAL AUDITS - The Board acknowledged the annual audit done on the Town Clerks Books which were found to be in excellent shape.

HEATER REPLACEMENT - The Board discussed the need for new heaters at the Town Barns. It was noted propane heaters are more efficient than kerosene ones. Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that the Highway Superintendent be authorized to order two new heaters at a cost not to exceed \$15,000. The funds are available in the highway contractual account. Put to vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom. Unanimously Carried.

SELL 2005 VOLVO – Ben Smith had noted that the 2005 Volvo, 10-wheel dump truck is not worth repairing. Motion was made by Noel Sylvester and seconded by Dan Gee that Ben go ahead and list this for sale. Put to vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom. Unanimously Carried.

FUEL TANKS – Mike noted the new fuel tanks for the town barns should be here next week. We now need a structure over these tanks. We do not have to take bids if the cost is under \$25,000.00 but can get estimates. Ben said we will also have to have power run to the structure. Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that Ben get estimates by the 16th of February to build a 20 x 16 structure over the fuel tanks. Put to vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom. Unanimously Carried.

There being no further old business, motion was made by Dan Gee and seconded by Noel Sylvester that old business be closed. Put to vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom. Unanimously Carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mike Volino said there is a **Local Law (3 of 2025)** pending approval. Motion was made by Dan Gee and seconded by Holly Chase that we accept the amended form for Local Law # 3 of 2025 which increases the limits of a real property Veteran's Tax Exemption to be in line with the County rates. Put to vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, abstain, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom. Unanimously Carried.

Motion was made that a **public hearing** be held February 19, 2025 at 6:45 P.M. to hear public comment on this proposed Local. Put to vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom. Unanimously Carried.

TOWN HALL REPAIRS: Mike Volino said we need to make repairs to the drywall cracks in the Town Hall, upstairs ceiling, paint the upstairs including the courtroom, and replace the downstairs bathroom floor which has leaked in the past and is peeling off. We also need to purchase lights for the playground area and outside the back of the building. It was decided that Mike will put an ad including all of the above in the paper noting we are taking estimates and specifically noting what work needs to be done and what we expect. Put to vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom. Unanimously Carried.

GRANT FUNDING: Mike Volino said Nick Langworthy's office has indicated there is a Community Funding Project Grant that we may be able to use to help purchase a new grader, which will cost about \$400,000. The Board agreed that Mike should talk with Nick Langworthy's office about the requirements for this grant.

PERMA EQUIPMENT GRANT: The Town Supervisor also noted there is a PERMA grant available that we could use to purchase a laptop and 55' screen TV to be used for training, for the highway shop. Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that Mike go ahead with an application for this grant. Put to vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom. Unanimously Carried.

There being no further new business, motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that new business be closed. Put to vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom. Unanimously Carried.

Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Dan Gee that the meeting be closed at 7:50 p.m. Put to vote, Michael Volino, aye, Noel Sylvester, aye, Daniel Gee, aye, Holly Chase, aye, Jennifer Hargrave, Zoom. Unanimously Carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sue E. Conklin, Town Clerk.