

**TOWN OF HOWARD
TOWN BOARD MEETING
JUNE 12, 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 OBrochta, Councilman Gary Rice, and Deputy Highway Superintendent Tom Dubois

Absent: Councilman Ed Frey, Councilman Ron Dyer, and Highway Superintendent Lee Pyer.

Also Present: Richard Stewart, Mike Kidder, Dawn Sutfin (C.H.I.P.'s Rep.), Nicole Hogan (Howard Library), Leah Kidder (Howard Library) and David Hogan.

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

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

A Motion was made by Councilman Rice and seconded by Councilman OBrochta to approve the May 8, 2024 minutes.

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

Public Comment: Richard Stewart asked if the Annual Financial Report was done. Supervisor Evia replied that it was not and the reason is that the former Bookkeeper will not be coming back to close 2023 Financial Report, so now moving forward, Supervisor Evia explained that he will be hiring a gentleman who is retired from the State Comptroller's Office by the name of Richard Blafield, who has been working with Christine Haar, Howard's Bookkeeper with closing out the Town of Avoca 2023 Annual Financial Report.

Mike Kidder asked about the work that needs to be done at the Town Library. Mr. Kidder addressed the issue of pot holes in the library driveway and insists that they need to be filled in because they were a safety hazard to the people coming to the library. Supervisor Evia said he wanted to make sure that the pot holes were in fact on Town property and if they are on Town property than the town will take care of it. Councilman OBrochta presented a tax map with measurements. Supervisor Evia said he would check for a recent survey map of the property. Mr. Kidder also asked about Larry Jackson coming to put metal under the front porch roof and power washing the library. Supervisor Evia said Mr. Jackson had been informed and was coming to give a quote for those repairs and he said the Board was aware of the library needing to be cleaned. He also asked about looking into improvements of the park. Supervisor Evia and Councilman OBrochta said they were talking to Tammy Kunzman (Grant Writer) from Hunt Engineering about getting a grant for the park. Councilman OBrochta explains that they do everything from beginning to the end and will do this service as a favor because of the town being a small municipality and there would be no need to retain them. Town Park discussion continued in Old Business.

Richard Stewart asked if the Town had gotten a document from the State of New York about pledging support for the housing crisis and that other towns had received this. Supervisor Evia and Fran Sharp, Clerk, said nothing had come through our emails or mail. He says the

scuttlebutt about it probably has something to do with bringing in illegal immigrants and having the town pledge support helping in this crisis. Councilman OBrochta says, "Not on my watch". He also said that the Canisteo Wind farm (6 towns) is in a crisis. The lease options have gone on so long that now Canisteo and Cameron are out. The landowners that thought they were getting a turbine on their property are not and are not renewing their leases. Now the Canisteo Wind farm does not have any way to run the lines. He commented that this could happen in Howard.

Nicole Hogan, Howard Library, also expresses a concern about the pot holes in the driveway. She says the issue has been talked about several times at the Board meeting which she got from reading the minutes online. She comments that she is very concerned about the safety of children/families and the elderly walking in the town and was disappointed that there was not a plan in place to resolve this problem. Supervisor Evia replied that they do not schedule for the highway department and it is the highway dept. that would fix the pot holes and that right now they are out oiling and stoning and that the Highway Superintendent is off due to surgery. When he gets back to work, they will see when they can get that worked in. However, the Board states they still want to know where the property line is between the library and the church. Councilman OBrochta stated that he will look into this the following day. She also states that children have slipped and fallen and she mentioned the various tripping hazards and we are very lucky as a Town no one has come back on the town. Supervisor Evia claims this is the first hearing about the falls.

Ms. Hogan goes on to comment about other tripping hazards such as the bleachers at the park which have been removed which she says is great and asked again about the pot holes. Supervisor Evia said they will have a look at it. She comments that is all we are asking for to keep the public safe. There is more Library discussion in the Monthly Library Report section.

Department Reports:

A. Monthly Highway Report- Deputy Highway Superintendent Tom Dubois reports that they have been working on grading roads, mowing roadsides, filling pot holes and Oil and Stoning started June 12th. He reports that Lake Demmon Road is finished. They sent 3 trucks to help Avoca Oil and Stone on June 11th and Smith Road will get black top on June 24th. Councilman Rice asked Mike Kidder about his thoughts on the Lake Road and he responded that it was good in places and in some places, it did not help because the drainage was never addressed. Deputy Superintendent Dubois suggested it could still be ditched along there is front of Mr. Kidder's house to control the water. Mr. Kidder responded that it would then be on his property. Deputy Highway Supervisor Tom Dubois asked for a resolution to purchase a new sandblaster rather than purchasing a used one. He explains that a sandblaster would be very beneficial to the department.

A Resolution (#16-2024) was made upon a motion by Councilman Rice and seconded by Councilman OBrochta giving the Highway Department permission to purchase a sandblaster with the associated safety equipment with an amount not to exceed \$4,500.00.

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

- B. Monthly Planning Board Report-** No report

- 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 April and May. Justice Cornell wrote a check to the town in the amount of \$426.00 for April and \$604.00 for May 2024.

- G. Monthly Animal Control Report-** Written report with nothing to report.

- H. Monthly Library Report-** Written report consisting of a letter addressed to the Board, Expense sheet, miscellaneous attendance sheet and June's Calendar. In the letter it addresses the complaints about the rusty rail on the front of the building, increasing concerns regarding the large potholes. Also included in their packet is a list of repairs and renovations needed to ensure patron safety. Leah Kidder, Howard Library, comments about a project proposal that the library had included in their letter to the Board, she asked about the removal and installation of the main floor carpet and who is responsible for the maintenance inside and outside of the Howard Library. Supervisor Evia responds that the carpet would not be the town's responsibility. Ms. Kidder asked if that was a policy in writing and if there was a process that the library would have to follow for this kind of project. Supervisor Evia responded that there was not a policy in place with just communication between the library board and the town board. He also commented that the inside repairs and maintenance would be the libraries responsibility except for furnace issues which he comments that Tom Dubois, Deputy Highway has taken care of in the past, if he is available would fix for little cost and the outside maintenance of the building would be the town's responsibility. Ms. Hogan comments that they are looking for feedback that they were just asking and have it in writing and that it would be most helpful for them to proceed when they are paying for expenses. She also addresses when the budget is to be in and the frustration of having their budget cut when for many years prior it was the same amount. Supervisor Evia advises her that in the past someone from the library would come to the September board meeting and would do a presentation and would answer any questions the board may have. Ms. Kidder comments that they will continue to work hard to communicate. They also expressed that they are pleased that some of outside projects are getting addressed and would appreciate keeping informed of when outside projects are scheduled so

not to conflict with Library functions. The Board thanked them for coming in and addressing the board with their concerns.

- I. **Monthly Town Clerk's Report-** Written report for May 2024 consisting of revenue brought in from 3 building permits (\$781.00) and 6 dog licenses (\$54.00). Disbursements: Paid out to Town Supervisor \$835.00 and NYS Animal Population Control Program \$6.00 totally \$841.00. Town Clerk, Fran Sharp reports that there are free Covid tests in the office donated by Steuben County Dept. of Health and the public is welcome to stop by and get some.

- J. **Monthly Town Supervisor's Report-** No Supervisor financial report. Supervisor Evia reports that he had a meeting with the Town's Insurance Carrier, they went over all the vehicles and equipment coverage amounts. They also looked at the amount of coverage on the buildings and it was determined that they needed to be increased in coverage. Supervisor Evia believes that next year they should consider the amount of coverage on the contents in the shop and the offices.

Old Business: Supervisor Evia addresses the topic of squatters from last month, he mentioned that Councilman OBrochta had gotten a copy of a "Notice of Adoption" of Local Law from Town of Clifton Park regarding squatters on private property and it is straight forward regarding what property owners can do to remove a squatter. Supervisor Evia and Councilman OBrochta said that they had spoken to the Attorney in Clifton Park regarding this and Supervisor Evia took a copy of this Local law to the Town's Attorney for him to read through it and get his input. Councilman OBrochta added that he had spoken to the Sheriff's dept. about this and they informed him that they would abide by the Local Town law if the town passed one. Councilman OBrochta continued the topic of whether the town was going to use Hunt Engineering to write a grant for the town park. Supervisor Evia expresses one of his concerns regarding a conversation prior with one of the Representatives of this company was a statement she made that she would do a gratis to the town however, at the end of the conversation it was implied there could be charges. He questions are they going to bill the town and that part was not clear to him. Councilman OBrochta said he thought it sounded like they would take a piece of the grant. Councilman OBrochta said he would reach back out to her and get clarity on this and Supervisor Evia suggests having her come and do a presentation for the Board. Councilman OBrochta comments that the deadline to file for the grant is July 31, 2024 and that the grant awards are capped at \$675,000.00 and that could build a nice park and that he would like to get an application submitted so maybe something could get started by 2025.

New Business: Dawn Sutfin, CHIPS Coordinator, she gives an overview of CHIPS. She explains that CHIPS is basically a bonded fund from NYS which all runs on a reimbursement basis, it is submitted on a quarterly basis with quarterly payments in June, September, December, and March. She then presents the Town Board with a packet of information regarding CHIPS and the other funding programs such as; Extreme Winter Recovery, PAVE-NY, and Pave our

Potholes. She explains in detail how the funding program works. She asked the Board if they had any feedback. Supervisor Evia commented about the proposal that was mentioned by Dawn that would include preventive maintenance that was brought up at Highway School, he comments this would be good because it would let small communities like our own to be able to extend the life of the roads without tearing them up and starting over. Dawn assured him that she would take to Albany his feedback. Dawn highly suggests Security Cameras for Highway, due to vandalism in some areas, the purchase can be covered by CHIPS. She informs the Board that the town can call her any time, she always has her state phone with her. The Board thanks Dawn for coming in and appreciates her help.

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

Highway Fund	(Abstract # 50 - 71)	\$280,780.61
General Fund	(Abstract # 353 – 376)	\$11,264.85
Street Lighting	(Abstract # 340)	\$175.45

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

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

Executive Session: None

Town Board Discussion: None

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Councilman OBrochta and seconded by Councilman Rice to adjourn the meeting at 8:37pm.

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

Frances Sharp
Howard Town Clerk