

**TOWN OF HOUNSFIELD TOWN BOARD MEETING**  
**October 12, 2011**

The monthly meeting of the Town of Hounsfeld Town Board was called to order by Supervisor Timothy Scee at the Town Hall, 18774 Co. Rt. 66 at 7PM and the Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Members present were: Supervisor Scee, Councilmen: Stephen Lee, David Cobb, Todd Farrington and Vincent Battista.

A motion was made by C'man Lee and 2<sup>nd</sup> by C'man Cobb to approve the Board minutes of 9/14/2011. All voted aye and the motion was carried.

Correspondence: A letter was received from Gary Hess, Storrs Road, saying he has documentation that he owns to the center of the abandoned road that the Town would like to sell. The Supervisor will forward this on to Attorney Renzi. The appraisal of the property has been completed. A notice was received about a support group called Caregivers which is hosted by Hay Memorial Library. A notice was received from Bond Schonek & King about Planning and Zoning training being held on 10/26/11 in Syracuse. A letter was received from New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Places notifying the Town that a site has been nominated to be listed on the historic register and the site is the old Storrs Road shipyard which is the property of Dennis Whelpley. C'man Battista read an email received from Paul Warneck asking for a refund of \$11.75 he was charged for a 2012 Town tentative budget. He sited minutes where the Town Board agreed to eliminate charges for copies. The Board agreed to make a decision on this at a later date.

The Supervisor's report was read by the Clerk to the Supervisor: Total receipts were \$128,269.85, Total disbursements \$175,006.51, Total in checking accounts \$188,787.13, Total investments \$551,903.70. A motion was made by C'man Battista and 2<sup>nd</sup> by C'man Lee to accept the Supervisor's report. All voted aye and the motion was carried.

A motion was made by C'man Battista and 2<sup>nd</sup> by C'man Lee to pay bills in abstract # 10, vouchers #529-586: General Fund A \$17,488.57, General Fund B \$5,141.03, Lakeside Cemetery Fund \$2,061.00, Highway Fund A \$22,693.69, Highway Fund B \$704.51, Water District 2 \$7,548.36, Water District 1 \$198.53, Water District 4 \$2,124.66, Water District 3 \$463.41, Water District 5 Capital Fund \$392.00, Abstract total \$58,815.76. All voted aye and the motion was carried.

Discussion was held on bills received from Attorney Dennis Whelpley for the Galloo Island wind project totaling over \$17,000. The Clerk to the Supervisor has not received any funds lately from the developer to pay bills for this project. Supervisor Scee will talk to the developer about this situation.

C'man Lee reported that he has attended two Water Committee meetings, working on an IMA with Sackets Harbor for District 5. The City of Watertown will be considering an agreement with us soon and C'man Lee reported that there have been changes made to that agreement by the City and a Public Hearing for both IMAs should be set very soon. C'man Lee met with Sandy Farrington from East Hounsfield Library to talk about future plans for the library.

C'man Cobb reported that he attended the Fire Dept. meeting and reported on the fund raiser events they have held and have planned. He also reported on the firefighter recognition for Garrett Loomis that took place in Albany on the 11<sup>th</sup> and another will be held next week in Maryland.

C'man Battista reported that the library budget requests have been received.

C'man Farrington reported that he attended the Recreation Commission meeting and a picnic table has been purchased for the water works park, he has had one session with C'man Battista on the internal audit, and he is working on an application for the Tiger III grant.

The Highway Superintendent gave a work report.

The Town Clerk gave a collections report for the month.

Kris Dimmick of Bernier, Carr was present to give an update on Water District 5 and he reminded the Board that the deadline of December 7<sup>th</sup> is near and the Town still does not have a water IMA to accompany the final application to EFC.

Supervisor Scee explained that New York State is now recommending that municipalities create a Shared Services Agreement. Jefferson County Highway Superintendent, Jim Lawrence Jr. and the Town Highway Superintendent, Bruce Alcombrack were present to explain the need for an agreement when municipalities are working together and sharing equipment, labor, and sometimes materials. This will be tabled until next meeting.

Supervisor Scee explained that the current insurance plan now provided to the full time employees is being discontinued on 1/1/12 and three plans with about the same coverage have been offered. A motion was made by C'man Lee and 2<sup>nd</sup> by C'man Farrington to approve an insurance plan for full time employees (Excellus Blue Cross) offered by Fuller Insurance, Carthage, NY and to get signed up by 12/1/11 to take advantage of the savings. This plan could save the Town approximately \$26,000. In discussion, C'man Lee added that this is a remarkable savings and C'man Cobb agreed that it looks good. All voted aye and the motion was carried.

Supervisor Scee reported that the 2012 Tentative Budget was delivered to the Town Clerk's office on October 4<sup>th</sup> and is available for review. The Supervisor added that Paul Warneck called the Clerk to the Supervisor to get a copy of this tentative budget and argued with her that it should be ready by the end of September. Supervisor Scee described this, in his opinion, as improper. Supervisor Scee set the first budget work session for Friday, October 14. at 3 PM. IMAs from City of Watertown and Sackets Harbor will also be reviewed.

In Supervisor's comments, Supervisor Scee reported that Jeff Kenney, Water Operator, was investigated by the Sheriff's Department due to a complaint about late deposits of Tower collections and theft of water made by C'man Vincent Battista and C'man David Cobb without the knowledge or consent of the Supervisor or other Board members. After review of the Water Dept. records, no charges were filed and the investigation was closed. Supervisor Scee asked C'man Farrington to read a letter from the Teamsters Union notifying the Town that a grievance has been filed by Jeff Kenney against the Town because of a bogus investigation, harassment and slander of his name by two council members, Battista and Cobb. The union also demanded an order to cease and desist these activities.

Public Comment: Jeff Kenney spoke about the time he has given to this community that he has lived in for 50 years and about his employment with the Town. He added that in 12 yrs as Water Operator, with 5 Supervisors and more council members, he has never been given any guidance on procedure for making deposits and that the sheriff's report declared that after investigations the allegations against him for taking quarters or water were unfounded. Mr. Kenney also suggested that these allegations against him by C'man Battista and C'man Cobb were a campaign tactic.

Betsy Stoker commented that she is sick of C'man Battista and Cobb being outvoted every time there is a vote and she agrees that copies should be free to the residents because they pay taxes.

Kathy Mereand spoke in support of Mr. Kenney and thought that if actions of employees are in question, the full Board should decide how to handle it and no Board members should act on their own.

Supervisor Scee added that he spoke to an attorney at the Association of Towns and they agreed that council members should not have acted on their own or tried to deceive the authorities.

Yvonne Podvin also supported Mr. Kenney and agreed that the situation should have been handled by the entire Board.

Helene Rainville was present to support Mr. Kenney and stated that allegations will stay with a person their whole life and suspicions of employees should be handled through the right channels.

Paul Brown, member of the Town Water Committee, spoke of confidentiality when dealing with employees and asked C'man Battista if he has a response to allegations against him. C'man Battista's response was that it was a night to attack him and untruths have been said, but he could not say much because investigations of improprieties are ongoing. He also added that "we" discussed that the deposits of quarters were not being made regularly and it is not appropriate.

Paul Locy stated that one way to get this Board into control is to vote on election day and get rid of the out of control members.

C'man Lee reminded the Board that there are checks and balances in place on the water tower with a meter that measures all the water that comes out and those records have been reviewed and when calculating the price of the water it corresponds with the deposits. Another check is a coin counter. Mr. Battista argued that the meter readings can have a variance of up to 30 percent.

This meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM.

Submitted by,

Diane M. Nier  
Town Clerk

