

**TOWN OF COVERT, SENECA COUNTY
PUBLIC HEARING
& YEAR END TOWN BOARD MEETING
December 29th, 2023**

The Public Hearing and regular Year End meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Covert was held Monday, December 29th, 2023 at 5:00 P.M. at the Town of Covert Municipal Building, 8469 South Main Street, Interlaken, New York.

Roll Call:	Supervisor Michael Reynolds	Present
	Councilwoman Deborah Nottke	Present
	Councilman Bill Bishop	Present
	Councilman Brayton Foster	Present
	Councilman Todd Wyckoff	Present

Others Present: Town Clerk Leslie Adams-Compton, Jack and Jen Persoon and other interested citizens.

Call to order: Supervisor Reynolds called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M. All rose for the pledge of allegiance.

Public Hearing: Nottke moved, seconded by Foster, to open the Public Hearing for the Interlaken Fire Contract. Reynolds said the cost is up about 5% from last year. Interlaken Fire Department plans to take on more of the Trumansburg district after the Town does its revaluation. Nottke moved, seconded by Foster, to close the Public Hearing for the Interlaken Fire Contract at 5:09 PM.

Public Hearing: Nottke moved, seconded by Foster, to open the Public Hearing for the Trumansburg Fire Contract. Reynolds said the cost is up a little bit, He said there would not be a purchase of the \$100,000 ladder trucks for a while. Nottke said they found \$10,000 in the budget. Nottke moved, seconded by Wyckoff, to close the Public Hearing for the Trumansburg Fire Contract at 5:11 PM.

Petitioners: Reynolds invited Jack and Jennifer Persoon to speak regarding their application for a solar farm on their small dairy farm. Jack shared that they are trying to diversify to survive and they feel that clean energy is an easy way to do that. He asked for any questions the Board may have.

Reynolds said that Will?/engineers have offered money to the Town for the installation of the solar farm, \$25,000/kw for 10 years, going up 2% each year, then it turns over to full assessment. They project 13 kw. He said that they intend to surround the panels with trees.

Foster said he did not trust that the State will look out for the Town's best interest. He said that once the Town removes the prohibitive status in the Land Management Ordinance, the Town will not have much say. He said he doesn't want the assessor involved, because the Town is being sued by a few property owners right now, and they could do the same. A PILOT agreement would be in writing

Foster said it is a controversial subject. Jack Persoon said it should generate more tax income for the Town. Foster asked how the solar will have an impact on surrounding properties. Persoon said it's not like wind turbines, it's surrounded by trees, it's clean energy; he thought it was a good site, right behind the Hipshot solar panels.

Nottke expressed concern for where the used panels will go in about 25 years. Persoon emphasized that he does care about the property but can't say where they will go. There will be a decommission plan.

Foster asked if Persoons' variance is allowed, will the neighbors do the same. He said that he believed our area is an energy efficient area. He said that with the gas industry, the DEC would sign off with consent of the landowner. He said it would be nice if the operator was more organized, and the developer came forward offering to pay for engineering studies, monetary benefits to the Town, from the start, referencing the New Leaf letter of Intent with 60 day notice for PILOT, after being told at a previous meeting that once we get going we'll be able to negotiate a pilot. He said that the developer is

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working for the investors. He speculated that the construction workers will not be local.

Reynolds said that New Leaf/LaBella will pay for the Town’s engineer.

Foster said there needs to be some obvious economic advantage. He said that it's not about you as an individual farm, it's the bigger issue of solar panels, and the public perception of them and he doesn't trust the State.

Foster asked if we will be obligated to do a big study when anyone wants to grow, process + sell marijuana.

Resolutions:

Resolution #11-23 Highway Hourly Resolution

WHEREAS the Town of Covert Highway Department appointed employees have all maintained acceptable work levels, now THEREFORE BE RESOLVED that the Town of Covert Town Board does hereby accept the recommendation of the Highway Superintendent that the following full-time employees will be given an increase in their hourly rate; part-time employees rates will be the minimum wage.

	2023	3% increase	2024 Total Reg.	2024 O.T.
<u>Employee:</u>	<u>Reg./hour</u>			
Roger Ike	\$27.55		\$28.38	\$42.57
Glenn Boyes	\$23.18		\$23.88	\$35.82
Craig Coonradt	\$22.50		\$23.18	\$34.77
Ryan Smith	\$22.50		\$23.18	\$34.77
			Minimum	
Thomas Hayward	\$14.20		\$15.00	

Motion: Foster, Second: Wyckoff. Vote: Aye-Wyckoff, Aye-Nottke, Aye-Bishop, Aye-Foster.

Nottke moved, seconded by Wyckoff, that Highway Fund Vouchers #179 - 187 in the amount of \$21,064.27 and General Fund Vouchers #240 - 254 in the amount of \$32,008.20 be approved for payment. Aye-Wyckoff, Aye-Nottke, Aye-Bishop, Aye-Foster.

Nottke moved, seconded by Wyckoff, to adjourn the meeting at 5:49 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,