

TOWN OF COVERT, SENECA COUNTY
REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING
November 13th, 2023

The regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Covert was held Monday, November 13th, 2023 at 7:00 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, Town Attorney Patrick Morrell, Deputy Clerk Brian Quan, and other interested citizens.

Call to order: Supervisor Reynolds called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. All rose for the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Minutes: Nottke moved, seconded by Foster, to approve the minutes from October 9, 23 + 30, 2023. Aye - Wyckoff, Aye - Nottke, Aye - Bishop and Aye - Foster.

Presenter: Nathan Miller of South Seneca Ambulance (SSA) shared using a power point presentation outlining the services they could offer the Town. He said they are primarily supported by the Towns of Lodi, Romulus and Ovid, although they responded to 57 calls in Covert in 2022. He said they began in 1973 as a volunteer service, but they currently have 8 full-time paid staff and numerous volunteers. He said they offer wellness screenings, CPR training, pet resuscitation, and fire scenes and training standbys. He said they offer hardship determinations for reduced cost and payment plans. He explained that they have one ambulance running all the time on a first come, first serve basis, but they have extra people on call. He said 45% of their calls are ALS (advanced life support) and 55% are BLS (basic). He said that SSA has answered 35% of Covert's calls this year. He said the average response time for Covert residents was 12 minutes. He said they have a feedback portal, are actively looking for volunteers, and there are many ways for the community to help. He asked that, even if the Town did not use SSA this year, they would appoint a liaison from the Town to attend their board meetings and be involved, etc.

Miller said they are looking for sustainable solutions through the County hopefully within the next few years.

The proposed cost for South Seneca Ambulance services for the Town is \$175,000 for two years. He said money comes back to the towns when there is an excess.

The Board asked a number of questions: If they call volume was down, would they ask for more money? Miller said he budgets for the possibility and has money in reserve; How can they operate so much cheaper than Trumansburg? Miller said the staff is (willingly) underpaid. He said the service is supposed to be "not for profit"; Can they provide the service without more equipment? Miller said 'yes'... but they can hike the rates more if needed(?); Who staffs the "fly-car"? Miller said that he does, from Geneva. Questions continued on patient's choice for service, blood pressure/glucose check on 911/is charged, in person visits, fee schedule/same for all towns, CONs, prison calls. Miller said that Trumansburg and South Seneca ambulances are in different regions and have different task forces. He said that ambulances are required to respond regardless of Town Contracts. He said they get about 100 prison calls per year.

Public Hearing: Nottke moved, seconded by Bishop, to open the Public Hearing at 7:55 PM to hear comments and ask questions concerning the 2024 Preliminary Budget for the Town of Covert.

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Foster asked that if the DB revenue went down, shouldn't the tax rate go down? Reynolds said he will double check the tax rates.

Nottke moved, seconded by Bishop, to close the Public Hearing for the 2024 Preliminary Budget at 8:14.

Public Hearing: Wyckoff moved, seconded by Nottke, to open the Public Hearing at 8:14 PM to hear comments on proposed Local Law of the Town of Covert authorizing the Town to adopt a budget that requires a real property tax levy in excess of the amount otherwise specified in General Municipal Law §3-c.

Reynolds said that we are at exactly the allowable amount.

Nottke moved, seconded by Wyckoff, to close the Public Hearing for the Local Law for tax cap override at 8:15.

Highway Superintendent: MacCheyne submitted his monthly report for October 2023 via email. The report included the following: Pickup snowplow installed, 1B hauled for winter salt mix, salt spreaders prepped, salt mixed with 1B's for winter use; a new driveway on Townline and E Bates Roads installed, barriers installed on Frontenac Bridge, they mowed roadsides and backslopes, cold patched all town roads, did regular maintenance on all equipment and helped Romulus with paving project.

Committees: Nottke said the DOT is looking for the Town's agreement on CHA's design plan speed for the Frontenac Bridge of 30 mph.

Nottke and Foster presented a resolution for the Town in support of seeking funds from Seneca County Tourism for the \$20,000 required for Covert's membership in the Three Falls LDC. Nottke also asked for the Town Board's input on where they stand in pursuing involvement in the new park.

Foster said he had no problem supporting the park **but not with taxpayer money.**

Nottke said the NY Parks agreement says that municipalities will get back their money.

Supervisor: Reynolds said the Persoon's Dairy Farm is requesting a variance from the Land Management Ordinance to install a solar farm. Emily Lukasik was introduced, representing the LaBella/New Leaf solar project.

Attorney: Morrell said that he and the assessors plan a meeting with a property owner who challenged their assessment hoping to work something out, but they are preparing for litigation, that would involve an appraisal.

Morrell said the Town Board would be required to do a coordinated review as the designated lead agency. The Town would have to contact others involved: DEC, NYSEDA, Fire Departments, etc.. And the Board should consider hiring an engineer for the Environmental Impact. Barron(?), MRB, Hunt were suggested. Reynolds said they've used Jason McCormick before.

Resolutions: Nottke moved, seconded by Foster, to schedule a Town Board meeting for Thursday, November 16th at 5:00 PM, in order to approve the 2024 Town of Covert Budget as final. Aye-Foster, Aye-Nottke, Aye-Bishop, Aye-Wyckoff.

Nottke moved, seconded by Bishop, to refer the Variance Request for Persoon's solar farm to the Planning Board on November 30th at 7 PM. Aye-Wyckoff, Aye-Nottke, Aye-Bishop, Aye-Foster.

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Nottke moved, seconded by Bishop, to schedule a Public Hearing for the Variance Request for Persoon's solar farm on December 11th at 7 PM. Aye-Wyckoff, Aye-Nottke, Aye-Bishop, Aye-Foster.

Nottke moved, seconded by Foster, to designate the Town of Covert Town Board as the lead agency for making SEQR determinations for the approval of the Variance for Jack and Jen Persoon, 8182, 8184, 8186 State Rte 96, Interlaken, to install three solar arrays, where there is a limit of one electricity production system per parcel and all electricity production systems with a DC capacity greater than 25 kW are prohibited under the Town of Covert Land Management Ordinance. Pursuant to 6 NYCRR 617.4 it is hereby determined that the action proposed in this application constitutes a Type I action as defined under said regulation and that it is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment and may require an Environmental Impact Statement. Aye-Wyckoff, Aye-Nottke, Aye-Bishop, Aye-Foster.

Resolution # 6-2023

To Approve Design Speed of 30 mph on Frontenac Rd Bridge

RESOLVED that the Town of Covert agrees with the design speed as submitted by CHA Consulting, Inc., engineers for the Frontenac Road Bridge Replacement, setting the speed limit not to exceed 30 mph. Nottke moved, seconded by Foster Aye-Wyckoff, Aye-Nottke, Aye-Bishop, Aye-Foster.

Resolution # 7-2023

Covert Town Board Request of County Tourism Funds for 2024 Support of Park at Frontenac Point

WHEREAS, the Three Falls LDC has proceeded well in 2023 towards the acquiring a license and securing services, plans and expects an opening of municipal State Park at Frontenac Point in the Town of Covert; and

WHEREAS, the start-up costs during 2024, its first year of operation, to open the Park to the public will require some further financial support from its three member municipalities (Ulysses, Trumansburg and Covert), and

WHEREAS, this new Park within Seneca County with its nearly 100 acres and half a mile of Cayuga Lake shoreline and evolving range of uses for public and private events and activities will quickly and appropriately attract and benefit tourists and local residents in 2024, and

WHEREAS, each of the three Member Municipalities has been asked to provide \$20,000 towards the 2024 Annual Budget of the Three Falls LDC for these purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Seneca County Occupancy Tax provides annual revenue to the County to promote and expand tourism and related purposes, and

WHEREAS, \$10,000 of that annual revenue was provided in 2023 to the Town of Covert for the establishment and organization of the Three Falls LDC;

NOW THEREFORE, the Town of Covert requests \$20,000 from that same revenue fund for this exciting new source and benefit to tourism from Seneca County for 2024.

Nottke moved, seconded by Foster. Aye-Wyckoff, Aye-Nottke, Aye-Bishop, Aye-Foster.

Nottke moved, seconded by Wyckoff, to approve the Supervisor's Income and Expenditure report for the month of October 2023. Aye-Wyckoff, Aye-Nottke, Aye-Bishop, Aye-Foster.

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Foster moved, seconded by Nottke, to approve the Highway Superintendent's report for the month of October 2023. Aye-Wyckoff, Aye-Nottke, Aye-Bishop, Aye-Foster.

Nottke moved, seconded by Foster, to approve Town Clerk report for the month of October 2023. Town Clerk received a total of \$1349.25; \$611.27 was remitted to the Supervisor. Aye-Wyckoff, Aye-Nottke, Aye-Bishop, Aye-Foster.

Nottke moved, seconded by Foster, to approve the Code Enforcement report for the month of October 2023. Aye-Wyckoff, Aye-Nottke, Aye-Bishop, Aye-Foster.

Nottke moved, seconded by Bishop, to approve the Dog Control Officer's report for the month of October 2023. Aye-Wyckoff, Aye-Nottke, Aye-Bishop, Aye-Foster.

Nottke moved, seconded by Wyckoff, that Highway Fund Vouchers #147 - 163 in the amount of \$77,990.91 and General Fund Vouchers #205 - 222 in the amount of \$20,517.32 be approved for payment. Aye-Wyckoff, Aye-Nottke, Aye-Bishop, Aye-Foster.

Nottke moved, seconded by Wyckoff, to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Adams-Compton, Town Clerk