



TOWN OF NEWFANE

TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION January 11, 2024

The Town of Newfane Town Board Work Session was held in the Town Hall, 2737 Main Street, Newfane, NY. The Session was called to order by Supervisor John Syracuse at 5:04pm.

Town Board Members Present:

Supervisor John Syracuse, Councilwoman Sue Neidlinger, Councilman Robert Horanburg, Councilman Peter Robinson

Excused Board Member was:

Councilman Richard Coleman

Others Present:

David Schmidt - Building Inspector, Donna Lakes -Town Clerk, Jim Sansone - Town Attorney, Rosemary Sansone, Jeff Neuman-Dog Warden, Joe Flagler - DCO assistant, and Larry Dormer

Guests:

UB Clean Energy Coordinator, Jason Kulaszewski; Solar Simplified Representatives - Sasha Lukovenko, Kim Danna

Meeting Called to order at 5:04pm.

Motion to approve the December 7, 2023, Work Session minutes was made by Sue Neidlinger and seconded by Robert Horanburg. Passed.

Jason Kulaszewski from UB, works with NYSEDA and other State groups to offer the incentive to work with Solar Companies for savings for the homeowners and the towns involved. Duffy Johnson from Porter

and also the Town of Hartland recommended them to contact Newfane and come and discuss the savings and service that can occur with using their services.

Presentation for a Community Solar project by Solar Simplified took place with a PowerPoint for all to view. (Printed PP report attached.) Sasha Lukovenko, who is VP Sales & Marketing, led the presentation and answered any questions that arose. He also introduced Kim Danna, Community Relations, who also stated that both Porter and Youngstown use this Municipality Program.

- They stated “Why it's important” to work with them.
- They shared the Community Benefits.
- Community Solar is a State-run program, without homeowners or business having to install solar panels.
- Discounts will happen for those that sign up - they will see a 10% savings on their utility bill.
- The Town will also receive \$50 per homeowner/business that signs up and can use those funds at their discretion. These come from Civic Funds as a one-time payment.
 - As an example: Lancaster/Depew has over 700 customers and the Town has \$35,000 in funds.
- See PowerPoint for details.
- Energy is produced by solar farms not a 3rd party supplier.
- National Grid customers can participate. The utility company (NG) cannot own the energy source.

John asked if they would come back and do open meetings/seminars. Businesses and homeowners can participate.

Jason K from UB stated that the Regional Institute with Erie-Niagara County has worked with him before. So working on this level with the Town would not be an issue. He helped us change Street lights to LED lights. Explained there's a "Tier Level" for communities. We would be considered a small Town. They provide technical assistance and explain the NYSEERDA program and get points for additional points which = additional grant funding to be applied to any sustainability projects.

- Newfane is considered a "Disadvantage Community" which allows us to gain more grant funds' by NYS.
 - Based on the Power Plant closing
 - Elderly Residents
 - The State wants 35-40% funding to go to disadvantaged Communities

Jason offered his help to get this program off the ground if we are interested. Even if we do not go with Solar Simplified. He is available to help. He answered a few questions from the Board and asked the public for any questions.

- It was asked if we would receive another bill and the answer was “No”. We would see the discount on our National Grid bill as an itemized line and discounts.

Sasha continued to explain:

- Other vendors are already working on getting customers.
- They reiterated that they are not a 3rd party supplier.
- Very easy for homeowners and businesses to sign up online. People can cancel any time after 90 days.
- People will see a 10% savings.

John thanked them all for all their information.

Supervisor Syracuse then read a note from Sadie Gunby. She thanked the Board for allowing her to speak last month & for their help to move forward with "Harper's Park." John then mentioned that the Recovery Center has 2 lots that are accessible along Ketchum Ave. They are willing to work with the Town and the idea of this project moving forward.

John invited Dog Control Officers Jeff Newman and Joe Flager to the table to share what is going on so far this year. The DCO's number of calls has gone up quite a bit. Jeff stated he may not answer his phone immediately because of his duties at the office of the Sheriff. He can't answer until his break, but by the time he calls people back, most people will have found their dogs and dogs will find their way home. His department continues to work on a Vehicle for the DCO's with an enclosed area for dogs. There are vehicles through the Sheriff's office, and they have Newfane as #1 on their list for used vehicles.

- The Town Board and DCO Newman explained the contact process of working through himself and the other two DCO's.
- Sue mentioned how important it is to have an article in the Town paper explaining all that they go through, and how important it is to have people get their dogs licensed.
- The Supervisor said that they have been working with Ag and Markets right along for the dogs and the kennels.
- DCO's have First Aid Kits / Badges / Vests because of a grant, are all on hand now.
- The DCO Vehicle would stay at the Town garage so that the marked vehicle stays there. They can get the dogs back to the kennel at McKee St. this way too. Upgrades have been made at the kennel.

The Supervisor re-addressed the Town Constable idea. They are looking at whittling down initial submission of the Constable Law.

- Jim Sansone suggested one centralized place where these complaints come in. Whoever gets a call should go through the Code Enforcement officer, David Schmidt. Make it a process with continuity.
- The Supervisor mentioned that their side arms would need to be certified with NYS and that the Town Insurance Co. knows that they are carrying, which will be protection for them and the Town. Joe Flager stated that even retired officers get certified once a year.
 - These certifications would be on file at the Town.

As far as Peace Officers or Constables are concerned, the training for these positions would come through the Sheriff's office. Jim Sansone will be putting something together so that the Board can read through it and really go over it. It was mentioned that these guys know how to de-escalate certain situations and that is a good thing.

Sue Neidlinger mentioned that this need goes beyond just dogs sometimes, as we live in an area with a lot of livestock. She has an ongoing spreadsheet who owns horses, goats, and livestock, etc. If anyone knows of people with farm animals, please have them contact her so she can keep an accurate list.

The Supervisor asked what days were good for Work Sessions, as he would like to set a set schedule for them. It was decided that the 2nd Thursday of the month, at 6:30pm for Work Sessions would be a set date moving forward.

Code Enforcement Officer David Schmidt passed out paper's that he has run across and is updating. The first page is an old document for Building Permits and attached are the new "revised" version that he is working on. He would like the Boards input.

- David went through and explained things, so people could understand the Building Permit process better.
- The 2nd sheet is the actual Building Permit. He checked with all depts on what they would like to see on the application.
- David continued and asked to look at the new pricing for different projects he has come up with. The original was from 2010 and he compared it to area towns around here (but not Lewiston). He needed to update pricing and not put a cap on anything.
 - Sue Neidlinger made a motion to accept updated fees from Building Inspector.
 - Robert Horanburg seconded.
 - Motion carried.
- Robert noted that it should read “See page 2” rather than ‘see back page’ as the original copies read.
- The Supervisor mentioned he would put a Resolution together for the new Building Fees.

Town Clerk Donna Lakes stated that Robin Bower has been studying to take the Notary Public exam, and she would like to cover the costs for this. Supervisor Syracuse mentioned that this is something that is covered under the Clerks Budget and there is no need to seek permission if she, as the Town Clerk, deems so. (see attached memo)

- Robert Horanburg made a motion to accept the Clerks request.
- Pete Robinson seconded.
- Motion Passed.

Referring back to the Dog Control Officers / Code Enforcer’s, Robert Horanburg asked who is qualified for these positions?

- Jim Sansone suggested to talk our Insurance Agent about insurance in regard to the DCO’s and Code Officers.
- Pete Robinson explained the "Private Contractor" idea for Code Enforcement Officers and the liability of having the DCO / Peace Officers create a Policy for these “Constables" for Town Insurance. We are all Town Employees and covered under Town Insurance. If the Constables are acting as part of the Town, then the firearms & insurance will all be ready to go.
- Robert Horanburg asked what kind of Policy has been established for the chain of command for the DCO's - but the Board cleared it by stating that the order of listings is on Website for contacting:
 - Jeff Newman is Dog Control Officer is 1st
 - Ken Nerber, DCO Assistant, 2nd
 - Joe Flagler, DCO Assistant, 3rd

Jim Sansone will take the Constable ordinance over to the Sheriff's office so they can review it. Pete Robinson suggested every town should have Constables and they are covered under the color of the town law.

2024 Budgets will be given to the new Board members.

Pete Robinson made a motion to adjourn.

Sue Neidlinger seconded.

Motion passed. Meeting adjourned 6:41pm.

Respectively Submitted,

Mary L Zeller

Confidential Secretary to the Supervisor