

**HOWARD TOWN BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY
November 13, 2019**

The regular meeting of the Howard Town Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Donald Evia. Councilmen present were Richard Stewart, Lowell Smith, Robert Palmer and Gary Rice. Also present were Town Clerk David Price, Highway Superintendent Lee Pyer, Bookkeeper Leann Wightman, Eric Hosmer, Michael Adams, Ed Frey, Amy Riekofski, Lynn Karr, Joanne Rice, Robert Cleeves, Sam Webb, and Jeff Ross.

Supervisor Donald Evia led the pledge to the flag.

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed by the Board. A motion was made by Councilman Palmer and seconded by Councilman Smith to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Carried: Palmer Aye; Smith, Aye; Stewart, Aye; Rice; Aye; Evia, Aye.

At 7:05 pm Councilman Smith made a motion to begin the public hearing on the Preliminary 2020 Town Budget. The motion was seconded by Councilman Palmer. Carried: Smith, Aye; Palmer Aye; Stewart, Aye; Rice; Aye; Evia, Aye.

Ed Frey commented on the fact that he had warned the Board at last year's budget that if they lowered taxes for 2019 and then had to raise them for 2020, people would remember the increase but not that they were lowered last year. He also noted that residents would not receive the state rebate check for keeping the Town Budget under the 2% budget cap. In addition, he pointed out that the 2020 budget did not allow for an increase in health insurance premiums. This could easily happen if one of the Town Crew went from single to family plan.

Superintendent Pyer noted that he was a man down so there would be more overtime. He was bringing the crew in ½ hour earlier for plowing. On the other hand, the man who had recently left had a family health plan. This meant that they did have a little flexibility in the health insurance budget.

Supervisor Evia explained that in light of the budget increase, we need to take that gamble rather than increase the budget any more than we had.

Superintendent Pyer wondered if we could set up a reserve fund for Health Insurance.

Leann Wightman responded, "no."

Ed Frey said that he would like to see the Town set up a purchase plan for 10-wheel trucks.

Supervisor Evia explained the agreement that we had with the Town of Eaton. Councilman Rice told Mr. Frey that the trucks that we were getting from the Town of Eaton were low mileage and still under warranty.

Supervisor Evia asked for comments from the Board. Councilman Rice stated that it was a good budget. Councilman Stewart said he took Ed Frey's comments seriously, but he felt that we have substantial reserves.

There followed a discussion regarding the various piece of highway equipment that had been purchased during 2019.

Leann Wightman started a discussion regarding the Town adopting a Reserve Fund Policy. She had printed one out and Supervisor Evia pointed out that there was a copy in all of the Councilmen's folders.

Ms. Wightman explained that the State wanted the towns to maintain for lack of a better word, a "slush fund" of between 15 and 40%. She continued that it was better to be closer to 15%, but ours was closer to 40%.

Supervisor Evia requested that the Board study the proposed Reserve Fund Policy and it would be reviewed and voted on at the December Board meeting.

Superintendent Pyer discussed some of the capital repairs that were needed on town buildings. The cold storage building needs a new roof. Councilman Smith stated that the same building also needed the OSB siding to be replaced.

Superintendent Pyer explained that it would be a multi-year project. He also stated that the Board should consider a wash bay.

At 7:40 pm Councilman Rice made a motion to close the public hearing on the Preliminary 2020 Town Budget. The motion was seconded by Councilman Stewart. Carried: Rice, Aye; Stewart Aye; Smith Aye; Palmer; Aye; Evia, Aye.

A Resolution (#23-2019) was made upon the Motion of Councilman Gary Rice and seconded by Councilman Lowell Smith to accept the 2020 Town Budget as presented. ADOPTED: Councilman Gary Rice, aye; Councilman Lowell Smith, aye; Councilman Richard Stewart, aye; Councilman Robert Palmer, aye; Supervisor Donald Evia, aye.

At this time several residents asked to be heard. They were concerned that that somebody may have manipulated the election. One resident stated that she had heard that one of the Councilman had been bragging that he had influenced the election results.

Councilman Stewart replied that he resented the implication.

When asked if he knew how campaign signs for a candidate who had attempted to withdraw her name from the ballot and moved out of state had appeared the day before the election, Councilman Stewart responded, "it was his responsibility to make sure any Republican candidate for office had a fair shake."

After some heated discussion on the topic Supervisor Evia called it to a halt. He stated, "we would have a fresh start in January, we had a good budget. Let's move on."

Supervisor Evia continued stating, "I've had a lot of good reports on Superintendent Pyer. The roads are in good shape and Superintendent Pyer has done a good job explaining various processes for maintaining the Town roads as well as needed repairs to Town equipment to the Board as well as interested residents."

Supervisor Evia mentioned that he had an inquiry from the newly elected Councilman regarding training for newly elected town officials. It was agreed that the Town would pay for the training.

Supervisor Evia invited Superintendent Pyer to discuss highway matters. Mr. Pyer requested a resolution banning roadside parking from November 1st to April 1st, and to place a notice in the *Southern Tier Shopper* stating that policy.

A Resolution (#24-2019) was made upon the Motion of Councilman Gary Rice and seconded by Councilman Robert Palmer to authorize Superintendent Pyer to have a no parking policy on roads in Howard from November 1, 2019 to April 1, 2020 and to advertise said policy in the *Southern Tier Shopper*. **ADOPTED:** Councilman Gary Rice, aye; Councilman Robert Palmer, aye; Councilman Richard Stewart, aye; Councilman Lowell Smith, aye; Supervisor Donald Evia, aye.

Superintendent Pyer stated that he had received four applications from the want ads looking for a new MEO. He was going to begin interviews next week. He further related that he had been calling in the crew at 3:00 am, ½ hour earlier than normal to make up for being down a crew member.

Mr. Pyer reported that things were going well and there had been no breakdowns within recent weeks. He also was planning on starting gravel crushing in the next couple of weeks.

At this time, Supervisor Evia commenced to present reports for review.

There was no Planning Board report, there had been no meeting.

There was no Assessor's report.

Bob Cleeves presented the Fire Department's report. He also informed the Board that the Pumper was headed up to Rochester for repair or perhaps an autopsy.

Supervisor Evia presented the Supervisor's report.

Building Inspector's report was reviewed. Supervisor Evia reported that he had received a resume from a qualified applicant for the soon to be vacant post of Building Inspector.

The Justice Report was reviewed.

Town Clerk David Price reported that the Clerk's office received payments from sales of dog licenses and building permits in the amount of \$290.00. He further reported that he had

dispersed funds via two checks, one made payable to Supervisor Donald F. Evia, Supervisor in the amount of \$252.00 and the other made payable to NYS Animal Population Control Program in the amount of \$38.00.

Animal Control Report was reviewed.

At this time, the review of the Highway, General, and Lighting District vouchers commenced.

The following bills were presented for audit:

Highway (Abstract #178-198)	\$	33,191.27
General (Abstract #215 - 231)	\$	3,880.09
Street Lighting (Abstract #214)	\$	269.75

A motion was made by Councilman Rice and seconded by Councilman Smith to pay these bills. Carried, Rice Aye; Smith, Aye; Stewart, Aye; Palmer, Aye; Evia, Aye.

Superintendent Pyer mentioned that the McAdam Road Bridge had been yellow flagged by the County and the steel headwalls had been replaced.

At 8:43 p.m. a motion was made by Lowell Smith and seconded by Bob Palmer to adjourn the meeting. Carried: Smith, aye; Palmer, aye; Stewart, aye; Rice, aye; Evia, aye.

David Price
Town Clerk