

OXFORD TOWN BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, January 14, 2015
Town & Village Hall

The Re-organizational Meeting of the Oxford Town Board was called to order by Supervisor Lawrence Wilcox at 7:30 pm at the Village Hall for the transaction of such business that may lawfully come before the Board. The meeting opened with the salute to the flag of the United States of America.

Present were:

Supervisor: Lawrence Wilcox
Council: Jerry Locke
 Alan Davis
 Ron Charles
 John Hofmann

Town Clerk: James W. Hemstrought Jr.
Highway Superintendent: Timothy Tefft

Absent:

Others Present: Edward Downey, Attorney and eight residents as per sign-in sheet.

Minutes Previous Monthly Meeting:

Jerry Locke made a motion to approve the minutes of December 10, 2014. Motion was seconded by John Hofmann and carried with 5 Ayes.

Supervisor's Monthly Report:

Supervisor Wilcox handed out the Financial Accounting Information Sheets, Investment and Certificate of Deposit Reports, as of December 30, 2014. He also gave the following Revenues, Appropriations and Checkbook Balances:

December 2014

Revenues	\$ 32,811.95
Appropriations	116,771.31

Check Book Balances:

General	\$ 10,035.36
Highway	20,288.37
T&A	11,317.28
Water District #1	1,331.94
Cemetery Restoration	2,885.40

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The following residents read letters concerning the Town Zoning Ordinance and the recent announcement by Governor Cuomo: John Knapp, Stacie Edick, and Mina Takahashi. A short synopsis of each letter follows. All letters are on file in the Town Clerk's office and available during regular office hours.

John Knapp

On December 17, 2014, acting DOH Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker recommended that high-volume hydraulic fracturing should not move forward in New York State. DEC Commissioner Joe Martens said "DEC's own review identified dozens of potential significant adverse impacts of HVHF."

This board has stated that they would move forward based on the decisions of our State Leaders. They have spoken. The science is in. Fracking and the collateral damage it inflicts, is not wanted in New York State.

In light of these new developments, the proposed zoning changes for this town need to be re-written. There should be no drilling in *any* part of our town. The allowing of Material Staging Areas, which are an integral part of the fracking infrastructure, should be stricken from the changes.

Stacie Edick

In addition to banning HVHF hydrofracking in Oxford in light of Governor Cuomo's December 17 announcements, I feel that the Town Board must also ban material staging areas, brine spreading and both liquid and solid waste disposal related to hydrofracking. If possible, the Town Board should create substantial fines for anyone caught doing these activities illegally.

Pennsylvania is very close to our Town and gas companies and waste haulers could be looking for options in nearby New York State. We must not become a dumping ground for the industry that is endangering our neighbors in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Mina Takahashi

We now have the long-awaited decision from Albany. Their decision was based mainly on the fact that studies to date have shown severe health impacts from gas drilling in places where it is occurring. I highly urge this town board to be consistent with the state's findings and not just remove but to prohibit gas drilling everywhere in our town, in all districts, not just the residential districts, but also in the commercial and agricultural districts.

In addition, I would also like to follow up on my request at last month's town board meeting that the Oxford Town Board obtain a legal opinion in writing from our town attorney regarding the legality and enforceability of the town zoning ordinance with regard to material staging areas as a permitted use by special exception. Even though there is a statewide ban on high-volume hydraulic fracturing, we must still protect our town from collateral damage associated with gas drilling elsewhere.

REPORTS:

Stefan Foster gave a report on "Little Merritt's Tomb & the Beardsley Cemetery" covering work on this project from 2013 to present. In 2013 the tomb was cleaned by One Stone at a Time, a gravestone conservation service. Brush and limbs were removed from the cemetery and a new window was installed in the tomb by Norwich Glass company. In 2014/2015 further cleaning and landscape work was accomplished. Stones throughout the cemetery were found underground, dug up and placed back in the spots where they will be reset and put back standing up.

Stefan finished writing his book, "Pining for the Past: Little Merritt's Tomb and the Beardsley Cemetery". To date he has sold approximately 400 books. After printing costs he has a profit of a little over \$3,000 to work with to clean stones, etc. So far, he has cleaned six stones in the cemetery and Kurt Riegel, "One Stone at a Time", has reset three stones that had fallen over, free of charge.

Stefan presented his future objectives and the items he would like the Town of Oxford to consider helping him with. His full report is on file in the Town Clerk's office and available during regular business hours.

Town Supervisor Annual Reports:

Supervisor Wilcox presented his annual reports for the year 2014 including after year-end budget changes. Motion was made by Alan Davis and seconded by Jerry Locke to adopt the budget changes as presented. Motion was made by Alan Davis and seconded by Ron Charles to approve the Supervisor's annual report. Both motions carried with 5 Ayes. The reports will be on file in the Town Clerk's Office during regular office hours.

Town Clerk / Tax Collector Annual Reports:

Town Clerk James W. Hemstrought Jr. presented the Town Clerk's and Tax Collector's reports for the year 2014. Motion was made by John Hofmann and seconded by Alan Davis to approve the Town Clerk's reports for the year 2014. Motion was carried with 5 Ayes. These reports will be on file in the Town Clerk's Office during regular office hours.

Town Supervisor 2015 Appointments:

Supervisor Wilcox went over the list of 2015 appointments and other re-organizational items necessary for approval by the Board. Motion was made by Alan Davis and seconded by Ron Charles to approve the Supervisor's appointments for 2015 and all other re-organizational items as presented.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The December 2014 collateralized deposit account information report was received from BNY Mellon.

A list of unpaid taxes was received and it was noted that Oxford had the most unpaid taxes of all the towns in Chenango County.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

Supervisor Wilcox called on board member Jerry Locke to make a special presentation to Stefan Foster on behalf of the Town of Oxford for his work on restoration of "Little Merritt's Tomb & the Beardsley Cemetery". The wording on the certificate reads as follows:

Certificate of Sincere Appreciation
STEFAN FOSTER
In recognition of his efforts to preserve history,
share Merritt's story
and restore the Beardsley Cemetery
for the education of all.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Vicky House, Town Historian, said that there is a lot of interest in preserving the property at 8 So. Washington Street in the Village of Oxford. This building was built in 1838 and further restored in 1870. She stated that there is information on her website blog about the project and interest has been expressed by the television program “This Old House” to help with the restoration.

Supervisor Wilcox called on Jerry Locke to report on the meeting with Attorney Ed Downey concerning the environmental assessment forms. He said that he and Ron Charles met with Mr. Downey and went over the new form to be presented to the Town Board.

Edward Downey, Town Attorney, gave an overview of the new Short Environmental Assessment Form which he filled out on behalf of the Town Board. He stated that the Oxford Town Board will serve as the Lead Agency for the Zoning Ordinance changes to Town Law #1-2007. The following Resolution was then presented:

**SEQR RESOLUTION – NEGATIVE DECLARATION
TOWN OF OXFORD ZONING ORDINANCE
CHANGES TOWN LAW #1-2007**

At a meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Oxford held on the 14th day of January, 2015 at the Village Hall in said Town, Councilman Jerry Locke moved adoption of the following resolution; Councilman John Hofmann seconded the motion:

WHEREAS,

1. In accordance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review regulations (SEQR), the Town Board of the Town of Oxford hereby declares its intent to serve as Lead Agency in regards to adopting certain changes in the existing zoning ordinances.
2. The Oxford Town Board has determined that the proposed action is a Type 1 action as defined under SEQR.
3. The Oxford Town Board, in its capacity of Lead Agency, has caused to be prepared an environmental assessment of the significance of and potential environmental impact of the proposed zoning law changes. Further, the Board did previously assign to committee to conduct an environmental review and report to the Board as a whole on said findings. The Board as a whole has heard and considered the report and findings of the committee. The Town Board hereby adopts the findings of the committee.
4. The Oxford Town Board has previously held a public hearing and has considered these comments in coming to its decision for this action, including any comments and findings received from the Oxford Planning Board dated September 16, 2014.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,

The Oxford Town Board declares that it will serve as Lead Agency for the Zoning Ordinance Changes Town Law #1-2007; and

The Oxford Town Board declares that, based on the Environmental Record which has been prepared, the zoning law changes will result in no major impacts and, therefore, will not cause significant damage to the environment. A Negative Declaration under SEQR is therefore issued for this change in the zoning law.

Motion was carried by roll call vote as follows:

Alan Davis	Aye
John Hofmann	Aye
Jerry Locke	Aye
Ron Charles	Aye
Lawrence Wilcox	Aye

Motion was made by Ron Charles and seconded by Jerry Locke to adopt the new Short Environmental Assessment Form. Motion carried with 5 Ayes.

Motion was made by Alan Davis and seconded by John Hofmann to schedule a Public Hearing for February 11, 2015 on the new “Special Exception” portion of the Zoning Ordinance changes to Town Law #1-2007. Motion carried with 5 Ayes.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:

Highway Superintendent Tim Tefft reported that they are keeping up with mother nature and watching the sand inventory. The sand supply should be okay for this year. Several road water problems have been corrected and all the equipment is in good working condition.

BILLS & CLAIMS: January 2015

Claims #1 thru #20 General Fund: Total: \$ 5,997.71

Claims #1 thru #13 Highway Fund: Total: \$35,274.15

Motion was made by Alan Davis and seconded by Jerry Locke to pay the bills and claims.

Motion carried with 5 Ayes.

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The next Town Board meeting will be held on February 11, 2015 at 7:30 pm in the Village Hall.

Meeting was adjourned by Supervisor Wilcox at 8:40 pm.

James W. Hemstrought Jr.

Town Clerk