

OXFORD TOWN BOARD MEETING **Wednesday, March 11, 2015**

The Monthly Meeting of the Oxford Town Board was called to order by Supervisor Lawrence Wilcox at 7:30 pm in 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

Others Present: Edward Downey, Attorney; Vicky House, Town Historian; and twenty residents of Oxford per sign-in sheet.

Minutes Previous Monthly Meeting:

Alan Davis made a motion to approve the minutes of February 11, 2014. Motion was seconded by Ron Charles 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 February 28, 2015. He also gave the following Revenues, Appropriations and Checkbook Balances:

February 2015

Revenues	\$452,656.29
Appropriations	53,658.04

Check Book Balances:

General	\$319,753.27
Highway	359,681.70
T&A	3,284.97
Water District #1	6,831.94
Cemetery Restoration	3,144.80

Local Law #1-2015 – Zoning Ordinance

Supervisor Wilcox called on Attorney Edward Downey to answer questions from the Town Board and the public concerning the revised Zoning Ordinance. Attorney Downey stated that all questions are to be made to the Town Board before he will give his answer. Attorney Downey also stated that the proper form was used for the SEQR Resolution, that the short environmental assessment form was okay to use for this type of ordinance and the Chenango County Planning Board has given their approval.

Town Board member Ron Charles and several residents asked questions which were answered by Attorney Downey. He said that the Town Board could adopt the Zoning Ordinance as revised or vote to remove certain items and vote on the remaining portions of the Ordinance.

Supervisor Wilcox asked the Board Members what they would like to do and the concensus was to vote on the Zoning Ordinance as revised.

Motion was made by Jerry Locke and seconded by John Hofmann to adopt the entire Zoning Ordinance Local Law #1-2015 as presented at the Public Hearing on February 11, 2015. Supervisor then called for public comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Paul Brennan, Mina Takahashi and Trellan Smith read and submitted letters concerning compulsory integration, municipal home rule, material staging areas and government transparency. These letters are on file in the Town Clerk's office and available during regular office hours.

Supervisor Wilcox called for a Roll Call Vote on the motion to adopt Local Law #1-2015 – Zoning Ordinance.

Allan Davis	Aye
John Hofmann	Aye
Jerry Locke	Aye
Ron Charles	No
Lawrence Wilcox	Aye

Supervisor Wilcox proclaimed Local Law #1-2015 duly adopted.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The February 2015 collateralized deposit account information report was received from BNY Mellon.

Information was received from the Chenango County Tax Office which showed that thirteen (13) parcels in Oxford are on list of unpaid taxes.

A letter was received from Stefan Foster giving a short history of “Little Merrit's Tomb” and asking for support of his next project goal which is to purchase a New York State Historic Roadside Marker. He is also asking community organizations to get involved. The Town Board gave \$1,000 to start this project which was to be paid back to the town as funds became available to do so. The Town Council agreed that Stefan should keep the \$1,000 and put it toward the sign project.

HISTORIAN'S REPORT:

Vicky House, Town Historian, gave a report, her first since becoming historian four and a half years ago.

RESEARCH AND WRITING – Since March 2013, I researched and wrote an article each week for The Oxford Review-Times which includes at times, The Whitney Point Reporter and Chenango American. In addition, I did a short series of articles for the Dryden News in preparation for their Civil War event which did relate to Oxford soldiers.

TEACHING AND PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS – I researched, compiled, printed and prepared several storyboards and power-point presentations on: “The Post Office During the Civil War”, “Covered Bridges and Their Role in the Civil War”. This presentation was done for the Theodore Burr Covered Bridge Resource Center and included Civil War letters by local soldiers. Also “Women in the Civil War”, “Christmas Ornaments Through the Ages and “A Walk Around the Park”.

At the 2013 APHNYC Conference, I made two presentations on work I researched and both were well received. This was the first time the conference representatives requested two presentations from one individual. I researched, compiled and prepared a workshop on:

“How To Do Research On The Internet” – I have had great success in finding information that others cannot so I developed this workshop to help others. I taught this workshop in Otsego County to their historical society and in Greene in 2014 to historical society members and other historians.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION – I am scanning photos, slides, negatives and film storing it all on an external hard-drive. This process is being done in accordance to the NYSED guidelines. Currently, the computer used for this work is no longer compatible due to the outdated operating system and will need to be replaced. To help me understand what is required and how to properly handle these records, I have taken several workshops offered by the NYSED and attend Regional Meetings for APHNYC whenever possible. I currently have memberships in APHNYC (Association of Public Historians of New York State), NYSHA (New York State Historical Association) and Partners in Trust. Locally, I belong to the Greene, Guilford, Smithville, and Colesville Historical Societies and the Chenango County Civil War Commemoration Project Committee.

Charlotte worked hard on all her records for many years. It was her request that I preserve it, expand on it and share it. Even though the last two items are not on the NYSED guidelines, they are Charlotte's guidelines. I am just fulfilling her wishes.

EXPANDING – Through the use of the internet, I have been able to add images and documents to the history of Oxford. I have contacted several Local History and Document Repositories to obtain copies of documents in their files. Cornell University, Gilder-Lehrman Institute, NARA (National Archives and Records Administration offices), Seth Kaller, Inc. Historic Documents and Legacy Collections, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, New York State Archives, Rutgers University Library and Library of Virginia Archives are some of the many places I work with in getting these records. There is a cost involved which I have covered to this point. In addition, I have traveled to the New York State Library and Archives in Albany, NARA, Cornell University and our own county offices to obtain additional records. I do and will continue to accept offers of donations of any historical material related to Oxford from individuals inside and outside Chenango County. I go to auctions, antique shops, shop online, flea markets and even garage sales to find items of interest to Oxford and I do find them.

SHARING – I share images and documents with those to whom the records pertain. In return, I work closely with a number of historians and historical societies and they share what they may have. Keep in mind, that Oxford people traveled around and may have lived in other counties so many requests will come from outside the county as well.

During the past year, I have received 373 emails requesting information of an historical nature. Most of these requests are for searches of someone's ancestors and others of an historical request. The use of the internet has increased the demand and I still receive (snail mail) for a total of 76 letters for the same purpose. Snail mail requests are not as many as when Charlotte was historian. The internet has helped with that, but I do receive mailed requests on a regular basis. I do receive requests from newspapers, authors, real estate agents, other historians, historical societies for information on individuals and the Department of Transportation for information on possible historic sites. Last year, I received approximately 277 calls for family history requests. I usually ask that they put the information in writing, but do take down names and dates just to get started. Again, the back and forth answers will mean more than just one letter. If someone is trying to get into a society, (SAR, DAR, Mayflower Society, etc.), I have to provide notarized copies for them which I can obtain from NBT Bank or the village clerk. I research, compile, print and assemble the calendar each year and make it available to purchase. This money will help pay for the out-of-pocket expenses and I enjoy the research which gives me another opportunity to learn the history.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Tim Tefft, Highway Superintendent, said that the highway crew has been repairing and cleaning equipment and getting the truck brooms ready for road cleaning. He also stated that there should be enough sand stockpiled to get through the remainder of this winter season.

BILLS & CLAIMS: March 2015

Claims #34 thru #51, General Fund: Total: \$176,226.68
Claims #26 thru #38, Highway Fund: Total: \$ 27,402.22

Motion was made by Alan Davis and seconded by John Hofmann to pay the bills and claims.
Motion carried with 5 Ayes.

The next monthly meeting of the Town Board will be held on April 8, 2015 at 7:30 pm in the Village Hall.

Meeting was adjourned by Supervisor at 9:10 pm.

James W. Hemstrought Jr.
Town Clerk