

**TOWN OF COLUMBIA
TOWN BOARD MEETING
April 11, 2024**

The Town of Columbia Town Board held an Organizational meeting **April 11, 2024**, 6:30 P.M. at the town building

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nathan Seamon — Supervisor
Ryan Fagan — Councilperson
Bruce Learned — Councilperson
H. Ed Reed — Councilperson
Jim Cotton — Councilperson

OTHERS PRESENT: Therese Winchester — Town Clerk
R. Mark Buddle — Superintendent of Highways
10 Community Members

Supervisor Seamon called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M., which was followed with the Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer

Approval of March 14, 2024 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Councilperson Fagan, seconded by Councilperson Learned, to adopt the following resolution:

ADOPTED VOTE: Ayes 5 Seamon, Fagan, Learned, Reed, Cotton
Nays 0
Absent 0

Supervisor Monthly Reports – Financial statements were presented.

Town Clerk Monthly Reports – Refund of a building permit. 21 Dog Licenses have been processed.

Check #1683 to Agriculture & Markets for dog licenses. Check # 1684 Town of Columbia, for balance of the account.

Other Reports (as necessary)

Highway Department - Still looking for NYS budget to determine our road work. Still need to have money in our local budget for resealing. In 2021 with \$50,000 did approximately 5.5 miles, now that will only do 3.5 miles.

Trash Day May 4, 2024, Herkimer Waste Authority is taking paint, chemical, antifreeze, and motor oil is available for any Herkimer, Oneida County resident from April 1 – September 30. Year around they accept electronics, waist garbage and tires. March 25 there will be a shredder at the facility.

New loader will be here the end of the month

Working on the trailer in the yard.

Road cleanup has just started. Sweeping of the roads have begun.

Town Clerk – Drop box is been put up. Foot traffic has picked up. The town clerk doesn't do hunting licenses.

Codes Enforcement – Rt 28 property is being worked on. Building permit of a pole barn.

Tax Collector - The Town of Columbia has a total of 1,102 parcels of land. The Tax Collector is assigned to collect taxes on 1,062 parcels. (The remaining parcels are "Corporate" parcels paid by entities like NYSEG, Windstream, etc.)

**TOWN OF COLUMBIA
TOWN BOARD MEETING
April 11, 2024**

From January 2, 2024 to April 1, 2024, I collected taxes on 900 parcels.

Paid the Town of Columbia \$526,365.01 on February 5, 2024

Paid Herkimer County \$357,219.74 and \$5.60 (half the interest earned on the checking account from January 1 to March 31, 2024)

Uncollected tax total was \$182,050.41. (Plus, State and Wild Forest tax of \$180.60)

I made 27 deposits in January, 15 in February, 6 in March, and 2 in April. (according to NBT Bank transactions) During my collections I tracked payments manually in a notebook and in an Excel spreadsheet.

Also, payments were noted in both of the “blue books” (One blue book is for the Town of Columbia records, and one if for Herkimer County.)

Planning Board - No report

Dog Control – No report

Privilege of the Floor - No items

Correspondence: Survey for Herkimer and Oneida County was distributed. Email from a town resident, FOIL request in regard to the who the towns liability insurance is through.

Consideration of Unfinished Business and New Business

Bank of Cooperstown Accounts

Town of Columbia Resolution #2024–10 presented by Council Member Cotton, seconded by Council Member Reed . RESOLUTION TO TRANSFER MONIES OUT OF THE BANK OF COOPERSTOWN

ACCOUNTS AND CLOSURE OF BANK OF COOPERSTOWN ACCOUNTS

WHEREAS, the Town of Columbia intends to transfer its monies from the existing Bank of Cooperstown accounts (General Fund, Highway Fund, and Petrie Brown Hall Certificate of Deposit) to NBT Bank; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Columbia intends to transfer monies from NBT Bank to each account’s respective NYCLASS account (General Fund, Highway Fund and Petrie Brown Hall);

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Columbia directs Town Supervisor Nathan Seamon to make these transfers of monies and to close the Bank of Cooperstown accounts;

AND THEREFORE, the Town Clerk is hereby directed to enter this resolution in the minutes of this meeting.

By the order of the Town Council of the Town of Columbia, New York.

A motion was made by Councilperson Cotton seconded by Councilperson Reed, to adopt the following resolution:

ADOPTED VOTE: Ayes 4 Seamon, Fagan, Reed, Cotton
 Nays 1 Learned
 Absent 0

Solar Energy Facilities Local Law

Town of Columbia Resolution #2024–11 presented by Council Member Reed, seconded by Council Member Fagan .

**TOWN OF COLUMBIA
TOWN BOARD MEETING
April 11, 2024**

**RESOLUTION INTRODUCING LOCAL LAW NO. 1 OF 2024 THE COLUMBIA SOLAR ENERGY FACILITIES
LAW, COMMENCING SEQRA REVIEW, AND REFERRING THE DRAFT LAW TO THE TOWN PLANNING
BOARD FOR REVIEW**

WHEREAS, the Town of Columbia (the “Town”) recognizes the use of solar energy as a renewable energy resource; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Columbia wishes to ensure any use of the Town’s solar energy resource is considered for approval in a manner compatible with the Town’s most current Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Law, and the survey results from the 2023 Town of Columbia Survey – Columbia Solar Project; and

WHEREAS, on April 13, 2023, the Town of Columbia enacted a moratorium to temporarily pause consideration, approval, and construction of certain renewable energy systems pending review of, and consideration of changes to, the existing Solar Energy Facilities Local Law, Local Law 1 of 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Columbia created an informal working group to review the existing Solar Energy Facilities Law, and the working group produced a new draft law with suggested revisions and changes to the existing Solar Energy Facilities Law; and

WHEREAS, the working group, in reviewing the current Solar Energy Facility Local Law, conducted research and developed a list of findings, which are attached to this resolution and incorporated herein by reference; and

WHEREAS, the draft local laws has been reviewed by special counsel, who has determined the draft law, Local Law No. 1 of 2024, The Columbia Solar Energy Facilities Law, is in a sufficient form to be formally introduced to the Town Board of the Town of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, the State Environmental Quality Review Act (“SEQRA”) requires that an agency conducting any action, which may have a significant effect on the environment, must ensure that the action is reviewed for potential environmental impacts; and

WHEREAS, adoption of the Proposed Solar Law would involve a change in allowable uses within at least one zoning district affecting 25 or more acres of the district; and

WHEREAS, Section 808 of Local Law 1 of 2015, the Town of Columbia Zoning Law, requires all proposed amendments to the provisions of the 2015 Town of Columbia Zoning Law be referred to the Planning Board for recommendation, prior to any public hearing or final consideration by the Town Board;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Columbia, New York, hereby introduces Local Law 1 of 2024, titled “Columbia Solar Energy Facilities Local Law”, and a copy of the introduced law is attached to this Resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Columbia hereby finds that the adoption of Local Law No. 1 of 2024 would qualify as a Type I action under SEQRA because it would involve a change in allowable uses within any zoning district affecting 25 or more acres of the district, under 6 NYCRR 617.4(b)(2); and

**TOWN OF COLUMBIA
TOWN BOARD MEETING
April 11, 2024**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Town Board of the Town of Columbia will continue its SEQRA review of the proposed solar law by preparing a Full Environmental Assessment Form for consideration at a Town Board meeting to be held in May or June 2024; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Town Board of the Town of Columbia will review any relevant submissions and comments related to the proposed Solar Law in order to make a determination of environmental significance under SEQRA, including any comments that may be provided by the Town Planning Board; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town hereby refers the draft of Local Law No 1 of 2024 to the Town Planning Board, along with a copy of this Resolution and incorporated Findings of the Town of Columbia Solar Energy Facilities Law Working Group; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Planning Board will review the draft of Local Law No 1 of 2024 and findings, and provide the Planning Board’s findings and recommendations, if any, to the Town Board prior to the regular Board Meeting scheduled in May 2024.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a public hearing on the proposed Local Law, and referral of the law to the County Planning Board and adjacent municipalities, shall occur at a time and date to be set after receipt of the Planning Board’s findings and recommendations, if any;

AND THEREFORE, the Town Clerk is hereby directed to enter this resolution in the minutes of this meeting.

The question of the foregoing resolution was duly put to a vote as follows:

A motion was made by Councilperson Cotton seconded by Councilperson Reed, to adopt the following resolution:

ADOPTED VOTE: Ayes 5 Seamon, Fagan, Reed, Learned, Cotton
 Nays 0
 Absent 0

Notice and publication of NYS Law Section 120 Protection of deer (Ag & Markets)

This will be published in the West Windfield Star, web site on policy section, and Facebook page. Stating that the Town of Columbia will be following the NYS Law section 120 Protection of Deer.

A motion was made by Councilperson Fagan seconded by Councilperson Cotton, to adopt the following resolution:

ADOPTED VOTE: Ayes 5 Seamon, Fagan, Reed, Learned, Cotton
 Nays 0
 Absent 0

Board Discussion

HR One Payroll Services – New payroll company, first payroll was successful. Vacation and Sick time will be in the next pay stub.

Annual Financial Report (AFR) Certified – completed the annual financial report was filed.

New York State Highway Law Section 284 – outline of the road construction, improvement plan between now and the end of the year.

**TOWN OF COLUMBIA
TOWN BOARD MEETING
April 11, 2024**

Vehicle Speed Concerns - Complaints about high speed that vehicles travel on the town and county roads. Goal is to have speed test run and speed limits posted. It needs to come in writing to the board, if passed then is forwarded to the county, then state.

Proposed Upcoming Meeting Dates – Tuesday, May 2th and Monday, June 6th

Audit, Approval of Bills and Transfers

A motion was made to pay the warrant by Councilperson Reed seconded by Councilperson Cotton:

ADOPTED VOTE: Ayes 5 Seamon, Fagan, Reed, Learned, Cotton
 Nays 0
 Absent 0

The next Town Board meeting will occur May 2,2024 at 6:30 P.M.

A motion was made by Council Member Fagan, seconded by Council Member Reed, to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Supervisor

Town Clerk

Council Member

Council Member

Council Member

Council Member