

June 12, 2024

The regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Colchester, Delaware County, New York was held on Wednesday June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

|                      |                     |              |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Present:             | Arthur M. Merrill   | Supervisor   |
|                      | Janet L. Champlin   | Councilwoman |
|                      | Gregory L. Lavorgna | Councilman   |
|                      | Julie A. Markert    | Councilwoman |
|                      | Daniel J. Pinner    | Councilman   |
| Recording Secretary: | Allison R. Gill     | Town Clerk   |

Others present: Robert Hafele, Alan Donner, Larry Bordoff, Ray Bivens, Ron Duprey, Larry Guglielmo, Michael Frisbee, Dennis Bennett, Jeannie Langdon, Don Reynolds, Bob Kurdt, Kendall Acevedo, Officer Cawley, & Elizabeth DeFalco (the Reporter).

The Meeting was called to order at 5:01pm by Supervisor Art Merrill , and he led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 meeting had been distributed earlier, Janet Champlin made the motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Julie Markert, all in favor, motion carried.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUEST:

Ron Duprey spoke on behalf of the Town of Colchester Veterans, requesting the town to grant a tax exemption known as the “Alternate Veterans Exemption”, Real Property Law section 458a. Colchester and Delhi are the only towns in Delaware County which have not granted this exemption to their eligible Veterans. The exemption provides a primary residence, property tax exemption of 15% of assessed value to veterans who served during war time, and an additional 10, to those who served in a war zone. Veterans with service related disabilities, receive an additional percentage based on ½ their disability percentage. This exemption is applicable to General Municipal taxes only and does not apply to school taxes. The Veteran’s presented a petition on behalf of this. 127 signatures in support of this.

The Board responded in total support of this Tax Exemption, however, there are many questions that need answering that no one had the knowledge on. Supervisor Merrill recommended that we set up a meeting at a Board Meeting or at the Legion meeting to have Joe Gifford, the town assessor, attend the meeting, to discuss this and go over what is the right way to proceed for everyone. Supervisor Merrill and Allison Gill will contact Joe Gifford and try to set something up for all. The Board reassured the Veterans of their support in this matter, and the Veterans were thankful.

Jeanie Langdon and Kendall Acevedo presented to the Board an update on the projects that their Class is doing in the Town. They have and will continue to work with Kay Parisi and MaryAnn Greenfield on the cleaning of the headstones in our cemeteries.

They presented a sketch drawing of what they want the Eagle to look like for the entrance of the Covered Bridge. It was pointed out to them that they do need to get permission from the County DPW first before they can do anything around the bridge. Highway Superintendent Ken Eck was not sure what part of the road the County actually owns. Either Superintended Eck or Councilman Dan Pinner will check with the county for this answer. They also stated that they were going to go through the town and paint all the fire hydrants purple and white. Supervisor Merrill suggested that they get in touch with the Fire Department to check on any paint specifications for the hydrants.

Don Reynolds spoke on behalf of the water drainage issue from Paige cemetery to his property. Supervisor Merrill reassured Don that he had just received a letter that day from the state in regards

the plans of fixing this runoff issue. Don questioned our insurance policy and if allowing the trucks on his property, was he ever liable for anything if an issue occurred. Supervisor Merrill will check in to this but is sure there is no liability on Dons part.

#### CORRESPONDENCE:

AG & Markets- DCO Inspection Report completed 5/22/2024—Satisfactory  
Coalition of Watershed Towns 2024 Executive Committee Election Results  
Heart of the Catskills DCO contract for the year 2024.

Teamsters Union sent an email stating the contracts for our Town Highway Department is up and they will set up meetings to start negotiations.

#### REPORTS: written reports on file at Town Clerk's office

Cooks Falls Court - May 2024 - \$43,147.00 disbursed to Supervisor.  
Downsville Court – May 2024 - \$6,718.00 disbursed to Supervisor.  
Downsville Water District- May 2024, \$1,615.85 disbursed to Supervisor  
Cooks Falls Water District- May 2024, \$610.03 disbursed to Supervisor  
Town Clerk- May 2024, \$3057.72 disbursed to Supervisor  
Tax Collector - Total Deposit Amount \$6,674,489.94  
Colchester Police- May 2024 Report

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

DWD- Downsville Water System Improvement Project DWSRF #17537: Meters & Installation No change

Public Safety Building- Court side almost completed. Finish work has been delayed as the carpenters were working in the Library. It was asked if the Town would hold an Open House once the building is complete. Board discussed and agree to plan this.. Julie Markert did suggest that all Police Officers be in attendance to meet the community.

NYCDEP hookup to DWD: Set up the account with Pat Obrien , We received the bill for the engineer, but will not pay until funds are put in the account.

Park Paddle Project – Work on this will be starting again, weather permitting

Town of Colchester Comprehensive Plan Update Grant- Need to set up a committee.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### **NO. 45-2024 06/12/24 Heart of Catskills Contract with Town of Colchester**

Janet Champlin made the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board of the Town of Colchester hereby authorize Supervisor Arthur M. Merrill to sign the agreement between the Town of Colchester, NY and The Humane Society of Central Delaware County, INC. (d/b/a Heart of the Catskills Humane Society) (HCHS), in Delhi, NY.

Resolution was seconded by Greg Lavorgna, all in favor, resolution declared adopted.

##### **NO.46-2024 06/12/24 Form a SMART GROWTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE**

Greg Lavorgna made the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Town has resolved to accept the NYS DEC 2024 Adirondack Park and Catskill Park Community Smart Growth Grant.

WHEREAS, The Town will utilize this grant to review and update its Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Town hereby establishes a committee of not more than 11 members, drawn from Town Departments and residents, as well as advisory members from Delaware County divisions; and

WHEREAS, the Town will put forth candidates for the committee and will solicit volunteers from town residents; and

WHEREAS, once formed, the committee will elect a chairperson, vice chairperson and secretary; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Board of the Town of Colchester to approve the formation of a Town of Colchester Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan Committee consisting of:

One (1) Town Supervisor

One (1) Town Council Member

One (1) Town Planning Department Member

One (1) Town Code Enforcement/Floodplain Management

One (1) Colchester Historical Society Member

One (1) Colchester Chamber of Commerce Member

One (1) Delaware County Planning Commission Member

One (1) Colchester Town Clerk

Three (3) Community Residents

The Term of this committee will be until all the grant deliverables have been met and the final Comprehensive Plan is published and distributed.

Resolution was seconded by Julie Markert, all in favor, resolution declared adopted.

**NO. 47-2024 06/12/24 Town Planning Advisory Service Program Contract**

Janet Champlin made the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board of the Town of Colchester hereby authorize Supervisor Arthur M. Merrill to sign the Town Planning Advisory Service Program Contract with the Delaware County Planning Board.

Resolution was seconded by Greg Lavorgna, all in favor, resolution declared adopted.

**NO. 48-2024 06/12/24 Level Up Tech Support Contract**

Janet Champlin made the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board of the Town of Colchester hereby authorize Supervisor Arthur M. Merrill to sign the Level UP Tech Support contract. This is 20 hours of tech support for \$1500.00

Resolution was seconded by Greg Lavorgna, all in favor, resolution declared adopted.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

An application was presented for a Head Life Guard/ Pool Director's assistant.

**NO. 49-2024 05/15/24 Appoint 2024 Pool Personnel Head Life Guard**

Janet Champlin made the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Colchester hereby hires Daemon Reed for the Head Life Guard position and assistant to the Pool Director. Daemon Reed will be at a rate of \$19.00 per hour.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board of the Town of Colchester hereby approves the hiring of this Head Life Guard.

Resolution seconded by Greg Lavorgna, all in favor, resolution declared adopted.

**GENERAL DISCUSSIONS:**

Highway Superintendent Ken Eck presented the Board with 3 estimates for a new road mower as their current one has broken. It is for a CS158M Flail Mower 62" Centurion Super Hammers. The estimates were

White's Farm Supply - \$7358.00

Eklunds Farm Machinery-\$9400.00

Westfield Ag and Turf- \$11,223.00

Board reviewed the estimates.

**NO. 50-24 06/12/2024 Purchase of 62” Flail Mower Centurion Super Hammers**

Janet Champlin made the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the board has decided that purchase of the roadside mower,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Colchester hereby authorizes the purchase of one CS158M Flail Mower 62” Centurion Super Hammers mower from White’s Farm Supply. The purchase price is \$7,358.00.

Resolution seconded by Greg Lavorgna. This resolution was put to a vote by roll call and resulted as follows:

Town Supervisor, Arthur M. Merrill -voting aye Councilperson, Janet Champlin -voting aye  
Councilperson, Julie A. Markert -voting aye Councilperson, Greg L. Lavorgna -voting aye

Councilperson, Daniel J. Pinner -voting aye

Resolution declared adopted.

Supervisor Merrill asked Superintendent Eck about a Dead End sign on Little Spring Brook Road. Superintendent Eck said he did not believe there was a sign there and that he would install one.

**PERSONNEL:**

Scott Obrien and his assistant have requested a \$5.00 raise for their work in the library and forthcoming. Supervisor Merrill had requested that the \$5.00 raise be effective as of the last Board meeting which was May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Board discussed. A vote was taken.

**NO. 51-2024 06/12/24 Pay Increase Scott Obrien and assistant**

Greg Lavorgna made the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Colchester hereby reviews Scott Obrien’s payrate as \$25.00 per hour and his assistants at \$20.00 per hour starting on May 16, 2024. Resolution seconded by Dan Pinner. This resolution was put to a vote by roll call and resulted as follows:

Town Supervisor, Arthur M. Merrill voting aye

Janet L. Champlin, Councilwoman, voting nay

Gregory L. Lavorgna, Councilman, voting aye

Daniel J. Pinner, Councilman, voting nay

Julie Markert, Councilwoman, voting nay

**NO. 52-2024 06/12/24 Pay Increase Scott Obrien and assistant**

Greg Lavorgna made the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Colchester hereby agrees to Scott Obrien’s payrate as \$25.00 per hour and his assistants at \$20.00 per hour starting on June 13, 2024 and forthcoming.

Resolution seconded by Arthur Merrill. This resolution was put to a vote by roll call and resulted as follows:

Town Supervisor, Arthur M. Merrill voting aye

Janet L. Champlin, Councilwoman, voting aye

Gregory L. Lavorgna, Councilman, voting aye

Daniel J. Pinner, Councilman, voting aye

Julie Markert, Councilwoman, voting aye

Resolution declared adopted.

**NO. 53-2024 06/12/24 Accept Letter of Resignation**

Greg Lavorgna made the following resolution:

WHEREAS, D. Joe Gifford has handed in a letter of resignation as Town of Colchester, Sole Appointed Town Assessor, effective July 16, 2024;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board of the Town of Colchester hereby accepts letter of resignation from D. Joe Gifford with regret and best wishes in his retirement. Resolution was seconded by Janet Champlin,  
All in favor, aye. Resolution adopted.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Al Donnor of The Town of Colchester Planning Board, announced the passing of Planning Board member Joel Melton. Al Donnor advised the Town Board that Robert Hafele would be named a permanent Planning Board member going forward,

Officer Cawley has had complaints about the Town of Colchester, Downsville Court and the operating hours. Hours need to be established and someone should be present during these hours. A lot of complaints about traveling here and no one here to take payments etc. Board discussed this and will speak with the Court.

Officer Cawley has also received complaints about the Side by sides using State Route 30. A meeting with James Noviello and his club is requested to set up what roads can be used and what cannot be. What is acceptable and what is not.

The Board has asked Highway Superintendent Kenny Eck to please remove any of the ATV/UTV signs that were installed on any county or state road to be removed and put only on the town roads. This should eliminate some confusion going forward until the club has this all established a bit more.

Janet Champlin stated that the Catskill Hot Dog cart had requested a picnic table and has not received one yet. Supervisor Merrill will speak with the cemetery crew and see if they are able to bring one from the Park.

Janet Champlin also stated that on July 9, 2024, will be the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for Senior Meals program in Colchester. She extended an invitation to all board members to attend the lunch on that date at 12:30. The Board members congratulated Janet and thanked her for all her hard work and hours she has put in to making this such a successful program. Janet stated that over 15,000 meals have been served in total. On average, they serve a total of 62 meals weekly.

Next regular meeting is Wednesday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> , 2024

#### SUBMISSION OF BILL/EXPENSES:

Janet Champlin made the motion, seconded by Dan Pinner , that the vouchers be approved, subject to any corrections or deletions, and all bills paid, all in favor, aye, motion carried.

With no further business, Julie Markert made the motion for adjournment, seconded by Greg Lavorgna, all in favor, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:43pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Allison R. Gill, Town Clerk