

Notes from the January 2020 Meeting of the Hamilton, NY, Town Council (1.9.20)

The January meeting of the Hamilton Town Council began with Town Clerk Sue Reymers administering the oath of office to newly elected Town Council members Darrell Griff and Shari Taylor, and to newly re-elected Town Supervisor Eve Ann Shwartz. Supervisor Shwartz read resolutions in appreciation of the service provided by retiring Council members David Holcomb (five terms, 20 years) and Chris Rossi (two terms, eight years), which the Council unanimously approved.

The Council's January meeting traditionally incorporates the annual organizational meeting, which this year included one-year appointments of Historian Jack Loop; Dog Control Officer Gordon Baker; Code Enforcement Officer Mark Miller; Deputy Town Clerk/Collector/Registrar of Vital Statistics Elisa Robertson; Planning Board/Zoning Board Clerk and Secretary Elisa Robertson; and Part-Time Temporary Clerk Jill Benson. Costello, Cooney & Fearon was appointed to a one-year contract as Attorney for the Town.

New or renewed appointments to local boards include:

- *Planning Board* – Elaine Hughes to a new 5-year term; Travis DuBois to finish Darrell Griff's term; and Kathleen Palmer as alternate. Mike Welshko will serve as chair.
- *Zoning Board of Appeals* – Bill Nolan appointed to a new 5-year term, and Harmon Hoff reappointed as chair.

Supervisor Shwartz reappointed Peter Darby as Deputy Supervisor and Budget Officer. A complete list of the staffing of town committees can be found on the website:

www.townofhamiltonny.org/town-council-committees/

Highway Superintendent Luke Dowsland reported on repairs recently made to Preston Hill Road and Borden Road. New signage is being installed on Preston Hill Road as weather allows. Crews plowed and sanded 21 times since the December meeting, using 756 yards of sand and more than 17,000 gallons of brine. The crew has constructed its own machine to produce brine, which is reducing water costs. Members of the highway crew serviced and repaired the Town's vehicles at a saving of more than \$3,000. As time allows, the crews are assisting with the installation of electric and water service at the new Town Office, another cost saving.

Bookkeeper Brynley Wilcox provided an accounting of Town receipts and expenditures, including \$15,800 received from the county for plowing during November, and more than \$142,000 (maximum eligible) received from the New York State DOT for 2019.

Town Clerk Sue Reymers reported on fees collected for licensing and services during 2019 (\$33,311), up approximately eight percent over 2018. Clerk Reymers also reported on December activity for Codes Enforcement Officer Mark Miller, including zoning and building permits, construction inspections, and oversight of the Town Hall project.

Town Justice Donald Haight reported the Town Court handled 263 cases in 2019, an increase of 84 cases and \$6,279 over 2018. Total revenue from all criminal, civil, vehicle and traffic violations and

misdeemeanor charges totaled \$25,025, of which the Town's portion was \$7,244. Justice Haight led the Council in a discussion of the new NYS laws affecting bail and discovery. Among other changes, the new laws are expected to reduce the number of cases handled by the Town Court in future years.

SOMAC is developing a capital plan to allow for vehicle replacement on a regular schedule. Peter Darby will replace Mary Dinski as the Council's liaison with SOMAC.

Partnership for Community Development has won \$1 million in new grants since December: \$350,000 to support home purchase and renovations for low- and middle-income families, and \$650,000 for a project planned at 18-22 Utica Street with Colgate and Hamilton Initiative. The PCD/TIA incubator is active with sessions coming up for owners of small businesses regarding taxes, social media, and insurance. Mary Dinski will be the Town Council's new representative to PCD.

Volunteer representatives from the Town, Village and Colgate have been working together since 2016 on a Climate Preparedness Working Group (HCPWG) to raise awareness and take positive steps addressing climate issues at the local level. This month, both the Town and the Village submitted detailed applications to become certified by New York State as Climate Smart Communities, a program that provides recognition and support for communities taking the lead on climate change and offers free technical assistance, grants, and rebates for electrical vehicles. Review of the application is expected within six weeks.

Work continues on the new Town Office Building, with roofing, framing and installation of electric and water among the current projects.

Supervisor Shwartz reported that PCD and Colgate's Upstate Institute are being enlisted to help with a needs assessment in the Village of Earlville.

Supervisor Shwartz chairs the Public Utilities Committee of the County Board of Supervisors. Support for broadband is a focus in 2020.

The next meeting of the Hamilton Town Council is scheduled at 6:30 Thursday, February 13, 2020 in the Village Courthouse, open to the public. More information: www.TownofHamiltonNY.org.

Submitted by Jim Leach for the Hamilton Town Council