

The Regular Meeting of the Homer Town Board was held at the Town Hall located in the Village of Homer, on Wednesday August 13, 2025, in the town boardroom, with Supervisor Park presiding.

Members Present:

Supervisor, Michael R. Park,
Deputy Supervisor, Barry E. Warren
Councilmember, Sarah E. Head
Councilmember, Caleb J. Leach
Councilmember, Kevin M. Williams

Others Present: Town Clerk, Heather M. Hill; Deputy Town Clerk, Brooke L. Poli; Highway Superintendent, Kyle Bean; Attorney to the Town, Dan Ellis; Village Mayor, Patrick Clune; Attendees: Tim Malchak, Michael Broughton, Emmanuel Pothos, Jack Eves from X101, Sydney Lee from Cortland Standard, and Brian Young.

Supervisor Park called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and opened with the pledge of allegiance.

MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

Deputy Supervisor Warren made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Head, to approve the Draft Regular Town Board Meeting minutes of July 9, 2025. All voting aye, the motion carried. **RESOLVED: to approve the Draft Regular Town Board Meeting minutes of July 9, 2025.**

Councilmember Head made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Leach, to approve the Draft Special Meeting Minutes Town Board Meeting Minutes of July 9, 2025. All voting aye, the motion carried. **RESOLVED: to approve the Draft Regular Town Board Meeting hearing minutes of June 11, 2025.**

MONTHLY BILL PAY

General bills were approved as audited by Councilmember Williams, motioned by Councilmember Williams, to approve the general fund vouchers for payment, seconded by Councilmember Leach; All voting aye, the motion carried. **RESOLVED: That General Fund, abstract #8, vouchers #199 through #237 totaling \$73,226.48 are approved for payment.**

Highway bills were approved as audited by Councilmember Leach, motioned by Councilmember Leach, to approve highway fund vouchers for payment, seconded by Councilmember Head; All voting aye, the motion carried: **RESOLVED: that Highway Fund, abstract #8, vouchers #101 through #116 all totaling \$52,908.38 are approved for payment.**

WRITTEN DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Councilmember Williams made a motion, seconded by Deputy Supervisor Warren, to receive and file the following monthly July reports as presented:

1. The Code Enforcement Officer- July 2025
2. Town Clerk- July 2025
3. Fire Chief- July 2025
4. Dog Control Officer- July 2025
5. Superintendent July 2025

All voting aye, the motion carried.

*No July Supervisor report this month.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Emmanuel Pothos, developer for billboards, shared a statement with the town board and thanked the town board for their time and efforts throughout this process. The proponent emphasized its potential to boost local revenue, visibility, and services, citing advertising opportunities for small businesses with assessment ranges. The developer stated billboards was a way to fund community improvements via interstate traffic.

Tim Malchak, resident of the town, emphasized the need to save money for the town, specifically concerning obtaining pricing for boxes for trucks to save costs.

Town resident Michael Broughton inquired about the town's plan for revisions to the comprehensive plan. Supervisor Park stated the grant application was currently under review, with a decision anticipated by December of 2025. If the grant was approved, a committee would need to be formed, and revisions could take up to two years to complete.

AGENDA ITEMS

Deputy Supervisor Warren made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Williams, to approve and designate the Cortland Standard as the official newspaper for the town, replacing the Post Standard. All voting Aye, the motion carried. **RESOLVED: to approve and designate the Cortland Standard as the official newspaper for the town, replacing the Post Standard.**

Dog Control Officer Lindsay Andersen updated dog traffic control and the dog business in the town. It was noted New York State imposed new guidelines on the shelter and the delayed grant funding for the facility.

The town of Homer is preparing for a town-wide reassessment of all properties for the 2027 assessment, officially starting September 1st, 2025. Letters will be sent out in August 2025. The reassessment aims to ensure fair, accurate assessments aligned with current market values and is crucial for maintaining eligibility for state subsidies, which are based on a 100% assessment rate. It was clarified that reassessments do not automatically increase taxes but rather help ensure proportional taxation. The last major reassessment was approximately 10 years ago.

Chairman Michael McMahon updated the planning board has had normal subdivisions, lot line adjustments, and solar proposals. There were discrepancies in productivity and significance that were discussed and efficiency of solar were reviewed. The planning board will develop a chart for towns to use when solar projects are proposed.

Chairman McMahon also stated the Comprehensive Plan review board met with THOMA Development and worked on developing a plan for the Smart Growth grant application to the DOS.

Councilmember Williams made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Leach, to authorize the supervisor to send a letter of support for a grant proposal developed by Trinity Valley LLC for a 2025 Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center Dairy Processor Modernization Grant. All voting Aye, the motion carried. **RESOLVED: to authorize the supervisor to send a letter of support for a grant proposal developed by Trinity Valley LLC for a 2025 Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center Dairy Processor Modernization Grant.**

An update was provided that on October 9th the community open house event was scheduled to review and discuss solar with the neighboring towns.

Councilmember Head made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Williams, to approve proposed changes to the personnel policy that were discussed including clarifying that overtime is applied after 40 hours of work, excluding vacation and sick leave. Additionally, all highway employees receive a \$300 voucher for personal protective clothing in August of each year, starting next year. All voting Aye, the motion carried. **RESOLVED: to approve and accept proposed changes to the personnel policy which include overtime is applied after 40 hours of work, excluding vacation and sick leave, and all highway employees will receive a \$300 voucher for personal protective clothing in August of each year.**

Superintendent Bean reported on highway department activities, including storm fixing, ditch work, and a spreadsheet was created to show highway department employees their true compensation. Family health insurance with HSA costs the town \$25,000 annually. The town pays full insurance, unlike other towns, but pays slightly less per hour.

The town needs to purchase a new plow truck due to existing trucks being weak and requiring extensive repairs (one used truck costs \$77,000 and needed repairs). The proposed

purchase is a 2026 Western Star truck from Tracey Road Equipment, costing \$189,850 for the cab and chassis \$144,700 for equipment (sander, plow, dump box), totaling \$334,500. This is a “state bid” contract. The truck has a five-year, 100,000-mile engine warranty and a three-year, 200,000-chassis warranty (excluding cabin chassis for snow plowing). The town is considering paying in 2026 or 2027 to maximize interest.

Councilmember Leach made a motion, seconded by Deputy Supervisor Warren, to approve the purchase of a 2026 Western Star truck from Tracy Road Equipment, costing \$189,850 for the cabin and \$144,700 for equipment, totaling \$334,500. All voting aye, the motion carried. **RESOLVED: to approve the purchase of a 2026 Western Star truck from Tracy Road Equipment, costing \$189,850 for the cabin and \$144,700 for equipment, totaling \$334,500.**

A new harder stainless-steel spreader is needed for one of the existing trucks to extend its life for another year. The cost is \$15,124, and it will be interchangeable with new trucks. It is required to get through the upcoming winter.

Deputy Supervisor Warren made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Leach, to approve the purchase of a stainless-steel spreader for \$15,124 which will be interchangeable with the new truck. All voting aye, the motion carried. **RESOLVED: to approve the purchase of a stainless-steel spreader for \$15,124 which will be interchangeable with the new truck.**

Updates to the new highway building include the floor, siding, lights, most electrical, heaters, and new overhead doors installed. A change order for \$1,450 is needed for snow bars over the doors. Ceiling insulation is pending electrical completion. Roof repair is funded. The total project cost to update the highway garage is approximately \$234,000. Minor maintenance and grading will still be needed, but the garage should be in good condition for the next 20 years.

Councilmember Leach made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Head, to approve the purchase and installation of snow bars at the highway garage in the amount of \$1,450. All voting aye, the motion carried. **RESOLVED: to approve the purchase and installation of snow bars at the highway garage in the amount of \$1,450.**

Town Clerk Hill updated the DEC season has started, and hunting licenses are being issued. The office is working on a retention schedule for paperwork disposal, planning a large 'Shred It' between the offices at the town hall. Deputy Clerk Kotas is filing maps and cleaning the dog-licensing filing cabinet. Sweeney's Pest Control sprayed the building's exterior, fogged the balcony, and treated corners due to a spider problem.

The annual insurance policy is up for renewal, with a significant increase to \$49,286.24 from \$41,179.48 last year. This increase is attributed to previously underinsured buildings, increased deductibles for the tractor, and the current construction making the property more valuable. The policy is reviewed every three years to secure better rates and can be reviewed and then go out to bid again.

Deputy Supervisor Warren made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Williams, to accept Bailey's Insurance new insurance increased rate in the amount of \$49,286.24. All voting aye, the motion carried. **RESOLVED: to accept Bailey's Insurance new increased insurance rate in the amount of \$49,286.24.**

There was discussion on a gap in insurance coverage during construction due to multiple separate contractors (e.g., plumber, electrician) not being under one umbrella policy. Once contractors are paid, their insurance no longer covers the work, making the town responsible. Builder's risk insurance, costing \$6,000, is needed to cover this gap and mitigate potential risks and will be looking into obtaining in the future.

Proposed changes to the town hall parking lot include designating 11 spots on the north side for town and village employees, reserving yellow-red marked spots on the south side for customer/visitor parking, and two handicapped spots in the back. An additional handicapped spot on the south side is for those who can walk short distances. These changes aim to manage parking during construction and for the incoming police department, with signs to be put up and the lot restriped post-construction.

Councilmember Head made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Leach, to approve the proposed layout of the town hall parking lot with designated parking signs. All voting aye, the motion carried. **RESOLVED: to approve the proposed layout of the town hall parking lot with designated parking signs.**

Update on the town hall renovation, including plumbing work starting on August 13th, the town hall basement being cleared out, and contractors expected to start installing items on August 13th and 14th. Details include new gas line installation, water line adjustments to prevent freezing, and the overall progress despite engineering issues. The completion date is set for January 2026. The downstairs will be remodeled, with two-thirds allocated for the village Police department and one-third for a new community area, including a kitchenette and new bathrooms. The senior citizen group are currently utilizing the Pat Hill Community Center for their monthly meetings.

Detailed discussion on the sales tax agreement. Initially, there was an initial 10-year agreement for sales tax at 27%, which ended when the city opted out after 5 years. A new formula has been proposed, with the current rate at 27.62%. This will drop to 22.5% in 2026, then 20.50% in 2027, 18.5% in 2028, and 16.25% in 2029, as part of a four-year agreement. The city has agreed to take 18%, and the county will vote this week or next week. The current sales tax revenue is approximately \$1,142,752, projected to drop to \$985,541 next year, resulting in an estimated loss of \$157,210.69 this year. To offset this, a minimum property tax increase of \$0.40 per thousand is required, with an overall increase of \$0.50-\$0.60 per thousand anticipated due to rising insurance, electricity, and equipment costs. The new agreement is for 10 years.

Discussion about developing a seasonal road policy for the Town of Homer occurred and reviewing the Town of Candor's policy as a guide. Currently, the town has 38 miles of seasonal roads that could potentially have new housing requests, which would affect the town's maintenance of roads. Councilmember Head and Councilmember Leach requested to meet with Attorney Ellis to help assist in understanding Candor's policy. The board will review the possibility of drafting a law for the town.

Attorney Ellis updated the board that he would prepare a 2% Tax Cap Law. The Houghton Hill Solar project will go before the planning board meeting on August 27th.

Exploration of host agreements with solar farms to secure payments, with the goal of setting money aside for future bridge projects. It was noted that IDA agreements mean solar farms pay set taxes and are off the tax rolls. Homer, Solon, and Cortlandville were identified as areas most affected by solar panels.

A resident posed a question about whether the town could hold the solar companies responsible to clean the soil that solar panels were on. Attorney Ellis stated it would need to be worked out in decommissioning plan, and depending on the size of the project, the state could get involved.

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke L. Poli