

The Town of Champion Town Board met in regular session on Monday, June 7, 2021 at the Town Municipal Building, 10 North Broad Street, West Carthage. Present were Supervisor Ferguson, Councilmen Stewart, Watkins, Waite and Gump.

Supervisor Ferguson called the meeting to order at 7:00pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Supervisor Ferguson opened the meeting for public comment. No one from the public addressed the Board.

**Monthly Reports**

- Engineering – Supervisor Ferguson reported that B,C& A are pursuing grants for the construction of a salt barn.
- Councilmen – M. Gump submitted a letter from the West Carthage Fire Department seeking support through the American Rescue Plan to purchase a UTV with tires and tracks to access remote areas. M. Gump questioned if the Town Board was prohibiting the Great Bend Fire Department from running firematic drills. Supervisor Ferguson explained that the site plan application submitted to the Town Planning Board by the Department to relocate in the former fire station did not include any request to use the property for firematic drills. A number of homes have been built on Railroad Street that are adjacent to the drill area. The Town received a number of complaints from those homeowners and referred them to the Zoning Officer. A stop work order was issued. The Department has not submitted a site plan requesting approval to run firematic drills. M. Gump stated that the drills are considered training. M. Gump questioned changes to assessments during the 2021 town wide revaluation. Supervisor Ferguson responded that out of over 2000 parcels in the Town that only eight (8) property owners attended grievance day and only six (6) of the attendees filed applications for Board of Assessment Review action. Motion by M. Gump to reject the 2021 revaluation and return to 2020 assessments. The motion did not receive a second. L. Waite remarked that changes to assessments in the Town of Champion were considerably less than in neighboring towns.
- Assessor – W. Vargulick affirmed the number of persons that attended grievance day.
- Parks/Historian – L. Thornton reported on research she has been doing. She is also writing articles of historical interest for the Lowville Journal. She requested that any person interested in training as a historian contact her to discuss the position.
- Circuit Rider – M. Dietrich submitted his written report and discussed efforts by the Friends of the Black River to identify and share sites along the Black River.

Motion by H. Watkins, seconded by M. Gump to approve the minutes of May 3, 2021 as presented. Ayes-5, Nays-0. Motion carried.

Motion by T. Stewart, seconded by L. Waite to approve payment of the following bills as presented:

General #138-174.....	\$61,623.80
Highway #64-83.....	\$78,390.68
RACOG #8.....	\$21.34
Con WD#1 O&M #8-11.....	\$735.25
WD#2,4&5 O&M #33-42.....	\$6,197.94
SD#1 O&M #3.....	\$5,516.87
SD#2 O&M #20-23.....	\$1,598.12

Ayes-5, Nays-0. Motion carried.

The Supervisor’s monthly report was read and discussed. Motion by T. Stewart, seconded by H. Watkins to accept the report as presented. Ayes-5, Nays-0. Motion carried.

D. Martel reviewed the recommended budget transfers(attached in minute book). Motion by L. Waite, seconded by M. Gump to approve the budget transfers as presented. Ayes-5, Nays-0. Motion carried.

Supervisor Ferguson requested that Board members submit a list of priorities for encumbering the funds from the American Rescue Plan for the next meeting.

Supervisor Ferguson reported that letters have been mailed to residents of the Town and V/West Carthage from Nexamp with information regarding informational webinars scheduled for June 15<sup>th</sup> and June 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. The letter also includes a website link to subscribe to the community solar program for up to 10% savings on electricity costs.

Supervisor Ferguson advised the Board that he has received a letter of resignation from Justice Heagle effective June 11, 2021. M. Gump suggested appointing Angela McGill to the position to pay her for volunteer training. D. Martel stated that Ms. McGill cannot be paid the justice salary since she has not qualified to perform the duties of the position.

### **New Business**

- Jonathan Schell, Associate Director of the Tug Hill Land Trust, presented resolutions for Town Board to endorse the submission of applications for Farmland Implementation Program Grants for Vernon and Mary Jane Scoville and for Jeffrey and Darcie Sullivan. L. Waite questioned if the entire farm is included. J. Schell advised that a 10-acre farmstead is exempt. Construction or changes outside of the farmstead must be approved by the Trust. M. Gump questioned why funds are involved. J. Schell explained that the applicant is reimbursed for surrendering the development rights to their land. The applicant is reimbursed eighty-seven and a half percent(87.5%) of the value calculated at approximately \$1,800/acre.

Resolution offered by T. Stewart, seconded by M. Gump:

WHEREAS, Vernon and Mary Jane Scoville are the owners of Scoville Farm, consisting of approximately 257.54 acres in tax parcels 85.00-1-31.1 in the Town of Champion, Jefferson County (the "Property"); and  
WHEREAS, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust is a New York not-for-profit corporation to accept, purchase, and hold conservation easements under section 170(h) of the Code and Treasury Regulation Section 1.170A-14(c); and  
WHEREAS, the Property is located within Jefferson County's Southeast Agricultural District 1 created pursuant to Article 25-AA of the New York State Agriculture and Markets. It is the purpose of this article to provide a locally-initiated mechanism for the protection and enhancement of New York State's agricultural land as a viable segment of the local and state economies of the local and state economies and as an economic and environmental resource of major importance; and  
WHEREAS, the Property is located within Jefferson County, which adopted Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan in April 2016; and  
WHEREAS, the Property is located within the Town of Champion, which adopted a comprehensive plan on March 5th 2018; and  
WHEREAS, the Property consists primarily of productive agricultural land. The Property, which is 257.54 acres, contains 183 acres in active crops and livestock production, 103 acres of prime soils and 93 acres of soils of statewide importance as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service; and  
WHEREAS, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust determined that accepting this easement on the Property will enhance the long-term agricultural values of the Property and forward its mission of protecting the wildlands, working forests and farms of the Tug Hill region and surrounding areas, and to promote appreciation

of the region's natural and cultural heritage, for present and future generations;  
and

WHEREAS, Scoville Farm and Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust agree the purpose of the agricultural easement will be to perpetually conserve viable agricultural land by preventing the conversion for non-farm uses. In achieving such prevention, the Property shall be forever reserved for continued agricultural use;  
and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Champion Town Board passed a resolution on June 7, 2021 at a regular Town Board meeting to endorse the submission of an application for a Farmland Implementation Program Grant for the Scoville Farm by Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust. If funded this grant will provide funding from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to purchase the development rights (Agricultural conservation easement) on the Scoville Farm.

By order of the Town Board of the Town of Champion by the following vote thereon: Ayes: 5 Nay: 0 Recused: 0 Resolution adopted.

- Resolution offered by M. Gump, seconded by L. Waite:

WHEREAS, Jeffery and Darcie Sullivan are the owners of Sullivan Farm, consisting of approximately 257.15 acres in tax parcels 85.07-1-20.2, 85.07-1-2.2, and 93.00-2-14.4 in the Town of Champion, Jefferson County (the "Property"); and

WHEREAS, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust is a New York not-for-profit corporation to accept, purchase, and hold conservation easements under section 170(h) of the Code and Treasury Regulation Section 1.170A-14(c); and

WHEREAS, the Property is located within Jefferson County's Southeast Agricultural District 1 created pursuant to Article 25-AA of the New York State Agriculture and Markets. It is the purpose of this article to provide a locally-initiated mechanism for the protection and enhancement of New York State's agricultural land as a viable segment of the local and state economies of the local and state economies and as an economic and environmental resource of major importance; and

WHEREAS, the Property is located within Jefferson County, which adopted Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan in April 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Property is located within the Town of Champion, which adopted a comprehensive plan on March 5th 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Property consists primarily of productive agricultural land. The Property, which is 257.15 acres, contains 245 acres in active crops and livestock production, 135 acres of prime soils and 45 acres of soils of statewide importance as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service; and

WHEREAS, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust determined that accepting this easement on the Property will enhance the long-term agricultural values of the Property and forward its mission of protecting the wildlands, working forests and farms of the Tug Hill region and surrounding areas, and to promote appreciation of the region's natural and cultural heritage, for present and future generations;  
and

WHEREAS, Sullivan Farm and Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust agree the purpose of the agricultural easement will be to perpetually conserve viable agricultural land by preventing the conversion for non-farm uses. In achieving such prevention, the Property shall be forever reserved for continued agricultural use;  
and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Champion Town Board passed a resolution on June 7, 2021 at a regular Town Board meeting to endorse the submission of an application for a Farmland Implementation Program Grant for the Sullivan Farm by Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust. If funded this grant will provide funding from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to

purchase the development rights (Agricultural conservation easement) on the Sullivan Farm.

By order of the Town Board of the Town of Champion by the following vote thereon: Ayes: 5 Nay :0 Recused: 0 Resolution adopted.

- Motion by T. Stewart, seconded by L. Waite to authorize the Supervisor to execute the uniform contract with UniFirst Corporation. Ayes-5, Nays-0. Motion carried.
- Supervisor Ferguson suggested scheduling a public hearing to gauge the public's opinion regarding the sale of cannabis in the town. Motion by T. Stewart, seconded by L. Waite to schedule a public hearing for July 5, 2021 at 7:00pm. Ayes-5, Nays-0. Motion carried.
- The Board agreed, by consensus, to hold the July meeting on the first Monday.
- Motion by T. Stewart, seconded by H. Watkins to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations. Ayes-5, Nays-0. Executive session began at 8:15pm.
- Motion by L. Waite, seconded by T. Stewart to return to open session. Ayes-5, Nays-0. Motion carried. Open session resumed at 8:22pm.
- Motion by T. Stewart, seconded by M. Gump to approve a five (5) year agreement between the highway employees, represented by Teamsters Local 687, and the Town of Champion including minor language changes and a two percent (2%) increase in wages for all job classifications. Ayes-5, Nays-0. Motion carried.
- Motion by T. Stewart, seconded by B. Ferguson to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:23pm.

*Christina Vargulick*

Christina Vargulick  
Town Clerk