

Regular Board Meeting
Of the Town Board of the Town of Cuba

Held at the Cuba Town Hall, 15 Water Street, Cuba, NY 14727

Present:

Supervisor: Lee James

Council Persons: Melodie Farwell, Bill Beck, David Decker, Jonathan Enzinna

Also Present: Allesia Heslin, Town Clerk, Chad Smith, Highway Superintendent, Dustin Burch, Chief of Police, Dylan Burch, Sergeant, Aaron Appleby, Ambulance Administrator, Trevor Hollenbeck, Dog Control Officer

Absent:

Supervisor James asked Heslin to perform a roll call of present members: Chad Smith, Dustin Burch, Dylan Burch, Jonathan Enzinna, Bill Beck, David Decker, Lee James, Melodie Farwell, Trevor Hollenbeck

Board Comments:

- Enzinna thanked the Cuba Chamber of Commerce for hosting the awards dinner. Extra congratulations to Aaron Appleby for winning Citizen of the Year. Enzinna also thanked Cuba Rushford School for putting together a community action fair, he is looking forward to attending next year. Enzinna also reminded anyone who lives in the village that elections are tomorrow.

Supervisor Comments:

- James wished everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day.

Minutes for 02/17/2026, Supervisor's Report for February & General, Assessor Consortium & Highway Abstracts #3:

When asked, board members responded yes, they had reviewed the minutes, reports and abstracts.

One spelling typo will be fixed on the last minutes.

The Supervisor's Report showed the general fund received \$1,118,806.73. The highway fund received \$548,484.63. The assessor consortium received \$10,611.53. Disbursements include \$518,039.13 for general, \$66,042.24 for highway and \$12,754.56 for assessor consortium.

The March Abstract #3 dispersed \$30,747.36 from the General Fund, \$17,595.41 from the Highway Fund and \$594.28 from the Assessor Consortium.

On the motion of Beck and seconded by Enzinna the reports were accepted as presented.

Clerk Comments:

- Registration is open for the Southern Tier West government conference held at Houghton University on June 4, 2026. Information will be available in the clerk's office for town employees.

Police Department Comments: In the month of February, the department conducted 57 traffic stops. There were 294 calls for service. The full report is on the website.

- The SRO vehicle had a tie rod repaired by the school at no charge to the town.
- The department is hosting their lady's fire arms safety course on May 2nd. This course will not grant anyone a pistol permit, you must already have a pistol permit.

- The department had an officer and a few school officials attend the Utica National Safety Meeting. Updates will have to be made to the SRO contract. Superintendent Gildemeister will make the corrections to the contract to move forward.
- Taser 10 training is coming up in April.
- Office Ahrens is considered competitive status with the civil service.
- Burch reminded everyone there is no overnight parking in the Village until April 30th.
- There is a burn ban from March 16 to May 14.

Appleby arrived at 7:09pm, James congratulated him on his award from the Cuba Chamber of Commerce for Citizen of the Year.

Ambulance Comments: The Cuba Ambulance Service responded to a total of 52 calls to service in February of 2026. 35 of those calls were taken to Olean General Hospital, 9 were taken to Jones Memorial Hospital and 5 were sign offs, 0 were taken by Mercy Flight and 0 were DOA. 37 of these calls were critical care with Cuba handling 36 and Olean 10/MTS handling 1. 29 of these calls were in the Village of Cuba, 9 were in the Town of Cuba, 0 were on the lake, 0 was mutual aid to Friendship, 0 were mutual aid to Clarksville, 1 was mutual aid to Ischua, 13 were to New Hudson, 0 was mutual aid to Rushford and 0 was on I-86.

- Appleby is continuing to try to apply for grant and funding for a new ambulance bay and new stair chair.
- Members that are currently enrolled in EMS classes are working on completing their required ride along time.
- NYS is requiring us to start carrying carbon monoxide detectors in each ambulance and first response vehicle. These look to be around \$120/each. Appleby has 3 on order.
- Farwell asked if there would be an opportunity to buy the oxygen canisters instead of renting them. There is an opportunity but the Town would then be responsible for hydro testing and would be more expensive in the long term.
- James would like to move forward and take possession of the property that the fire department is donating. The fire department has had it surveyed and there is just under 1 acre that they would sell to the Town for \$1. The Town will need to get an architect's rendering and James would like to put that out to a few different places to get bids so that the Town would be ready to go. Community funding is available through congressional designated funds. A proposal was sent to be reviewed. James procured some letters of support and submitted those as well. The project will be looked at for some USDA funding so it may be possible to receive some money from a grant.
- Appleby spoke about the problems with the recent ambulance bay. The bay is located in the school's old bus garage on Bull St. The ambulances are parked one in front of the other, the school uses the building for maintenance so the building is dusty and isn't the ambulance's own space. There is no room for training and it is impossible to fit everyone. The parking lot is getting rough and the lot is very congested during summer soccer season.
- James feels that getting a new building is a critical need. Beck made a motion to have the Town's attorney and fire department's attorney draft paperwork to buy the lot for \$1 and get an architect's rendering for a new building. Seconded by Enzinna. All in favor, passed.

Highway Comments:

- Plowed eight times
- Cut brush on Hamilton Hill, West Main and Prospect
- Helped county with bridge, hauled material out and in
- Piled sand
- Put eight-ton limit signs up

Equipment Repairs:

- Built sander door for Peterbilt

- Serviced broom
- Serviced excavator
- Serviced chipper
- The Bull St. bridge probably won't be done until May due to waiting for the blacktop plant to open.
- The town received correspondence regarding the Allegany County intermunicipal agreement. James asked for a motion to accept the agreement. Farwell made motion. Seconded by Beck. All in favor, passed.

Sewer Committee: none

Facilities:

- Burch met with Mazza regarding the heating system and will have a bid soon.
- The capital project is still in limbo for the school. Appleby stated that they are going to start staging some equipment in the next couple of weeks.
- An attorney fell this morning on the walk out front even though it was shoveled and salted. A prior board had discussed a hand rail and an awning over the walkway and Burch would like to reopen that conversation.
- Burch will get Decker and Enzinna key cards to the building.
- A new hot water tank has been installed in the highway building.
- James mentioned that highway utilities were much higher this month. The delivery is almost as much as the usage. The usage wasn't much more than last year. A local dog shelter had to shut its doors due to a quadrupled utility cost. James expressed her worry that more small businesses and municipalities will feel the crunch.

Dog Control Comments:

- 7 calls so far this year.
- A dog was taken by the Cattaraugus County SPCA from Smith Road.
- Hollenbeck thanked the Cuba PD and Crystal Hall from Caneadea for dealing with a dog hit on I-86.

Code Enforcement Comments:

- Reed completed his annual report and it has been filed with the state.
- Reed sent a couple of letters of remedy to properties that received complaints. James hopes those are remedied and would like to ask the planning board to take a look at laws in other communities so the town knows its options if these properties are not remedied.

Assessor:

- The board received an analysis of sales from the office.
- James read a letter from Board of Assessment Review member David Crowley tendering his resignation effective March 1, 2026. James extended her thanks to Mr. Crowley for being so helpful and knowledgeable. Farwell motioned to accept with regret. Seconded by Beck. All in favor, passed.
- James asked Lisa Szucs to serve on the Board of Assessment Review. Szucs has served on the BAR in Friendship and has been through several reevaluation projects. Beck motioned to appoint Lisa Szucs to fill the BAR vacancy. Seconded by Decker. All in favor, passed.

Planning Board:

- Next meeting March 24th at the Cuba Town Hall.

Old Business:

- James reached out to Andover Certified Traffic for new 911 signs. The signs would be approximately \$15 apiece. Heslin will order new signs as needed.

New Business:

- Farwell completed the justice audit. All paperwork was complete, thorough and accurate with no areas of concern. Enzinna motioned to accept the justice audit. Seconded by Decker. All in favor, passed.
- Next week the Greenway Planning Summit will be taking place in Ellicottville. James will be attending.
- The Allegany County Area Foundation will be at the Cuba library March 23rd to talk about the different grant programs and scholarships they have available.
- The Allegany County Office for the Aging is celebrating March for Meals the week of March 23-27th. Anyone is welcome to help celebrate and go for a ride along March 24th.
- March 26th is the powers and duties of newly elected officials training.
- Cemetery day is Saturday, April 25th or Sunday, April 26th. James would like to have a cleanup day organized for the Smith Road Cemetery.
- Reed mentioned that he may attend training in Utica regarding flood zone, FEMA and other topics. The cost for the training may be able to be split with a few communities that Reed serves.

Public Comments:

- Donna Falandys thanked the board in regards to the lawsuit for doing their due diligence and believing that the process was done unfairly and it should not have even been filed. Falandys believes that everyone has to pay their fair share. Beck is sorry that justice wasn't turned faster. James stated that it is still being unraveled through the legal process. There will continue to be expenditures.
- Heather Forness read the minutes from the last meeting and commented that although those who spoke about 287G were ready and well-rehearsed they don't speak for everyone and although they may have showed up in full numbers they don't speak for everyone in the town.
- Dawn Wildrick-Cole introduced herself. Dawn is running for county judge this fall. She was born and raised in Cuba and now lives in Almond. This is a contested election, which is not common, Dawn is going around to put together a face with a name. Dawn has worked in the court system for her entire career and has been endorsed by Tom Brown and she believes this has well prepared her for the position. She is currently the town justice in Almond. She acknowledges that the problems in Allegany County are not easy to solve but she is willing to do her part. Her husband, Jeremy, stated that there will be a meet and greet at the Perfect Blend, Saturday, March 21st at 3:30pm.
- Emily Sprague read a collective statement from 7 residents that thanked the town board for allowing public comment and for listening to their perspectives regarding the 287G program tonight and at the previous meeting. They are returning to share additional concerns that have been generated by some of the town's constituents. They filed a FOIL request to hear the January recording of the meeting to seek clarification of how the conversation progressed. The portion of the meeting devoted to this topic was about 8 minutes. They were concerned about the lack of questions or discussion posed by board members when making this decision. They were taken aback by the lack of acknowledgement of the severity of the decision and the impact it could have on our community. The group formulated additional concerns: How would this decision diminish local control of our town officers to the federal government? Were other leaders in our community consulted to get their thoughts on this decision? What could be the potential cost to our community associated with lawsuits occurring in other locations where ICE is active? What would be the financial impact of visitors no longer wanting to patronize the businesses in our community due to fear of being racially profiled in Cuba? They group was disappointed by the dehumanizing nature of the discussion. Some of the things the group is witnessing are family separation, death while in custody, inhumane condition in ICE facilities, excessive use of force, violations of Constitutional rights and murder. A nearly blind, non-English speaking refugee from Myanmar was left at a closed Tim Hortons in freezing condition. He was later found deceased on the streets of Buffalo.

This decision emboldens community members to call the police on their black and brown neighbors. The group would like the board and police to consider the impact this has on the trust between the local community and local law enforcement. The possible negative outcomes could include community members in need having fear of calling 911 and racial profiling of our neighbors. The group strongly urged the board to reconsider their decision to enter into the 287G ICE agreement regardless of the governor's decision and to please take their concerns to heart and consider the harm this could have on our loving and peaceful community.

- Kelly Burch is a mother, wife and business owner and owns four properties in Cuba. Burch was appalled by members of our community that came here to speak on the rest of their behalf and she agrees with Heather Forness. She thanked the elected officials doing their best for the community and who we elected to make decisions for us. Burch is sick and tired of the lies and rhetoric that this organization has continued to spread. They have wasted an unprecedented amount of the town board's time answering your questions and it never seems to be enough. After having a conversation with Chief Burch after the last month's meeting there were a list of questions that took him over 3 hours to answer. Three hours of a police officer's time was taken to answer your questions. That time could have been better spent serving the tax payers in other ways: filing for grants, other issues that are needing to be handled. Burch urged those who were not tax payers to excuse themselves because she believes they are here to do nothing but spread further division. Appalled that the organization feels as though their concerns are the only concerns in this town. Three hours could have been spent on something productive as opposed to the what ifs and racially profiling. There has not been one reported incident of the officers for the Town of Cuba racially profiling individuals, so the way that Burch sees it is that their organization is racially profiling the police department. (Audience members started debating) James told the audience that we are not getting into a debate, everyone is going to have different opinions and ideas. Kelly Burch stated that the group is racially profiling our local government and police department and doing what the group stated they don't want to happen here. Burch stated that, no, their complaints are not valid, not everyone feels the way they do, they are responsible for creating the division and tension between community members so please stop the rhetoric and waste of our elected officials time, stop creating the division that didn't previously exist in our community and sated that you can't always have it your way.
- Jennifer Burdsall asked if any of the questions on the sheet from the last meeting got answered? Burch stated that he spent three hours on it and he elected not to respond because he has already responded to everyone and anyone who has worked with him knows that that isn't the department. Burch stated that he understands people look at other communities and what might be going on there but our department gets implicit bias training, racial training, all sorts of training and he would never allow that to happen here. 100% of the five immigration detainees that the department has dealt with before have committed crimes. Burch stated that the department would never go around and ask someone their immigration status. Burch was contacted by the general consulate from Mexico on one person that was here illegally and they had a warrant for them two weeks ago. There was also an accident on the expressway a week and a half ago and the passenger was from Venezuela. It took an hour and half to find out who the person was, that person was here legally. If the officers had training that could have been five or ten minutes. Burch asserted that the crap going on across the country, it is not going on here, we are not doing that here and he wouldn't allow it. He has never once had an officer commit any kind of racial profiling and they receive training and continual education. He is offended by some of the community members that he has worked with over the years, he is not taking any more questions on it again. He is not changing his stance on it, they would never go after someone just based on the fact that they think they are here illegally, they are not ICE, they are not going to be wearing masks. (People started arguing)
- Marianna Kunz stated that everyone needed to be respectful of each other and treat everyone the same.
- James stated that everyone has different views and opinions and are not ever going to be 100% on the same page. The board does their very best and she doesn't tell anyone how to do their jobs, training and continuing education are the most important thing in any profession. She stated that she thinks we have one of the best departments and she receives many thank yous for the way that they have conducted their

business and for their help. She is appalled and we all need to be thankful and keep conversation open. She hears everyone, she doesn't see it in our community, we are not Minnesota. James wished those running for the village board good luck.

At 7:55pm. Farwell made a motion to go into executive session to discuss contractual and legal matters. Seconded by Decker. At 9:02pm the meeting reconvened with a motion from Farwell seconded by Beck.

With no further business to discuss, Decker motioned to adjourn, seconded by Farwell. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Allesia A. Heslin, Town Clerk

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