

# Colton Board Overlooked

## Swafford Chooses Unelected Elk Buddy As Deputy Super

By LARRY ROBINSON

COLTON - Supervisor Bill Swafford has reached beyond the town's elected board to appoint his new deputy, an extraordinary local political move that means his second in charge will not have the right to vote on any town business.

The decision is likely to ruffle the feathers of at least some members of the town council, who are now left wondering why Swafford would look beyond the town's own elected political body to find someone to chair meetings in his absence.

"That was my decision and my decision only," justified

*"He can chair the meeting, that is his total function,"*

*- Joan Kilroy*

Swafford regarding his idea to appoint fellow Elk's Lodge member and local fireman Rick Wood as his deputy town supervisor. "It's time to get more people involved in town business."

Swafford also said the decision was not based on any bad blood left over from last November's town election in Colton.

Swafford said he consulted the New York State Comptroller's office in Syracuse and referenced a book titled McK-

inney's Consolidated Laws of New York state in deciding to pick a deputy town supervisor who is not elected by voters.

He also suggested that the rest of the town board, who are all elected representatives in the town of Colton, did not have a problem with the decision.

However, board member Joan Kilroy pointed out that while she is willing to abide by Swafford's decision, she can't help but feel disappointed that the newly elected

supervisor, who ran on a platform of ending political divide on the board and in the community, seems to be taking a step away from that pledge.

"I was disappointed that he opted to go in that direction when he had spoken so much about creating a new direction of unity and openness," said Kilroy.

Kilroy also said it is her understanding that Swafford's new deputy will not have the authority to vote on town business and will also not have authority to sign documents like pay checks.

"He can chair the meeting, that is his total function," said Kilroy.

Grace Hawley, the only other Republican on the Colton town board besides Swafford, said she too feels disappointed.

Hawley ran an unsuccessful campaign against Swafford for the supervisor's seat last November.

"It is obviously going to be a little bit awkward since the appointed deputy has no voting power," said Hawley. "I think we were all a little disappointed."

Newly elected town council members Joe Zelinski and Kathy Hayes could not be reached for comment last night regarding the appointment.