

**MEETING OF THE TOWN BOARD  
OF THE TOWN OF NEW HARTFORD, NEW YORK  
HELD AT TOWN HALL, 8635 CLINTON STREET, NEW HARTFORD, NY  
ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026 at 6:00 P.M.**

Town Supervisor Messa called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. The Supervisor led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was then taken with the following Town Officials and Department Heads present:

**TOWN BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

- Councilman Vincent Pristera
- Councilman John Latini
- Councilman David M. Reynolds
- Deputy Supervisor / Councilman David Tehan
- Supervisor James Messa

**OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS/EMPLOYEES PRESENT:**

- Town Attorney, Herb Cully
- Town Clerk, Michele Moran
- Deputy Clerk, Susan Keller
- Highway Superintendent, Richard Sherman
- Police Chief, Ronald Fontaine
- Supervisor Confidential Secretary, Christine Martin
- Finance/Personnel Department, Christina Lacy
- NH Library Director, Anne DuRoss
- Assessor, Darlene Abbatecola
- Highway Secretary, Shannon Guernsey
- Members of the media: Alexis Manor, Rome Daily Sentinel

Absent: Codes Officer George Farley

Thereafter a quorum was declared present for the transaction of business. Supervisor Messa briefly reviewed the Board Meeting Rules of Conduct.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Councilman Latini introduced the following Resolution for adoption; seconded by Councilman Tehan:

**RESOLUTION NO. 119 of 2026**

**RESOLVED** that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby accept and approve as submitted the minutes of the Regular Town Board meeting held March 4, 2026, and does further waive their reading.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

1.Ed Collins – Agricultural Building Permit Fee

Ed Collins, dairy farmer from Chadwicks (Elm Street / Route 8), addressed the Board regarding the building permit fee for a proposed 300' x 600' agricultural barn. Mr. Collins stated the current fee structure—calculated at \$0.10 per square foot—resulted in a \$18,000 permit cost, which he believes is excessive.

Town Attorney Cully reported that the Town Code does not contain a separate fee category for agricultural buildings and that existing categories (residential, commercial, multifamily, site plan, etc.) do not apply. Because agricultural structures are not defined in the fee schedule, the Board has the authority to set an appropriate fee.

Attorney Cully noted that other municipalities maintain significantly lower agricultural permit fees. Mr. Collins emphasized the economic challenges facing local farms and requested relief, noting his farm is one of only two remaining

in New Hartford. The Board expressed agreement that the current fee was not appropriate for agricultural use and indicated intent to establish a reasonable fee.

**RESOLUTION NO. 120 of 2026**  
**AGRICULTURAL BUILDING PERMIT FEE – COLLINS FARM**

Councilman Latini introduced the following Resolution for adoption; seconded by Councilman Pristera:

**RESOLVED** that the New Hartford Town Board, having reviewed the matter of the agricultural building permit requested by Mr. Ed Collins for construction of a 300' x 600' agricultural barn, and having determined that the Town Code does not contain a designated fee category for agricultural structures, does hereby establish a flat agricultural building-permit fee of \$100.00 for this project.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

2.Lori Catanzaro, 4451 Middle Settlement Road, addressed the Board regarding ongoing issues related to the neighboring property occupied by New Hartford Eye Associates. Ms. Catanzaro reported:

- Significant stormwater pooling near her mailbox and driveway
- Repeated incidents of individuals urinating on or near her property
- Litter, vehicle maintenance, and debris from patients and contractors entering her yard
- Excessive lighting from newly installed rooftop LED fixtures illuminating her home and backyard
- Lawn maintenance contractors blowing debris onto her property
- Flooding in her backyard due to inadequate drainage

Police Chief Fontaine confirmed that officers had visited the businesses in the plaza to notify them of the complaints and expectations for compliance. The Police Department is also attempting to contact the property owner, John Wade. The Board discussed lighting requirements, noting that fixtures must be “dark-sky compliant” and shielded to prevent light spillover onto neighboring properties. Codes Officer Farley previously inspected the site; however, the Board will request further review regarding shielding and compliance.

Highway Superintendent Sherman reported he will follow up with NYS DOT regarding drainage issues resulting from prior road construction near the Route 5B intersection.

The Board will continue working with the Codes Office, Police Department, and DOT to address Ms. Catanzaro’s concerns and will provide follow-up communication.

**PRESENTATIONS**

**PARKINSON’S AWARENESS MONTH PRESENTATION**

Allison Schwartz, Parkinson’s Program Director for Community Wellness Partners, addressed the Board to announce that April is Parkinson’s Awareness Month. She noted that Community Wellness Partners operates in both Clinton and the Town of New Hartford and that she has served as Director of the Parkinson’s Program since January 2025. She provided an overview of Parkinson’s disease, its prevalence, and the importance of community support.

Ms. Schwartz highlighted that the Town of New Hartford is participating in the “Spark the Night” initiative by lighting the Town building blue in honor of those living with Parkinson’s. She shared a video produced by a worldwide Parkinson’s nonprofit featuring local landmarks. She also distributed informational flyers and Parkinson’s awareness pins to the Board.

**REQUEST TO USE SHERRILL BROOK PARK – PARKINSON’S AWARENESS WALK**

Ms. Schwartz requested permission to utilize Sherrill Brook Park on Saturday, September 12, 2026, for the annual Parkinson’s Awareness Walk. She confirmed that the required application and fee had been submitted to the Town Clerk. The Board noted that last year’s walk was highly successful, with participation from the New Hartford Police Department, New Hartford Fire Department, and Edwards Ambulance. Approximately 200 attendees participated, raising nearly \$40,000 for Parkinson’s programs.

**RESOLUTION NO. 121 of 2026**

**AUTHORIZING USE OF SHERRILL BROOK PARK – PARKINSON’S AWARENESS WALK**

Councilman Pristera introduced the following Resolution for adoption; seconded by Councilman Latini:

**RESOLVED** that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby approve the request of Community Wellness Partners to utilize Sherrill Brook Park on Saturday, September 12, 2026, for the annual Parkinson’s Awareness Walk.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

Following the vote, the Board presented Ms. Schwartz with a Town Proclamation recognizing Parkinson’s Awareness Month. Ms. Schwartz also noted proclamations received from Oneida County, the Village of Clinton, the City of Utica, the City of Rome, and members of the State Assembly.

**CYBERSECURITY & INFRASTRUCTURE PRESENTATION – UPPER 90 SOLUTIONS**

Wayne Williams of Upper 90 Solutions provided an extensive overview of the Town’s current cybersecurity vulnerabilities and the need for infrastructure upgrades. He explained that cybersecurity requirements for municipalities have increased significantly and that the Town’s current systems are outdated, lack off-site backups, and do not meet modern compliance standards.

Upper 90 Solutions submitted a two-phase proposal including:

- Infrastructure and network upgrades
- Migration from Microsoft Exchange Server to Microsoft 365
- Implementation of modern security policies and controls
- Off-site cloud-based backups
- Full disaster recovery plan
- Staff training and quarterly policy reviews
- Ability to remotely wipe or secure lost/stolen devices
- Elimination of outdated on-premise servers in favor of cloud-based systems

Cost Structure

- Phase 1 infrastructure cost: \$14,970 (up-front)
- Total project cost: approximately \$32,000–\$33,000
- Upper 90 offered to spread labor costs over 12 months
- Upper 90 also offered to maintain the Town’s current monthly service rate of \$1,350 for 12 months, representing an estimated savings of \$15,000–\$17,000 compared to market rates.

After extensive discussion, the Board agreed that the upgrades were necessary and financially feasible.

**RESOLUTION NO. 122 of 2026**

**AUTHORIZING CYBERSECURITY & INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE**

Councilman Tehan introduced the following Resolution for adoption; seconded by Councilman Pristera:

**RESOLVED** that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby authorize the Supervisor to execute the proposal from Upper 90 Solutions for cybersecurity and network infrastructure upgrades, including migration to Microsoft 365, implementation of off-site backups, and establishment of a disaster recovery plan; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the total project cost shall not exceed \$33,000, with \$14,970 to be paid up-front for hardware and infrastructure, and the remaining balance to be paid in equal monthly installments over twelve (12) months; and be it further

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**RESOLVED** that Upper 90 Solutions shall maintain the Town's current managed-service rate of \$1,350 per month for a period of twelve (12) months following implementation.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

### **FINANCIAL UPDATE – BONADIO GROUP**

Supervisor Messa introduced Leanne Wells, Outsourced Controller with the Bonadio Group, noting that the Town has been working closely with Ms. Wells and her team for the past three months. Weekly meetings have been held to review financial progress, audit preparation, and corrective actions. The Supervisor thanked Finance Director Christina Lacy for her extensive work in coordinating the process.

Ms. Wells provided a comprehensive update on the Town's financial status and ongoing audit work.

#### **2024 & 2025 AUDIT STATUS**

Ms. Wells reported that:

- The 2024 financials have been reviewed by Bonadio and forwarded to the Town's external auditors, who have begun their audit work.
- Bonadio is currently finalizing the 2025 financials, which will be delivered to the auditors no later than April 15, 2026.
- The Town Supervisor is pursuing an aggressive audit schedule, with the goal of having both the 2024 and 2025 audits completed — and AFRs filed — prior to the start of the 2027 budget season.

#### **BAN RENEWAL & DEBT REVIEW**

During preparation of the 2026 BAN renewal, Bonadio:

- Responded to due-diligence requests regarding economic development, tax rates, and financial trends.
- Identified the need to review all existing bonds and BANs, ensuring that borrowed funds were spent on their intended projects.
- Noted that unspent bond proceeds must be placed into a debt-service reserve to offset future payments.

A full debt service schedule was prepared and included in the Board's packet.

#### **CASH ACCOUNTS & BANK CONSOLIDATION**

Ms. Wells reported that the Town currently has:

- 136 cash accounts in the general ledger
- Corresponding to 40 separate bank accounts

This structure creates unnecessary complexity and risk of error. Bonadio is working with the Finance Department to consolidate accounts methodically, ensuring each fund retains its required cash account while eliminating redundant accounts.

#### **WEBSITE TAX RATE ERROR**

Bonadio identified an error on the Town's website regarding the printed tax rate and taxable assessed values for the 2026 adopted budget. Ms. Wells emphasized:

- Taxpayers were billed correctly
- The Town remained under the tax cap
- The error was limited to the posted summary, which will be corrected during the 2027 budget process

#### **FUND BALANCE PRESENTATION**

Ms. Wells delivered an educational overview of fund accounting, fund balance requirements, and OSC expectations, noting:

- Municipalities must maintain reasonable fund balance levels
- A recommended target is 25% of annual expenditures (approximately three months of operating costs)
- Excessively high or low fund balances may indicate poor budgeting practices
- Fund balance must be formally reported in the Town's annual budget, including:
  - Encumbrances
  - Appropriations
  - Reserves
  - Unassigned fund balance

Ms. Well's Board presentation will be kept on file.

**RESOLUTION NO. 123 of 2026  
2026 BAN RENEWAL**

Supervisor Messa requests authorization to sign the renewal for the Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) in the amount of \$6,033,045. This renews the BAN for one year, after which he anticipates the Town's credit rating restored and we will move to BOND.

Councilman Reynolds introduced the following Resolution for adoption; seconded by Councilman Tehan:

**RESOLVED** that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby approve Supervisor Messa to sign the 2026 BAN renewal in the amount of \$6,033,045.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

**TOWN SUPERVISOR  
REGIONAL COLLABORATION UPDATE**

Supervisor Messa reported that, as part of his 2026 initiatives, he met with local municipal leaders including:

- Mayor Talerico (New York Mills)
- Mayor Ryan (Village of New Hartford)
- Whitestown Supervisor Kaleta

The meeting was described as collaborative and productive, with discussion on shared services, purchasing efficiencies, and opportunities for joint initiatives. The group agreed to meet quarterly, with the next meeting scheduled for June 2026.

**GRANT WRITING SERVICES – MRB GROUP**

The Supervisor informed the Board that Whitestown and several neighboring municipalities utilize **MRB Group** for grant writing and economic development support. MRB assists with:

- Identifying available grants
- Assessing competitiveness
- Preparing applications
- Advising on long-term funding strategies

The Supervisor noted that:

- The Town has not yet filed for the **Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)**
- DRI applications are highly competitive, and first-time applicants are often denied
- Prior investment in the target area (e.g., sidewalks, lighting, paving in Chadwicks) strengthens future applications

MRB's fee structure was received later in the day and will be shared with the Board. The Town may set a **"not-to-exceed" budget amount** (e.g., \$10,000) for grant writing services. This item will be revisited at the **May 6, 2026** meeting.

**RESOLUTION NO. 124 of 2026  
FINANCE AND PERSONNEL SCHOOL**

Supervisor Messa requests authorization for Christina Lacy to attend a NYSAOT 2026 Regional Finance and Personnel School in Albany on Mary 6-7. Cost of the school is \$250.

Councilman Latini introduced the following Resolution for adoption; seconded by Councilman Pristera:

**RESOLVED** that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby approve Christina Lacy's attendance at the NYSAOT 2026 Regional Finance and Personnel School in Albany on Mary 6-7 at a cost of \$250.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted

**PAYROLL SYSTEM MODERNIZATION – PAYCHEX UPGRADE**

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The Supervisor reports the he has been evaluating improvements to the payroll process. The current system is heavily manual, requiring extensive data entry by Finance staff. Paychex has proposed an upgrade that would:

- Transition employees to electronic timekeeping via app or laptop
- Allow department heads to electronically review and approve timesheets
- Automate leave requests and accrual tracking
- Reduce manual entry errors
- Improve efficiency and compliance

The OSC has also recommended modernization of the Town's payroll process.

Costs: One-time setup fee: \$1,500, Monthly fee: Approximately \$258 (in addition to current cost)

- No long-term contract; service is month-to-month
- If unsatisfied, the Town may cancel at any time

Following discussion, the Board acted as follows:

### **RESOLUTION NO. 125 of 2026**

#### **AUTHORIZING PAYCHEX PAYROLL SYSTEM UPGRADE**

Councilman Latini introduced the following Resolution for adoption; seconded by Councilman Reynolds:

**RESOLVED** that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby approve the upgrade to the Town's existing Paychex payroll system to implement electronic timekeeping, automated approvals, and related payroll efficiencies, at a one-time setup cost of \$1,500 and a monthly fee of approximately \$258; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the Town shall continue on a month-to-month basis and may discontinue the service at any time if deemed not beneficial.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

### **BOARD TABLET DISCUSSION**

The Supervisor proposed purchasing tablets for Town Board members to:

- Reduce printing and paper waste
- Allow real-time access to agendas and documents via SharePoint
- Improve meeting efficiency
- Reduce staff time spent reprinting updated packets

Estimated cost: \$130–\$200 per tablet, approximately \$2,000 total for 10 units.

Upper 90 Solutions would configure the devices. The Board will review options and revisit the matter at a future meeting.

### **STANDING COMMITTEE REVIEW**

The Supervisor reminded Board members to:

- Meet regularly with their assigned departments
- Assist department heads as needed
- Report updates or concerns at Town Board meetings

### **COMMUNICATIONS, WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE**

Supervisor's Confidential Secretary Christine Martin provided an update on communication initiatives.

#### **1. Facebook Page Reacquisition**

Ms. Martin reported that:

- The Town's official Facebook page had been lost prior to January 2026
- Access was denied, and the page was controlled by a party no longer associated with the Town
- Recovery options initially included purchasing the page or potential costly litigation
- After a two-month verification process with Facebook, Ms. Martin and the Town successfully regained ownership
- The recovery retained the 3,500 followers and was completed at no cost to taxpayers

The page is now used for timely notices, updates, calendars, and public information.

#### **2. Town Crier Improvements**

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The Town now publishes a dedicated full-page “Town Hall Update” in the Town Crier, consolidating:

- Supervisor updates
- Town Clerk information
- Highway Department news
- Other departmental items

This format improves visibility and consistency.

**3. Website Enhancements**

Ongoing improvements include:

- Streamlined navigation
- Removal of redundant or outdated content
- Clearer access to agendas, minutes, schedules, and announcements
- More intuitive layout for residents

**4. “Report a Concern” Relaunch**

The Town relaunched and promoted the “Report a Concern” feature on the homepage.

- Submissions increased from under 30 per year to over 30 per month
- Issues are routed directly to the appropriate department

**5. YouTube Channel**

A new Town of New Hartford YouTube channel (Town of New Hartford, NY) has been created to host:

- Town Board meeting videos
- Public hearings
- Other official content

This supports transparency and accessibility.

**PRINT MEDIA DISCUSSION**

The Supervisor and Board discussed the Town’s current use of the Utica Observer-Dispatch for public notices. Concerns were raised regarding limited coverage of Town affairs and past difficulties meeting statutory publication deadlines. It was noted that the Daily Sentinel has consistently attended meetings and provided thorough reporting.

Supervisor Messa and Secretary Martin recently met with Daily Sentinel reporter, Alexis Manore to strengthen communication. The Board agreed that the Rome Sentinel provides more consistent coverage of Town business and recommended re-designating the Daily Sentinel as the Town’s official newspaper.

**RESOLUTION NO. 126 of 2026**

**DAILY SENTINEL RENAMED OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER**

Motion was offered by Councilman Latini and seconded by Councilman Pristera to designate the Daily Sentinel as the official newspaper of the Town of New Hartford, replacing the Utica Observer-Dispatch.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

**RESOLUTION NO. 127 OF 2026**

**APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS**

Motion was offered by Councilman Latini and seconded by Councilman Reynolds to approve the vouchers as audited.

Upon roll call:

- |                     |   |  |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Councilman Pristera | – | Aye  |
| Councilman Latini   | – | Aye  |
| Councilman Reynolds | – | Aye  |
| Councilman Tehan    | – | Aye (abstain from Adirondack Bank voucher) |
| Supervisor Messa    | – | Aye  |

The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

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**TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

Town Clerk Moran provided the monthly report for March 2026:

Total receipts collected: \$20,954.37 • Local share remitted to the Town: \$20,782.87 • Disbursements included: General Fund: \$279.50, General Part-Town: \$18,528.37, Part-Town Police: \$175.00, NYS Ag & Markets (spay/neuter): \$104.00, NYS Dept. of Health (marriage licenses): \$67.50

**Tax Collection Update**

The Clerk reported that the 2026 Town and County tax collection period concluded on April 1. Total collected: \$17,184,972.52, Collection rate: 93.43%. Any outstanding taxes must now be paid directly to Oneida County. The Supervisor and Board commended the Clerk's Office for successfully completing its first full tax collection cycle under new staffing.

**Records Digitization Grant**

The Clerk reported that a **\$75,000 NYS Archives grant** application was submitted for Phase 1 of a multi-year records digitization project. Phase 1 would digitize permanent records from the present back to 1986, including maps, assessment rolls, and vital records. The project would improve FOIL response times and protect archival materials.

**Everyone Can Play 5K – April 19 Event**

The Clerk noted that a verbal poll had previously been taken to allow the Everyone Can Play 5K Walk scheduled for April 19, 2026. The Board reaffirmed the approval.

**RESOLUTION NO. \_128 of 2026**

Motion was offered by Councilman Latini and seconded by Councilman Pristera to reaffirm approval of the April 19, 2026 Everyone Can Play 5K Walk at Sherrill Brook Park.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

**TOWN ATTORNEY**

Town Attorney Cully reported on two matters:

1. **Paris Road Solar** – A resident again raised concerns that the project is not in compliance with its permit, including dying trees. The Attorney anticipates the matter may result in litigation and has requested an updated report from John Dunkle.
2. **Ristorante Café Maya** – The establishment previously approved under a slightly different name is now operating as “Ristorante Café Maya.” They intend to offer acoustic (non-amplified) music only and close by 9–10 P.M. Town Attorney submitted the required notification to the State Liquor Authority based on the Board's prior approval.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**Grateful for Graham Walk – May 2, 2026**

Chief Fontaine reported that the Utica Roadrunners will hold the Grateful for Graham Walk entirely on the Rayhill Trail, with parking arranged at BOCES. A certificate of insurance was submitted. No police support is required beyond routine monitoring.

**RESOLUTION NO. 129 of 2026**

Motion was offered by Councilman Latini and seconded by Councilman Reynolds to approve the Grateful for Graham Walk on May 2, 2026.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

**ANIMAL SHELTER – VOLUNTEER APPOINTMENTS**

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Chief Fontaine reported that Workers' Compensation and the Town's insurance carrier confirmed coverage for animal shelter volunteers. Three individuals completed background checks and interviews and are recommended for appointment. Volunteers will primarily assist on weekends.

**Animal Shelter Volunteer Appointment – Luke Wilson**

**RESOLUTION NO. 130 of 2026**

Motion to appoint Luke Wilson as a volunteer to the Animal Shelter by Councilman Latini, seconded by Councilman Reynolds.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

**Animal Shelter Volunteer Appointment – Dorothy Spina**

**RESOLUTION NO. 131 of 2026**

Motion to appoint Dorothy Spina as a volunteer to the Animal Shelter by Councilman Latini, seconded by Councilman Reynolds.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

**Animal Shelter Volunteer Appointment – Katherine Soggs**

**RESOLUTION NO. 132 of 2026**

Motion to appoint Katherine Soggs as a volunteer at the Animal Shelter by Councilman Reynolds, seconded by Councilman Latini.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

**ANIMAL SHELTER – ADOPTION FEES**

Chief Fontaine recommended establishing adoption fees for unclaimed animals, consistent with regional practices and intended to offset veterinary and care costs.

**RESOLUTION NO. 133 of 2026**

Motion by Councilman Latini, seconded by Councilman Pristera, to establish a \$125 adoption fee for dogs.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

**RESOLUTION NO. 134 of 2026**

Motion by Councilman Reynolds, seconded by Councilman Latini, to establish a \$100 adoption fee for cats.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

**BUILDINGS & GROUNDS / ANIMAL SHELTER FACILITY UPDATE**

Chief Fontaine reported that the additional kennel area at the animal shelter is nearing completion. Remaining tasks include:

- Assembly of additional kennels purchased last year
- Drainage work to be completed with assistance from Highway Superintendent Sherman
- Minor finishing work and final cleanup

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The Supervisor expressed interest in holding a ribbon-cutting ceremony, with Animal Control Officer John Treen cutting the ribbon in recognition of his extensive work on the project. Board members commended Chief Fontaine, ACO Treen, and the Highway Department for their efforts.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY – CONSUMER SQUARE INCIDENT**

The Supervisor and Board discussed a recent serious incident at Walmart in Consumer Square. The Board expressed concern about recurring disturbances in the area and emphasized the need for a proactive approach, similar to actions previously taken at Fun Nation.

Discussion included:

- Walmart’s high volume of unaccompanied minors
- The Town’s nuisance abatement law
- The need for increased responsiveness from property owners
- Deployment of targeted police details in commercial areas

The Town Attorney will review whether nuisance abatement procedures may apply and will contact Walmart management to address concerns raised by the Board.

Board members also commended Investigator Brelinski for an excellent fraud-prevention program recently presented to the public.

### **HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

#### **1. New Hire (Deferred)**

Superintendent Sherman reported that a candidate for a Highway Department position requested additional time to consult with family. The hiring recommendation will be brought forward at the next meeting.

#### **2. Flag Maintenance Program – Fred’s Flags**

Superintendent Sherman presented a proposal from Fred’s Flags for annual maintenance of the Town’s large outdoor flag and flagpole. The service includes:

- Inspection of halyard, cleats, snaps, and hardware
- Replacement of worn flags at each visit
- Repairs to existing flags
- Restrunging of the pole if necessary
- Removal and installation of flags
- Hardware maintenance and replacement
- Use of Fire Department aerial apparatus for access

The annual cost is \$6,500, prorated to \$4,875 for the remainder of the year.

Sherman noted that the Town typically goes through 3–4 flags per year, and past repairs—including a failed crank mechanism—have cost several thousand dollars. The Board discussed the value of maintaining the highly visible flag and the importance of ensuring it remains operational.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 135 of 2026**

Motion was offered by Councilman Reynolds and seconded by Councilman Latini to enter into the prorated annual maintenance agreement with Fred’s Flags for the remainder of 2026.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

### **BROOKS LANE / ROSS COURT DISCUSSION**

Councilman Latini and Highway Superintendent Sherman discussed ongoing issues with plowing and sanding at Brooks Lane and Ross Court, a private cul-de-sac taken over by the Town for winter maintenance last year at the request of the homeowners’ association.

Superintendent Sherman reported:

- The cul-de-sac is not built to Town specifications, making it difficult for Town plow trucks to maneuver.
- Only a pickup truck can service the area, and even that has resulted in complaints from one resident.
- The HOA president is out of state,

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and the complaining resident is not an HOA officer. • The Town previously advised the developer (Larry Adler) that the cul-de-sac was not to spec. A temporary snow-storage lot was provided, but the layout remains problematic. The Board discussed whether to rescind the prior resolution accepting the road for winter maintenance. Town Attorney Cully will contact the HOA's attorney to advise that the Town is reconsidering maintenance due to non-compliance with Town road standards and unresolved operational issues. The matter will return to the Board once the HOA responds.

### **STORMWATER CAMERA INSTALLATION UPDATE**

Superintendent Sherman provided an update on the Town's stormwater camera installations, which were included as part of the LED streetlight conversion project. Cameras will monitor water levels at key locations, including:

• Bleachery Avenue • Elm Street • Clinton Street (New York Mills) • Middle Settlement Road dam • Grange Hill Pond • Sherrill Brook Park and Elm Street Park

Most cameras are ready for installation; one remaining pole must be set before Power Line installs the final units.

Cameras will provide real-time alerts to staff during storm events.

The Board also discussed future camera placements at Wills Drive and the Roman/Hughes project area.

### **SIGN REMOVAL – RIGHT-OF-WAY CLEANUP**

Superintendent Sherman reported a significant increase in illegal signs placed in Town rights-of-way, on utility poles, and at major intersections. The Board agreed the Town must take action to maintain appearance and enforce code.

The Board emphasized the need for consistent enforcement, especially at high-traffic areas such as Kellogg Road, Route 8 ramps, and Tilden Avenue.

### **TEAMSTERS CONTRACT AMENDMENT – LABORER POSITION**

The Town is struggling to fill CDL-required MEO positions. The Laborer/MEO-Trainee title allows hiring individuals without a CDL, who then have six months to obtain one. Once the CDL is obtained, the employee transitions into the regular MEO pay scale under the contract. The position already exists in the Oneida County civil service structure.

The Supervisor and Highway Superintendent presented a proposed amendment to the Teamsters Local 294 contract to reinstate the Laborer / MEO-Trainee position at \$19.00 per hour.

Town Attorney Cully reviewed the agreement and found no issues.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 136 of 2026**

Motion was offered by Councilman Reynolds and seconded by Councilman Pristera to authorize the Town Supervisor to sign the contract amendment with Teamsters Local 294 establishing the Laborer/MEO-Trainee position at \$19.00 per hour.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

### **TRAFFIC SIGNAL ENGINEERING – VALLEY VIEW & CHAPMAN ROAD**

Superintendent Sherman reported that engineering services for the Valley View/Chapman Road traffic signal upgrade are ready to proceed. The Town's engineering consultants (John Dunkle and Jason Brown) completed survey work, utility review, soil borings, permitting, design plans, bid documents, and construction estimates. Because the prior Kellogg/Oneida signal project came in under budget, remaining BAN funds are available to complete this intersection as well.

The engineering fee for the project is \$24,000, and the request before the Board was authorization to solicit bids.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 137 of 2026**

Motion was offered by Councilman Reynolds, seconded by Councilman Latini, to authorize the Highway Superintendent to advertise for bids for the Valley View/Chapman Road traffic signal project.

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Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

**SURPLUS EQUIPMENT – 2012 MACK DUMP TRUCK**

Superintendent Sherman requested authorization to surplus a 2012 Mack six-wheel dump truck, , VIN 1M2AX08C9DM001785, with plow, salter, and dump body, to be sold through Auctions International with the right to reject any and all bids.

**RESOLUTION NO. 138 of 2026**

Motion by Councilman Reynolds, seconded by Councilman Latini, to declare the 2012 Mack dump truck surplus and authorize sale through Auctions International.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

**SURPLUS EQUIPMENT – 2004 FREIGHTLINER BRUSH TRUCK**

Superintendent Sherman requested authorization to surplus a 2004 Freightliner 4300 brush truck, VIN 1HTMWAAR25H122962, which has been replaced by a new unit.

**RESOLUTION NO. 139 of 2026**

Motion by Councilman Reynolds, seconded by Councilman Pristera, to declare the 2004 Freightliner brush truck surplus.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly adopted.

**SURPLUS EQUIPMENT – TIRE CHANGER & MISCELLANEOUS PARTS**

The Superintendent requested authorization to surplus an old tire changer and miscellaneous parts for retired leaf machines, including wheels and radiators.

**RESOLUTION NO. 140 of 2026**

Motion by Councilman Reynolds, seconded by Councilman Latini, to declare the tire changer and miscellaneous parts surplus and authorize sale through Auctions International.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried.

**HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT**

Superintendent Sherman provided the monthly report, including:

- Spring cleanup and brush pickup beginning Monday through September/October
- Paper shredding event scheduled for Saturday, May 16, 8:00 AM – Noon
- Stormwater work: ditching, pipe clearing, dam and creek inspections, and tree removal
- Road sweeping and catch basin cleaning
- Park projects: dog park bridge replacement and playground improvements
- Street sign replacement underway in the Woodberry area
- Crack sealing on roads paved last year
- Ditching and pothole lists for Town and County roads
- Trail maintenance and tree removal along the Ray Hill Trail

The Superintendent also reported on a pothole repair machine rented for evaluation. The machine can repair 30–40 potholes per day with a single operator, improving efficiency and reducing labor needs. If successful, the Town may consider purchasing one in the future.

The Board discussed potential shared services with neighboring towns and possible grant opportunities.

**Rayhill Trail Project – Financial Planning**

The Superintendent reported that the Ray Hill Trail reconstruction is a two-year project with a total cost of approximately \$4.7 million. The Town must pay invoices upfront and then seek reimbursement. The Supervisor noted that appropriate

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debt service planning and a BAN will be required. The Town’s engineer, John Dunkle, will provide updated financial timelines.

**NEW HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Library Director Anne DuRoss provided the monthly report:

- Spring break programming scheduled daily
- “Neighborhood Trees” program returning the week of April 20 (50–100 trees distributed annually)
- National Library Week events, including a new sensory-safe early-access program for families
- Library’s 50th Anniversary Celebration the week of May 4, with a special event on May 6 in partnership with the New Hartford Historical Society
- Annual statistical and financial reporting to New York State underway

**COUNCILMAN REPORTS**

**Councilman Reynolds**

- 51 fire inspections completed in the past month; fees collected totaled \$4,896.37.
- Provided an update on a proposed battery energy storage system previously presented to the Town. Reported that the Town of Warwick experienced two major fires at battery storage facilities, one resulting in condemnation of the site. Expressed concern regarding NYS Senate Bill S5506, which would remove all local zoning authority over battery storage facilities. The Board agreed to monitor the legislation and consider sending a letter of opposition pending further information.

**Councilman Tehan**

- Reported receipt of a 30-day advance notice for a liquor license application from Chipotle Mexican Grill on Commercial Drive. The application includes beer, wine, and cider service and recorded indoor music.
- The Board discussed:
  - High in-and-out traffic at the location
  - Concerns about take-out alcohol and open-container issues
  - The need for clarification on license type and restrictions
  - Potential impacts on outdoor seating areas
- The matter was tabled, and the Town Attorney will send a letter to the State Liquor Authority requesting clarification before the Board takes a position.

**RESOLUTION NO. 141 of 2026  
ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Town Board, Councilman Latini moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:13 PM; seconded by Councilman Pristera.

Upon roll call: AYES: Supervisor Messa, Councilman Tehan, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Latini, Councilman Pristera. The Resolution was unanimously carried and adopted.

The next Regular Meeting of the Town Board will be held on **Wednesday, May 6, 2026 at 6:00 P.M.** at the New Hartford Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Moran

Town Clerk

Updated 4/8/26 11:03 AM