

Town of Fowler February 9th, 2026, Regular Scheduled Board Meeting at 6PM.

The Town of Fowler regular scheduled Town Board meeting was held on the above date with all Board members present. Also present were Town Clerk Tami Gale, Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie, Town Justice Tim Knowlton, Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw, Assessor Chair Kathleen Besaw, Highway Superintendent Nelson Bice, Paul Johnson, Richard Clement, Laurina Greenhill, Scott Cleveland, and Deb Walsh.

Supervisor Newwine called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM then proceeded with the pledge of allegiance and led a moment of silence to honor our military men and women, and for the family of those who have recently passed, extending deepest sympathy to the family of Town of Fowler Highway Superintendent Randy Durham, Karen Barr, and Gary Dusharm.

Supervisor Newwine asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 12th, 2026 Organizational Town board meeting. A motion was made by Councilperson Knight seconded by Councilperson Simmons. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Supervisor Newwine asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the Emergency February 2, 2026 board meeting. A motion was made by Councilperson Bishop seconded by Councilperson Walsh. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Interim Highway Superintendent's Union Status and Pay Scale

Supervisor Newwine discussed that board members had received correspondence by Teamsters Local Union No. 687 of similar situations that have occurred in the past outlining how they were handled.

Supervisor Newwine reported that they have no issues with the Town appointing Mr. Bice as temporary/interim Highway Superintendent for the remainder of 2026. He will be allowed to remain in the Union, relinquishing his role as Union Steward, so long as the Town Board is the hiring and disciplinary authority during his term.

Supervisor Newwine discussed he had gone through Hwy. Superintendent Durham's wages and Nelson's wages and the difference between them was \$4.50/hr. Supervisor Newwine made a proposal to board members to increase Nelson's wages by \$4.50/hr. for the increased responsibility of the interim position. A motion was made by Councilperson Bishop seconded by Councilperson Knight approving the increase. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Bookkeeper Finnie asked Supervisor Newwine the effective date of the change of pay. Supervisor Newwine directed Bookkeeper Finnie to make the increase retroactive beginning on Monday, February 2nd.

RESIGNATION

Supervisor Newwine asked the board for a motion to accept the resignation of Neson Bice as Deputy Highway Superintendent. A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons seconded by Councilperson Knight. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

APPOINTMENT

Supervisor Newwine asked the board for a motion to approve the appointment of Dennis Travis as Deputy Highway Superintendent. A motion was made by Councilperson Walsh seconded by Councilperson Bishop. All in Favor. MOTON CARRIED.

BEAVER CONTRACT

Supervisor Newwine discussed the Town of Fowler Beaver Control Contract that is in effect from March 1st to December 31st and reported that Dan Moyer of Moyer's Wildlife Control will provide the service at the same rate that was paid in the year 2025. Supervisor Newwine asked for a motion to award the beaver contract to Moyer's Wildlife Control for the year 2026 with the amount of \$300.00 paid per site. After some discussion, a motion was made by Councilperson Simmons seconded by Councilperson Walsh to award the beaver control contract to Moyer's Wildlife Control for the year 2026. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION #7 of 2026

ADDITIONAL 2025 BUDGET TRANSFERS FROM DECEMBER 31, 2025

Supervisor Newwine submitted Resolution #7 of 2026 to the board for adoption. The additional Town of Fowler 2025 Budget Transfers were described by Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie as transfers to get accounts out of the hole and make accounts even. The Budget Transfers from the General Fund totaled \$13,104.58 and went to balance 20 accounts. The Budget Transfers from the Highway Fund totaled \$30,221.33 and went to balance 11 accounts.

A motion was made by Councilperson Walsh seconded by Councilperson Bishop to adopt Resolution 7 of 2026, additional Town of Fowler 2025 Budget Transfers. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

AYES: 5 NEWVINE, SIMMONS, BISHOP, KNIGHT, WALSH

NAYS: 0

Town Department Reports

Justice Department

Town Justice Timothy Knowlton reported:

- Court Clerk Irma Ashley is expected to be able to return to work for her regular hours starting on Monday.
- He will be attending a Magistrates' meeting at the end of this month and will attend mandatory training at the County jail.
- There have been a few arraignments with 2 DWI 's.

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie:

- Provided Cash Balance Reports for Month ending December 31, 2025 and Budget Balances for Month ending December 31, 2025 to the board for their review.
- Reported the general fund was 95.62% spent and had received 134.56% in revenue and the highway fund was 106.64% spent and had received 102.2% in revenue, stating both funds had done well for the end of the year.
- Reported that \$170,000 had been added to the fund balance for general , highway, Fire, and Street Lighting.
- A sales tax check was received in February that was down \$17,462.00 from last year.
- Reported she is working on the AUD that is filed yearly by March 1st.

Assessors

Assessor Chair Kathleen Besaw reported:

- Taxable status date is March 1st and she has been closing out all the books with changes that were made to any assessments.
- Discussed the need to have an appraisal completed on Empire State Mines, as the last appraisal on file is over 10 years old. She reported that to have this specialized appraisal completed on the mines, the cost will be between \$30,000 - \$50,000.

Supervisor Newwine asked Assessor Chair Besaw to provide the 10-year-old appraisal on Empire State Mines to the board for review.

- Discussed she would like to meet with the board members to further discuss the possibility of having a re-valuation done in the Town of Fowler, to give the board a chance to ask her any questions that they may have.
- Discussed that without a re-valuation people are paying more than their share of the tax burden, many of whom can't afford to do so.
- Used the example of the mines recently purchasing a property for \$170,000 and it is assessed for \$4,000, and she can't change the assessment, stating that there will be more of this popping up.

Historian

Historian Karen Simmons:

- Reported St. Lawrence County Historian Nancy LaFaver had reached out to the Town of Fowler for assistance in filling out an application for a Pomeroy Patriot roadside marker for the Fowler Baptist Church Cemetery which has 3 patriots buried there who had fought in the Revolutionary War.
- With this being the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, this is a great opportunity for the Fowler community to honor our patriots.
- Discussed, the application has been sent in, and it will be late summer or early fall before we hear back. If accepted, they will pay for the dedication ceremony where the Sons of the American Revolution will perform the service.

Animal Control

Councilperson Simmons reported for Dan Moyer who was not in attendance:

- 1 complaint had been received about an animal on the California Rd growling at the neighbor while he was snow blowing his driveway.
- 1 complaint was received about a missing dog on County Route 24.

Beaver Control

Councilperson Simmons reported for Moyer's Wildlife Control who was not in attendance:

- There has been no beaver activity reported.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw reported:

- Asked permission to purchase the new building code book at a cost of \$900.00. It was the consensus of the board to approve the purchase.

Councilperson Knight notified CEO Besaw that he had received a complaint from a taxpayer of a homeowner on the Doane Rd dumping garbage bags where he has a collection of vehicles.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Tami Gale reported:

- There were no DEC sales in the month of January.
- She had licensed 26 dogs, issued 4 Certified Marriage Transcripts, and had handled 1 building permit.
- January was a very busy month of collecting taxes. Taxes are 77.16% collected, ahead of last year's 74.41%.
- The Town of Fowler's share of the tax warrant has been paid to the Town, and a check has been sent to St. Lawrence County Treasurer's Office for tax money collected over the local share.
- Clarified a vehicle magnet order for Code Enforcement Officer Besaw.
- Deputy Town Clerk Donna Brown has worked several days in January and is working out well. She is also a notary public.
- The yearly Justice Court audit and Town Clerk audit will be placed on the March agenda as Court Clerk Ashley will be back to regular work hours.

Maintenance Department

- Maintenance Worker Byron Woodward was not in attendance.

Highway Department

Highway Superintendent Nelson Bice reported:

- There has been an issue with the overhead doors at the highway department. The repairs are estimated to cost \$2,400.
- The computer screen in the loader is not working. The same screen was replaced a year and a half ago. It is estimated that a replacement screen will cost \$1,500. The repair is scheduled to be completed Friday.
- Truck 91 is leaking antifreeze through the exhaust. They don't know if it is the head gasket or a cracked head.
- Truck 20 is having a problem with the tailgate staying closed. They have tried welding it, which doesn't hold long, and would like to discuss having it repaired at Viking for a permanent fix.
- The two shifts seem to be working out well with the amount of plowing that has needed to be done this season.
- The highway department hauled in 1500 yards of road sand as they were down to the last of the sand, and he may need to order some more with the snow projected in the forecast.
- He had ordered 100 ton of salt, as he wasn't sure if any more had been ordered.
- The maintenance of the trucks continues to be completed.
- The highway department laborers are continuing to do good jobs.

Councilperson Knight asked if the floors are being cleaned. Highway Superintendent Bice stated that they used to clean the floors when the trucks were out, but with the two shifts there is no one at the highway department. Hwy. Superintendent Bice stated that they are now trying to clean the floors during one shift or the other or in between.

Councilperson Knight asked about a tire repair bill in this evening's purchase orders for the loader. Hwy. Superintendent Bice reported that all 4 tires on the loader were repaired as they have continued to lose air. Hwy. Superintendent Bice reported since the repair they have been maintaining correct tire pressure.

Councilperson Bishop asked if they had enough calcium chloride. Hwy. Superintendent Bice stated they had about 50 bags of it, and it isn't something that they use a lot of.

Councilperson Bishop asked Hwy. Superintendent Bice if they still had the steamer at the highway department. Hwy. Superintendent Bice stated they use a hot pressure washer that runs on diesel fuel, using a generator, to thaw the culvert pipes out. Councilperson Bishop stated that due to the weather we have had this winter the culvert pipes are going to be bad.

Councilmembers

Councilperson Walsh: Had no further questions or comments.

Councilperson Lynn Bishop: Had no further questions or comments.

Councilperson Leo Knight Jr: Had no further questions or comments.

Councilperson Karen Simmons:

- Reported in the month of January, the HAP food pantry had a total of 28 visits.
- Thanked the following people for donating groceries: Debbie Andrews, Bob Smith, Bob Gore, Marcia & Scott Cleveland, and Roger Refici.
- The next SOS Program delivery will be made on March 20th.
- Reported that the first Fowler Family Day meeting will be held on February 26th at 3:00 PM, at the Town Hall if anyone is interested in coming to help plan this year's event.

DISCUSSION ON RUNNING FOR THE OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

Supervisor Newvine asked Town of Fowler Republican Committee Chair Karen Simmons to advise interested members of the public on what they would need to do if they are interested in being elected to the office.

Ms. Simmons reported that Interim appointed Highway Superintendent Bice will hold the office of Highway Superintendent until December 31, 2026. The unexpired term of office of the Highway Superintendent, that was held by Randy Durham, ends on December 31, 2027. Anyone who is interested in running for this office, if they are a registered republican, would need to let her know, as she will be picking up petitions that will need to be carried in March, to obtain the necessary number of signatures required to be placed on the ballot this November. If anyone interested in running for the office is a Democrat, they will need to speak with Democratic Committee Chair Jane Dodds, and Independent or other party affiliations should call the Board of Elections, in Canton with any questions they have to learn what is needed for them to be placed on the November ballot.

Ms. Simmons discussed that the person who is elected to the office of Highway Superintendent in November will serve a one-year term of office, the remainder of Randy Durham's term, and will need to run again in 2027 to be elected to a new 4-year term of office.

Supervisor Ricky W. Newvine:

- Discussed with the passing of Highway Superintendent Randy Durham, we found that there were some issues getting into the highway computer due to unknown passwords, and he would like to recommend that anyone who uses Town of Fowler computers provide their passwords to the Town Clerk in a sealed envelope to be kept in the office as a preventative measure to avoid the occurrence of this issue in the future.
- Read aloud a sympathy card received from the Town of Hermon.
- Discussed many other Towns, Villages, and community members have reached out to him, with the passing of Highway Superintendent Randy Durham offering their sympathy, assistance, and help.
- Thanked Rachel Hunter, Editor of the Gouverneur Tribune Press, for her terrific article on Randy.

- Thanked Town Clerk Gale for this evening's memorial to Randy.
- Discussed that Councilperson Knight had suggested we check with Lisa Durham to inquire if she needed assistance with keeping her driveway clear during this time. Supervisor Newvine reported he had spoken with Angelina Durham to see if there was anything the Town could assist them with and she had asked if the Town could help keep the driveway clear for the family. It was the consensus of the board to approve the request for the remainder of the season.
- Discussed he had received a renewal packet from Fuller Insurance Company, which will be renewed in May.

RE-APPOINTMENTS

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to re-appoint Barbara Finnie as Bookkeeper. A motion was made by Councilperson Bishop seconded by Councilperson Walsh. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED. Town Justice Timothy Knowlton administered the Oath of Office to Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie who was in attendance.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to re-appoint Vicky Cappellino as Board of Ethics Committee Member. A motion was made by Councilperson Knight seconded by Councilperson Simmons. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Public Comment

- Glen Besaw asked if the Town had thought anymore about having music nights at the pavilion during the summertime.
- Nelson Bice thanked Supervisor Newvine, Bookkeeper Finnie, and Town Clerk Gale for their help with getting acclimated to his new role in the highway department.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to audit the bills. A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons seconded by Councilperson Bishop to audit the bills. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

The bills audited for the General and Highway Fund were #16 to #55 with a total of \$37,497.49.

The next regular scheduled board meeting will be held on March 9, 2026, at 6:00PM.

With no further business, on a motion of Councilperson Bishop, seconded by Councilperson Knight, the meeting was adjourned at 6:42PM. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tami Gale; Town Clerk