

Town of Fowler March 9th, 2026 Minutes of Regular Scheduled Board Meeting and Justice Court & Town Clerk Audit of 2025 Books at 6:00 PM

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, Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw, Town Justice Tim Knowlton, Assessor Chair Kathy Besaw, Maintenance Worker Byron Woodward, Planning Board Chair Stephen Gale, Richard Clement, Deb Walsh, and Paul Johnson Jr.

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, all healthcare workers, and for the families of those who have recently passed including Betty Stevens, and for the family of John Hunter expressing our deepest sympathy to another member of our family Rachel Hunter.

Supervisor Newwine asked for a motion to approve the minutes from February 9, 2026, regular scheduled board meeting. A motion was made by Councilperson Bishop seconded by Councilperson Knight and carried.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION #8 of 2026

Justice Audit & Town Clerk Audit of the 2025 Books

A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons seconded by Councilperson Walsh to adopt a resolution to allow the Town Board to audit the Justice Department 2025 books & the Town Clerk 2025 books. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

JUSTICE COURT AUDIT & TOWN CLERK AUDIT OF 2025 BOOKS

Supervisor Newwine read aloud a letter received from Town Justice Timothy Knowlton requesting the annual presentation of his court records to the board for an audit examination. Supervisor Newwine noted the 2025 books and records of Town Justice Timothy Knowlton, and Town Clerk Tami Gale were presented to the board for review this evening and remained open for public inspection during the regular board meeting. The audit conducted by the town board members was completed at the end of the board meeting.

The 2025 books and records of Town Justice Timothy Knowlton and Town Clerk Tami Gale were presented for review. The board examined the records and dockets and verified that the records of criminal actions stated the names of the sworn witnesses as well as residence information. The records were duly examined, and it was determined that the fines therein collected have been turned over to the proper officials of the Town of Fowler as required by law. The Town Clerk's records, including the deposits of all funds, were determined to be in order.

RESOLUTION #9 of 2026

3-Year St. Lawrence County Ice and Snow Removal Agreement

Supervisor Newwine discussed the agreement between the Town of Fowler and the County of St. Lawrence for winter maintenance of County roads. It was discussed that the term of the contract shall be for 3 years,

beginning October 1, 2026 and ending June 1, 2029. The County will pay the Town at the following Tier I annual payment amounts:

Year	<u>Town Total Payment</u>	<u>Paid Per Mile</u>
2026-2027	\$105,042.00	\$6,150.00
2027-2028	\$109,312.00	\$6,400.00
2028-2029	\$113,582.00	\$ 6,650.00

A motion was made by Councilperson Knight seconded by Councilperson Bishop to approve the agreement. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

DISCUSSION ON 2026 MOWING CONTRACT

Supervisor Newwine reported that he had spoken to Dan Fifield and he is interested in continuing to provide mowing service for the Town of Fowler in 2026. Supervisor Newwine discussed that he does expect the amount to go up a little from last year due to the price of fuel.

Discussion on hiring LaBella Associates for Fowler Housing Grant Support

Supervisor Newwine reported that he had met a representative of LaBella Associates, who works out of Potsdam when he attended a conference last year in Warrensburg, NY. Supervisor Newwine discussed that he had learned that to have LaBella Associates apply for a housing grant for the Town of Fowler the Town would need to front \$5,000 in costs to apply for a housing grant. It was discussed that 20 to 30 percent of the grants are approved. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the board to approve moving forward with LaBella Associates.

Town Department Reports

Justice Department

Town Justice Tim Knowlton:

- Court is going well.
- He attended a Magistrate's Meeting at the County jail. The Sheriff's Department gave an update at the meeting and he reported that they are great to work with.
- He has had 3 arraignments since the last meeting.
- Discussed that Gouverneur and the Town of Fowler right now are seeing the most DWI's.

Supervisor Newwine asked if "fix-it" tickets had gone away yet. It was discussed they haven't gone away yet, and the court has had no updated guidance from the State.

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie was not in attendance.

Assessors

Assessor Chair Kathy Besaw reported:

- The tax-year closed out on March 1st. Anything that is received now will be placed on the next tax-roll.
- Everything is going well in the Assessor Department.
- Reported that she has had several calls on the newly mandated Veteran Exemption, and discussed the information is not being presented correctly. She had learned from the Directors of

the Real Property Office in Canton that the legislation must go back to committee, as there is a section that is illegal. She had learned from Michael Boprey, Director of St. Lawrence County Veteran Services Outreach Office, that there is no one that he knows of who qualifies for this new exemption.

- Discussed that there are 4 qualifiers for the exemption: PTSD, TBI, a victim of sexual aggression, or a victim who was re-leaved from duty as they were LGBTQ, and that you would have had to physically change your house to accommodate your disability to qualify for the exemption.

Supervisor Newwine asked Assessor Chair Besaw if she has made any progress finding someone to conduct an assessment of the mines. It was discussed it is being looked into.

Supervisor Newwine asked Assessor Chair Besaw to set up a work session for the board to explain the process of a revaluation.

Historian

Historian Karen Simmons reported:

- She has been working on genealogy for the Hodgkin family.
- She is now working on genealogy for the Walrath family.
- Received a phone call from a gentleman who is working on our application for a Pomeroy Plaque for the Fowler Baptist Church Cemetery. They discussed the location for the plaque to be installed, which will be to the left of the monument and the flag.
- Reported she had contacted the minister of the Fowler Baptist Church, and the Town of Fowler owns the property.
- Reported a cemetery lot was sold in the Fullerville Cemetery last month.

Animal Control

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

- 1 complaint was received concerning a dog on the River Rd.

Beaver Control

Councilperson Simmons reported for Moyers Wildlife Control who was not in attendance:

- There is an invoice in this evening's purchase orders for beaver control on Swill Hill Rd. It was discussed that Hwy. Superintendent Durham had to call Moyers Wildlife Control in January due to beaver activity affecting the road, in advance of the new beaver control contract. The purchase order was approved to be paid.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Besaw:

- Not much building is going on right now.
- He is going to be following up on a few complaints that were received during the winter.
- He hasn't had the new building code installed on his computer yet, which will need to be done through Edmunds, who provides his code enforcement software program.
- Reported during the installation of his new computer at the end of 2025, multiple permits were lost in the system which he has since learned cannot be recovered. It was discussed that the paper copies of the building permits that were lost will now be used for any future needs.
- He will be attending his yearly training next month in Syracuse.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Tami Gale:

- There were no DEC sales in the month of February. She had issued 3 Certified Death certificates, issued 1 certified Marriage Transcript, licensed 37 dogs, sold 1 Cemetery Lot in the Fullerville Cemetery, and had collected \$1.50 for photo copies.
- Reported she is preparing the paperwork for the tax warrant renewal for the County Treasurer's Office and taxes are 80.65% collected. The amount left to be collected is \$512,325.91.
- Asked the board their pleasure in setting the fee for 2nd notices for taxpayers who haven't paid any tax at all this year. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the board to set the 2nd notice fee at \$2.00.
- 2nd Notices to taxpayers will be mailed in mid-April.
- We are looking for lifeguards for Sylvia Lake beach, as currently only 2 of the 7 lifeguards who worked last year have reported they will be returning. Interested lifeguards need to be 16 years of age and have waterfront skills certification and CPR certification.
- A Bottle & Can check in the amount of \$212.65 was received from a pick up on 1/27/2026, and a second pick up of bottles and cans was made this week by B & B Redemption Center.
- Pepsi machine money was collected from the machine at the highway department in the amount of \$85.00.
- Thanked Councilperson Bishop for providing the contact information for the DOT to a taxpayer with a concern.
- Thanked Supervisor Newvine for coming to try to catch the critter in the Town Clerk's Office ceiling.

Maintenance Department

Maintenance Worker Byron Woodward:

- Discussed that there are 3 lights that are staying on all of the time behind the highway department, at the grey building, the yellow building and the gas pumps. He reported he has worked on the problem and has replaced the eyes.
- He plans to work on the sidewalk for the pavilion and stain the ramp for upcoming projects.

Supervisor Newvine discussed that there is \$35,000 in the playground fund and the need to get the basketball court finished as soon as possible.

Highway Department

Highway Superintendent Nelson Bice was not in attendance due to an emergency.

Supervisor Newvine discussed interim Highway Superintendent Neson Bice is doing a good job. He stated that the highway laborers seem to be happy.

Councilmembers

Councilperson Walsh:

- Discussed the new painted lines on the floor of the highway department look great.
- Asked to have a barrel cart purchased for the highway department as a safety precaution. Supervisor Newvine discussed that he would do some research and contact Nelson to order the cart.

- Discussed that there are pigs running at large on Doane Rd while plow trucks are out plowing the road. It was discussed Supervisor Newvine would contact the animal control officer to see who handles this kind of problem.

Councilperson Lynn Bishop:

- Asked if the floors under the overhead doors at the highway department are going to be worked on this year, as heat loss is occurring from their current condition. Supervisor Newvine discussed that the floors are going to be worked on this year.
- The property on CR 22 has been cleaned up by the County, and it looks very good.
- He would like to have a little work done at the Balmat Cemetery, to include repairing the railing, and suggested possibly having summer workers at the highway department complete the work.
- Discussed, the sand that is on the old skating rink needs to be put back in the salt barn.
- Asked if there had been any news on the property next to the Town Hall. CEO Besaw discussed that it has been over a year now since the fire and the property needs to be cleaned up. Supervisor Newvine stated he would make an inquiry to the County Attorney.

Councilperson Leo Knight Jr:

- Reported that he stops by to check on the highway department once a week and stated that they are doing well keeping up with the necessary maintenance at the highway department and everything looked cleaner.

Supervisor Newvine asked if both overhead doors had been fixed at the highway department as the invoice total from Kelly Overhead Doors in this evening's purchase orders seemed quite low for the repairs. Councilperson Walsh stated that he was told all the overhead doors were working well.

Councilperson Karen Simmons:

- In the month of February, the HAP Program was visited 34 times.
- Thanked the Gouverneur Masonic Lodge for their check donation of \$150.00 in honor of Highway Superintendent Randy Durham, and thanked Brad Conklin for his cash donation of \$100.00 for the food pantry.
- Thanked Orville & Joan Eacker for their donation of eggs twice last month, and Robert Saidel for the donation of 50lbs of potatoes.
- Thanked the following for food donations: the First Presbyterian Church of Gouverneur, Ricky & Sue Newvine, Scott & Marcia Cleveland, Debbie Andrews, and Bob Smith.
- She will be delivering SOS care packages this Wednesday to the Fowler school apartments and Kilkarney Court assisted by Debbie Andrews and she and Supervisor Ricky Newvine will deliver the remainder of the care packages on Friday, March 20th. There are 110 senior citizens who will receive the care packages.
- The next meeting for Family Day will be held on Thursday, March 26th at 3:00 PM.
- Family Day is being held on Saturday, July 18, 2026.

Supervisor Ricky W. Newvine:

- Read aloud thank-you cards received from the family of Randy Durham Sr, Vicky Cappellino, and Vivian Goodman.
- Reported on correspondence received from Senator Mark Walczyk.

- Reported the Town of Fowler had received a notice from our insurance company renewing our policy on May 15, 2026 with a few changes and exclusions.
- Reported he has ordered a new beach sign from the County, that will read "beach closed September to May – No Trespassing, after the Town of Fowler had received a phone call asking if ice fishing was allowed at the beach.
- Reported he had attended the "Local Roads Are Essential" advocacy Day rally held in Albany, previously attended by Highway Superintendent Randy Durham, that advocates for increased state aid, increased funding for local roads, bridges, and infrastructure, and increased CHIPS funding. He was able to talk with Assemblyman Ken Blankenbush while attending the rally.
- Reminded anyone who uses town computers to provide their passwords to the Town Clerk.
- Apologized to the board for handling a situation that was brought to his attention over the weekend without contacting them. Supervisor Newvine discussed that a septic system was in danger of being taken out by the flooding, and that the State usually handles this re-occurring situation by putting calcium chloride in a drain near the property to take care of it. Supervisor Newvine called Bruce Patton, Highway Maintenance Supervisor New York State DOT, to discuss the concern and ascertain where the State applies the calcium chloride. After the application of the product the water was completely remediated. Supervisor Newvine discussed, he thought this was a good way to help the State and at the same time, form a better relationship between the State and the Town of Fowler. Supervisor Newvine discussed that the resident is going to make a quilt to donate to our Family Day raffle as a gesture of gratitude for the help.

Public Comment

Richard Clement: Discussed the need to have the lawn leveled in front of the playground where the water pools every year. It was discussed the side lawn at Town Hall was worked on last year and that area was not included in the work. Supervisor Newvine stated that maybe it could be leveled this spring.

Glen Besaw: Discussed he had talked to Jeff Davison, who has agreed to have his band be the first to come and provide entertainment at the pavilion. He suggested maybe we could start holding this kind of event on week nights regularly in the summertime. Glen was appointed to take care of the scheduling and organizing.

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 #56 to #95, with a total of \$75,747.66.

The next regular scheduled board meeting will be held on April 13th, 2026 at 6:00PM.

With no further business, on a motion of Councilperson Bishop, seconded by Councilperson Knight, the March 9, 2026 Regular Town Board meeting & Justice Court and Town Clerk Audit of 2025 Books was adjourned at 6:40 PM. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tami Gale; Town Clerk