

Town of Fowler September 8, 2025, Minutes of 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, Town Justice Tim Knowlton, Highway Superintendent Randy Durham, Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie, Planning Board Member John Walsh, Assessor Chair Kathy Besaw, Maintenance Worker Byron Woodward, Board of Ethics Committee Member Vivian Goodman, Deb Walsh, Richard Clement, Laurina Greenhill, Lenore Griebisch, Karl Griebisch, Scott Cleveland, Marcia Cleveland, and Carol Dier.

Supervisor Newvine 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 those who have passed since our last meeting: Freda Stiles, Denver "DR" Littlebrant, and Joanne Orford.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 11, 2025, regular scheduled board meeting. A motion was made by Councilperson Knight, seconded by Councilperson Bishop. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED LOCAL LAW No. 1 OF 2025 PROVIDING A VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER AND VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE WORKER REAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

At 6:01pm Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to open the Public Hearing on proposed Local Law No. 1 of 2025. A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons, seconded by Councilperson Knight. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Supervisor Newvine reported the proposed Local Law would provide a real property tax exemption of up to 10% of the assessed value of real property owned by qualifying volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers. Supervisor Newvine reported there are extra copies of the proposed local law available for the public. Supervisor Newvine discussed that the public hearing would remain open if the public had any questions about the proposed law.

SET DATE FOR OCTOBER BOARD MEETING

Supervisor Newvine reported a date needed to be set for the October board meeting as the 2nd Monday in October falls on the Columbus Day holiday. It was discussed that the Town Clerk needs to submit the preliminary/tentative budget to the town board by October 5th. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the board to schedule the October town board meeting to be held on Wednesday, October 15th, 2025 at 6:00 PM, and board members would receive the tentative budget in advance of the board meeting, prior to the October 5th deadline.

SET DATE FOR 1st BUDGET WORKSHOP

Supervisor Newvine reported that a date needed to be set to hold the 1st budget workshop in preparation for the 2026 preliminary/tentative budget. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the board to set the 1st budget workshop to be held on Wednesday, September 24th at 3:00PM at the Fowler Town Hall.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION #16 of 2025

Constitution Week Proclamation

Supervisor Newvine discussed he had received a request from the Daughters of the American Revolution asking the Town of Fowler to proclaim the week of September 17 through September 23, 2025 as Constitution Week and read the proposed proclamation aloud to meeting attendees.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to adopt Resolution #16 of 2025. A motion was made by Councilperson Simmonds seconded by Councilperson Bishop. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

AYES: 4 *NEWVINE, SIMMONS, BISHOP, KNIGHT*

NAYS: 0

CLOSING PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED LOCAL LAW No. 1 OF 2025 PROVIDING A VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER AND VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE WORKER REAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

At 6:07pm, after having received no questions from meeting attendees, Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing on proposed Local Law No. 1 of 2025. A motion was made by Councilperson Bishop, seconded by Councilperson Knight. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

RESOLUTION #17 of 2025

Adopting Local Law 1 of 2025 Volunteer Firefighter and Ambulance worker Exemption

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to adopt Resolution #17 of 2025. A motion was made by Councilperson Bishop seconded by Councilperson Knight. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

AYES: 4 *NEWVINE, SIMMONS, BISHOP, KNIGHT*

NAYS: 0

Town Department Reports

Justice Department

Town Justice Tim Knowlton reported:

- The court now has a representative of the DA's office who comes to court regularly. It was discussed that the court has gone for 2 to 3 months without having a representative at court.

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie reported:

- She had provided Town of Fowler Cash Balance Reports for Month Ending July, 2025, and Budget Balances for July, 2025 to board members for their review.
- 57.31% of the General Fund has been spent with 79.12% of revenues received.
- 71.68% of the Highway Fund has been spent with 91.82% of revenues received.
- She had provided department heads with their budget request paperwork before the start of the meeting and asked to have the requests returned to her by the 20th.

Assessors

Assessor Chair Kathy Besaw reported:

- They have been busy with valuations of building permits that have been completed.
- Provided a status report on data collection for the town. It was reported that there are 1,725 parcels located in the town, and to date 1,369 data cards have been completed.
- Data collection is about 90% completed. She reported once the remaining data cards have been completed that they will need to start all over again, as some of the data is over 5 years old.
- She reported the purpose of collecting the data is in preparation for a re-valuation, so the town knows what kind of shape it is in.
- She is still waiting to hear from a representative in Syracuse, and she is hoping by November she will be able to provide the board with a report showing just how skewed the assessments are in the town.

Historian

Historian Karen Simmons reported:

- It has been quiet in the Historian's Office.

Animal Control

Councilperson Karen Simmons reported for Dog Control Officer Dan Moyer who was not in attendance:

- 1 complaint had been received concerning a dog on River Rd, in Hailesboro, which has been resolved.
- 1 dog had been picked up on the Doane Rd and spent a night in the kennel before being claimed by its owner.

Beaver Control

Councilperson Karen Simmons reported for Moyer's Wildlife Control:

- He is working on beaver control on the River Rd and the Swiss Hill Rd.

Code Enforcement

Supervisor Newvine reported for Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw who was not in attendance:

- The owner of the property of 81 Little York Rd has been served with an order detailing proceedings to remove the unsafe building damaged by fire in January of this year.
- Removal is expected to begin within the next few weeks.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Tami Gale reported:

- DEC Gross sales for the month were \$1,663.00 with the Town of Fowler's Commission being \$91.77. She had licensed 45 dogs, issued 4 death certificates, 1 marriage license, 2 certified marriage transcripts, handled 10 building permit applications, collected \$45.00 in kennel fees, sold 1 bicentennial book, and had collected 4.50 for photocopies.
- \$202.00 had been collected in coins from the Pepsi machine at the highway department.
- A scrap metal check had been received in the amount of \$404.40 for 7.24 tons of scrap metal.
- She has signed several people up for the Local Government Conference being held on October 14th at SUNY Potsdam. If anyone else is interested in going, please contact her.

Maintenance

Maintenance Worker Byron Woodward reported:

- He has prepared the dog kennel for winter.
- The heat is in working order and is set to 50 degrees until colder weather arrives.
- He is working on a new water pipe for the highway department.
- He will be removing the window air conditioning units in the downstairs of the town hall this week but will leave the air conditioners located upstairs in the court in place until later in the fall.
- Asked the board to consider having the side yard of the town hall leveled with top soil and re-seeded to make it safer for visitors. Supervisor Newvine reported that it was a great idea and would contact John Hall for an estimate.
- Asked what the savings were to heat the town barn last winter with the new propane furnace being installed. It was discussed the heating cost would need to be looked into.
- Suggested the board think about replacing the town hall furnace.

Highway Department

Highway Superintendent Randy Durham reported:

- The Chub Lake Rd project should be finished tomorrow.
- Outer Country Club road work is done being worked on this year.

- Fire extinguisher inspections for both the town barn and town hall will be completed on Wednesday.
- He expects to receive the first CHIPS check on the 17th and has completed paperwork to submit the second CHIPS check this week, which will roll over about \$148,000 to be used next year.

Supervisor Newvine asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham what he was going to do with the sand pile at the rear of the salt/sand barn. It was discussed that the sand would be brought into the building and used this winter. It was reported there is an orange fence around the sand until it is moved.

Presentation of plaque to Councilperson Scott Cleveland

Supervisor Newvine read aloud a plaque thanking Scott for his years of service as councilperson of the Town of Fowler. Supervisor Newvine presented Scott's wife Marcia Cleveland with a floral bouquet.

Councilmembers

Councilperson Karen Simmons:

- Reported the rabies clinic was held on August 14th. There were 130 animals vaccinated against the disease to include: 91 dogs, 35 cats and 4 ferrets.
- Reported \$259.00 in donations was received at the free rabies clinic. An additional \$70.00 in donations was received, which was paid that night to the vet tech.
- Thanked Supervisor Newvine, Tami Gale, Leo Knight, Scott Cleveland, and Roger Refici for their help at the rabies clinic.
- In the month of August, the HAP food program was visited 36 times.
- The next SOS delivery will be made to senior citizens in the month of December.
- Additional family day t-shirts were ordered, and are available in size medium, large, extra large and 2XL if anyone would like to purchase them.

Councilperson Leo Knight:

- Had no further questions or commentary.

Councilperson Lynn Bishop:

- Discussed the mowing contract ends in September and asked Supervisor Newvine about extending the mowing into October. Supervisor Newvine reported the mowing contract will be extended as done in the past.

Supervisor Ricky W. Newvine:

- Thanked Highway Superintendent Durham for his help with closing the beach for the season.
- Praised the professionalism of the Natural Bridge Rescue Squad, who had responded to a call to the town hall for an injury occurring at the rabies clinic that was held on August 14th when Gouverneur Rescue was out of service.
- Reported that the pavilion had been rented for a family reunion by Jeremy and Jennifer Link, and they donated the \$100.00 deposit back to the Town of Fowler, with much praise for the facilities.
- Congratulated Scott Cleveland for his work and dedication to keeping the pavilion and the playground very well maintained and taken care of.
- Reported a thank you card had been received from the family of Robert J. Leader for the donation given in his memory.
- Reported he had attended a seminar held in Warrensburg to learn more about potential housing grants. He is hopeful that there will be something in place for the year 2027.

- Reported he had signed a Solar on Earth Agreement, which gives back 10% of the solar charges on national grid bills for municipalities for the next five years. Supervisor Newvine discussed that on the town's last national grid bill, this would have saved the town \$160.00.
- Discussed that a lot of landowners on County Route 22 had received letters from Empire State Mines regarding their water and property. Some of the landowners reported they had not received return calls when trying to contact the number provided in the letter. One landowner had contacted the Town of Fowler to inquire about their letter.
- The dog kennel was inspected by Ag & Markets and had no concerns.

Public Comment

Lenore Griebisch-Heitz:

- Discussed that she was commenting this evening on behalf of many Sylvia Lake landowners who are very concerned and very much opposed to the use of chemicals in Sylvia Lake.
- Reported that since attending the Town of Fowler's July 14th 2025 town board meeting, she had attended a Sylvia Lake Association meeting and asked the association members why they were asking the landowners at Sylvia Lake to pay \$100.00 to rent the benthic mats to suppress the growth of milfoil for the season when they had already paid for them. She reported that the association members agreed that it was probably not a good idea to have asked this of Sylvia Lake landowners.
- Offered her assistance to the Town of Fowler's beach for milfoil removal, if we notice we have a problem. She discussed that she would get people there to remove weeds naturally without the use of chemicals and would be happy to place a benthic mat if that was needed.
- She reported that they are very motivated to keep chemicals out of the lake with all of the questionable stuff that comes with using them.
- Supervisor Newvine and the town board thanked Lenore Griebisch-Heitz for her offer of assistance if it was needed.

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 #326 to #364 , with a total of \$283,670.04.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, at 6:00PM.

With no further business, on a motion of Councilperson Knight , seconded by Councilperson Bishop , the September 8th, 2025, Regular Town Board meeting was adjourned at 6:35PM. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tami Gale; Town Clerk