

Town of Fowler October 15, 2025, Minutes of Regular Scheduled Board Meeting at 6PM.

The Town of Fowler regularly scheduled Town Board meeting was held on the above date with all board members present. Also present were Town Clerk Tami Gale, Highway Superintendent Randy Durham, Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw, Assessor Chair Kathy Besaw, Planning Board Member John Walsh, Maintenance Worker Byron Woodward, Debra Walsh, Dick Clement, Scott Cleveland, Lenore Griebisch-Heitz, Karl Griebisch, and attending via teleconference Rachel Hunter, editor of the Gouverneur Tribune Press.

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 to give our sympathies to the families of those who have been lost: Patricia “Patti” Hogue, Karen Beck, and John Hadfield.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 8, 2025, regular scheduled board meeting. A motion was made by Councilperson Knight, seconded by Councilperson Bishop to approve the minutes. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

DISCUSSION ON THE 2% TAX-CAP

Supervisor Newvine discussed we needed a motion to stay within the 2% tax-cap. A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons seconded by Councilperson Knight to stay within the 2% tax-cap. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING DATE SET

Supervisor Newvine reported a date needed to be set for the November board meeting. After some discussion, a motion was made by Councilperson Knight seconded by Councilperson Bishop to set the November Town board meeting for Thursday, November 6th at 6:00 PM. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

SET DATE FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to set Thursday, November 6, 2025 as the date to hold a public hearing on the proposed 2026 preliminary budget. A motion was made by Councilperson Bishop seconded by Councilperson Simmons. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

PRESENTATION OF PRELIMINARY/TENTATIVE BUDGET

A copy of the preliminary/tentative budget for fiscal year 2026, was filed with the Town Supervisor and in the office of the town clerk on October 1st and presented to board members this evening with extra copies made available for the public.

DISCUSSION ON ADVERTISING FUEL BID

Supervisor Newvine discussed the need to advertise the 2-year fuel BID. A motion was made by Councilperson Knight seconded by Councilperson Simmons to advertise the 2-year fuel BID to come in for the December 8th, 2025 board meeting. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

DISCUSSION OF HOUSING GRANTS

Supervisor Newvine reported he had attended a meeting in Warrensburg, New York presented by LaBella Associates to learn more about their professional services and grant support for housing rehabilitation for the Town of Fowler. Supervisor Newvine discussed that we can't apply for a housing rehabilitation grant until 2026 for money to be delivered in 2027. Supervisor Newvine reported that LaBella Associates would assist with the application and administration of a CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Program Grant at a cost of approximately \$5,000 to \$6,000. Supervisor Newvine discussed that he wasn't sure if the cost of their professional services would be a part of the grant money or if the town would be responsible for their fee but discussed either way it provides valuable housing rehabilitation assistance for the residents of the Town of Fowler and is worth it.

DISCUSSION OF DEC GRANT

Supervisor Newvine reported that the DEC again has advertised that grant money is available to be applied for. Supervisor Newvine discussed that previously the Sylvia Lake residents who were in favor of a chemical solution for Sylvia Lake had asked the Town to sponsor the application of a DEC grant as they are not able to apply for it themselves. Supervisor Newvine discussed that the Town of Fowler sponsored the application for the grant in the past and stated it was an error to have done this as it was done with the understanding that the majority of Sylvia Lake residents were in favor of a chemical solution which does not appear to be the case.

After some discussion, it was consensus of the town board of the Town of Fowler that if the residents of Sylvia Lake who are in favor of a chemical solution want the Town of Fowler to sponsor an application for a DEC grant in the future, that they will need to prove to the town board that the majority of the residents of Sylvia Lake are in favor of using a chemical solution in Sylvia Lake.

Town Department Reports

Justice Department

Town Justice Tim Knowlton was not in attendance.

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie was not in attendance.

- In advance of the meeting provided Cash Balance Reports for Month ending August, 2025 and Budget Balances for Month ending August, 2025 to the board for their review.
- The report showed the general fund was 63.81% spent and had received 103.32% in revenue and the highway fund was 90.5% spent and had received 98.21% in revenue.

Assessors

Assessor Chair Kathy Besaw reported:

- The data cards have been completed for all of the residences in the Town of Fowler, excluding Sylvia Lake.
- Commended assessor Timothy Thomas for all of his work completing the majority of the data cards.
- Reported that she and assessor Theriault will be starting data collection at Sylvia Lake next week and will finish it in the spring of next year.

- Discussed she will be taking updated photos of residences at the lake and documenting decks, docks, and any additions that building permits were not obtained for to accurately update the property data cards.
- They continue to work on valuations.

Historian

Historian Karen Simmons reported:

- Nothing has been going on in the Historian's Office.

Animal Control

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

- 1 complaint was received about dogs not being cared for properly at a residence on County Route 22 which was determined to be unfounded.
- She and Supervisor Newvine will be attending a presentation discussing the Companion Animal Care Standards Act (Article 26C) on October 29th presented by Janet Collier of New York State Agriculture & Markets.
- The presentation will provide new information concerning the operation of the dog kennel at the Town of Fowler.

Beaver Control

Councilperson Karen Simmons reported for Moyer's Wildlife Control:

- Moyer's Wildlife Control submitted a \$1,500 invoice in this evening's bills for beaver control at four locations and the removal of 12 beavers.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw reported:

- Contractors have been completing many building projects before winter.
- The new home at Twin Falls in Fullerville is up and looks very nice.
- He has contacted the DEC regarding questions concerning the property next door and is awaiting their response.
- His new computer has been set up. His code enforcement program is scheduled to be re-installed on the new computer on October 23rd.
- He will be able to process building permits again after the installation.
- Gave an up-date on the cement dock that was put in illegally at Sylvia Lake. The DEC had asked him to step back and let the DEC handle it. He reported that the DEC did let the dock owner keep the dock, and they fined him.
- A building permit could not be issued for the illegally built dock, but it will be added to the property's assessment.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Tami Gale reported:

- DEC Gross sales for the month were \$4,623.00 with the Town of Fowler's Commission being \$232.42. She had licensed 24 dogs, issued 1 Marriage License, issued 1 One-Day Marriage Officiant License, and had handled 8 building permit applications.
- The town emails have been switched over to .gov email addresses, as well the town website is now fowlerny.gov. It was discussed the email address and website change was mandated by legislation and needed to be in place by December 21st of this year.
- The 2026 newsletter is starting to be worked on and will require responses for individual sections hopefully by the end of October.
- Notification was received that the NYS Tug Hill Commission's 35th Local Government Conference is being held on Tuesday, April 21st 2026 at the Turning Stone Resort if anyone is interested in attending the conference.

Maintenance

Maintenance Worker Byron Woodward reported:

- He has turned the heat on in the dog kennel and needs to purchase a 2nd smaller heater for the kennel.
- Reported the metal is missing that used to be at the base of the highway department doors allowing for cold air to enter.

Supervisor Newvine discussed that a new propane furnace was purchased for the highway department last year and the heating costs have almost doubled. It was discussed that the highway doors have not been resealed in around 10 years. Supervisor Newvine asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham to contact the overhead door company to see if they had any recommendations to assist with the heat loss from the gap in the doors.

Supervisor Newvine discussed maintenance worker Woodward's past recommendation to replace the furnace in the town hall. Maintenance worker Woodward suggested they will need to conduct a lot of research to ensure the town hall heating bill will not double before replacing it.

- Reported the pavilion has been winterized.

Supervisor Newvine reported he had received a request to rent the pavilion for a kid's birthday party earlier in the day and asked the board members their thoughts. It was discussed the pavilion was fine to use, without the bathrooms, and the porta potties were still available at the playground. It was further discussed that an application for use and deposit would not be required and there would be a reminder given that any garbage that was generated would be their responsibility to remove.

Highway Department

Highway Superintendent Randy Durham reported:

- He has talked with the Town of Rossie, and they are going to pay for the portion of their road which connects to the outer Country Club Road when paving is done.
- It was discussed a meeting would be necessary with the Town of Hermon to discuss asking them to pay for their portion of the Battle Hill Road when improvements are made to it.
- Discussed he had the old lifeguard stand to take to the Amish located on highway 812, to get an estimate for a new lifeguard chair to be built using composite material instead of wood, and asked permission to turn the bill in to be paid when the chair is completed.
- Discussed he has had to red tag Truck 5 due to a large crack in the frame making it unsafe to drive. He reported a representative from Whitesboro Trucks is coming to take a look at it, but that it may not be able to be fixed. His plan is to continue using Truck 91 until there is more information on the status of Truck 5.

Councilmembers

Councilperson Leo Knight Jr:

- Asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham to add the "truck crossing" signs to the new larger signage that was installed on the Sylvia Lake Rd, so that the new signage has "truck crossing" on it.
- Asked the board if they wanted the mines to pay for the new signage that was requested and discussed an invoice in the amount of \$447.00 that was sent to the mines. It was the consensus of the board that the installation of the new signage was a taxpayer safety issue and not the responsibility of the mines and the invoice was a town expense.
- Asked Code Enforcement Officer Besaw where the situation stood regarding the junk cars on the Doane Road that they had previously discussed. CEO Besaw reported that the situation required an order, and he would print up the order as soon as his code enforcement programs were reinstalled on his computer.

Councilperson Lynn Bishop:

- Asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham what he is able to use CHIPS funds for. Hwy. Superintendent Durham replied that CHIPS funds are able to be used for many things and gave an example that they can be used to purchase new equipment, but then you needed to keep the equipment which was purchased for 10 years. Hwy. Superintendent Durham stated most of the towns don't use their CHIP funds on roads, but he does, because it is the only way to get more of the roads done.
- Suggested that maybe some CHIP funds could be used towards new guard rails or hiring a contractor to cut down the larger trees that might be too big for the highway workers to remove.
- Asked the board their thoughts about installing a light behind the pavilion where the tractor and truck are. After a lengthy discussion, Supervisor Newvine asked maintenance worker Woodward to take a look at it and see what he thinks would be a solution.

Councilperson Karen Simmons:

- The month of September had 39 visitors to the HAP Program. She thanked Marcia & Scott Cleveland, Mike and Missy Tersmette, Robert Saidel, and Kenny and Crystal Smith for donations to the program last month.
- The next SOS care package delivery will be made in December and as of meeting time there will be a total of 113 deliveries made.

Supervisor Ricky W. Newvine:

- Reported the side lawn of the town hall had been leveled and reseeded since the last meeting and thanked John Hall for performing the work.
- Reported the building next door to the town hall is now down and thanked John Hall and CEO Glen Besaw for their work.
- Reported he had received correspondence from Kurt Richter, of Spectrum Business who may be able to offer the town a savings opportunity on phones and internet. Asked Town Clerk Gale to forward the town's existing phone and internet bills to him to go over.
- Discussed he had written a letter of support to Sarah Waring, Executive Director of Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) for a St. Lawrence County IDA Graphite Pilot Facility Application for \$500,000 in funding for Empire State Mines LLC. Supervisor Newvine reported they should find out by the end of October if the grant was awarded.
- Reported there is a tentative date set for November 17th at 6:00 pm, at BOCES for an update to be provided by Empire State Mines for the citizens of Fowler.

Public Comment**Lenore Griebisch-Heitz**

- Thanked the board again on behalf of many residents of Sylvia Lake, for their consideration of using common sense to get rid of milfoil at Sylvia Lake by using non-chemical means when it becomes a problem.
- She discussed they had talked to the DEC about the proper way to do it and they had given them the ok to remove the milfoil by using the mats, which the Sylvia Lake Association has decided not to double charge Sylvia Lake residents to use.
- Reported since they attended the last board meeting further studies have been published reporting on the main chemical which they wanted to use in the lake to be a forever chemical that dissipates from the water but remains in the sediment.

- Reminded the board that the comprehensive survey that the milfoil taskforce had completed in 2022 was not a reliable representation of the majority of residents of Sylvia Lake.
- Appreciates the town board's approach to the matter.
- Suggested perhaps in the future, the town board may consider passing an ordinance requiring anyone using any chemical to have to go through a review with the town and obtain a permit.

Karl Griebisch

- Suggested, the town board should question the means of how data was collected in the future when a comprehensive survey has been conducted.
- Discussed that no response on this particular survey was considered as a "yes" to the chemicals being used.
- Stated that many of the residents of Sylvia Lake who he has personally spoken to do not want chemicals used in Sylvia Lake, and many of the residents didn't either respond to or receive their surveys.

Scott Cleveland

- Stated the basketball court should be getting fixed next week.
- Asked the board if they wanted to make the basketball court any longer. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the board that the length of the basketball court was fine as it is. It was discussed a basket could be placed on each end.

Byron Woodward

- Discussed the beavers have returned.
- Reported a homeowner on Little York Rd had two bullets shot into her garage recently.

Dick Clement

- Commented that Hwy. Superintendent Durham and the highway department had done an excellent job on the California Road. He was happy to see the Grader being used.

Lenore Griebisch-Heitz

- Asked if the Town of Fowler owned the boat launch at Sylvia Lake. It was discussed that the DEC runs and monitors the boat launch at Sylvia Lake that is owned by the mines.

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 #365 to #408, with a total of \$193,921.74.

Supervisor Newvine reminded all to remember to vote in the General Election on November 4, 2025.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be held on November 6th, 2025, at 6:00PM.

With no further business, on a motion of Councilperson Bishop, seconded by Councilperson Simmons, the October 15th, 2025, Regular Town Board meeting was adjourned at 6:47PM. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tami Gale; Town Clerk