Town of Fowler September 14, 2026 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 Paul Johnson Jr, Assessor Chair Kathy Besaw, Maintenance Worker Byron Woodward, Board of Ethics Committee Member Vivian Goodman, Dog Control Officer Dan Moyer, Deborah Force, Debra Tupper, Richard Tupper, Deb Walsh, Scott Cleveland, Deputy Highway Superintendent Dennis Travis, and 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 for the families who have lost loved ones since our last meeting: Ronald Goodman.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 10, 2026, regular scheduled board meeting. A motion was made by Councilperson Knight, seconded by Councilperson Bishop. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

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 Tuesday, October 13th, 2026 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 2027 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 30th at 4:00PM at the Fowler Town Hall.

DISCUSSION ON THE FOWLER DOG KENNEL

Supervisor Newvine reported that we have some issues and a complaint has been filed with New York State regarding the dog kennel. Supervisor Newvine reported that he, along with Deputy Supervisor Simmons and Dog Control Officer Moyer had met with representatives from the State earlier in the day. Supervisor Newvine reported that the inspection that was done today at the Fowler dog kennel had passed with flying colors.

Supervisor Newvine stated recently there has been discussion about closing the Fowler dog kennel and that if we want to keep the dog kennel operating, there are a lot of regulations that will need to be followed. Supervisor Newvine reported on the following:

- If a dog is in the kennel for 5 days it falls under Article 7 rules, which passed at today's inspection with flying colors.
- Article 26C states if you keep a dog for more than 7 days, there are further regulations that need to be followed, which we are pretty well in compliance except for needing a few more operating procedures in place.

1. The kennels need to be numbered.
2. A clipboard is needed for each dog.

Supervisor Newvine stated the report was that we are doing a good job running the kennel other than the few procedural issues.

Supervisor Newvine reported that he and Deputy Supervisor Simmons will be working on the regulations for the kennel moving forward.

Supervisor Newvine discussed that there have been ongoing discussions regarding the kennel remaining in operation or contracting with another kennel to receive Town of Fowler dogs and stated he didn't think this would be decided tonight.

In attendance, was Deborah Force, who asked Supervisor Newvine if she could speak and reported that she was the person who had filed the complaint with the State.

Deborah Force:

- Discussed she didn't think people realized how traumatized the dogs that are kept in the kennel become after days and weeks of being housed there.
- She holds the owners who drop off the dogs responsible, but when they are taken in by the Town of Fowler, kept in the kennel and don't see the light of day, it is concerning.
- Discussed "Charlie" a dog that was found at Sylvia Lake, went unclaimed, and was eventually euthanized after he was determined to be an aggressive dog. She stated she feels that he wasn't aggressive at the beginning of his stay in the kennel, but he was made to be that way by spending 5 weeks in the kennel.
- Discussed she knows Councilperson Simmons tried very hard to find "Charlie" a home, as she herself had done.
- Discussed that in the end she thinks that spending 5 weeks in the kennel is just as inhumane as the dog being abandoned.
- Discussed the 3 new dogs that are currently in the kennel, and their behaviors she sees when she visits the kennel.
- Stated she would rather see the Town of Fowler dog kennel be closed than see more dogs put down after staying that length of time in the kennel.
- Offered to take the mandated classes to become a volunteer to help with animals that are housed in the kennel.

Supervisor Newvine agreed that she was right, that the longer period of time spent in the kennel affects the animal's psyche and they are working on a plan to have volunteers become certified to walk the dogs that are housed in the kennel.

Scott Cleveland

- Reported that he and Marcia were going to donate a 10' X 20' outside kennel to the Town of Fowler.

After further discussion, Supervisor Newvine reported that the status of the dog kennel would be addressed at the October 13th board meeting.

PRESENTATION OF PLAQUE TO DEBBIE TUPPER

Supervisor Newvine presented a plaque to Debbie Tupper for her 7 years of dedicated service to the Town of Fowler as Deputy Town Clerk, Registrar 2018 – 2025.

PLAQUE IN MEMORY OF HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT RANDY DURHAM

Supervisor Newvine presented a plaque in memory of Highway Superintendent Randy Durham that will be placed on a wall of the Fowler Town Barn.

Town Department Reports

Justice Department

Town Justice Tim Knowlton reported:

- Court is running very well.
- Discussed how lucky the Town of Fowler is to have Court Clerk Irma Ashley. He discussed she is well known throughout the County as one of the best and handles three other town courts.

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie was not in attendance.

- No Cash Balance Reports or Budget Balance Reports were provided.

Assessors

Assessor Chair Kathy Besaw reported:

- Discussed that the 100% Veteran's Exemption finally got passed and will go into effect October 1st and she does believe that there is one person in the Town of Fowler that may be eligible for the exemption.
- Discussed that there are specific criteria to qualify for this exemption, and each town decides if they want to offer the exemption.
- Discussed St. Lawrence County is going to decide to approve or not approve the 100% Veteran's exemption in either October or November. If it is approved by the County and the Town decides to adopt the 100% Veteran exemption, then the County will cover the exemption. If the County does not approve the exemption and the Town of Fowler decides to adopt the 100% exemption, then the Town would have to cover the exemption.
- It was discussed that the Town of Fowler will wait to see if the exemption is approved by the County before deciding to adopt the exemption.

Historian

Historian Karen Simmons reported:

- The Town of Fowler has been granted a Pomeroy Patriot Burial roadside marker, that is going to be placed at the Fowler Baptist Church Cemetery commemorating where three American Revolution Patriots: James Cole, Comfort Johnson, and Jedediah Kingsley are laid to rest.
- Reported on Saturday, October 3rd, at 1:30 PM there will be a dedication ceremony that is open to the public to include a gun salute, the playing of TAPS, and readings of the three Patriot biographies, followed by a reception compliments of the Fowler Baptist Church.
- Discussed Councilperson Bishop, Supervisor Newvine, and Byron Woodward have all assisted in locating the graves of the Patriots.

Animal Control

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to appoint Scott Cleveland as a dog kennel volunteer for the Town of Fowler. A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons seconded by Councilperson Walsh. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Beaver Control
Dan Moyer reported for Moyer's Wildlife Control:

- Chub Lake and Stone Rd culverts have been cleared.
- One end of Fullerville Rd has been cleared and work continues on the bridge end of Fullerville Rd with assistance from the highway department to clear the culvert at that location.
- Byrns Rd and River Rd continue to see beaver activity.

Supervisor Newvine discussed the chain of command that alerts Moyers's Wildlife Control to beaver activity. Supervisor Newvine discussed that presently, the Highway Superintendent informs Councilperson Simmons of any beaver activity and Councilperson Simmons then calls Moyer's Wildlife Control to report it. Supervisor Newvine would like to have the Highway Superintendent call Moyer's Wildlife Control directly to report beaver activity and leave out the middle man. It was the consensus of the board to approve the notification process.

Code Enforcement
Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw was not in attendance.

Town Clerk
Town Clerk Tami Gale reported:

- DEC Gross sales for the month were $2,690.00 with the Town of Fowler's Commission being $114.39. She had licensed 37 dogs, issued 13 death certificates, issued 2 marriage licenses, issued 5 certified marriage transcripts, issued 1 one-day Marriage Officiant License, handled 4 building permit applications, and had collected .75 cents for photocopies.
- The Local Government Conference is going to be held on Tuesday, October 13th at SUNY Potsdam. If anyone else is interested in going, please contact her to be signed up. Assessor Chair Besaw is the only one who has requested to be signed up to attend as of meeting time.
- Interim Hwy. Superintendent Nelson Bice's credit cards have been cancelled and newly appointed Hwy, Superintendent Johnson's cards have been ordered.
- The phone systems have been re-set to reflect the change in highway superintendents.
- All rabies certificates have been either mailed or emailed to attendees.
- She has been working on genealogical services requests, and a FOIL that was sent to her along with 500 other Village and Town Clerk's.

Maintenance
Maintenance Worker Byron Woodward reported:

- He sprayed the front entrance to the Town Hall for spiders.
- Discussion was had on renting a lift to pressure wash the building.
- Discussed he would be winterizing the pavilion now that the pavilion rentals are done.
- More work needs to be completed at the dog kennel but can't begin until the dogs are re-homed.
- Discussed there is moisture in the basement of the town hall and suggested a dehumidifier be installed to combat the odor, reporting the dampness is likely adding to the spider problem.
- Discussed having the highway department tear up the existing basketball court this fall.

Supervisor Newvine reported the septic system needed to be checked at the pavilion as there is a foul odor coming from the area. It was further discussed that it will need to be investigated before the sidewalk is put in.

Highway Department
Highway Superintendent Paul Johnson Jr. reported:

- It has been very busy in the highway department.
- Work was done to repair a washout on the River Rd.
- Asked for permission for the highway department workers to attend an equipment expo in Syracuse on October 28th from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. It was the consensus of the board to approve the request.
- Asked for permission to send some highway department workers to training sponsored by Gillee's Auto on the new style disc brakes. It was the consensus of the board to approve the request.
- Discussed Shantyville Rd, and the big trucks that are driving on it due to the detour, and the need to post a weight limit sign. It was the consensus of the board to approve the new weight limit signage to be posted on Shantyville Rd.
- Reported the frame in the 91 International Truck is cracked, antifreeze is leaking out of it, and he believes it is time to park it. It was discussed the box on the 91 is in great shape and it could be put on a new cab and chassis. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the board to approve Highway Superintendent Johnson to obtain a quote for the cab and chassis.
- The remaining paving is expected to be done in the first week of October.
- On October 16th he has an appointment at Viking for the new 2026 MACK truck.
- He had ordered an additional 4,000 yards of sand in preparation for Cook's Sand and Gravel closing down this year.
- Mowing has been completed for the year.
- The new "Fullerville" sign was installed.
- Provided quotes to replace the head and blade on the tiger mower. After some discussion, the board approved the purchase of 60" rotary head with blade bar/brush knives & hydraulic door at a cost of $22,675.
- Discussed the need to replace signs and sign posts throughout the town.
- Reported the highway workers have been doing great.
- Reported the tables and chairs had been cleaned and set up by highway department workers in advance of the rabies clinic.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 6:56 PM Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to enter into executive session to discuss the highway department union contract. A motion was made by Councilperson Bishop seconded by Councilperson Knight. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED. Highway Superintendent Johnson was invited into the executive session.

At 7:04 PM Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to end the executive session. A motion was made by Councilperson Bishop seconded by Councilperson Simmons. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Supervisor Newvine read aloud a part of the agreement that was discussed in executive session: In order to retain and maintain the current quality Highway Department workforce the constituents of the Town of Fowler expect, the Town Board would like to offer the following amendment to Article 19 of the current Articles of Agreement in place between members of Teamster Local 687 and the Town of Fowler set to expire 12/31/2027.

Supervisor Newvine reported that presently the highway workers are offered a single coverage plan at no cost. The board would like to now offer a two-person plan and a family plan at a much-reduced rate.

Supervisor Newvine stated he was going to have Highway Superintendent Johnson present the offer to the highway workers in the morning, and he didn't want to announce the amounts of the plans to the general public before the highway workers were made aware of the offer.

Councilmembers

Councilperson Karen Simmons:

- Reported the rabies clinic was held on August 20th, with 173 animals being vaccinated to include 115 dogs, 56 cats and 4 ferrets.
- Reported $474.00 in donations was received at the free rabies clinic.
- Reported that Scott Cleveland is now certified by the State to volunteer at the dog kennel.
- Thanked Supervisor Newvine, Janice and Roger Refici, Leo Knight, and Scott Cleveland for their help at the rabies clinic.
- In the month of August, the HAP food program was visited 31 times.
- The SOS delivery will be made on Friday, September 25th.
- Reported that 2 lots had been sold in the Fullerville cemetery.

Councilperson Leo Knight:

- Had no further questions or commentary.

Councilperson Lynn Bishop:

- Asked Highway Superintendent Johnson if the sand being stockpiled on the lot is going to be covered.
- Asked about a tree that was down in the cemetery.
- Discussed he would like to volunteer to help take care of the dog kennel.

Councilperson Walsh:

- Had no further questions or commentary.

Supervisor Ricky W. Newvine:

- Read aloud a thank you card received by the Town of Fowler from Vivian Goodman, and a thank you card to Supervisor Newvine for his generous donation of a generator to this year's family day prizes, from Chris Siebels, winner of the generator.
- Reported the bridge on CR 22 is not expected to be finished until the middle of November.
- The Empire State Mines meeting at BOCES went very well.
- The Rescue Squad has presented a contract that the board will need to further discuss if they want to pay after corrections suggested by the Town Attorney are made to it.
- Thanked Scott Cleveland for all of his volunteer work at the dog kennel.

Public Comment

- Debbie Walsh asked why Dr. Tim Monroe worked at the rabies clinic this year.
- Scott Cleveland discussed that he feels if the dog kennel remains open there needs to be a lot more volunteers.
- Vivian Goodman thanked the Town for the flower delivery she received after the loss of her husband Ron.
- Dennis Travis asked the board if the highway department workers who are in the local fire department are still allowed to leave work if there is a major call. It was discussed that the workers would still be paid in the past when Superintendent Durham would let them go to a call. The board agreed they did not have a problem with it.

- Dennis Travis asked to have a new plow and one-way wing ordered for the new 2026 MACK instead of putting an old plow on it. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the board to agree.
- Byron Woodward stated the mowing and care of the cemeteries is disgraceful and would like to see them mowed more.

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 #324to #371 , with a total of $36,343.32.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 13, 2026, at 6:00PM.

With no further business, on a motion of Councilperson Walsh , seconded by Councilperson Knight , the September 14th, 2026, Regular Town Board meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tami Gale; Town Clerk