

Town of Fowler June 8, 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, Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie, Highway Superintendent Nelson Bice, Assessor Chair Kathy Besaw, Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw, Laurina Greenhill, Paul Johnson Jr, Andrew McEathron, Ethics Committee member Vivian Goodman, Gina Orr, Debbie Walsh, 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 those who have passed since our last meeting: Ron Taylor and Esther Trombley .

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to approve the minutes of May 11, 2026 regular scheduled board meeting. A motion was made by Councilperson Knight, seconded by Councilperson Walsh. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Town Department Reports

Justice Department

Town Justice Tim Knowlton was not in attendance.

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie:

- Provided Cash Balance Reports for Month ending April 30, 2026 and Budget Balances for Month ending April 30, 2026 to the board for their review.
- Reported the general fund was 32.83 % spent and had received 35.67% in revenue and the highway fund was 17.24% spent and had received 63.54% in revenue.
- Reported that budget balances are doing well and at this time balances in each account should be around 33% spent.

Assessors

Assessor Chair Kathy Besaw reported:

- Grievance day is now over with 2 grievances received. There were no inquiries on the approximately 60 letters of assessment changes that were mailed to taxpayers.
- Discussed Robert Theriault's last day as assessor was May 31st.
- Introduced Gina Orr to the board and meeting attendees, reporting that Gina is interested in filling the vacant assessor's position and is willing to run in the next election for the unexpired term of office.
- Asked the board to appoint Gina Orr to the position so that she could begin training her. Councilperson Simmons, who is the Town of Fowler's Republican Chairperson announced that she had discussed the vacancy with St. Lawrence County Board of Elections and learned that the Town Board could appoint Gina to fill the vacant position after the June 23rd primary is held.

Supervisor Newvine asked the board their thoughts on the appointment. It was the consensus of the board to approve the appointment of Gina Orr to fill the vacancy.

- Councilperson Simmons reported that she would obtain the necessary paperwork for the appointment to be made at the July 13th board meeting.

Supervisor Newvine noted the equalization rate was lowered to 7%.

- Discussed the new Director of the Real Property Office is assisting in trying to find a qualified vendor to complete an appraisal of the Empire State Mines.

- She reported that Supervisor Newvine in the near future will meet with the mines to discuss that the Town of Fowler's position is to stay on an even playing field.

Supervisor Newvine discussed that he would reach out to County Attorney, Steve Button, to see if he had knowledge of someone who could complete such an appraisal of the mines.

Historian

Historian Karen Simmons:

- Thanked Highway Superintendent Bice and the Highway Department for installing the new cemetery signs.
- Thanked the Gouverneur Fire Department for filling the water tank at the Fullerville cemetery.

Animal Control

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

- 4 dogs were picked up on May 4th running at large in Balmat.
- 1 dog was adopted by a Fowler resident.
- 1 dog was taken in by the Potsdam SPCA.
- 2 dogs remain in the Fowler Dog Kennel, one male and one female approximately 6 months of age and both dogs are a pitbull mix breed.
- A complaint was received about multiple dogs from a residence on CR 22 going onto a neighboring property which resulted in 5 unlicensed dogs being newly licensed.
- 2 dogs were picked up on CR 24 running at large with quills in their mouths and were brought to the Fowler Dog Kennel. The animals received care at Roput Veterinary Clinic for their condition. The owner of the animals was located, and the dogs were reunited with their owner after being licensed and the veterinary bill being paid in full.

Supervisor Newvine reported he had inquired with the State and had learned that kennel animals going unclaimed are still able to be euthanized, and this may need to be discussed concerning the 2 dogs that have been in the Fowler Dog Kennel now for a month and a half.

Beaver Control

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

- No beaver activity or need for beaver control was reported this month.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Besaw reported:

- Building Permits have been coming in very slowly this year.
- Several open building permits from last year are being followed up on.
- A couple of new houses are being finished.
- The new Flood Plain maps have been received. He is looking for someone to explain them to him, as they are all completed using engineering terminology.
- He believes that the Town of Fowler stayed pretty much the same.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Tami Gale reported:

- DEC Gross sales for the month were \$256.00 with the Town of Fowler's Commission being \$14.14. She had issued 1 certified marriage transcript, collected \$97.00 in miscellaneous dog fees, collected \$20.00 in bank fees, issued 5 death certificates, had licensed 31 dogs, and handled 4 building permit applications.
- Tax collection is over, and 91.34% of the tax roll has been collected.

- Balancing paperwork will be completed by the end of the week, and the final check will be mailed to the County.
- Bottle & Can money in the amount of \$226.90 was received.
- A scrap metal check was received in the amount of \$348.00 for 3.58 tons of scrap metal.
- 2 FOIL requests were received. One is in the process of being worked on and is a 10-year request for building permits issued in the Town of Fowler from 2016 to 2026. The second FOIL request is on a property on the River Rd and is being addressed by Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw.
- On Wednesday, June 17th the Town Clerk's Office will be closed from 9:00 to 11:00AM for Workplace Violence and Harassment & Discrimination Annual Training. This will be the first of several opportunities made available to take the training in-person.
- The office has been busy with beach protocols and family day preparation.
- She will place an ad in the paper next week that the beach is scheduled to open on June 24th.

Maintenance Department

Maintenance Worker Bryon Woodward reported:

- The dog kennel has not been able to have the remaining work completed that was mandated by the State due to it being occupied with dogs that have been in it since May.
- The sidewalk can't be completed this week due to upcoming rentals of the pavilion space and scheduled music nights. He thought the 20th might be a good date to pour the concrete. It was discussed that he would mark the lines and the highway department would need to strip the sod and place the gravel. He asked Hwy. Superintendent Bice to leave some extra gravel near the site.

Supervisor Newvine reported that originally, the board had wanted to install some parking spaces at the back of the pavilion, but they had decided to install a sidewalk instead. He reported the quote to re-do the basketball court that was installed last year, was almost \$13,000 for a 30' by 50' area, which was determined to be too costly.

- Discussed he would be getting the air-conditioners in the Town Hall this week.
- Reported he has more staining to complete.
- Asked if anyone had come to give an estimate yet to repair the pit in the highway department. Supervisor Newvine reported that he had called Continental Construction, and they were not interested in supplying a quote for the repair. It was discussed that Highway Superintendent Bice will contact other vendors tomorrow concerning the needed repairs.

Highway Department

Highway Superintendent Nelson Bice:

- Reported Chub Lake Rd has been paved.
- The highway department has been hauling gravel and anticipate starting the shoulder work on Thursday.
- The stone to pave Country Club Rd has been hauled and is stored at the Hailesboro Ball Park lot.
- Suite-Kote projects the project to be done by the end of the month, and then the County will return to pave it.
- Truck 22 had a problem with a battery cable rotting in half.
- The new 2026 Ford F-250 truck is ready at a cost of \$53,091.00. It was discussed that the truck will go to Whitesboro Plow in Watertown to be fitted with a plow package for a plow that is already owned by the Town.

- He asked for the board's approval to turn the invoices in to Bookkeeper Finnie to be paid in advance of the next board meeting and added to this month's bills. Bookkeeper Finnie asked the board for a motion to approve the paying of the invoices. A motion was made by Councilperson Knight seconded by Councilperson Walsh to approve the request. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.
- Reported he had arranged for a meeting with a representative from Highway Superintendent School to assist him with applying for CHIPS funds.
- Discussed the email that he received from the DEC concerning testing at the old Town of Fowler dump site. He discussed that there is no cost to the Town of Fowler. After further discussion a motion was made by Councilperson Knight seconded by Councilperson Simmons to approve the request for testing at the old dump site by the DEC. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.
- Reported Highway employee Matt Filiatrault will not be at work this week due to a family member illness.
- The highway members are doing shared services with other towns this week.
- The highway department has started mowing roadsides.
- The County has started painting the roads that were in need of it this year.
- The fuel program can't be found on the highway computer, and he is having the program reinstalled to track the fuel usage.

Councilmembers

Councilperson Karen Simmons:

- In the month of May, the HAP Program was visited 30 times.
- There will be an SOS Program delivery this month with 111 senior citizens signed up to receive the care package.
- Thanked Scott and Marcia Cleveland, the Presbyterian Church, and Pastor Orville & Joan Eaker of Stepping Stone Church for their food donations to the pantry.
- Asked if the picnic tables under the pavilion could be moved to make room for the band.
- Reported Fowler Family Day planning is coming along, and she had called the DEC, and they are bringing a display to family day this year.

Councilperson Leo Knight Jr.:

- Thanked Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw for taking care of the issue on Hull Rd.
- Asked Maintenance worker Byron Woodward if the damaged building was going to be repaired this summer. Maintenance worker Woodward reported that the building is full of highway department materials which all need to be removed from the building before repairs can be made to the damaged area of the building. It was further discussed, once the materials were removed, that shelving units would need to be removed and the repairs would be made later in the fall. Highway Superintendent Bice reported that he would start removing the materials when it slows down at the highway department.
- **Councilperson Lynn Bishop:**
- Reported that signage needed to be replaced in Fullerville near the residence of Jim Cole.
- Asked about the lack of safety arms being in-place while a dump truck was being washed. It was discussed that there were 4-inch safety pins being used on the truck at the time for safety.

Councilperson Walsh:

- Had no further questions or commentary.

Supervisor Ricky W. Newvine:

- Gave an update:

Regarding the Sullivan Road Recreation Area / Boat Launch

Effective immediately the Hollow Dam Project on the Sullivan Road has ceased operation and the Ampersand Company will not be renewing their lease. Ownership of the property at that location has reverted to the prior owners who will no longer offer any public access to the picnic area and the river. Should a new lease be acquired the owners will revisit the situation.

- Reported an informational meeting will be held on Monday, June 15th at Southwest Tech BOCES at 6:00 PM regarding the status of the Empire State Mines graphite project.
- Reported he had received a thank you letter from the Hailesboro Cemetery Association for the yearly contribution made by the Town of Fowler in support of the cemetery.
- Reported he had received correspondence from a company that makes special benches from the arms of recycled wind turbines at a cost of \$3,000 to \$10,000.
- Thanked Highway Superintendent Bice for the ordering and installation of the additional playground signage.
- Reported the paving of Chub Lake Rd looks good and recommended that it be striped to help keep traffic on the correct side of the road.
- Asked Highway Superintendent Bice if there was a current road count. Highway Superintendent Bice reported that Highway Superintendent Durham had completed a road count last year and he would try to find it.
- Reported that there are 7 lifeguards this year. Six are currently being paid a wage of \$19.00/hr. and 1 supervising lifeguard is receiving \$20.00/hr. Supervisor Newvine asked the board to increase their pay by \$1.00/hr. A motion was made by Councilperson Bishop seconded by Councilperson Simmons to approve the wage increase to \$20.00/hr. and \$21.00/hr. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Public Comment

- Gina Orr reported that there is a pipe near the railroad tracks on Country Club Rd that is full of debris and gets clogged up causing neighboring properties to become flooded.
- Councilperson Simmons reported that the annual Hailesboro Cemetery Association meeting is going to be held at the Town Hall on Wednesday, June 10th, at 6:00 PM for anyone interested in attending.
- Debbie Walsh asked who does the mowing at the Hailesboro Cemetery.
- Vivian Goodman stated that she would like to donate a small apartment size refrigerator/ freezer if we could use it for the food pantry.

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

The bills audited for the General and Highway Fund were #174 to #225, with a total of \$135,808.52.

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

The Town Hall will be closed in observance of Juneteenth on Friday, June 19th.

The Town Hall will be closed on Tuesday, June 23rd for the 2026 Primary Election.

The 9th annual Family Day will be held on Saturday, July 18th, 2026.

With no further business, on a motion of Councilperson Bishop , seconded by Councilperson Knight, the June 8, 2026, Regular Town Board meeting was adjourned at 6:46PM. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tami Gale; Town Clerk