

Town of Fowler November 6, 2025 Regular Scheduled Board Meeting Minutes and Public Hearing on the Proposed 2026 Town Budget 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, Highway Superintendent Randy Durham, Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie, Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw, Town Justice Tim Knowlton, Planning Board member John Walsh, Lisa Durham, Deb 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.

Supervisor Newvine led a moment of silence to honor our military men and women, our local health care workers, and for the family of Duane Vrooman.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2025, Town Board Meeting. A motion was made by Councilperson Simmons, seconded by Councilperson Bishop to approve the minutes. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED 2026 BUDGET

At 6:01pm Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to open the Public Hearing on the proposed 2026 Town budget. A motion was made by Councilperson Knight seconded by Councilperson Simmons to open the Public Hearing on the Proposed 2026 Town budget. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Supervisor Newvine discussed the Public Hearing on the proposed 2026 Budget would be left open for as long as anyone needs for questions or for clarification and stated there were copies of the proposed budget available for the public to view.

INVITATION TO BID ½ TON CREW CAB PICK UP TRUCK

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to advertise an Invitation to BID for the purchase of a ½ ton crew cab pick-up truck to come in for the December 8, 2025 regular scheduled board meeting. After some discussion, a motion was made by Councilperson Bishop seconded by Councilperson Knight to approve the invitation to BID. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

RESOLUTION

Supervisor Newvine read aloud a resolution in support of Fort Drum as a host site for the Department of Defense's microreactor program, expressing the Town of Fowler's willingness to collaborate with NYSERDA, NYPA, and federal partners in evaluating and supporting the deployment of advanced nuclear energy technologies within the County.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to approve Resolution #15 of 2025. A motion was made by Councilperson Bishop seconded by Councilperson Knight. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

RESOLUTION #15 OF 2025

Support of Fort Drum as a candidate site for the Department of Defense's Advanced Nuclear Microreactor Initiative.

AYES: 4 NEWVINE, SIMMONS, BISHOP, KNIGHT

NAYS: 0

TOWN DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Town Justice

Town Justice Tim Knowlton:

- The DA failed to show up at the Town of Fowler court in October resulting in a DWI charge being dismissed. It was reported that this is the 3rd occurrence that no representatives from the DA's office have been present in court.

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie:

- Provided Town of Fowler Cash Balance month ending October, 2025 and Budget Balances month ending October, 2025 to the board for their review.
- 79.55% of the General Fund has been spent with 108.32% of revenues received.
- 120.44% of the Highway Fund has been spent with 110.4% of revenues received.
- With two months left in the fiscal year, expenditure is within the 80% spent range with additional revenue still coming in.

Assessors

Supervisor Newvine reported for Assessor Chair Kathleen Besaw who was ill:

- Effective in 2026, the County has raised the income ceiling for senior citizens to receive an exemption on their County taxes. The income ceiling has been raised from \$17,700 to \$30,700, with anyone making less than \$25,000 receiving a 50% exemption. Applications are available in the assessor's office.

Historian

Historian Karen Simmons reported:

- Nothing has been going on in the Historian's Room right now.

Animal Control

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

- 1 complaint had been received about a dog running at large on the Doane Road; however, the dog could not be located.
- She and Supervisor Newvine attended a presentation from Ag and Markets on the mandated new dog kennel regulations.
- The presentation was very informative. In speaking with Janet Collier, from Ag and Markets, they had learned the Town of Fowler appears to be in good shape complying with the new mandates. It was discussed we may need to add a few walls to create an isolation section if an animal is determined to be sick while housed in the kennel.
- It was discussed that the Town of Fowler will need to be issued a yearly license to operate the dog kennel at a cost of \$150.00/year under the new legislation.

Beaver Control

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

- He continues to work on beaver control on Popple Hill Road.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw:

- He is still not able to process building permits with the system that was reinstalled on his new code enforcement office computer. He will contact support to have the issue resolved.
- 1 complaint was received resulting in him having to condemn a tenant occupied, mobile home. The occupant received new housing accommodations with assistance from multiple agencies.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Tami Gale reported:

- The gross DEC sales for the month were \$1,091.00 with the Towns commission being \$60.18, she had issued 8 Death Certificates, licensed 33 dogs, handled 8 building permits, sold 2 bicentennial books, and had taken in \$2.25 in photocopies.
- She received a scrap metal check on 10/9/2025 in the amount of \$159.20 from NorthStar Auto & Salvage for 2.82 tons of scrap and had received a 2nd scrap metal check on 10/31/2025 in the amount of \$132.80 from NorthStar Auto & Salvage for 2.38 tons of scrap.
- Bottle & Can money was received on 10/22/2025 in the amount of \$181.00 from Star Lake Bottle Redemption.
- Bottle & Can money was received on 10/21/2025 in the amount of \$282.90 from Hermon Bottle Redemption.
- Pepsi Machine Money was received in the amount of \$179.00 in dollar bills and \$197.35 was received from the change in the Pepsi machine.
- Family Day Merchandise sales from July through October were collected in the amount of \$208.00.
- She received a check on 10/6/2025 in the amount of \$337.00, for sluice pipes sold at auction.
- Reported the town offices will be closed on Tuesday, November 11th in observance of Veteran's Day.
- Thanked all veterans for their service.

Maintenance

Maintenance Worker Byron Woodward was not in attendance.

DISCUSSION ON REPAIRS FOR DOORS AT THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Supervisor Newvine asked the board if they had all been made aware of the \$11,000 cost to repair the highway doors. Hwy. Superintendent Durham reported air is leaking from under the garage doors due to the wearing away of the metal that used to help seal the doors. After some discussion, a motion was made by Councilperson Bishop seconded by Councilperson Knight to approve the repairs for the doors at the highway department. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED. It was discussed that the repairs will be completed by the end of this year.

Highway Department

Highway Superintendent Randy Durham:

SEASONAL ROAD DISCUSSION

Reported the Town of Fowler needs to declare its seasonal roads, as is done every November. A motion was made by Councilperson Knight seconded by Councilperson Bishop to declare the following roads as seasonal roads from December 1, 2025, to April 1, 2026. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

SEASONAL ROADS DECLARED

Stone Road, from the bus turn around to Orebed Road.

Sibley Road, from the bus turn around to State Land.

Fire Falls Road, from Luke Gates home to Town of Fowler Line.

Lamb Road, from Country Club Road to Town of Fowler Line.

Shantyville Road, from the Besaw Farm to the plow turn around on Byrns Road end. (Corral)

- The new 2026 MACK plow truck has been delivered to the highway department and is waiting on further assembly from Viking.
- Provided a vehicle road count for Town of Fowler roads showing peak travel times in the am and pm reporting he would provide another vehicle road count in the spring.
- Discussed Truck 5 has a cracked frame which will cost \$14,000 to repair and it can never be used to sand or be used as a plow truck again.
- Reported this will leave him with 4 plow trucks which is not a problem as there are 3 plow routes, and they can go to 3 plow routes if one of the trucks were to break down.

Supervisor Newvine asked what Hwy. Superintendent Durham intended to do with Truck 5. Hwy. Superintendent Durham reported that he is going to scrap Truck 5 as he does not believe it should be sold with a cracked frame. After further discussion, a motion was made by Councilperson Bishop seconded by Councilperson Simmons approving Truck 5 to be scrapped. Councilperson Bishop asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham to be sure to remove any salvageable parts.

- Asked permission to have Christmas breakfast for the highway department workers. It was the consensus of the board to approve the breakfast.
- Asked the board for permission to purchase safety hoodies for the highway department at a cost of \$70.00 each. It was the consensus of the board to approve the purchase.

DEC REPORTS RECEIVED ON CULVERT REPAIRS POST HURRICANE DEBBY

- Hwy. Superintendent Durham discussed that he had finally received the DEC reports on the repairs the Town of Fowler made to the culverts on Country Club Road and Northwoods Road in the aftermath of Hurricane Debby, in 2024.
- The DEC stated that what we did to fix the culverts after Hurricane Debby at the time was legal, as it was an emergency, and now they are saying the culverts that were installed are too small. Highway Superintendent Durham reported the culverts that were installed are bigger than what was previously there.
- Hwy. Superintendent Durham stated he believes the culvert that was replaced on Country Club Road near Grace Barbarito's home is going to end up being a bridge. Supervisor Newvine agreed that is what he thought they were looking at too. Hwy. Superintendent Durham stated he thought the water there was 20' wide on both sides. Supervisor Newvine wondered if they were to dredge the right side of the road if it would eliminate the problem. Supervisor Newvine questioned what the DEC is going to make us do and discussed that he and Hwy. Superintendent Durham should set up a zoom meeting with our FEMA and New York State Representatives to discuss our options.

Councilmembers

Councilperson Leo Knight Jr:

- Thanked the Town of Fowler on behalf of Empire State Mines, LLC, for the newly installed signs on the Sylvia Lake Road.

Councilperson Lynn Bishop:

- Complimented the highway department on the nice job they had done on the guardrails located on Little York Road.

- Asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham if the plow trucks are ready for the season. Hwy. Superintendent Durham reported the plow trucks were all ready for the season.
- Asked if he had a plow for the new ¾ ton pick up that was approved this evening to be advertised for BID. Hwy. Superintendent Durham reported that he had a brand-new v-plow to be placed on the new ¾ ton pick up truck when we acquire one.
- Asked what the cut for the diesel was. It was discussed that it was cut before delivery, and he has never had a problem with it but would find out the cut and let Councilperson Bishop know.
- Asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham if he was going to start using the pile of sand sitting on top of the old skating rink that couldn't be put back into the sand/salt barn. Hwy. Superintendent Durham stated they will start loading that sand and using it as it is mixed and ready to go.

Councilperson Karen Simmons:

- In the month of October, a total of 38 people had visited the HAP Program.
- Expressed concerns that with the government shut down the HAP Program may potentially receive increased visitors.
- Thanked Glen and Kathy Besaw, Mike and Missy Tersmette, Vivian Goodman, Robert Saidel, and Wanda Fayette for their donations of food.
- Thanked Robert and Diane Jennings for their monetary donation and thanked an anonymous donor for their donation of \$2,000 to the food pantry.
- The next SOS delivery will be made on December 18th.
- Congratulated Robert Theriault, John Walsh, and Lynn Bishop for their recent election to office.
- Discussed the new mandated even year election law and how it effects newly elected and current elected office holders. Anyone elected in 2025 will have a 3-year term of office, not a 4-year term of office, and current office holders that were elected in 2023 will stay in office to complete a 4-year term, and if they run again in 2027 that term will be a 3-year term of office instead of a 4-year term. The goal of the “even -year elections is to increase voter participation by aligning local elections with higher- turnout State and Federal races. The even-year election law was adopted in 2023 to begin with the November 2025 election cycle. It was discussed that when the office is up on an even year, the office will return to being a 4-year term.

Supervisor Ricky W. Newvine:

- Asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham if the highway workers were going back to working 8-hour shifts this week. Hwy. Superintendent Durham started the highway department workers will be going back to 8-hour shifts on Wednesday.
- Discussed that he and Hwy. Superintendent Durham met with the Town of Hermon and had learned they have agreed to cover the cost of the repairs to the Battle Hill Rd.
- Reported he had a meeting with Spectrum, who contacted the town to try to save the town money on internet and phones, and had learned there were no savings to be had.
- Reported he visited BOCES Southwest Tech earlier in the day and reported attendance is up by 60-70 kids, complimenting the great program.
- Discussed there may be another update for residents presented by Empire State Mines, LLC on November 17th, however it has not been confirmed at this time.

CLOSING THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED 2026 BUDGET

Supervisor Newvine asked if there were any questions on the proposed 2026 Town budget.

With no questions received, at 6:31PM, a motion was made by Councilperson Simmons seconded by Councilperson Bishop to close the public hearing on the proposed 2026 budget. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION #18 OF 2025

Adopting the Town of Fowler Budget for Fiscal Year 2026.

Supervisor Newvine submitted Resolution #18 of 2025, a Resolution, approving and adopting the operating budget for the Town of Fowler for Fiscal Year 2026 to the board for adoption. A motion was made by Councilperson Bishop seconded by Councilperson Simmons. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

AYES: 5 NEWVINE, SIMMONS, BISHOP, KNIGHT

NAYS: 0

Public Comment

- There was no public comment.

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

The bills audited for the General and Highway Fund were #409 to #453 with a total of \$96,801.83.

The next regular scheduled board meeting will be held on December 8, 2025 at 6:00PM.

With no further business, on a motion of Councilperson Bishop, seconded by Councilperson Knight, the meeting was adjourned at 6:34 PM. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tami Gale; Town Clerk