



Town of Somerset

Volume 29, Issue 3



Holiday 2014

From Your Town Clerk

Dear Residents,

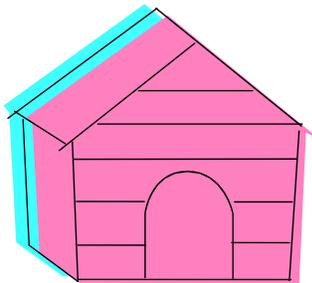
It is hard to believe the year is almost over and so is the end of my first year in office. I am very thankful you elected me to serve as your Town Clerk. I get to work at a job I truly enjoy in a town I love. I hope you haven't experienced too many "hiccups" with the changeover. I want to provide our best service to you, so if you ever have any concerns please let me know. Also, if there are any services that we don't provide that you would like us to, please call or email me your ideas.

This Christmas holiday I will get to spend time with both of my boys. I am especially looking forward to it since my youngest is graduating in June and it may be the last time we can all get together without too much difficulty. I will have my office closed an additional day during the holidays so my clerks can enjoy uninterrupted time with their families too. My schedule is on the back page under items to note.

I would like to wish your and your families Happy Holidays!

Tracy L. Carmer

Please remember to get your dog licensed. They should be licensed once they are 4 months old and have had their rabies shot. Also, keep your pets' comfort in mind this time of year. Make sure you provide a warm place for them if they are outdoors during the cold months.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<i>Supervisor News</i>	2
<i>Councilwoman's Corner</i>	3
<i>Historian's Corner</i>	3
<i>BFD News</i>	4
<i>Highway Dept</i>	5
<i>Assessor's News</i>	5
<i>Water/Sewer Dept</i>	6

A Word From Your Supervisor

Daniel Engert 795-3575, ext. 3



It's hard to believe that we are nearing the much anticipated holiday season already! As our thoughts and attention begin to shift towards holiday celebrations and the gathering with family and friends, let me just briefly update you on some Town matters.

The 2015 budget was recently adopted by the Board. The tax rate was held flat and there will be no increase to property owners in 2015. There are no cuts in any services to the Town of Somerset in 2015 and the Board directed the strategic use of reserves in order to necessarily replace some heavily stressed highway plow equipment. The 2015 budget reflects the final year in the current PILOT with the UNYPP Somerset Power Plant. We are in discussions currently and are hopeful that the current ownership group will extend a PILOT agreement into 2016 but the long term future remains uncertain at this point in time. Revenues from the largest taxpayer in the Town and County have diminished significantly (77%) over the past three years as the plant endures increased market pressures and delivery challenges. Let me try to put this into perspective. Over the past 25 years, the revenue from the plant (on average) contributed to more than 60% of the overall budget and in many years, it was as high as 70%. In 2015, the PILOT payment will account for just 8% of the budget. Over the past three years, the Board and I have directed significant efforts to right size your Town workforce, deploy core duty staffing initiatives and make investments in new technology and equipment to improve operational efficiencies in order to meet the increasing revenue challenges. Thus far, we have been able to reduce the cost side of ledger and have avoided raising taxes. At the same time, we believe that our exceptional department heads and town employees have continued to provide the top notch services that you expect to receive from your local government. Considerable challenges remain ahead for the Town unless we are able to secure economic development project(s) to replace our significantly diminished revenues from the power plant in order to position ourselves for the next period in our community's future. The Board adopted my budget plan to invest further into the Somerset Lakeshore Site (former Verizon site) to better market this parcel, including an investment in serviceable infrastructure improvements in order to be able to attract the right fit for this location. We remain committed to this parcel as a significant opportunity for economic development.

As you may know, Apex Clean Energy is an independent renewable energy company that is researching a potential industrial wind energy generation project in Somerset. They have named this project "Lighthouse Wind Project". To be clear, this is a private industry initiative and not a "Town project". They are conducting feasibility studies and I am aware that they are in the midst of discussions with private landowners within the Town, mostly along the Rte. 18 corridor. I am advised that this process will take approximately one year. If the feasibility studies conclude with the presentation of a project, the primary permit will come through the New York State Public Service Commission's (NYSPSC) Article 10 siting process for electrical generation, not from the Town. The permitting process, including wildlife studies, will take at least two years to complete. The first step in their process is to file a Public Involvement Program document with the NYSPSC, which they recently did. Again, this is not an application for a project but nonetheless it confirms their interest and continued due diligence. The NYSPSC case number for Lighthouse Wind is 14-F-0485. I would encourage everyone interested to go to <http://www.dps.ny.gov/SitingBoard/> and you can follow all filings on the project as well as provide comments. Apex Clean Energy has also established a comprehensive website which provides information concerning the project as well at <http://www.lighthousewind.com/>. We are certainly at a critical juncture in our town and this is an important conversation that will need to take place. I am looking forward to hearing from constituents regarding your thoughts and desires about economic development and a potential wind project in Somerset. I will keep everyone advised to the greatest extent possible throughout the process. If a project is ultimately proposed, it will take, minimally, as many as three years to begin construction. In the meantime, there will be many opportunities for involvement and I look forward to hearing from the community. I have posted a link which describes the Article X siting process on the Town website at <http://www.somersetny.org/>.

In closing, it has been a memorable year for our community as we celebrated the 100th year of our Barker Fire Department; we concluded the expansion of the fire protection district which strengthened the future of the district as well as the Fire Department; the Town is leading the way to establish a county-wide municipal healthcare consortium;

Cont'd. on page 7

Councilwoman's Corner

Robin Jansen

I signed up for NY-ALERT about a year ago and have come to rely on the alerts and notifications that I signed up to receive. I have been alerted to road closures that allowed me to change my route and saved me time on the road. NY-ALERT is New York State's All-Hazard Alert and Notification system. It's a web based portal that allows State agencies, county and local governments, emergency service agencies and institutions of higher learning to provide emergency alerting information.

The types of alerts that you can receive are Amber alerts, Silver alerts, Road closures, delays and accidents, severe weather, campus closures, as well as other notifications.

NY-ALERT is free and subscription based. If you wish to receive emergency information, you can register on the NY-ALERT website at www.nyalert.gov or you can call 1-888-697-6972. When you register you can list multiple devices from which to receive alerts and notifications. Most alerts are issued locally by your county or local municipality. If you would like more information, the Somerset Town Hall has NY-ALERT brochures available.

With winter fast approaching, having this kind of information available can help you and your families stay safe.

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

By: Pete Devereaux 795-3575, ext. 7

This article appeared in The Barker Register on December 23rd 1937

Alumni Annual Christmas Dinner and Reunion



Next Wednesday evening, will be a big night for all alumni of Barker High School, for on that night all the school graduates and their friends will meet for the annual Christmas dinner and reunion.

Festivities will begin at 5:30 p.m. in the school building with dinner served by Mrs. Rebert and the girls of the homemaking classes. A good program with singing, skits and other entertainment will follow, arranged by Richard Klatt, alumni president. At 8:00 p.m. open also to the public two basketball games will be played in the high school gym. The first game will be between the high school girls team captained by Elsie Cullison, and the alumni team captained by Stella Gorges Israel. The second game will be between the high school boys captained by Van Snowden and the alumni boys team in charge David Haight and T.J. Devereaux. The alumni boys team has been organized for several weeks, and is entered in the Niagara-Orleans League.

Dancing with music by Ev Jepson's orchestra of Lockport will conclude the program. There also will be card playing in the music room.

I do not know how many years this event took place but it sounds like a good time was probably had by all.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and safe New Year!



BARKER FIRE DEPT.

By Chief Scott Matheis, Sr.

I would like to start by thanking everyone who came out to celebrate our 100th year with us. I am sure everyone had a great time. With winter fast approaching here are a few things to remember:

GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS:

Downed utility lines, power company blackouts, heavy snow falls or summer storms can all lead to power outages. Many people turn to a portable generator for a temporary solution without knowing the risks.

- * Generators should be operated in well ventilated locations outdoors away from all doors, windows and vent openings.
- * Never use a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open.
- * Place generators so that exhaust fumes can't enter the home through windows, doors or other openings in the building.
- * Make sure to install carbon monoxide (CO) and smoke alarms in your home. Follow manufacturer's instructions for correct placement and mounting height.
- * Turn off generators and let them cool down before refueling. Never refuel a generator while it is running.
- * Store fuel for the generator in a container that is intended for the purpose and is correctly labeled as such. Store the containers outside of living areas.

CHIMNEY FIRE PREVENTION:

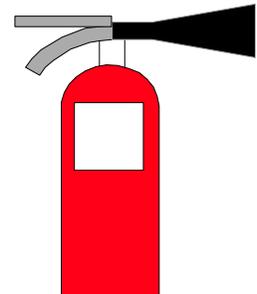
- * Keep chimneys and flues clean and well maintained.
- * Be careful when using open fires to keep warm. Make sure you always use a fire guard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers.
- * Ensure the fire is extinguished before going to bed or leaving the house.
- * Ensure good quality fuel is used.
- * Never interrupt the air supply by blocking air vents or air bricks.

If you have a fire hydrant in front of your home clear snow from around it when you clear your driveways and sidewalks.

We are always in need of more members . If you would like to help your community stop by any Thursday evening and see what it's all about. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Do you have empty fire extinguishers to dispose of? Follow these steps provided by the Deputy Coordinator of Fire Investigations:

- Empty cylinder
- Remove valve
- Cut cylinder in two pieces
- Take to Niagara Metals in Royalton to receive scrap metal payment



NEWS FROM THE HIGHWAY DEPT.

Mike Flint 795-3866



Greetings From Your Highway Department:

At the time of this writing the trucks are in the final stages of prepping for another snow season. We just had our first taste of winter from mother nature. Nothing serious, just a reminder of what's on its way this season.

The men from the Water Department have started to get some time in the plow seats to be better prepared to assist our department with snow removal should we need help this winter.

Two reminders to address: First, please be aware it is against NYS Highway Law to plow or deposit snow from driveways or private property on to public roads or highways. Second, sometimes mail boxes and or paper boxes get damaged in the wake of moving snow from the highways. Be assured it is not done intentionally. It is just something that does happen. In a letter from the NYS Attorney General written February 28, 1966, he stated mailbox damage is sometimes an unfortunate consequence of snow removal also known as collateral damage (a part of snow removal). In the event it does happen, we ask that you be patient. Let the highway department know about it with an address/location and be assured we will attend to its repair as soon as we are able.

Finally, feel free to stop in to the office with any issues or concerns or just to say hello any time.

Assessor's Office

Anthony Dispenza—Assessor 795-3575, ext. 6
somersetassessor@roadrunner.com

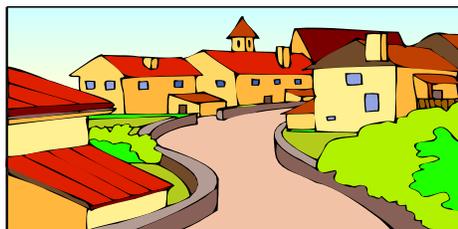
Some friendly reminders and announcements are due:

The Town of Somerset website includes an Assessor webpage which includes news, office hours, and other helpful information related to the office. Two especially helpful new features are the OARS System and Tutorial and the Exemption Overview Tutorial.

The OARS, or Online Assessment Roll System, makes the assessor's records available to the public in a user-friendly format. Records available for each property in the town and village include improvements, map images, sales, taxes, exemptions, and more. The Quick Links sidebar offers a quick and easy tutorial showing how to enjoy the many features of OARS.

Also in the Quick Links sidebar is the Exemption Overview Tutorial, which is a short presentation on eligibility requirements as well as benefits available for the most popular exemptions applicable to town, county and school taxes.

Exemption renewals are due in this office by March 1, 2015 for Enhanced STAR, Senior (Aged), Disabled and Agricultural exemptions. Notices will be sent to current recipients by December 31.



Water/Sewer Department News

Mel Denny, Water/Sewer/Grounds Superintendent
795-9919



During the winter months, it is important to keep your fire hydrants and sewer vents clear of snow.

Have a safe and enjoyable holiday!

Managing Household Hazardous Waste

Here are tips for a couple items most citizens wish to dispose of but are unsure how:

- ◆ Latex paint—for cans that are less than 1/3 full, add kitty litter or saw dust or allow to dry in a well ventilated area and place out for trash. For cans more than 1/3 full, go to www.rethinkyourwaste.com/hhw for upcoming collection events.
- ◆ Prescription medication—Never flush medications! Residents may drop off prescription and over the counter medications, ointments, sprays, inhalers, creams, vials and pet medications no questions asked at the Niagara County Sheriffs Office. Please do not bring household hazardous wastes, needles or mercury containing devices.

Submission from Modern Recycling

As we reflect back on the past year and make resolutions for the future, we can resolve to make better waste and recycling choices too. The United States generates more waste per person than any other country and over fifty percent more than we did fifty years ago. Thankfully, a greater portion of our waste can now be recycled, preserving resources and energy. We can even turn plastic bottles into clothes and butter tubs into toothbrush handles! You can help by following the simple steps below to ensure efficient collection of 'resources' in the waste from your house.



Place recycling and trash carts with wheels toward your house and three feet of space between your cart and objects like mailboxes on both sides of the cart. Also, please do not park in front of carts. Following these procedures facilitates use of automatic arm trucks, which are a more efficient collection system.

With winter and the holidays upon us, don't forget that you can recycle most gift-wrap and product packaging, holiday cards, empty aluminum foil pans, soup cans and tissue boxes and even broken sleds and shovels. Please do not recycle string lights in your recycling cart. They are accepted with electronic waste and at metal recyclers.

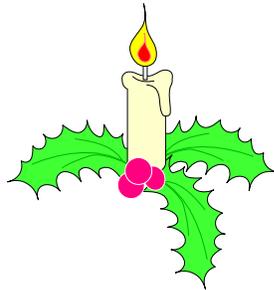
Beginning January 1, 2015, New York State bans consumers from disposing of covered electronic equipment in landfills or waste-to-energy facilities. Items such as TV's, computers, monitors, video games, etc. must be recycled because they contain small amounts of metals that are toxic if leaked into the environment but valuable when recovered. DO NOT recycle these in your recycling cart or leave them at your curb. Bring electronic waste to the Sewer/Water Plant, 8500 Lower Lake Road, Barker. Some electronics retail stores also accept electronics for recycling. Find information about manufacturers' collection programs via the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/66872.html>.

Have children at home? They can become a "Super Sorter" with this fun new game that models what happens in a recycling sorting center. Play *Super Sorter* at www.iwanttoberecycled.org/game. For more recycling tips, visit ModernCorporation.com or [Facebook.com/ModernDisposal](https://www.facebook.com/ModernDisposal).



UPCOMING EVENTS:

- December 1—13, 2014 Annual Silent Auction presented by Friends of the Barker Library
- December 6, 2014 Last day to order **Hall Apple Farm pies** (from any Faith United Church member)
- December 13, 2014 Faith United Methodist Church: 4th Annual **Christmas Community Celebration** featuring the Community Band, School and Church Choirs, a Cookie Walk, pies and more. Free admission.
5:00PM Sub Sale, Hall Apple Farm pies and Cider sale (pre-order please), Cookie Walk.
6:00PM Musical entertainment including Randy and Anna Atwater, and a Christmas Carol sing-a-long.
- December 14, 2014 1:00PM-4:00PM Victorian festivities at the **Babcock House** including Christmas carols, baking in the brick oven, churning butter, wagon rides, hot chocolate, cookies and punch
- December 17, 2014 **Conservation Club Winter Raffle.** Tickets are \$5 and you need not be present to win. Prizes include a smoker, flat screen tv, meat packages, and gift cards. Drawing to be held at **8:30PM.**
- December 21, 2014 9:30AM Faith United Methodist Church sings “Gloria”
- December 24, 2014 7:00PM **Christmas Eve Service** at Faith United Methodist Church
- January 11, 2015 8:30AM-1:00PM **AFS Pancake Breakfast** at Barker Fire Hall
- January 25, 2015 8:00AM-1:00PM Senior Class/Somerset Masons **Pancake Breakfast** at Barker Fire Hall
- February 8, 2015 1:00PM-4:00PM **AFS Carnival** at Barker Central School
- March 1, 2015 8:00AM-1:00PM Barker Music Parent Club **Pancake Breakfast** at Barker Fire Hall



Cont'd. from page 2 A Word From Your Supervisor

and we are currently awaiting responses to an RFP from interested private companies to provide broadband internet services within the Town. The Board and I remain committed to working hard and putting forth much effort on behalf of our community. We desire to effectively represent you and your interests. On behalf of the Board, we extend the warmest wishes for a joyous holiday season and we wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

In your service,

Daniel M. Engert – Town Supervisor

**Volume 29, Issue 3
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P.O. Box 368
Barker, NY 14012-0368

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Phone: 716-795-3575
Fax: 716-795-9041
Website: www.somersetny.org

U.S. Postage
Standard
PAID
Middleport, NY 14105
Permit #21

**RURAL ROUTE
BARKER, NY 14012**

The Business Card Holder has been installed in the lobby at the Town Hall. If you are a Somerset resident with a business, please bring in business cards to be placed here. This will help other residents who may be looking for a service that you provide.

Remember to drop off your electronic recycling at the Sewer Plant, 8500 Lower Lake Road, on garbage day from 7am—3pm. This service is provided free of charge to all Somerset residents. Please don't leave TVs at the curb because it is illegal for the garbage men to take them now.



Items to Note:

Garbage pickup will not be affected by the upcoming holidays.

The Town Clerk's office will be closed December 24—26, and December 31—January 1.

The Trash and Recycling schedule for 2015 will be mailed to all residents in mid-December.