



Town of Somerset

Volume 35, Issue 5

Holiday 2020

From Your Town Clerk



Dear Residents,

I hope this newsletter finds everyone well! Covid-19 has not spared Somerset and Barker as we have had 28 cases in Somerset and 2 cases in Barker to-date. If this virus reaches you and you need assistance with anything, please reach out to me and I will do what I can to help.

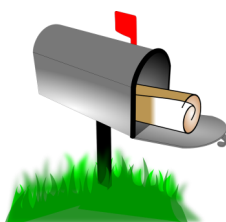
While we wait for a vaccination so that things can return to normal, the holidays are going to be different this year. I wish you all a safe and healthy holiday season!

Tracy L. Carmer, RMC

When mailing correspondence (including payments through your bank) please send them to:

Somerset Town Hall
PO Box 368
Barker, NY 14012

Mail that is not properly labeled with our post office box number is being delayed as the post office determines where the piece of mail is supposed to be delivered. Each piece of mail that is incorrectly addressed is received with a note from the post office to notify sender of our PO Box.

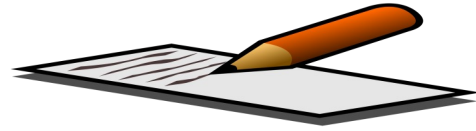


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A Word From Your Supervisor

Jeffrey Dewart 716-795-3575, ext. 3



Hello Somerset,

Hopefully you and your family are in good health. We have had a rough year in 2020.

Everyone should have received their garbage carts by now. If you did not receive one please call the town hall and we will make arrangements to have one delivered to you. With that said, if you want a second cart you can purchase one from the town at our cost, but there will be a charge of \$48.00 for each additional cart that will be billed to you for next year. Beginning in 2022 the \$48.00 charge will be part of your tax bill. Additionally, the town hall will have tags for \$5.00 each that you can buy if you have extra bags of garbage that don't fit in the carts. Please bear with us as no one likes change but we do not have a choice. As soon as I find out which week per month we will be allowed to place large items for pickup I will let everyone know.

Have a Safe and Happy Holiday!

Your Supervisor, Jeff Dewart



THE AMERICAN LEGION

Herbert W. Carr Post 425 would like to thank the community for its support of the hometown for heroes banner program. The cutoff date for the program is March 1, 2021. If you wish to honor a veteran or active duty member of the armed forces with a banner, you may pick up and return an application at the Somerset Town Hall or the Barker Village Hall, or at 1365 Quaker Road. If you have any questions, please contact Jon Hotaling at 716-345-2799 or Larry Dent at 254-278-8259.

Thank you,

Jon L. Hotaling, Commander





Councilwoman's Corner

Did you know?

Through planning and zoning, towns have the authority to plan for and regulate the development of and use of real property for the community's health, safety and welfare. The basic premise of planning and zoning balances the well-being of the community against individual property interests by adopting local laws that are in line with the needs of the area and the town's vision for development. Article 16 of Town Law is the primary source for planning and zoning authority and allows towns to "regulate and restrict the size of buildings and other structures, ... and the location and use of buildings, structures and land for trade, industry, residence and other purposes". The central tenet of zoning is its concern with land use and not who uses or occupies the land.

Did you know that the Town of Somerset has the full list of Codes and Zoning on its website? Need to know the requirements for putting in a swimming pool or an outside wood burner? Check the website. Click on the Ordinances tab on the home page. There is a search function that allows you to locate a specific topic.

Norm and I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year.



Niagara County Legislature 14th District - John Syracuse

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) continues to play an important role in the well-being of Niagara County residents. As the Legislative representative to CCE and Chair of the Agricultural Farmland and Protection Board, I thought I would update you as to some of their activities throughout the year. The Executive Director, Justin P. Rogers, compiled a summary of some of the larger initiatives undertaken so far to date:

"The Veggie Van provided over 10,000 lbs. of fresh produce to low access communities during COVID."

"\$223,800 worth of healthy foods were distributed to Niagara County residents via food box giveaways."

"\$83,836 was raised for Niagara County 4-H youth via CCE's 1st ever virtual livestock auction in August 2020."

"\$29,961 worth of personal protection equipment & supplies were distributed to agri-businesses in Niagara County."

"224 volunteers provided 1,850 hours of service to fellow residents in 2019."

"10,500 Niagara County residents participate in CCE food safety and nutrition programs."

My hat is off to the hardworking men and women at our CCE. As many of you know, the Niagara County Legislature has designated them as a partner agency and as such received over \$ 384,000 in funding for 2020.

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HISTORIAN'S CORNER

Peter Devereaux 716-795-3575, ext. 7

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

As we try to get through this year of mask wearing and social distancing let us pray to God for a safer and better 2021. I'm sure there is a reason for what we are going through but I don't have a clue what it might be.

Merry Christmas and a Healthy, Safe and Happy New Year .



Barker Fire Department

Kids' DRIVE-THRU Christmas Party at the Fire Hall will take place on Saturday, December 12th from 11am to 12noon. Santa will be there to hand-out goodies to the kids.

Still looking for a gift for Christmas Consider giving that special someone new smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and/or carbon monoxide detectors.

We purchased a new 2020 Demers ambulance in October and it is our plan to have an Open House during 2021 for the community to see our new purchase.

By now you should have received our Fund Drive letter. Please consider making a donation, if you have not already done so to:

BARKER FIRE DEPARTMENT INC., PO BOX 274, BARKER, NY 14012.

Safety Reminders from the Fire Department:

- Change your batteries in your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors
- Keep the fire hydrants and outside furnace vents clear of snow
- Have your chimney checked and cleaned
- Be sure your house number is clear and visible. Order sheets for house signs are available at the Town Hall.



Need a New Year's Resolution for 2021? Join your local fire department! Volunteers are always needed. Stop by any Thursday evening between 6:30 – 8pm for an application.

We will be holding a DRIVE-THRU Spaghetti Dinner on Sunday, February, 21, 2021 starting at 12noon. Tickets will be available from any fireperson. Watch our sign for further details.

Thank you to the community for your continued support throughout the year. Hope you have a happy and safe Holiday Season!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



Tis the Season to be Reading!

Exciting things will be coming to the Barker Public Library in the New Year.

We are moving forward with our plans for the new Library and Village Hall building. The library has applied for grants to help with the cost. We wait to hear if we are successful. An optimistic timeline would have us breaking ground in the spring. So cross your fingers, say a prayer, light a candle, whatever you believe in because we are ready to get this done.

The BPL Book Club will be starting up again on Monday January 25, 2021 @ 6:00 pm. Whether we meet in person or virtually is still being decided. The January book is Alternate Side by Anna Quindlen. Call the library at 716-795-3344 to reserve your copy.



Introducing Book Buddy Bundles. Let us help you and your child meet reading goals with a pack of 3-5 themed picture books, a craft, coloring sheet or puzzle. Themes include Friendship, Winter, Dinosaurs, Princesses, Kindness, Animals and Humor. Stop in to take a look! Book Bundles for the older kids are in the planning stages and ideas are always welcome.

The BPL was able to purchase 4 Kindle Fire tablets and 2 Kids Edition Kindle Fire tablets to loan to our patrons. This purchase was made possible by a Dollar General Grant we received. The borrower must be at least 18 years old, have a valid photo ID, a Barker Public Library or NIOGA library card in good standing. This will allow access to all of our digital collections via the Hoopla, Libby by Overdrive, RBDigital/Zinio and Kindle apps.

We are open Monday – Friday, 10:00 – 5:00. We look forward to seeing you-with your mask on of course! Be safe and well! Have a wonderful Christmas, Hanukah, Kwanza and New Year from your Barker Public Library.



Tax Collector's Hours for the 2021 Tax Season

****CLOSED HOLIDAYS****

January 4 through February 1:

Monday through Thursday 9AM - 4PM

February 4 through 25: (4th, 11th, 18th, 25th)

Thursdays 9AM - 4PM

March 4 through 31: (4th, 11th, 18th, 25th, 31st)

Thursdays 9AM - 4PM

Wednesday, March 31 (final day) 9AM - 4PM

Please pay by check or money order whenever possible.



If you must pay with cash in person, please have the exact amount.

Water/Sewer Department News

Jonathan D. Dewart, Water/Sewer/Grounds Superintendent
716-795-9919



Cemeteries - Information on our cemeteries can be found on the Town website www.somersetny.org under the cemetery link. You may also call my office with any questions you may have.

Before you Dig - Remember to call 811 before you do any digging. It is the law that you must call at least two (2) full business days in advance so the underground utilities have a chance to mark out their lines.

Backflow Preventers - These are **required** on all new homes and homes that are being sold. It is your responsibility to install a preventer. Your water/sewer account will not be transferred without this requirement being met.

Electronic Recycling - This is an ongoing program and items can be dropped off at the Sewer Plant, 8500 Lower Lake Rd, on garbage days from 7am - 3pm.

Park Pavilions - If you are a Somerset resident and you would like to use the pavilions in the Somerset Park, you can make a reservation by calling the Town Hall at 795-3575 ext. 2 for the Clerk's office. There is no charge for using them if you are a resident.



REFUSE/RECYCLING PROGRAM



By now everyone should be aware of the new contract that we have with Modern Disposal for our garbage pickup. Effective January 1, 2021, all of your bags shall be placed in the totes that were provided by the Town of Somerset (exception for those who already have the same style tote and wished to keep using that instead). Modern will no longer stop and pick up bags and place them in the truck unless you have stopped in the Town Hall to purchase a tag to place on the bags for \$5.00 each. If you find that one tote is not enough to cover your refuse disposal needs you may purchase additional carts for \$46.33. Keep in mind that per this contract, you will see an additional charge on your tax bill of \$48.00 per tote for each of the additional totes that you place at the curb. This charge is for the pickup and disposal of your refuse. Another change will be to large item pickup. Instead of one large item every week, we will be allowed 3 large items during one specific week each month. Modern Disposal will be sending a flyer to all residents advising the new schedule. The recycling program has not changed and will continue on an every-other week schedule. We ask for your patience as they implement the change to one person trucks.

Continued from page 3

ReSTART, ReTHINK and ReCONFIGURE NIAGARA COUNTY

In mid-spring, I announced the formation of 3 working groups charged with preparing Niagara County for post-pandemic operations. This effort involves members of the Legislature, as well as other county leaders, department heads and community partners. Niagara County and our residents are more than ready to get back to business, get back to fully functioning, but we fully recognize there is a little more to it than what we are used to. So, this is where I came up with the ReStart, ReThink and ReConfigure Niagara County initiative.

ReStart Niagara is focused on helping businesses get started back up and running, assessing government programs and providing any other support deemed necessary by the business community. This group works in partnership with Niagara USA Chamber and the Niagara County Center for Economic Development (NCCED). Most efforts were initially designed to help the business community meander through the numerous emergency orders put forth by Governor Cuomo. Our NCCED set up a web page which provided (and continues to provide) re-opening guidance for businesses during this un-precedented COVID event. The site is <http://www.niagaracountybusiness.com>. If you have a specific question, you can call the Center directly at 278-8750. Our Emergency Management Services office continues to supply the local businesses with necessary personal protective equipment. Our Department of Public Health has been doing an outstanding job in educating Niagara County residents in the wake of COVID. As a seated member on the Niagara County Board of Health, I can give you direct knowledge of the painstaking process we go through to weigh, measure and balance the "how to" as it relates to the almost daily ever-changing regulations imposed by the Governor, educating the public on said regulations, and keeping our people safe and as healthy as possible all while trying not to decimate the economy. For more information, please go to the web site <http://www.niagaracounty.com>. This site has a concise list of information relating to county business and day-to-day updates on COVID.

ReThink Niagara is focused on what we have learned in providing services to our community during COVID that can modernize our service delivery moving forward. **ReConfigure Niagara** looks to operate Niagara County government in a time of severe budget constraints. These 2 groups work hand-in-hand with each other. Again, we are working closely with our department heads and our other elected officials, such as County Clerk Joe Jastrzemski and our Treasurer Kyle Andrews. Working through these 2 committees, we put in action a volunteer lay-off program to our county workforce. By having employees take the lay-off, the county was able to save over \$500,000 for the taxpayers. Just recently, the Legislature passed an early retirement incentive to the workforce at our October 2020 meeting. The numbers have not been collected yet, but the intent of the offer is that there must be a net savings to the taxpayer for the incentive to be provided.

These focus groups are not intended to be an academic exercise or some long range planning effort that will be implemented down the road. Niagara County residents will receive concrete action from each committee in real time.

WEST SOMERSET ROAD UPDATE

The County Highway Dept. has been moving equipment and material out to West Somerset Road throughout the summer season. Milling and paving the previously completed shoulder reconstruction is underway at the time of this writing. The next phase of piping and shoulder reconstruction will be on-going through the winter.

The County is winding down another highly productive year placing over 30,000 tons of asphalt on our roads. Some of the major roads were Ransomville, Riddle, Block Church, Tonawanda Creek and East Canal. Other shoulder rehab consisted of Hartland, Quaker, Youngstown/Wilson, Slayton Settlement, Royalton Center, Old Niagara and Wolcottsville Roads.

Our guide rail replacement strategy continues. The County conducted signage improvements on some of our roads. This should make the roads a little safer. There were 3 rounds of road-side mowing. One round of county-wide road patching was performed and the crew will be revisiting these sites in preparation for winter.



LACK OF BROADBAND LEAVES WNY RESIDENTS BEHIND IN COVID WORLD

A newsletter column from New York State Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt

The COVID-19 pandemic has forever changed our world and how we do things. From work to school, so many things that were once done in-person are now done remotely. This has made access to high-speed, affordable broadband internet essential for every New Yorker – from students learning from home to employees working remotely. But this pandemic has shown how far we must go to make that a reality.

Western New York has struggled with internet connectivity and dead zones for years. In 2015, Gov. Cuomo announced a \$500 million Broadband-for-All initiative to address this issue. It wasn't enough, and our communities bore the brunt of that insufficiency during the height of the pandemic.

Over 700,000 students and 18,000 teachers in our state lacked broadband access during the height of the pandemic. That's 27 percent of students and nine percent of our educators. This is a travesty, and it's absolutely unacceptable. It's time to make a real investment in our broadband and internet infrastructure to improve education, economic, and quality of life outcomes for Western New Yorkers.

Senate Democrats have made this investment difficult. In the 2019-2020 state budget, Democrats passed a broadband tax. It charges internet service providers tens of thousands of dollars to install new internet lines, a move that makes it nearly impossible to put broadband services in rural communities. Last month, I joined Orleans County Legislature Chairwoman Lynne Johnson and Niagara County Legislator Dave Godfrey to highlight the broadband tax's ramifications on residents of Niagara and Orleans Counties. Right now, this punitive tax is the biggest obstacle we face toward bringing the reliable, affordable internet we all deserve and, quite frankly, need.

My Senate Republican Conference colleagues and I believe that investing in rural and high-need communities and ensuring internet access is essential and of imminent importance. That's why we are pushing for a complete repeal of the broadband tax. That way, service providers can get to work installing new lines immediately, and we can make sure our students, teachers, and people working from home aren't left in the lurch any longer.

It's the 21st century. By eliminating the broadband tax and providing affordable access, we can make sure all New Yorkers are part of it.



From Town of Somerset Justice Court,

As you are all plenty aware, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic for most of this past year, the Courts have had to cease operations for some time. As of now we are able to proceed in some fashion to help dispose of cases still pending, and incoming.

If you receive, or have received, a Vehicle & Traffic ticket please disregard the date that the officer enters on that ticket as you will receive a letter from the Court with your options. Please follow the directions in this letter from the Court so that your case can be moved along and disposed of in a timely manner.

If you have a Criminal Case pending, you will be notified by the Court if, and when, you should appear as these cases need to be spaced in a way to minimize the amount of traffic in the Court at any one time.

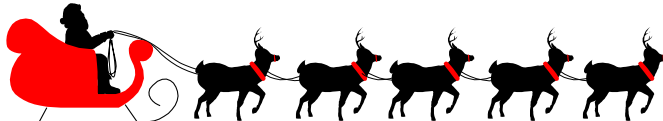
As for Summary Proceedings (eviction and non-payment concerns) these may resume and the Court is now able to accept these filings. Note though that there are still limits as to how the Court can settle these types of cases and that mediation services are strongly encouraged, when both parties do not have representation by an attorney.

Small claim matters can also now be filed with the Court and the matter will be scheduled, with notice being sent to both parties of when to appear.

Governor Cuomo has developed a list of States that, if you have been to any of them within 14 days of your scheduled Court Date, you may not visit the Court and should contact the Court with this information.

If you have any question please contact the Court at 716-795-3575 option 1 and the Court Clerk will return your call.

Thank you very much and the Court staff wishes you all good physical and mental health as we continue to 'get through this together'.



Looking for Somerset Residents in Need!

The Town has a contract with Niagara Community Action Program to assist Somerset residents. They are willing to assist anyone who qualifies, so please contact them if you could benefit from any of the following:

- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Weatherization Assistance Program
- Fair Housing Advocacy
- Rural Preservation
- SNAP
- Childcare Cost Assistance
- Help on getting caught up if you are behind on your mortgage or utility payments

There are fliers available at the Town Hall regarding each of the programs. You may pick one up the next time you are at the Town Hall or, to aid in avoiding the possible spread of Covid-19, we would be happy to mail them to you so give the Town Clerk's office a call at 716-795-3575, ext. 2.

Barker Lions: We Serve



Since 1947, our charter year, the Barker Lions have hosted a Halloween event for the students in Barker. This year, we did a coloring contest and Trunk and Treat at our building on Main Street. The winners of the Jack O'Lantern coloring contest were the following:

The Most Creative were Lydia Atwater and Lexi.

Funniest was Aine Davis.

Scariest were Shawna Hill, Jayden and Jacob Wahl.

Most traditional were Kyle Rounds, Jacob Linkowski and Jack Schwab.

Lion's Choice were Eli Sears, Teagan and Madelyn.

The Lions appreciate the Barker High School Seniors who helped get our goodie bags ready and handed them out.

Our annual appeal is going on. Each home in the district received a flyer about our club with an envelope. The flyer lists the ways Barker Lions demonstrate the motto We Serve in the Barker Community. Among these are providing eye exams and glasses, hearing aids and entry ramps for those in our community who need but cannot afford them. We aid the Barker Food Pantry, sponsor the Boy Scout troop, host a Halloween event, and give scholarships to graduating seniors. The club maintains a lending closet for various medical devices, maintains a building than many community groups use and recognizes volunteers through our Robert Uplinger Award. 100% of the funds raised with this appeal stay in the local community to aid those who need it.

For the holidays, we are supporting the Food Pantry here in Barker. We also are continuing to support community members who need glasses and hearing aids. Please remember we collect those items for recycling as well. Lion Past President Kevin Bittner wants to thank all who supported our recent cheese fundraiser. Those funds will be supporting these efforts. This sale is held every October, so please mark your calendar for next year.

We invite the members of our community to join us by volunteering for one of our projects, visiting or speaking at one of our meetings, making a donation and asking about membership. For more information about our activities, please check our website, www.BarkerLions.org, email Roar@BarkerLions.org, or call 716-778-7001.

On Saturday, December 12, the Barker Lions will host a Star Show at the Winery at Marjim Manor. Wilson

Lion Steve Smith, a local astronomer, will have his telescopes set up and do an educational program beginning at 6 PM. In recent years, this program has been held in Wilson, and the Lions are excited to have it locally.



Highway Department
Michael M. Flint, Superintendent
(716) 795-3866



Winter conditions and snow are on their way. Please drive safely. Also watch for deer in the road this time of year.

Finally, wishing everyone Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from your Highway Department.

Spectrum Internet® Assist

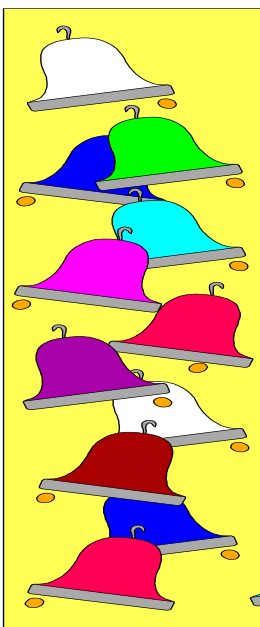
As more people are required to access internet from home, Spectrum wants to make broadband more accessible for low-income learners and seniors. The Spectrum Internet Assist program provides reliable, high-speed internet access at an affordable price for those who qualify.

Eligible low-income households can receive discounted 30 Mbps high-speed internet, along with Security Suite and an internet modem, at no additional charge. Spectrum Internet Assist requires no contracts, and there are no data caps or hidden fees.

To qualify for this program, one or more members of your household must currently receive assistance under one of the following programs:

- **National School Lunch Program (NSLP)**
- **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) of the NSLP**
- **Supplemental Security Income (For Applicants 65+ Years of Age)**

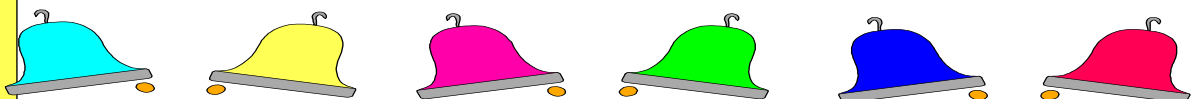
Visit their website for an application.



These items are allowed in your recycle cart:

- * Holiday packaging
- * Wrapping paper & gift boxes
- * Holiday cards
- * Paper holiday decorations
- * Large plastic holiday decorations
- * Plastic or metal sleds & shovels (no wood)

String lights can be included in your electronic recycling



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8700 Haight Road
P.O. Box 368
Barker, NY 14012-0368

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

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

RURAL ROUTE

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!

Kids' DRIVE-THRU Christmas Party at the Fire Hall
will take place on
Saturday, December 12th from 11am to 12noon.
Santa will be there to hand-out goodies to the kids.



Our new Refuse Program begins January 1, 2021