



Town of Somerset



Volume 33, Issue 3

Holiday 2018

From Your Town Clerk

Dear Residents,

2018 is almost over and I hope everyone had a safe and healthy year!

As everyone knows, we just made it through another budget season. To keep expenses low, the budget that was passed incorporated reduced hours for the Town Hall so 2019 will bring some changes. Beginning January 1st, the Town Hall will be open from 9am – 4pm Monday through Thursday. My deputy clerks' hours have been reduced so although the Town Hall will be closed on Fridays I will still have work to do. Since my laptop can connect remotely to my work computer, I plan to work from home on Fridays so that I can utilize that time to get caught up. I also will be more cognizant of scheduling my meetings and making appointments on Fridays as much as I can. I realize that some people may only be able to get to the Town Hall on Fridays and I am more than willing to make plans to meet you at the office so feel free to reach out to me. I think something that will be helpful is that we are in the process of enhancing the phone system to one that converts voicemails into emails. When this occurs it should make it easier to communicate as everyone should be able to get your message in a timely manner. Bear in mind that this change affects all of the Town Hall offices, so please be patient with everyone as we get used to the new format.

I hope everyone has a very enjoyable holiday and a great new year!

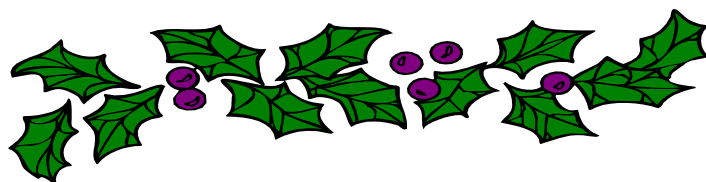
Tracy L. Carmer, RMC
Town Clerk/Editor



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**DON'T FORGET CEMETERY DEED
TRANSFER FEES WILL BE IN EFFECT
BEGINNING JANUARY 1ST**



A Word From Your Supervisor

Daniel Engert 795-3575, ext. 3



I hope this letter finds you very well. As the end of another year draws near and our thoughts begin to shift toward our friends, loved ones and holiday celebrations, thank you for taking the time to read the newsletter and to keep up to date on the business of your Town. I would like to begin by also saying thank you for the honor to serve you in office as your employee, the Town Supervisor.

As Town Supervisor, I fulfill the role of the chief financial officer for our municipality. The Town Board ultimately is responsible for adopting the town budget. The 2019 town budget was recently adopted by the Town Board. We reduced appropriations (spending) by 1%, there was a zero increase in the general tax rate and we reduced the overall tax levy by approximately 3%. That being said, be assured that there are appropriate funds allocated for legal, technical and engineering experts as the town prepares to defend against the Lighthouse Wind project. Apex announced their intent to file an application in 2019 and the Town will also file for the intervenor funds that Apex is required by statute to provide in order to offset certain costs incurred by the town during the application process. The Town is committed and intent to defend the overwhelming will of the constituents who do not want their Town to be transformed into an industrialized zone of massive wind turbines in all directions.

The Fire District tax rate increased in 2019 due to the significant reduction in the assessed valuation of the power plant that was adjusted with the new PILOT agreement this year and also from the new NYS law that mandates certain cancer coverage for volunteer firefighters. Somerset residents continue to pay the lowest fire/ambulance district taxes in the County. Finally, there was a slight (\$.80/per household) increase in the Refuse/Garbage collection fee due to our contractual obligations with Modern associated with the consumer price index.

There are no service cuts and while some services are enhanced or more centrally coordinated, you can expect the same exceptional services that all of our departments currently provide to you. As the Board contemplated the 2019 budget and keeping taxpayer costs down as much as possible, there were some considerations to re-structure the official hours of the Town Hall which include Monday through Thursday staffing through much of the year in 2019. We will be evaluating this schedule throughout the year to measure any impact on services versus the taxpayer costs moving forward. However, in an effort to otherwise enhance conveniences we have also expanded the website to include more online services, bill paying and communication opportunities. There is also the opportunity to schedule appointments with town hall officials in order that schedules can be better accommodated in order for services to be delivered conveniently. The Water/Sewer and Highway Department staff schedules are not impacted.

Finally, on behalf of the entire Town, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our recently retired Water/Sewer/Grounds Superintendent Mel Denny. He contributed exceptional service for 38 years to help make our Town the great place it is to live and raise a family. I wish him the very best in his future endeavors. The Town Board appointed Jon Dewart as the new Superintendent to step in and fill those duties immediately. It's truly a new and exciting era in the Town!

As I close, please take a moment and consider how fortunate that we are, in so many ways. As we approach the holidays, please remember the less fortunate of our community, the less mobile in our community and the less visited. If you have an opportunity, please consider even a small act of kindness that can brighten someone's day and in doing so, you brighten the Town as well. Have a safe and joyous holiday season and Merry Christmas to all!

In your service,

Daniel M. Engert – Town Supervisor





DID YOU KNOW? From Councilwoman Robin Jansen

Did you know that New York State has an alert system? NY-Alert is New York States All-Hazards alert and notification system. It provides emergency alerting information and private notifications to a defined audience (local, county, regional or statewide).

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. Your email address will be your identifier. When you register you can list which alerts you wish to receive. Most alerts are issued locally by your county or local municipality.

I signed up for NY-ALERT a few years ago and it has been invaluable when it comes to knowing where road closures are in the event of flooding or accidents. I check it every day on my way to and from work to know where closures are and what to avoid. I have saved a lot of time by driving a different route than normal because I got notified that a road had closed. I get the notice that the road is closed and another one when it's reopened. I've also signed up for other alerts, and believe me it can overload your email box because there are a lot of options including small craft advisories, sewage discharges and weather related emergencies like flood watches. Check it out.

2019 Tax Collection Hours:



January 2 to January 31 (Monday—Thursday) 9:00am to 4:00pm

February 7, 14, 21, 28, (Thursdays Only) 9:00am to 4:00pm

March 7, 14, 21, 28 (Thursdays Only) 9:00am to 4:00pm

April 1 9:00am to 4:00pm

Closed Fridays and holidays. Postmark dates for collection periods accepted.

Payment methods are Check, Cash and Credit Card (fee applies)

Also, online @ www.somersetny.org

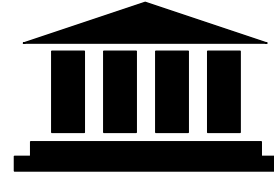


News from the Barker Fire Department



- ◆ Kids' Christmas Party at the Fire Hall on December 15th at 10am. Santa will make an appearance along with games, a magician and rides on the fire trucks.
- ◆ Still looking for a gift for Christmas Consider giving that special someone new smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and/or carbon monoxide detectors.
- ◆ Reminders from the Fire Department:
 - *Change your batteries in your smoke detectors
 - *Keep your fire hydrants and outside furnace vents clear of snow
 - *Please be courteous to our Fire Police. They are there to not only protect us, but also to protect you from any hazardous conditions while we are on a scene
 - *Yield the right of way to all emergency vehicles
- ◆ Need a New Year's Resolution for 2019? Join your local fire department! Volunteers are always needed. Stop by any Thursday evening between 6:30 – 8pm at the fire hall for an application, or at the Town Hall during office hours.

Watch our sign for any upcoming events. Thank you to the community for your continued support throughout the year. Hope you have a happy and safe Holiday Season!



NEWS FROM SENATOR ORTT

Dear Somerset residents,

Before anything else, I would like to say thank you. Thank you for your unwavering support over these last two years. Because of you, I will have the honor of serving our district for another two years – a duty I hold in the highest regard. It is imperative that you realize just how important your voice is, and I look forward to letting the governor and my colleagues in the Legislature know how their policies will affect our communities.

As we wind down the year, it is important we take the time to review what we have accomplished these last 12 months and plan ahead for our immediate future.

Over this last year, my colleagues in the New York State Senate stood firm against the wayward fiscal and economic policies of downstate progressives, preventing over a billion dollars in new taxes and regulations. We also delivered record school funding and increased funding for veterans and individuals with mental health and developmental disabilities across New York State.

Moving forward, I have serious concerns about the upcoming leadership of the state, which promises socialization of your healthcare, confiscation of your firearms, and the increasing of your taxes. This, however, does not change my job. I will be sure to let downstate liberals in the Senate Majority know how wayward and destructive their policies are here in Western New York. I will continue to be a staunch advocate for my fellow veterans and be a voice for those with developmental disabilities or mental health issues.

Under the rule of Gov. Cuomo, we have seen the outmigration from our state surge to over one million individuals, corruption flourish, and the economy flounder. We have seen additional burdens placed on our small businesses, and we have seen anyone with a perspective that differs from that of the radical progressive labeled as “enemies.”

These next two years will be challenging – without a doubt. However, I can promise you that each day I will fight for you. That is why you have chosen me to serve you, and I will continue to do it to the fullest extent of my abilities. Western New York needs a voice and I plan on ensuring that voice is as loud as ever. With your continued support, we will stand firm.

Again, thank you for placing your trust in me.

Your Senator,

Robert Ortt



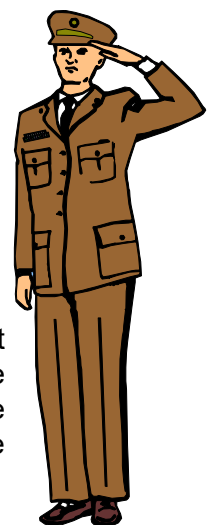
HISTORIAN'S CORNER

By: Pete Devereaux 795-3575, ext. 7

Herbert W. Carr Post # 425, American Legion

The Post now has a new home in the Barker Central School. Herb Loesch and the post members have done a wonderful job with the museum and are to be congratulated on the work they have done to make this a wonderful memorial to our Veterans. Herb will be more than happy to open the Museum for anyone to visit. You can call the school or Herb to make an appointment. Herb Loesch 795-9191 or 471-0591(Cell)

I would like to wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas and Happy and Prosperous New Year.



News From Around the County - Legislator John Syracuse



ELECTRONIC RECYCLING NEWS

Recycling electronics such as TV's and computer monitors continue to be a challenge for local municipalities. New York State had intended for a manufacturers'-funded law related to recycling these environmentally harmful products. Unfortunately, that is not the case today. However, NYSDEC has announced the release of \$900,000 in grant funds to provide relief to local governments financing electronic waste collection in their communities. These funds have been made available by the DEC in an effort to reimburse municipalities up to 50% of eligible expenses related to the responsible management of covered electronic equipment after the state banned their disposal in 2012. These funds are welcome in Niagara County as little in the form of regulatory revision has occurred since the E-waste law passed. Ms. Dawn Timm, the Niagara County Director, Division of Environmental/Solid Waste, continues to be our lead proponent as she once again prepares annual reports and grant submission documentation for all Niagara County municipalities in order to claim reimbursement.

HIGHWAY/ROAD RECONSTRUCTION REPORT

The highway department has had a busy and productive paving season this summer. In the past 2 years, we have been able to modernize our highway construction equipment to include:

- * A new milling machine and paver purchased by using NYS CHIPS funding
- * Four new excavators included under a NYS SAMS grant as a result of the efforts from Senator Rob Ort
- * Two new material hauling trailers also funded through the CHIPS program

With this increased capacity and the dedicated, hard work of our highway labor force, we were able to mill and resurface more than 15 center-lane miles in-house, which represents over 5% of our total highway inventory. To put that in perspective, that equated to over 32,000 ton of asphalt, with more than 9,200 ton being placed in July alone. I would be remiss if I didn't mention here that this could not have been accomplished without the assistance of many of the towns across Niagara County embracing the model of shared services. The Carmen Rd. bridge repair is complete. The bridge opened 11/15/18. I wish to thank all of you for your patience. Carmen Rd. cross-over culvert work has started from Route 18 and will be moving south. This is a rehab project that requires a large amount of pipe replacements. The project will also require the existing road surface to be milled and re-profiled before new pavement is placed. Phase 1 West Somerset Rd drainage will occur during the next few workable months--weather permitting.

CONT'D ON PAGE 6

Calendar of Events

- December 8th 4pm - 7pm Christmas Community Celebration at Faith United Methodist Church. Includes a Cookie Walk, Turkey/Ham sub meal, Christmas craft vendors, and a Santa's Workshop. The Barker Community Band will be performing at 6pm.
- December 15th 10am - Barker Fire Department Kids' Christmas Party
- December 21st at 7:30pm - Born a Savior, Born a King Cantata at Faith United Methodist Church. Presented by vocalists from County Line, Faith United, Hartland and Quaker Road United Methodist Churches and Covenant United Church of Christ.
- December 24th 9pm - Christmas Eve Service at Faith United Methodist Church.

Cont'd from page 5

NIAGARA COUNTY PARKS/GOLF COURSE UPDATES



Bond Lake

* New 1/4 mile hiking trail completed as part of an Eagle Scout project. This trail opens more lake-side access for hiking, picnicking and fishing. A kayak launch is also included on the trail.

Krull Park

- * Installation of electrical power to the north park to support festivals, shelters and events
- * A grant was received that will allow for a comfort station/rest room facility adjacent to the Splash Pad which will be fully ADA compliant. This work is scheduled to be completed for the 2019 season
- * The first-of-its-kind Forestry Grant, which will be used to evaluate tree health and establish a forestry management plan
- * Roof replacement to pavilions in the north park

West Canal

* The retaining wall was repaired to the docking area. This project also included water and electric power delivery to the docking site. This will accommodate up to 10 boats. We look to complete this in 2019

Royalton Ravine

- * Restroom update began and should be finished by early 2019 season
- * Proposed Eagle Scout trail 2019

Lastly, grants have been secured for the 2019 season and we will see the installation of new playgrounds at West Canal and Oppenheim Parks. The County will also create 18-hole disc golf courses at Bond Lake and Royalton Ravine. The design has been supported by the WNY Disc Golf Assoc. These should be completed for the 2019 season.

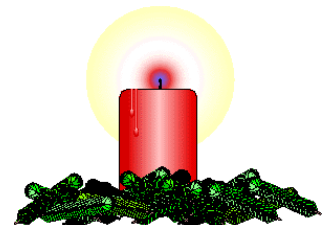
Winter activities, yes winter activities! Bond Lake has 13 miles of cross country skiing and hiking trails. The sledding hill at Bond Lake closes at dark. Bond Lake, as well as Krull Park, have 2 outdoor skating rinks. Both sites will see scraping and skim coating in an effort to improve the skating surfaces. Go to www.niagaracounty.com for more details on sledding and skating times/conditions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS

After a long and arduous process, the County was able to sell the Davison Rd. property to Mulvey Construction. The purchase price was \$100,000. The County closed on this property shortly before my writing of this article. Mulvey is looking to complete a residential-mixed use complex. This has been a long-awaited effort. When you elected me over 15 years ago, you told me that you wanted a government that was right-sized. The sale of this property fits in with that goal. This property will be returned to the tax roll and be productive for the tax-payers of Niagara County. If you recall a few years ago, the property taxpayers faced a similar dilemma with the government-run Mt. View Health Facility. Because of the sale of that property to a privately run company, the property taxpayers in Niagara County no longer subsidize a nursing home.

In other developments, our local Newfane Tops Market was able to secure low cost power through Niagara County's own "Empower Niagara" Program. As a member of the County Legislature during the NYPA relicensing process I pushed for this program. Niagara County is the only taxing jurisdiction that has put aside power for economic development. Specifically, this power is used to assist small-to-medium sized businesses that were deemed "ineligible" for power credits through original NYPA programs. Because of the Empower Niagara Program, we were able to support a local business and keep the jobs, goods, and services right here in Newfane.

Have a great, safe holiday season and Merry Christmas!



SEASONAL RECYCLING REMINDERS

YES! Recycle:

- Holiday packaging
- Wrapping paper & gift boxes
- Holiday cards
- Paper holiday decorations
- Large plastic holiday decorations
- Plastic or metal sleds & shovels (no wood)
- Aluminum foil & trays (clean)
- Soup cans (empty)
- Tissue boxes (empty)
- Valentine's chocolate boxes



NO! Dispose:

Please DO NOT put these items in your recycle cart or bin in any season:

- Containers with hazardous materials or chemical residue (pool chemicals, engine oil, household cleaners, etc)

A good reminder for the holidays: Please note that *string lights* can be recycled through our electronic recycling program. Drop them off at the Wastewater Treatment Plant at 8500 Lower Lake Road on garbage days from 7am - 3pm.



What do I do with these?

Alkaline batteries - currently the only locations that accept them are a distance from us. They are:

ShopCraft, 719 Elmwood Ave, Buffalo, NY 14222; Tifft Nature Preserve, 1200 Fuhrmann Blvd, Buffalo, NY 14203; and Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo, 65 Niagara Square, Suite 607, Buffalo, NY 14202. (We are in discussions to have a drop off location at the Town Hall.)

Carbon monoxide and smoke detectors - if these are ionized (they will have a radiation symbol on the back), they must be recycled and most manufacturers will accept theirs back. The Town Clerk's office has a list of mailing addresses for different manufacturers that they can provide to you.

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8700 Haight Road
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

Recycling and Trash Holiday Schedule:

**** December 25, 2018 (Regular pick up) Rescheduled to December 26, 2018**

**** January 1, 2019 (Regular pick up) Rescheduled to January 2, 2019**
