



Town of Somerset



Volume 27, Issue 3

Holidays 2012

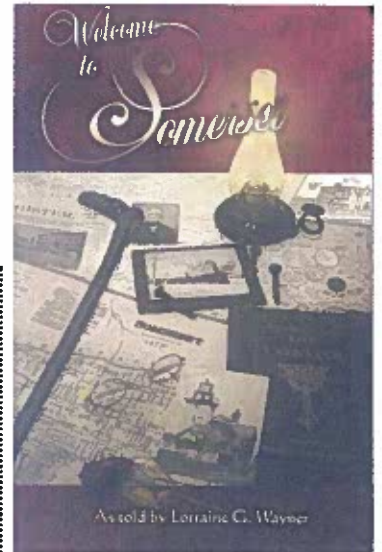


Dear Residents,

As we move ahead this time of year and look forward to a New Year, we always have news to share with you. Please read through your newsletter, clip and save pertinent information and as always, if you have any questions or comments, feel free to call me at the Town Clerk's Office at 795-3575. May you enjoy the memories that you have made during this holiday season and a very happy and healthy New Year.

Becky Connolly, Town Clerk

We still have our history books "Welcome to Somerset" available at the Town Hall. Our former Historian, Lorraine Wayner, is the author of this magnificent recollection of the history of our Town. It makes a wonderful gift any time of the year. They are available at the Town Hall for \$10.



GARBAGE COLLECTION

FOR
CHRISTMAS
AND NEW
YEARS is
changed to
Wednesday
December 26th
and January 2nd,
2013.

ELECTRONIC RECYCLING DROP-OFF

is held every garbage day from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, 8500 Lower Lake Road. You may bring your items and drop them off. Help save our Earth!

Items that will be accepted include:

Computers, televisions (as well as cathode ray tubes), small scale servers, Computer peripherals including monitors, electronic keyboards, electronic mice or similar pointing devices, facsimile machines, document scanners and printers that are used with a computer and weighing less than 100 lbs., VCRs, digital video recorders, portable digital music players, DVD players, digital converter boxes, cable or satellite receivers, electronic or video game consoles and any cable, cord or wiring permanently affixed to or incorporated into such product.

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A Word from Your Supervisor

Daniel M. Engert - 795-3575 daniel.engert@gmail.com



I would like to begin my year-end report by extending the very warmest greetings to all of the residents, friends and neighbors in the Town of Somerset. It has been a truly rewarding year of service for me, and as I draw down on the remaining weeks in 2012 and begin to gear up for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of us in 2013, I am continually mindful of the incredible responsibility that you have entrusted in me to serve at this time. Thank you for the honor to serve you as your Town Supervisor.

Let me begin with a summary of the Town Budget for 2013. The challenges we faced included a 44% reduction in PILOT revenue from the UNYPP Somerset Operating Facility, increased pension costs, and increased healthcare costs to cite the most significant. The strategies that were adopted to meet these challenges were fairly straightforward. Department heads and I began the process in August and they were challenged with 15%-20% in spending cuts, some positions were eliminated through retirement or consolidation, our sales tax projections were increased slightly and an increase in assessed valuation all played pivotal roles in the development of the budget. Reserves were also used, but in a reasonable manner to offset the impact on our taxpayers. With a great spirit of cooperation between the department heads and the Town Board, we were able to cut the 2013 General Tax rate by almost 50%, the tax levy was reduced by 20%, overall spending was reduced by 21%, and the refuse (garbage/recycling) bill was decreased by 33%. The 2013 Town Budget was ultimately adopted without eliminating or even diminishing any public service which is expected and deserved by Somerset residents to maintain your quality of life.

This year, Somerset completed the revaluation of real property assessment for the first time since 1999. All of our properties are now assessed at the full fair market value. I am aware that some residents have questions concerning their assessments and I would encourage you to call or visit with our new interim Town Assessor, Mr. Dominic Penale. He is extremely competent and brings more than 30 years of experience to serve Somerset residents. He is happy to sit down with you and will provide you with all the information you need if you wish to file a grievance concerning your assessment.

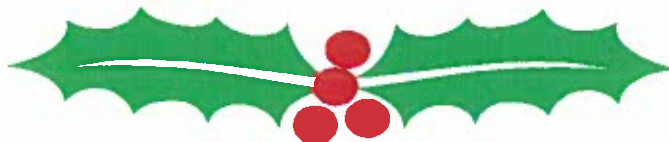
The Comprehensive Plan was adopted recently and the Town has now partnered with the Somerset Operating Facility to pursue "Shovel Ready" certification for the parcel of land formerly eyed by Verizon. This certification project, which will be steered by the Niagara County Center for Economic Development, will be critical as we endeavor to effectively market this site to prospective business ventures in the future. We are anticipating that this certification will be achieved before the end of 2013.

The Town is nearly finished re-designing its website, www.somersetny.org. You will find a wealth of information there as the departments push more and more material onto the site. It will be an invaluable resource to find forms, find answers to frequently asked questions, view assessment information, review meeting notes and so much more, all from the comfort and convenience of your home or wherever you may be in need to access it. I would also encourage you to provide feedback concerning what you see and what you don't, as it will help us to make the website that much more effective for everyone. Check back often!

Please have a safe and memorable season with your family and friends and may each of you enjoy a joyous and blessed Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

In your service,

Daniel M. Engert - Supervisor





EVERY OTHER WEEK RECYCLING

We have all heard old sayings such as "You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear". Well, sometimes it seems that these old sayings are not 100% accurate. An excellent case in point would be your Town Board's recent decision to adopt Every Other Week recycling. Contrary to the old adage, this decision takes what once was a liability to the Town and turns it into an asset. By moving from weekly recycled item pick up using the little red bins to an EOW recycling platform, and using the new forest green / earth brown rolling carts, the Town will actually be receiving revenue from our service provider – Modern Disposal. This initiative is all part of your Town Board's focus of driving down costs while still providing a high level of service to you, the Taxpayer.

Somerset has joined with some other forward thinking municipalities in Niagara County that have adopted this winning proposition. Modern Disposal benefits from being able to more efficiently pick up our recyclables while we benefit from them returning these savings back to us. This is a real win/win arrangement.

Thanks to the efforts of Niagara County Environmental Coordinator – Dawn Timm, Town Supervisor Dan Engert, and the various Town Department Heads, Somerset was able to coordinate and launch this program in record time. This enabled the Town Board to secure excellent pricing, along with free assembly and curbside delivery of the carts. We allocated some of our share of the better than projected County sales tax revenue, along with a portion of the Town's refuse fund balances to pay for the carts. The Town will also receive a rebate covering 50% of the cost and so you will not be billed additionally for them. In fact, Town residents who live in the Refuse District will see their refuse bill for 2013 actually decreased by 33%! The Refuse District does not include the Village of Barker as this service is provided by the Village. If you are a Village resident, check with a Village official to determine whether EOW will be provided there.

EOW has already begun and here's a few things to remember:

- The more you recycle, the more revenue will be paid to the Town and the better we will be able to keep our overall refuse collection charges under control.
- The new green and brown carts are **for item recycling only** – no garbage please – a pictorial label of what can and cannot go into these carts is on the lid.
- The carts will be emptied by Modern Disposal every other week – however, there is no requirement to place them curbside until they are full, so take a look at the color coded route pickup map and calendar to see your specific 2013 EOW pick up schedule.
- A copy of the color coded map and calendar showing when pick up is scheduled can be seen at the Town Hall or on the Town's website at www.somersetny.org.

*So let's all jump on board and help the environment by **increasing our recycling** – while **saving some money** all at the same time!!*

From Your Town Clerk—Becky Connolly, 795-3575

DOG LICENSES: We are receiving numerous complaints about dogs not being under the control of the owner. After investigating, we find that these dogs are not licensed. New York State law requires dogs age 4 months or older to be licensed. You may bring your up to date rabies information to the Town Clerk's Office to purchase the license. License fees are \$6.00 for spayed and neutered dogs and \$16.00 for all unspayed and unneutered dogs. If a dog license is not paid within 60 days of the date of renewal, there will be a \$10.00 late fee added to the license fee. Town Law requires dogs to be under the control of the owner at all times. Unfortunately this is not always the case. Please help us keep a safe environment and license your dog (s).



PASSPORTS: Our office is a processing agent for passports and passport photos. If you are anticipating traveling out of the country, please contact my office for information on what is required. You may also access our website for information.

ON-LINE PAYMENTS: In order to better serve you, online bill pay is available for paying your tax bills and hopefully will be available shortly for paying your utility bills. Watch our website for further information.

Blessings for happy and healthy holidays to all of you!

Tax Collection Hours

Taxes can be paid at the Somerset Town Hall during the following times beginning January 2nd:

January—Monday through Friday 9:00 AM— 4:30 PM

February and March—Fridays only—9:00 AM— 4:30PM



Barker Free Library
Where the story never ends

The Barker Free Library has a new website. Check us out at www.BarkerFreeLibrary.com. You can access the library's catalog to request or renew materials, download audio and E-books. See what's going on at the library in Programs and News. While you're there, click on the Freegal Music link to download free MP3 music. An easy-to-use website with no software to install. Get Mp3 files that can be played on ANY device (including iPods). Patrons will need to login using their library card number and pin. Downloads are limited to 3 per week. Android and iPhone apps are also available. Freegal features millions of songs by popular artists in hundreds of musical genres. If you have a question or would like a demonstration of how Freegal works, stop in or call the library at 716-795-3344. As always, our staff will be happy to help you.

Lisa Thompson, Director

freegal
 music

From Your Historian, Peter Devereaux

somersehistorian@yahoo.com

This is a cute little article that appeared in The Barker Register on Dec. 24, 1910, titled "A Christmas Doll Wedding."

We are to have a wedding;
Our mothers planned it all.
You are to be my little wife
And I your husband tall.

I love your pretty eyes of brown-
My own are dark and blue-
But as they're only glass, my dear,
They'll see no faults in you.

My china lips, they long to kiss
All your dull cares away,
But I must wait for three long weeks
Until our wedding day.

However, time will pass, sweet maid,
And then we'll never part.
I swear to love you all life
With all my wooden heart.

Your Own,

Dec. 1, 1910

Reginald.

Such was the love letter written by Reginald Graham of New York, a beautiful doll twenty inches tall, light hair, blue eyes, with long dark lashes, to his ladylove, Miss Alice Winchester, a brown eyed doll beauty of Boston.

The fact is that a marriage had been arranged between these two dollies by their little mammas and several grown-up aunties, to take place at Christmas time at the home of the doll bride.

But making the clothes! Grandmas, cousins and aunties spent days using their nimble fingers to fashion the tiny manly garments, as no little girl could possibly do the difficult sewing.

It was decided that a black broadcloth suit must be made, but as a full dress evening coat could be used only for formal occasions a tuxedo or dinner coat was finally agreed upon as being of more service.

All the time we have been telling about the bridegroom dear, little Alice has been so busy having a long white satin wedding dress made, a real lace veil and the daintiest kind of lace trimmed underwear.

A traveling gown of cloth, an automobile coat of champagne color, all have been prepared for the "going away" costume.

A procession of twenty little girls with their dollies follows Reginald and Alice, who march into the drawing room to the music of a wedding march played on the piano; then into the dining room, where the dollies sit at a table that has been arranged for them, with a tiny wedding cake decorating the center.

Then comes the wedding tour around the garden and then the newly married pair go to housekeeping in a big closet that has been furnished for them with all the latest conveniences.

It was really the most brilliant marriage that was ever made in Toyland and is the true story of a dear little brown eyed girl's Christmas present.

A great many dollie guests were invited from "Mother Goose" land, and among those most noticed were:

Jack be Nimble, Jack be Quick,
He was the first one there;
Then came Little Goldie Locks,
Who ran away from the bear.

Bright miss Nancy Etticoat'
Used to standing long,
Shone beside Tom Tucker,
Who sang the supper song.

Mistress Mary, Quite Contrary,
Brought from her garden fair,
Several maidens all in a row,
With pretty curling hair.

Bobby Shafto, from o'er the sea,
Was in a happy mood;
I saw him gazing bashfully
At dear Red Riding Hood.

Little Miss Muffet had left her tuffet
And surprised us all, oh, my!
By going to a corner with Little Jack Horner
And sharing his Christmas pie.

Shy Bo Peep without her sheep
Many sweet glances won,
And there without his little pig
Was Tom, the Piper's Son.

Marjorie Daw and big Tom Stout
Attracted much attention,
And many more whose names, alas,
I haven't room to mention.

It was a wedding so very grand,
All in the month of December,
With the very Four Hundred of Toyland there,
As many will long remember.

Julian Jerome

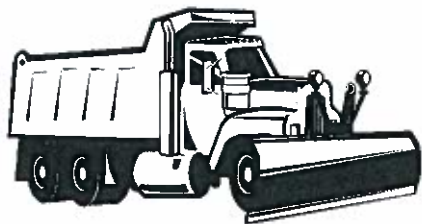
Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Peter Devereaux, Town Historian

Please note that I have established the following hours for my office:

Tuesday 9am-3pm and Friday 9am-3pm





Just a few friendly reminders from the Highway Dept., that leaving snow on the highway is prohibited by Section 1219 of the Vehicle and Traffic Law and Section 214 of Highway Law of the State of New York.

Parking on any Town Road is prohibited in accordance with provisions of Town of Somerset Code

NEWS FROM THE HIGHWAY DEPT. Kenneth J Bigelow, Superintendent of Highways 795-3866

191-15 as specified in Schedule XI (191-33) from 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. from November 1 to April 1.

The Highway Dept. is going to begin using NY-ALERT to post road closures in the upcoming construction season. This is a service started by NYS to notify residents of many different kinds of alerts such as road closures or impending weather alerts along with many others.

You as residents can sign up to receive these alerts as a consumer by going to www.nyalert.gov or by calling 1-888-697-6972. You can receive these alerts many different ways, you do not have to have computer be a part of this service. I have a few brochures that I will leave at the Town Hall.

The Employees of the Highway Dept. wish everyone a Safe and Happy Christmas Season.



Do you have strings of Christmas lights that no longer work? They can be brought to the Water/Sewer plant to be picked up with our Electronic recycling. Drop them off on any garbage day between the hours of 7am—3pm.

NEWS FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

By Brandon Sandolini, Fire Chief



This is the time of year that we use our alternative heating devices, wood stoves and fireplaces.

I would like to remind those of you who use fireplaces and woodstoves, to have your chimneys cleaned and inspected yearly BEFORE using your stove. A chimney fire happens quickly and without warning. They can burn inside your walls for hours without detection. They're especially dangerous when no one's home. By the time the fire's discovered, it's usually too late to save the home.

Another cause of many house fires is the use of power strips. The problem is that people overload these devices with appliances that require too much electricity causing the power strips to overload. Use a UL rated power strip that is rated for the given application. Regardless of internal circuit breakers, these devices can still fail. If you're going to use them, DO NOT plug in any more appliances than the strip can handle. Be sure that the power strip has a UL label and has been tested. The \$1.99 power strips at discount stores ARE NOT SAFE. Many of these strips do not have the safety features that are required by the Underwriters Laboratories.

Remember; if you use a portable generator make sure it is placed outside. Never run a generator inside, utilizing these devices inside your residence can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.

CPR training is available through the fire department at a nominal fee, call for details.

With inclement weather fast approaching be alert for Fire Police working in the roadways during incidents. Please respect the Fire Police as you would any Peace Officer.

The Barker Junior Firefighters are selling reflective address signs as a fund raiser; they are \$15/each and greatly help the responding firefighters locate your address.

As always, the members of the Barker Fire Dept are here to assist our residents in the practice of fire prevention. If you need us to help you establish a fire escape plan or any other fire prevention matter, do not hesitate to call the fire department 795-3011 at anytime. I, or one of our firefighters, will be happy to come to your home and assist you.

Water/Sewer Department News

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



We have good news for those who live within the Sewer District. You are going to see a decrease in your sewer tax rate! The combination of increased property values due to the town-wide reval and reducing our budget lines has allowed us to decrease our tax rate by 6¢/\$1,000.

The Water District had a loss in property value with the renegotiated PILOT. After reducing our water district budget as much as possible to offset this loss in revenue, we still had a gap to close. On November 13, 2012, the Town Board approved a 5¢/1,000 gallon rate increase for water use. This new rate goes into effect with the first billing in January and is our first increase since 2005. By implementing the increased rate for usage instead of taxes, it allows you to have some control over how much you are spending. The minimum bill for 0-8,000 gallons has increased from \$14.20 to \$14.60.

A couple reminders from our department: With the winter weather upon us, it's important to remember to keep your hydrant and vent pipes clear of snow. Whenever an employee from our department comes to your house, he has town identification and will be in a marked town truck.



DROP OFF CENTER FOR YOUR USED TONER CARTRIDGES / FLAGS / CELL PHONES / GLASSES HEARING AIDS and HOUSEHOLD BATTERIES

You may dispose of your **HOUSEHOLD BATTERIES**, tattered flags, used cell phones, used toner cartridges from your printers, old eye glasses and hearing aids at the Town Hall. We will recycle them for you.

Assessor's Office

Assessor- Dominic Penale 795-3243

Clerk- Carol Maines somersetassessor@roadrunner.com

Reminder that **Exemption Renewals** for Enhanced Star, Senior Exemption, Disabled and Agricultural are due in our office by **March 1, 2013**. If any property owner will turn 65 before December 31, 2013 you may apply for the Enhanced Star Exemption.

If you have any questions you may call this office during normal business hours:
Tuesday 9 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. & Thursday 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

SOMERSET TOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

From: Supervisor Daniel M. Engert **Police Phone:** 716-255-0503



The end of the first year of service has arrived and as promised, it's time to review the "report card" of your Somerset Town Police Department.

Overview - The Town Board believes that public safety is among the most fundamental obligations of local government. The safety of one's person and one's property are widely viewed as basic human rights and are essential to a community's overall quality of life. The Board understands that communities can heavily influence their appeal as a place to raise a family or open a business by assuring that its citizenry is reasonably safe. Without public safety, it makes it that much more difficult to deliver basic services, encourage economic development, support public education and promote stable housing which are the vital tenants of a desirable community in which to live.

The police force is not full-time but police constables are assigned strategically to patrol every day during the late afternoon through early morning hours when call volume for police services is typically greatest. The primary focus of the Department is to protect life and property for Town residents and Town businesses as well as to respond to calls for service from the citizenry. The supplementary focus of the agency is to promote safe roadways for vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic by enforcing vehicle and traffic laws and conducting safety checks.

Results—The effective assignment of manpower was viewed as a critical component to keep costs down by not unnecessarily layering manpower and the associated costs during periods when call volume and law enforcement functions are significantly diminished. According to the Niagara County Sheriff's E-911 Communication Center, 65% of the calls for service in Somerset occur over a nine hour period between the hours of 4pm and 1am. The Somerset Town PD is responding to approximately 61% of the total number of calls for service that are being reported in the Town of Somerset since its inception on April 1, 2012. This statistic clearly demonstrates that Somerset patrols are being assigned effectively.

The Somerset Town Police Department has provided exceptional productivity when measured against annual service reports that were submitted to the Town under previous contracts. The analysis below compares the TSPD monthly statistical average with the statistical monthly averages provided for the same service categories as provided under previous contracts for the years 2008-2011.

House/Property/Business Checks (829)	104/month : 55% increase
Arrests(20)	2.5/month : 50% increase
Traffic Tickets(127)	17/month :14% increase
DWI arrests (6)	.75 /month : 40% increase
Total Service Calls (1354)	169/month : 29% increase
% Response to all service calls in Somerset	61% : 51% increase

I provide a monthly report to the Town Board on the services provided that month by the Department. I also post these reports on the Town website. What is extremely encouraging to me as I review their statistics is the level of activity that they engage in. They are recording law enforcement or theft deterring activities almost every single hour that they are logged in for service. This means that when they're not responding to a police call, they aren't just sitting around, they are performing an area or property check, visiting a business and checking locks or checking on a house that is receiving house checks. They are being proactive and vigilant for the residents of the Town they serve.

Continued on Page 9

Somerset Town Police Department—Continued from Page 8

This mission is stressed to them and I believe that they deliver exceptional service each and every night for you. Be assured, there is a high level of accountability to ensure that your tax dollars are providing an exceptional return on investment.

Cost –All Town of Somerset taxpayers share equally in the cost of public services received from the Town. The Somerset Town Police Department cost to the Somerset taxpayer in 2013 will be four cents (\$.04) per \$1000 of assessed valuation and is included within the general town tax rate which was cut overall by almost 50%. In other words, local police service for a taxpayer in Somerset with \$100,000 assessed valuation will cost four dollars (\$4.00) in 2013. The TSPD represents only four (4%) percent of the Town General Fund Budget. The Town Board believes this to be a valued and cost effective service for their Somerset constituents.

Moving Forward – The Town Board saw fit to continue this service line in their 2013 budget and as with every budget line associated with every service which is provided by the Town, it will be continually evaluated in terms of efficiency, cost effectiveness and overall need.

Operation “Good Afternoon Somerset”– In January, I will be announcing the start of a new service that the Town will provide to our residents, particularly to our elderly and senior citizens. I discussed this at a recent Senior Citizen luncheon and many there expressed positive comments about starting it up so we’re going to give it a try. Town residents will be able to sign up for a daily service that has them call our Police Constable Office before 6pm and leave a brief message on the answering machine stating their name and address, essentially “checking in” for the day. When the Police Constable reports for duty that afternoon, all messages will be checked and anyone who is signed up for the service and who has not yet “checked in”, will be paid a visit by the Police Constable at their residence to check their well-being. Operation Good Afternoon Somerset will also hopefully provide assurance to the out of town families and loved ones of participating Somerset residents knowing that our Police Department is looking after their family member or loved one.

As always, please be encouraged to provide feedback (positive or negative), constructive criticisms and/or suggestions for improvement concerning the Somerset Town Police Department.

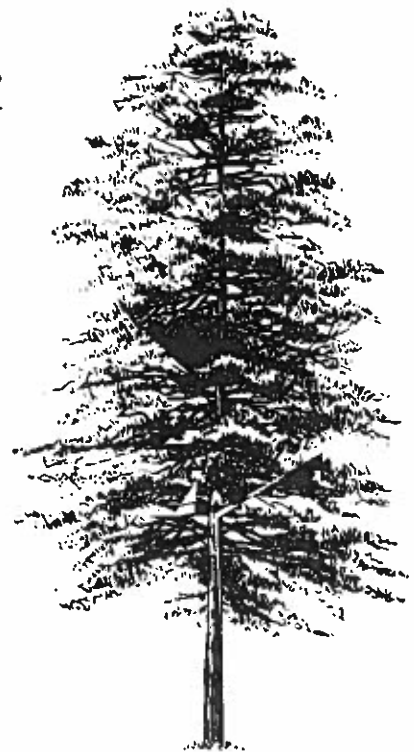
CODE ENFORCEMENT

**By Code Enforcement Officer
Mark Remington 795-9556**

As a reminder, all wood burning stoves, chimneys, fireplaces and outdoor wood boilers require a permit in the Town of Somerset. Insurance companies call this office on a regular basis inquiring on residents that have “alternative heating devices” to see if they’ve been inspected.

If you have any questions on building and zoning issues please don’t hesitate to call my office at 795-9556. I will be happy to assist you.

Wishing all of you a healthy and happy 2013!



**Volume 27, Issue 3
Holidays 2012**

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

* Please consider donating to our local food *
* pantry at Faith United Methodist Church. *
* There is always a need for items to feed our *
* community. They are especially in need of dry *
* staples such as cereal, stuffing mix, macaroni *
* and cheese, rice, peanut butter, etc. All *
* donated items benefit families in our *
* community. Thank you for giving! *



REMINDER
YOUR RECYCLING TOTE IS FOR RECYCLING ONLY.
IT WILL NOT BE PICKED UP IF IT CONTAINS TRASH.

Upcoming Events Calendar

Jan 1st— Happy 2013
Jan 2nd—Refuse Collection Today
Jan 8th—Town Board Meeting 7:00PM
Jan 9th—Planning Board Meeting 7:30PM

**BARKER FREE
LIBRARY HOURS:**

Monday 10AM—5PM
Tuesday 10AM—8PM
Wednesday Closed
Thursday 10AM—8PM
Friday 10AM—5PM
Saturday 10AM—1PM

