

Notes from the January 2022 meeting of the Hamilton, NY, Town Board (1.13.22)

The January monthly meeting of the Town Council also serves as the annual organizational meeting, including appointments or reappointments to various responsibilities and boards.

Organizing for 2022:

Jack Loop was reappointed town historian; Gordon Baker will serve as dog control officer; Mark Miller continues as zoning and code enforcement officer; Elisa Robertson continues in the roles of deputy town clerk/collector, planning/zoning clerk, and secretary to the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals.

For the Planning Board: Mary Galvez was reappointed to a five-year term and Kathleen Palmer was named to fill the final year of Travis DuBois' term (DuBois is newly elected to the Town Council). Mike Welshko was reappointed chair of the Planning Board. Harmon Hoff will continue as chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Town Supervisor Eve Ann Shwartz named Council member Shari Taylor deputy supervisor, succeeding Peter Darby, who did not seek reelection to the Council. Brynley Wilcox was named budget officer. Shwartz also assigned members of the Council as liaisons to various agencies, committees and municipalities in the Town.

The Monthly Meeting:

During his monthly report of activities in his department, Highway Superintendent Luke Dowsland explained how the nationwide slowdown in vehicle production is affecting the schedule and price for regular replacements in the Town's fleet. The situation presents both budget and service issues to which the Council and the Highway Department are adapting.

Dowsland reported that the Council's highway committee had visited four other highway departments to inform the planning for a new highway garage, a project that Shwartz said is "probably four to five years out." In the interim, the current highway garage is in need of a new roof and repairs to the boiler, and bids will be sought for those projects.

Bookkeeper Brynley Wilcox shared a comparison of the Town's year-end fund balances from the past five years. Her report highlighted a favorable comparison of the 2021 fund balance to the two previous years, a development that she said attributed largely to unbudgeted revenues such as funds from the American Rescue Plan, FEMA reimbursement of expenditures dating to 2013, insurance for a fire that totaled one of the Town's dump trucks, and unanticipated sales tax revenues.

Town Clerk Sue Reymers said that her office is preparing for the one-on-one meetings that Town Assessor Rochelle Harris will hold with property owners beginning in February. Supervisor Shwartz said that the process of updating assessments is "on track" and that notices of revised assessments will be mailed to property owners in late January and early February. Assessor Harris will schedule informal meetings to review assessments at the request of property owners. She explains the re-evaluation process in detail on the Town website:

https://www.townofhamiltonny.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf5581/f/uploads/assessors_article_on_assessment_update_2021.pdf

Southern Madison County Ambulance Corps (SOMAC) has received approximately \$18,000 to date in response to its current fundraising appeal, which will help pay down the debt on its new ambulance and related equipment, said Supervisor Shwartz. Donations may be directed to the SOMAC website: <https://www.paypal.com/donate?token=sQt6VotMDSPvSpPhxFmi-za1fOpK988HFbsRIsYE27bQCGuK8wni6N95TY41QmNygoNu7JCnOSJ010Xc>

Landscape architect Jocelyn Gavitt has developed a new design for the proposed park at the Town's access to Nine-Mile Swamp. The Council scheduled a public presentation of the new plan for 10:00 a.m. Saturday, February 19, at the Hubbardsville Fire Station, 8155 Green Road.

The Council's next regular meeting is scheduled February 10. Visit the Town website for details (<https://www.townofhamiltonny.org/>)

Jim Leach for the Town Board