

Town of Fowler July 14, 2025 Minutes of Regular Scheduled Board Meeting at 6PM.

The Town of Fowler Regular scheduled Town Board meeting was held on the above date with all board members present. Also present were Town Clerk Tami Gale, Town Justice Tim Knowlton, Highway Superintendent Randy Durham, Planning Board member John Walsh, Assessor Chair Kathy Besaw, Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw, Ethics Committee Members Vivian Goodman & Vicky Cappellino, Matilda Larson of St. Lawrence County Planning Office, Karl Griebisch, Marisa Griebisch, Lenore Heitz, Jeanette Perry, Tom Mashaw, Brittany Mashaw, Ben Mashaw, Mike Cappellino, Laurina Greenhill, Debbie Walsh, and Rachel Hunter, Editor of the Gouverneur Tribune Press.

Supervisor Newvine called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM then proceeded with the pledge of allegiance and led a moment of silence to honor our military men and women, all healthcare workers, and those who have passed since our last meeting: Charlie Hougue, Lillith Griffith, as well as for two residents who don't live in the Town of Fowler, however are part of the Fowler family; Bob Leader, and webmaster, Shari Barnhart's stepmom Donna.

Supervisor Newvine reminded all in attendance that this was a business meeting and asked attendees to reserve their comments until the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2025, regular scheduled board meeting. A motion was made by Councilperson Cleveland, seconded by Councilperson Simmons. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Presentation by Matilda Larsen, St. Lawrence County Planning Office, with an overview of the County's septic repair and replacement program.

Supervisor Newvine introduced Matilda Larsen to meeting attendees.

- Ms. Larsen discussed that she was attending the meeting to promote participation in the septic repair and replacement program.
- It provides funds for multi-years, awarded by the New York State Department of Conservation, to help protect good water quality.
- The DEC has identified multiple bodies of water throughout the County where property owners will be eligible to participate in receiving up to 50% reimbursement for the repair or replacement of a faulty septic system, or a system that is at risk of having a failure.
- She would like to encourage as many property owners as possible, who are eligible, to participate in the program.
- She presented pamphlets and postcards to members of the town board and provided the same to meeting attendees, showing highlighted maps of the properties that are eligible.
- She discussed the properties that are shown on the provided map, which touch a designated water body that is considered to be unimpaired, and having a septic system that is within 250', can apply to receive the 50% reimbursement which covers engineering costs and contractor costs up to \$10,000.
- She encouraged those who are eligible to visit the County website, and to fill out the application, and someone from either the St. Lawrence County Planning Office, or the Department of Health will follow up with you.
- It was discussed there are no income requirements, and the property can be a year-round residence or can be a camp.
- It was discussed the County has until the end of 2026 to administer the funds for this program.
- The number for interested people to call who have further questions about this program is 315-379-2292.

Supervisor Newvine thanked Ms. Larson for the information presented to the Town of Fowler.

Fullerville Cemetery Proposal by the Mashaw Family

Supervisor Newvine introduced Ben Mashaw and family to meeting attendees to present a proposal involving the Fullerville cemetery. Ben and Brittany Mashaw addressed the board and asked for approval for the family to take on a meaningful project to honor the past and to care for a place where many of our loved ones are at rest, in the Fullerville cemetery; a project to include:

- To have the ability to clean up some of the headstones that are located there.
- They will focus mainly on headstones from the 1800s to 1900s, and headstones of veterans, who may not have family left to provide any upkeep.
- They would like to clean up the moss growing on the headstones, clean up overgrowth, and to tend to hanging branches covering some of the stones.

It was the consensus of the board to approve the project with all members of the board extending gratitude to Ben and the Mashaw family for their volunteerism. Supervisor Newvine presented Ben with a Town of Fowler t-shirt and wristband to wear while he works on the project.

Lifeguard Wage Discussion

Supervisor Newvine stated this discussion is after the fact and reported that Governor Hochul decided to raise the pay of lifeguards at all State beaches in New York State to \$22.00/hr., and the Town of Fowler felt that we should raise what we pay our lifeguards. Supervisor Newvine reported the lifeguards earned \$16.00 and \$17.00 an hour and have now been raised to \$19.00 and \$20.00 an hour. Supervisor Newvine stated that the lifeguards do a terrific job, have a lot of responsibility, and we are lucky to have them.

Town Department Reports

Justice Department

Town Justice Tim Knowlton reported:

- All is going well in court.
- Court Clerk Ashley continues to send out letters of judgement for all who have failed to pay their fines.
- Court will not be held this week as he is attending justice training in Potsdam.
- The next court date will be held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday in August.

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper Barbara Finnie was not in attendance.

Assessors

Assessor Chair Kathy Besaw reported:

- The final tax roll has been received. There is a copy in the Town Clerk's Office and the Assessor's Office. Anyone is welcome to come in to view the roll.
- The final State Equalization Rate is 8.00.

Historian

Historian Karen Simmons reported:

- Thanked maintenance worker Byron Woodward for hanging the new plaque holder at the Town Hall.
- She will have the new Korean Conflict plaque with additional information on display on Family Day.
- Thanked Leo Knight for the new picture of the number 2 mine in Fowler.
- Thanked Michael Cappellino for the documents he had donated to the Historian's Office earlier in the day.

Animal Control

Councilperson Simmons reported for Dan Moyer who was not in attendance:

- Two dogs were picked up by animal control on Country Club Rd. Their owner was located, and the animals were returned on the same day, after receiving rabies vaccinations, getting licensed, and paying kennel fees.

- A pit bull was picked up running at large on Byrns Rd. The dog was advertised to locate its owner and stayed in the kennel for over 10 days and was unclaimed. The dog had stopped eating and had many health issues. The decision was made to have the animal euthanized.
- Maintenance worker Byron Woodward continues to work on the dog kennel to bring it into compliance with new State mandates.

Beaver Control

Councilperson Simmons reported for Dan Moyer who was not in attendance:

- There was no beaver activity being worked on at this time.
- He reported that the beaver huts on County Route 22 appear to have been removed.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Glen Besaw reported:

- The complaint he received regarding the dock installed in Sylvia Lake without a building permit is being handled by DEC.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Tami Gale reported:

- DEC Gross sales for the month were \$285.00 with the Town of Fowler's Commission being \$15.75. She had licensed 31 dogs, issued 4 certified marriage transcripts, had issued 4 death certificates, handled 4 building permit applications, had collected \$100.00 in miscellaneous dog fees, sold 1 plot in the Fullerville Cemetery, and had collected \$1.25 for photo copies.
- Received her discharge of collector paperwork from the County stating she has fully settled the sums due for taxes with the County.
- She received a scrap metal check from Northstar Auto and Salvage LLC. in the amount of \$437.20 for 2 separate scrap metal pickups on 5/16 & 5/29 for 7 tons of scrap metal.
- She received \$204.00 from the Pepsi machine located at the highway department.

Maintenance Department

Maintenance Worker Byron Woodward reported:

- He has ordered the supplies and will be working on the dog kennel to bring it to compliance.
- The new sidewalk at the pavilion will be poured after the dog kennel work is completed.
- He had applied a plaque to a headstone in the Gulf Cemetery requested by a family member of a NAVY veteran, through the historian's office.
- He reported that the Gulf Cemetery has no water available and overall is in very bad condition. He asked the board if they could apply for any funding to help make needed repairs and suggested maybe the Town of Fowler could sponsor a work day with volunteers to aid in the up keep of all the Town cemeteries.

Councilperson Knight asked maintenance worker Byron Woodward if he was able to repair the lifeguard chair at the beach. It was discussed that the lifeguard chair is in bad condition, and it won't be a quick fix. He made the suggestion of ordering a new plastic lifeguard chair that won't succumb to the weather.

Highway Department

Highway Superintendent Randy Durham:

- Paving season has been busy.
- Suite-Kote is grinding CR 24 today and tomorrow, then they will move on to Country Club Rd, and should be moving on to CR 22 on Thursday and Friday.

- He sent in his first CHIPS reimbursement for \$180,000, and still has \$216,000 in regular CHIPS, and has almost \$40,000 in Extreme Weather Funds to use.
- He will be putting top on the far end of Doane Rd. for 1.1 miles, and the remainder of the funds will be saved for next year.
- He has 15 culverts to change on Country Club Rd, which is expected to take a week to complete, and will begin next Monday.
- There will be road closures when this work is completed.
- Reported that Truck 16 needs a new air conditioner and compressor, at a cost of \$716.00 and asked the board about their thoughts on having it fixed. It was the consensus of the board to have the work completed.

Public Comment

Lenore Griebisch Heitz:

- Thanked Supervisor Newvine for letting her address the board on behalf of many Sylvia Lake landowners who are very concerned and very much opposed to the use of chemicals in Sylvia Lake.
- Reported what brought her in to discuss the matter, was reading , in the Sylvia Lake Breeze, Summer 2025 edition, that the Town of Fowler has pledged \$5,000 to be used for the application of herbicide to address the milfoil problem.
- She wanted to give the board a different perspective on the use of herbicides from many of the landowners at Sylvia Lake, that were not included in the initial discussion when the \$5,000 was pledged by the Town of Fowler.
- She reported that the herbicide, ProcellaCOR, is a newly regulated toxic chemical with many water use restrictions to include: treated water may not be used for lawn irrigation; hydroponics; livestock drinking; composting; treated water may not be entered for 12 hours without protective equipment.
- She reported that the ProcellaCOR label warns there is an oxygen depletion risk. It can cause oxygen depletion in the water due to plant decay, which can lead to fish kills.
- She reported that ProcellaCOR was registered by the EPA in 2017, and it was first used in 2018 by the State of Minnesota, where the Department of Agriculture has since banned ProcellaCOR, designating the chemical to be a PFAS chemical (a synthetic forever chemical), that does not break down naturally, and accumulates in the environment and body, and has been linked to cancer, thyroid disease, human development issues, liver disease, and the list goes on and on.
- She reported that it just doesn't make common sense to use a chemical when there are safe and non-toxic ways to deal with milfoil.
- She reported the DEC has given approval for the hand harvesting of milfoil, when they used to say not to touch it.
- It was also reported that the Sylvia Lake Association has 18 Benthic mats to suppress the growth of milfoil that landowners may rent for the season.
- She asked the board that if the \$5,000 donation that was pledged toward the chemical treatment of milfoil was still available to use in 2025, that it would be appreciated instead, if it could be used for the Benthic matt barriers instead of chemical treatment.

Supervisor Newvine discussed the \$5,000 donation that was previously pledged was predicated on the fact that it was assumed the majority of the landowners would be in favor of the use of the herbicide for milfoil mitigation. Supervisor Newvine stated that the \$5,000 that was previously pledged was ARPA (American

Rescue Plan Act) Funds, that needed to be designated for use by the end of 2024, and that money is now gone and has been used elsewhere.

Jeanette Perry:

- Stated that she hoped the Town of Fowler would never be in favor of putting chemicals in Sylvia Lake, when the milfoil is not a problem.
- She asked the Town of Fowler to call her, or one of the landowners attending tonight's meeting, if they feel there is a problem.
- Discussed that there never was a vote taken on the use of ProcellaCOR in Sylvia Lake.

Marisa Griebisch:

- Reported that she had a member of the Sylvia Lake Association contact her and ask her why she hadn't returned her survey form on the use of herbicide in the lake. She reported she, as well as many other landowners, had not received the survey.
- Discussed that a survey was then sent to her, and she sent it back in stating no to the use of herbicide in Sylvia Lake.
- Using herbicide is going to take our beautiful gem lake and make it not considered to be unimpaired any longer, and they are not going to give septic replacement or repair funds to bodies of water that are considered to be impaired.

Karl Griebisch:

- Stated he had attended a meeting 20 years ago at the Town Hall where Sylvia Lake landowners were told not to pick the milfoil. That a tiny piece of it would turn into a forest, and so they never picked it at all, and if they had been picking it for the last 20 years, it would probably be gone.
- Asked if anyone has ever had to deal with someone who has died from leukemia or Parkinson's disease, stating he has lost friends from access to these kind of chemicals, and it is not a pretty sight.
- Stated that he really appreciates the board having the attitude they have about looking at something and not going for a simple answer, as it gets more complicated down the road, and wondering what may happen in 15 years when someone gets sick with leukemia from the chemicals that may have been used.
- Stated anything that we can do to make sure that this doesn't happen is a good solution to this problem.

Councilmembers

Councilperson Karen Simmons:

- Reported in the month of June, the HAP Program was visited 38 times.
- The HAP Program is closed until July 31st because of preparations for Family Day.
- Thanked Dave & Shelly Fackler and Mike Tersmette for the food donations to the food pantry.
- On June 20th she and Supervisor Newvine delivered SOS Care Packages to 110 senior citizens in the Town of Fowler.
- Asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham to have the highway department workers cut the tree that is growing up through the snow plow behind the highway department.
- Reminded everyone that Saturday is Family Day, and to be sure to get your tickets for all the raffle prizes.

Councilperson Cleveland:

- He pressure-washed the basketball court and reported that there is definitely a goose problem. He would like to purchase a shovel to leave at the court for visitors to use.
- Suggested that individuals renting the pavilion give their cell phone numbers instead of their house phone numbers.

Councilperson Leo Knight Jr.:

- Asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham if he is going to be putting any more sand back in the Sand/Salt Barn. Hwy. Superintendent Durham reported that it would all be going back in.
- Asked Hwy. Superintendent Durham to have some of the more experienced workers watch the new workers when this job is done.

Councilperson Lynn Bishop:

- Suggested the plows could use a little touch-up paint applied to them. Hwy Superintendent Durham stated that the painting of the plows will be completed after the busy road construction season has ended.
- Reported that something had to be done about the Balmat Cemetery. Supervisor Newvine discussed that the board would look at all the cemeteries to see what is needed for up-keep.

Supervisor Ricky W. Newvine:

- The Sand/Salt barn has been repaired; however, the insurance money has not been received yet. It was the consensus of the board to hold the payment for the repairs until the insurance check is received.
- The County has conducted our yearly workers' comp safety inspection which went well with one minor issue in the hwy. department barn.
- The lawn is going to be mowed and raked in preparation for family day.
- He received a copy of the memorandum of understanding between Teamsters Local 687 and the Town of Fowler for the agreed upon compensation for the designated safety officer and for the agreed upon \$200.00 reimbursement to purchase OSHA approved foot wear or clothing.
- He had received a thank you letter from the Gouverneur Hospital Auxiliary for the donation in memory of Nancy Cappellino.
- He had received a card from Vicky Lutz for the SOS care package that she received.
- The corner of Sylvia Lake Rd and SH 812 has been trimmed back.
- He called the County in regard to ATV statutes and had learned that the only areas that are allowed are from Colton to Pitcairn.

Supervisor Newvine asked for a motion to audit the bills. A motion was made by Councilperson Cleveland seconded by Councilperson Bishop to audit the bills. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

The bills audited for the General and Highway Fund were #240 to # 292 with a total of \$191,170.31.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be held on August 11, 2025 at 6:00PM.

With no further business, on a motion of Councilperson Knight, seconded by Councilperson Bishop, the July 14, 2025, Regular Town Board meeting was adjourned at 7:24PM. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tami Gale; Town Clerk