

**A regular meeting of the Town Board of Thurston, County of Steuben, and the State of New York was held at the Town Hall, 7578 County Route 333 on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of September 2025.**

**Present:** Town Supervisor: Michael Volino  
Town Council: Daniel Gee, Holly Chase, Noel Sylvester  
Highway Superintendent: Ben Smith  
Code Enforcement Officer: Nick Nolton  
Fire Department Secretary: Desiree Fisk  
**Absent:** Town Council: Jennifer Hargrave  
Assessor: Diana Dixon

**Visitors:** Brandi Smith, Jeff Sweeney, Sam Dick, Eva Turner, M. Ruth Schoonover, Alan Crooker, Dolores Crooker, Ken DeWert, Lori DeWert, Barbara Dartt, Bill Dartt, Darlene Chase, Roselyn Renner, (Zoom) Chris Volino, Sarah Volino, Cal Hoad, Lamora Hoad

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:00 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Ken DeWert said he was there to talk about the culvert issue at his property on the Savona-Campbell Road. He said if the Town wishes him to pay for the culvert work done that was in the Town of Campbell, he would do so. Michael Volino said we would discuss this later in the meeting. Ken noted that he has not yet received a tax bill indicating this is in the Town of Campbell, but he would check that.
- Alan Crooker thanked the Highway Department for fixing the Savona-Campbell Road. He asked if they put fiber paper down and were they planning on fixing the shoulders. Ben Smith said they did not put fiber paper down and they will be fixing the shoulders. Alan asked if the ditches would be dug out. Ben Smith said the area is level there. Alan said it is a problem as when the ice melts in the spring and during heavy rain there is nowhere for the water to go and it washes areas out.
- Ruth Schoonover asked about food for the food pantry. Jeff Sweeney said it was his understanding this is not a food pantry but for emergency issues only. We are hoping to store non-perishables, not distribute them.
- Barbara Dartt asked if they could still apply for the CDBG grant as their basement needs repairs. Michael said the awards have been made for this year, but her application will be on file for next year. Barbara Dartt said they never received an answer this year and Michael will check into that.

Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that public comment be closed. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

**MINUTES:**

- Motion was made by Dan Gee and seconded by Noel Sylvester that the minutes from the August 20<sup>th</sup> meeting be approved as presented. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

**BILLS:**

Michael Volino submitted the following bills for approval by the Board:

General: \$10,245.13 Vouchers A173-A189  
Highway: \$11,368.85 Vouchers DA127 – DA138  
Trust & Agency: \$ 165.00 Voucher TA9

Motion was made by Noel Sylvester and seconded by Dan Gee that the bills be ordered paid and charged to the proper accounts as noted. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

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**TOWN CLERK:**

- Sue Conklin noted that an error was made when sending in the Standard Workday Resolution for Ben Smith so we must have a new resolution, post it for 30 days, and resubmit it. The following resolution was made:

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Town of Thurston hereby established a standard workday for the Superintendent of Highways, B. Morris Smith, and will report this to the New York State and Local Retirement System based on his record of activities,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the standard workday for the Superintendent of Highways will be 8 hours with bi-weekly pay, and

**BBE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk of Thurston will post this resolution on the official Town bulletin board where it will remain for 30 days.

Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that the above resolution be passed, effective immediately. Put to roll call vote: Holly Chase, aye; Dan Gee, aye; Michael Volino, aye; Noel Sylvester, aye; Jennifer Hargrave, absent. Unanimously carried.

- The Town Clerk presented her monthly report to the board indicating total collections for August were \$498.90 with \$460.90 staying with the Town.

**JUSTICE:**

Darlene Smith reported collecting \$42.00 during the month of August.

**DOG CONTROL:**

Randy Akins reported a dog complaint on Starr Road that was resolved. He also reported a call about two missing German Shepherds which he later found out were back home.

**CODE ENFORCEMENT**

Nick Nolton reported he issued one building permit during August, has 18 open permits, issued 3 certificates of occupancy, and has 2 permits pending.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Desiree Fisk as Fire Department Secretary said she has caught up past financial reports and is working on the current budget.

**HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT**

- finished clearing the seasonal part of South Hill Road, ditched, graded, raked, rolled, and brined
- finished grading Foster, raked, rolled, and brined
- graded Cottage Road, raked, rolled, and brined
- graded Cahill Road, raked, rolled, and brined
- fixed the gauge on the new large fuel tank; the cable came off the gauge and fell into the bottom of the pipe which made the tank look like it had a bad inside liner
- installed a new cutting edge on the grader
- graded Knowles Road, raked, rolled, and brined
- ditched Knowles Road from Brinks back to South Hill
- patched potholes and bad spots around town
- graded, raked, rolled, and brined the seasonal part of Wood Road
- ripped up .2 miles on Savona-Campbell Road and added item 4 crushed gravel to get it ready for paving
- repaired seasonal portion of Hamilton to make it passable to reach the property at the end
- Savona-Campbell Road pavement has been put down by Dalrymple and looks nice
- graded the bottom of Green Hill Road, raked, rolled, and brined
- started grading Rising Road, 80% of dirt roads are graded and then moving to Forty Dollar Road

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**Highway Superintendent con't**

- Dug out both sides of the back of the seasonal end of Hamilton to make it passable for four wheel drive vehicles

**SUPERVISOR**

- We were not awarded funding for the Parks or the Archives Grant
- Noel Sylvester donated shelving for the Emergency Food Closet
- New .gov emails are now available and just must be set up – Town Clerk will assist with that
- Month end closing for August has been completed and sent to the Town Board
- Supervisor attended the NYS Archives webinar on developing a policy for managing e-mails
- CDBG Grant – Bi-weekly check-ins with Labella and STC continue. Eco testing is complete with 2 or 3 projects ready to be put to bid by October 1
- Feedback received from the July 30 NYMIR inspection of the Town Facilities
- Sierra Club will fund planting and plaque at the Town Hall in the spring/summer 2026 to honor Rachel Treichler, our Attorney who passed away earlier this year.
- We received our first check for CHIPS reimbursement of \$190,785.62 in September.
- Campbell Savona School District has reached out to local towns to see if we had any information that we would like to have included in their school newsletter.

Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Dan Gee that all departmental reports be accepted as presented. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

*Seasonal Road signs:* Michael asked Ben Smith if he received any quotes for replacement of the limited maintenance (seasonal road) signs and Ben said he is still working on this.

*Purchase of Grader – Resolution:* Michael noted the USDA has accepted all our bond documents and we can now order the grader. The following Resolution # 19 of 2025 was presented to the Board:

**WHEREAS** the Thurston Highway Department has identified the need to replace our current grader, which is necessary for the efficient and safe operation of the department, and

**WHEREAS** it has been determined that the acquisition of this equipment is in the best interest of the taxpayers and residents of the Town of Thurston, and

**WHEREAS** in accordance with General Municipal Law §103, competitive procurement procedures were followed to solicit bids for the equipment, and

**WHEREAS** upon review of the bids it was determined that Five Star Equipment submitted the Best Value bid with a total cost of \$414,077.03, and

**WHEREAS** the Town Board finds that the terms of the purchase agreement are in the best interests of the Town for the acquisition of the equipment.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Town Board of Thurston as follows

Section 1: The Town Board hereby authorizes the Supervisor to enter into a purchase agreement with Five Star Equipment, Inc for the purchase of a 2026 John Deere 772 P-Tier Motor Grader with 6WD.

Section 2: The total cost of the equipment shall not exceed four hundred forty-one thousand seventy-seven dollars and three cents.

Section 3: The Supervisor is authorized to execute all necessary documents and to take all necessary actions to complete the purchase and delivery of the equipment; and

Section 4: Funding for this purchase has been secured through the USDA.

Section 5: This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

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Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that the above resolution be adopted effective immediately. Put to roll call vote: Noel Sylvester, aye; Michael Volino, aye; Holly Chase, aye; Dan Gee, aye; Jennifer Hargrave, absent. Unanimously Carried.

The Board agreed that the highway department should be keeping daily inspection and maintenance reports on all their equipment. Michael Volino said there is an asset management program available for this purpose.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS continued:**

Strategic Plan Survey: Holly Chase said she has only received 11 responses to the strategic planning questionnaire that has been put out for the public.

Cemetery Signs: NYS requires that all cemeteries have an identification sign on them. The Board will continue to look for affordable signs.

Wreaths Across America: The Town of Thurston is considering joining the Wreaths Across America Program and residents could then sponsor a wreath to be placed on the grave of a Veteran in the Thurston Village Cemetery in December. Motion was made by Noel Sylvester and seconded by Holly Chase indicating the Board agreed with designating the Town of Thurston as a Wreaths Across America participant. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried. Information will be placed on the Town Website.

Beautification of Town Hall: Scott and Sue Conklin will donate landscape timbers to place around the Town Hall sign so plantings can be done in the spring. Motion was made by Noel Sylvester and seconded by Holly Chase that this be approved. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

Town Signboard: Michael Volino said the Town Clerk has requested we investigate getting a signboard to put by the road for the Town Hall. Nick Nolton indicated he could probably make one but let's see what we can find to order as well before a decision is made.

Salt Barn Repairs: Michael said there are repairs needed on the inside of the Salt Barn where several sections of plywood need replacement. An outside quote was received for \$1000 for labor plus the cost of the plywood. Nick Nolton said he could make the repairs for \$300.00, and the cost of the plywood. Motion was made by Dan Gee and seconded by Holly Chase that Nick Nolton be authorized to fix the salt barn where needed. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that Unfinished Business be adjourned. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Culvert Policy: Due to the recent situation with a culvert on Savona-Campbell Road, the Town Board has discussed revisiting our current Culvert Policy and Application. The Board said because there was no malicious intent when the culvert on that road was installed on Campbell property that they will not ask the landowner to pay the approximately \$195 and cost of 4 ½ hours of labor and stone. This brought to light that we need to have a better policy and follow it. The policy will be reviewed, updated, and acted on at our reorganization meeting in January. The Code Officer said he has a program that includes a culvert policy and a fee for such can be collected by him and turned over to the town clerk. It was suggested a fee of \$25.00 be charged for this.

Presentation of 2026 Budget: The Town Clerk presented the tentative budget to the Town Board for their review. This will now be posted on the Town website. Michael noted that the value of Thurston increased 9.5% this year with the Tentative Budget having an increase in the tax levy of 1.67% which is below the 2%cvap.

Cross Training Noel Sylvester asked the Highway Superintendent what progress is being made on cross training employees of the Highway Department. Ben said he is working on it. Noel suggested we get a schedule set up to make sure everyone is trained on all pieces of equipment.

Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that new business be closed. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1 – There is a drive through free rabies clinic Thurston September 25 from 6 – 8 pm at the Highway Shop

2 – There is a budget workshop on October 1 at 7pm.

3 – The next regular meeting will be October 15 at 7:00 p.m.

Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that the meeting be adjourned at 8:00 p.m. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sue Conklin, Town Clerk

*Sue E. Conklin*