

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING FOR THE TOWN OF THURSTON, HELD JANUARY 7, 2026
AT 6:00 PM AT 7578 COUNTY ROUTE 333, THURSTON, NEW YORK.**

Present: Michael Volino, Town Supervisor
Town Council: Holly Chase, Daniel Gee, Jennifer Hargrave, Noel Sylvester
Highway Superintendent: Alan Crooker
Code Enforcement Officer: Nick Nolton
Assessor: Diana Dixon

VISITORS: Sam Dick, Dolores Crooker

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

SUPERVISOR APPOINTMENTS:

Michael Volino appointed Holly Chase as Deputy Town Supervisor and noted he would be the Town Budget Officer, both for a one-year term to expire December 31, 2026.

ELECTED DEPARTMENT HEAD APPOINTMENTS:

Sue Conklin appointed Dolores Crooker as Deputy Town Clerk and Deputy Registrar of Vital Statistics, and Brandi Smith as Deputy Clerk. Brandi Smith appointed Sue Conklin as Deputy Tax Collector. Alan Crooker appointed Randy Akins, Sr. as his Deputy Highway Superintendent. All are for one-year terms to expire December 31, 2026.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Dan Gee that the following appointments be made, each for a term of one year to end December 31, 2026:

- Nick Nolton was appointed as Code Enforcement Officer,
- Randy Akins, Sr was appointed as Dog Control Officer,
- Mary Akins was appointed as Deputy Dog Control Officer,
- Megan Dorritie of Harter, Seacrest, and Emery LLP, was appointed as Town Attorney,
- Safety Committee members were appointed: Michael Volino, (Safety Coordinator), Alan Crooker, Randy Akins, Sr., Noel Sylvester, Diana Dixon,
- Noel Sylvester and Roselyn Renner were appointed as Co-Historians for the Town,
- The Board will discuss the Board of Ethics at the next regular meeting in January 2026,

Put to vote: Holly Chase, aye; Daniel Gee, aye; Michael Volino, aye; Noel Sylvester, aye; Jennifer Hargrave, aye. Carried.

PAY SCHEDULE:

Motion was made by Daniel Gee and seconded by Noel Sylvester that the following pay schedules be approved as noted:

- Highway Superintendent paid bi-weekly at an annual rate of \$55,000. Michael said Alan has declined Health Insurance and participation in the NYS Retirement System through the Town.
- The following will be paid monthly: Supervisor/Budget Officer, Justice, Town Clerk/Registrar of Vital Statistics/Records Management, Dog Control Officer, and Code Enforcement Officer.
- The following will be paid Bi-Annually: Board Members, Assessors, Tax Collector.

Put to vote: Holly Chase, aye; Daniel Gee, aye; Michael Volino, aye; Noel Sylvester, aye; Jennifer Hargrave, aye. Carried.

RULES OF PROCEDURE:

Motion was made by Jennifer Hargrave and seconded by Noel Sylvester that the following Rules of Procedure be approved as noted:

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- Designate the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. as the regular meeting date, except for November which will be November 11th, the second Wednesday;
- Set the Town Clerk's office hours on Wednesday from 4pm to 7pm and Thursday from 9am to Noon excluding legal holidays;
- Set Town Court on the first and third Tuesday of every month at 4:30 p.m. excluding legal holidays;
- All vouchers for payment from the General and Highway Funds are due to the Town Supervisor the Monday before regular board meetings;
- Direct the Town Supervisor to pay approved bills within two business days following the regular Board meetings;
- Direct the Town Supervisor to pay all monthly utility bills and approved vendors in such a way as to not accrue late fees;
- Approve holding two rabies clinics at the Highway Shop, one in the spring and one in the fall;
- Direct all Department heads to present monthly reports to the Board by the Monday prior to regular Board meetings;
- Direct two Town Board Members to conduct and present results of the 2025 annual audit of the Town Clerk and Town Justice no later than the January (21st) regular meeting;
- Direct two Town Board Members to conduct and present results of the 2025 annual audit of the Town Tax Collector and Town Supervisor no later than the April (15th) regular meeting;
- Direct the Highway Superintendent to submit, prior to cut-off dates set by NYSDOT, all requests for reimbursement through the CHIPS program;
- Direct the Highway Superintendent to submit, prior to cut-off dates set by NYSDOT, all requests for reimbursement through the CHIPS program;
- Direct the Highway Superintendent to remove snow and ice from the Town Hall and Fire Hall parking lots and sidewalks;
- Set dog license fee schedule as follows; \$7.00 for spayed or neutered dogs, \$15.00 for unspayed or unneutered dogs, and \$6.00 for replacement tags;
- Noted the fee for checks with insufficient funds is set at \$25.00,

Put to vote: Holly Chase, aye; Daniel Gee, aye; Michael Volino, aye; Noel Sylvester, aye; Jennifer Hargrave, aye. Carried.

CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS:

Motion was made by Daniel Gee and seconded by Holly Chase that the following contracts and agreements be approved as presented:

- Designate Five Star Bank as the official depository;
- Designate Sprague Insurance (NYMIR) as the municipal insurance provider;
- Designate the Southern Tier Shopper as the official newspaper;
- Approve AMR (American Medical Response) as the ambulance service;
- Set the 2026 mileage rate for Town Business as \$.70 per mile;
- Approve an annual contract with Isaac Heating and Cooling for the Town Hall and Highway Shop.
- Approve the continued use of Williamson Law Book Software programs for Accounting/Payroll, Clerk's Reports, and Highway Superintendent;
- Approve the continued use of All-Star Cleaners as cleaners of the Town Hall and add them to cleaning restrooms and the office at the Highway Shop;
- Noted the town is waiting for a dog shelter contract with a new owner. The shelter is located on County Route 25. This will be discussed at an upcoming meeting.

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Put to vote: Holly Chase, aye; Daniel Gee, aye; Michael Volino, aye; Noel Sylvester, aye; Jennifer Hargrave, aye. Carried.

Michael noted the Town Tax Collector has provided an **Intermunicipal Agreement with Steuben County Finance to provide online and telephonic payment options for tax payments**. The following resolution was presented to the Board for review:

WHEREAS, the Town of Thurston wishes to better serve our residents by authorizing the County to collect Town Tax payments by credit cards via telephone or by internet, and

WHEREAS, Steuben County has offered a shared services agreement to the Town of Thurston which would allow such payments through the County Tax Collection Software which would include a convenience fee structure to the residents, and

WHEREAS, this agreement will automatically renew every four years unless the Town provides, in writing, their wish to discontinue it, and

WHEREAS, this agreement does not alter or modify any of the tax collector duties or due dates for Town tax payments,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Supervisor be authorized to sign such agreement as attached in full in the Board Meeting Minutes from January 7, 2026.

Motion was made by Dan Gee and seconded by Holly Chase that Resolution # 1 of 2026 adopting such agreement be approved and the Town Supervisor be authorized to sign as required. Put to roll call vote: Jennifer Hargrave, aye; Daniel Gee, aye; Noel Sylvester, aye; Michael Volino, aye; Holly Chase, aye. Carried.

**PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 5-B OF THE GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW
AND SECTION 925-C OF THE REAL PROPERTY TAX LAW**

THIS AGREEMENT, made the 7th day of January, 2026, by and between the County of Steuben, a municipal corporation of the State of New York, having its principal office at 3 E. Pulteney Square, Bath, New York 14810 (hereinafter "County") and the Town of Thurston, a municipal corporation, having its offices at 7578 County Route 333, Campbell, New York 14821 (hereinafter "Town").

WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, the County and Town recognize the need for shared services to more efficiently utilize the tax dollars of its residents and recognize that a shared services opportunity exists as to the collection of taxes by electronic payment, via the internet or telephone; and

WHEREAS, the General Municipal Law Article 5-G allows two or more municipal corporations to enter into agreements subject to approval by the governing body of each municipal corporation; and

WHEREAS, the General Municipal Law §5-b and Real Property Tax Law §925-c allow and set conditions for payment of real property taxes via the internet; and

WHEREAS, the County has an existing business relationship with Value Payment Systems (hereinafter "VPS") to provide online and telephonic payment options to County residents, including an existing convenience fee structure; and

WHEREAS, the Town has expressed interest in offering an electronic payment option to Town taxpayers, with the taxpayer being responsible to pay the related convenience fee; and

WHEREAS, the Town is currently using the tax collection software written by the Steuben County Information Technology Department and the County has the ability to import data from VPS to update the Town's tax collection information; and

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WHEREAS, on or about June 26, 2017 the County of Steuben, by and through the Steuben County Legislature, adopted Resolution #108-17 authorizing the Commissioner of Finance of Steuben County to enter into inter-municipal shared services agreements with eligible towns to permit town taxpayers to pay current year taxes via the internet or telephone, with existing convenience fees charged by VPS to be paid by any taxpayer choosing to pay the current year taxes electronically; and

WHEREAS, on or about January 7th, 2026 the Town, by and through its Town Board, adopted Resolution # 1 authorizing the Town Supervisor to enter into an Intermunicipal Agreement with the County of Steuben authorizing the County to provide certain financial services to the Town including, but not limited to, the collection of real property taxes via the internet or telephone; and

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual promises and agreements contained herein, the parties hereby agree as follows:

1. The Steuben County Finance Office shall provide tax collection services through electronic payments as permissible and sanctioned by Real Property Tax Law §925-c, commencing on or about January 1, 2026 and ending with the reconciliation and settlement of the Tax Warrant in accordance with NYS Real Property Tax Law Article 9. This agreement will automatically renew annually for four (4) additional years, through the tax year 2030, unless notice of non-renewal is provided in writing to the other party on or before November 1 of the year preceding the issuance of the Town and County Tax Bills.
2. Written notice of non-renewal by the Town must be given to the Steuben County Commissioner of Finance and the Steuben County Attorney. Written notice of non-renewal by the County must be given to the Town Supervisor and the Attorney for the Town, if applicable.
3. The Town will assist in any reasonable and practical way to allow Steuben County to update the Town's tax collection information as required through the tax collection software.
4. Authority for Execution on Behalf of the Town of Thurston: The Supervisor of the Town of Thurston has executed this agreement pursuant to the Town of Thurston Resolution No. 1 adopted on January 7, 2026 by the Thurston Town Board. A copy of the Resolution of the Town of Thurston and certified by the Thurston Town Clerk are annexed hereto and made a part thereof.
5. Authority for Execution on Behalf of Steuben County: The Commissioner of Finance for Steuben County has executed this agreement pursuant to Resolution No. 108-17 adopted by the Legislature of the County of Steuben, at a meeting thereof held on June 26, 2017. A copy of said resolution is annexed hereto and made a part hereof.
6. This agreement between the parties is solely relative to the collection of real estate taxes, and penalties/interest as applicable, by electronic payment via the internet or telephone. This agreement may not be extended or applied to any other monetary collections by or for the Town.
7. The County will provide information on the Town and County Tax Bills prepared by the County, subject to space availability, to instruct taxpayers regarding payment of taxes via the internet or telephone.
8. The County will update the Tax Collection system with information relating to payment of taxes electronically.
9. The County will collect taxes and penalties/interest as applicable via the VPS vendor and any and all Town taxes collected through VPS will be credited to the Town accordingly.
10. The County will provide daily reports to the Town of payments received through VPS and will credit any payments received against the tax warrant.

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11. The County will provide a monthly report to the Town of penalties and interest received and will itemize penalties and interest as a reconciling item on the final settlement with the Town's Tax Collector.
12. The County will process dishonored items by removing the payment information from the Tax Collection system, will apply the appropriate fees, and notify the Town to update its roll.
13. The Town will promptly update the tax roll for all payments received and revise the tax roll as needed for dishonored items.
14. It is understood that the parties are independent of each other and are not to be considered agents, employees, or partners of the other party for any purpose whatsoever.
15. Each party shall at all times hold harmless the other party from all claims, damages or judgments or for the defense or payment thereof, based on any claim, action or cause of action whatsoever, including any action for malicious prosecution, libel, slander, or personal injury, or any affiliated claims, by reason of any act or failure to properly act on the part of the indemnifying party and in particular as may arise from the performance under this agreement.
16. This agreement constitutes the complete understanding of the parties. No modification of any provisions thereof shall be valid unless in writing and signed by both parties.
17. This agreement does not alter or modify the respective duties and responsibilities as required by statute in relation to any tax warrant issued pursuant to the Real Property Tax Law.

LAWN MOWING CONTRACT: Motion was made by Daniel Gee and seconded by Jennifer Hargrave that the town continue the lawn mowing contract with Alan Crooker for the Town Hall lawn and Town Cemeteries for the year 2026. Put to vote, Put to vote: Holly Chase, aye; Daniel Gee, aye; Michael Volino, aye; Noel Sylvester, aye; Jennifer Hargrave, aye. Carried. Michael said he spoke with the Town Attorney and they found no conflict of interest in this action.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF POLICIES:

Michael listed the Town Policies that were reviewed with no changes to be made as follows: Procurement, Deposits and Investments, Fund Balance, Breach Notification, Sexual Harassment, Workplace Violence Prevention, No-retaliation, Code of Ethics (amended at the January meeting), Workplace Weapons, Smoking, Equipment and Vehicle Use, Equal Employment Opportunity, Grievance, Fair Housing Plan, Town Hall Usage, Release of Employee Related Information (FOIL), Bloodborne Pathogen Plan, Public Health Emergency Plan, Fair Housing Plan, Records Retention, Language Access, Partial Payment of Health Insurance Premiums for Elected Officials, and a revised Culvert Policy which includes a \$25.00 fee for new driveways.

Motion was made by Noel Sylvester and seconded by Dan Gee that the above policies be accepted as they are. Put to vote, Jennifer Hargrave, aye; Noel Sylvester, aye; Michael Volino, aye; Dan Gee, aye; Holly Chase, aye. Unanimously Carried.

Electronic Funds Transfer Policy which is a new requirement from NYMIR:

Michael said the purpose of this policy is to ensure that any electronic funds transfers are initiated, executed, and approved in a secure manner. The policy sets up requirements with respect to any payment or processes used for EFT's for payments or revisions to vendors, employee direct deposits or any other monetary transfers and sets up safeguards for such. Motion was made by Noel Sylvester and seconded by Jennifer Hargrave that the following Resolution # 2 of 2026 be reviewed:

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WHEREAS, the Town of Thurston utilizes Electronic Funds Transfers (EFTs) for efficient financial operations, including payroll, vendor payments, and grant disbursements; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the Town to ensure the security, accountability, and proper authorization for all EFTs in compliance with New York State law

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Clerk is directed to certify and provide copies of this resolution to the Town Supervisor, Chief Fiscal Officer, and relevant banking institutions as required.

Put to roll call vote, Jennifer Hargrave, aye; Dan Gee, aye; Noel Sylvester, aye; Holly Chase, aye; Michael Volino, aye. Unanimously Carried.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF JOB DUTIES FOR ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS:

Michael said the following have completed job descriptions on file with the Town of Thurston:

Town Supervisor/Budget Officer, Highway Superintendent (with the addition of maintaining sidewalks and parking lots for the Town Hall and Fire Department), Board Members, Town Clerk and Records Management Officer, and Historian.

The following positions need to have job descriptions set up: Assessors, Code Enforcement Officer, Dog Control Officer, Justice, and Tax Collector. The Town Clerk will work with these elected officials to complete these as required.

SPECTRUM and FRANCHISE FEE: Michael noted we have a public hearing on January regarding the renewal of the Franchise Agreement with Spectrum/Charter Communications. He said he contacted them regarding the payment of a franchise fee to the Town of Thurston and they sent an amended agreement which includes such. The public hearing is at 6:45 on the 21st of January.

EQUIPMENT: A discussion was held with the Superintendent of Highways discussing what to do with some of the older equipment the Town has and whether to continue to put money in to repairs or sell the equipment, At this time the 2008 GMC 5500 6-wheel dump has an invoice to be paid for \$5077.47 and there are still about \$10,000 in repairs that would need to be done to get it up and running. Alan Crooker said he feels we should sell it at this time. Motion was made by Jennifer Hargrave and seconded by Noel Sylvester that the 2008 GMC 5500 6-wheel dump truck be sold as is. Put to vote, Holly Chase, aye; Dan Gee, aye; Michael Volino, aye; Noel Sylvester, aye; Jennifer Hargrave, aye. Unanimously Carried.

It was noted the other trucks to be sold are: 2006 Sterling Dump Truck, 2001 Auto Car, 2009 John Deere Road Grader. Motion was made by Jennifer Hargrave and seconded by Noel Sylvester that these trucks be listed on auction but that we keep the grader until the new one arrives in June. Put to vote, Holly Chase, aye; Dan Gee, aye; Michael Volino, aye; Noel Sylvester, aye; Jennifer Hargrave, aye. Unanimously Carried.

There being no further business, motion was made by Holly Chsae and seconded by Dan Gee that the meeting be adjourned at 8:00 p.m. Put to vote, , Holly Chase, aye; Dan Gee, aye; Michael Volino, aye; Noel Sylvester, aye; Jennifer Hargrave, aye. Unanimously Carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sue Conklin, Town Clerk