

November 19, 2024  
6:30 p.m.  
2354 State Route 434  
Apalachin, New York

### Regular Meeting of the Owego Town Board

A. Call to order, roll call and the Pledge of Allegiance -

Supervisor Donald Castellucci called the meeting to order, the Clerk called the Roll, and Attorney Graven led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council:

Present: Supervisor Castellucci, Dean Morgan, Gary Hellmers, and Jonathan Marks

Absent: Craig Jochum

Department Heads:

Present: Tyson Stiles, Director of Utilities  
Rick Pedro, Sole Assessor  
Irene Graven, Town Attorney  
Michael Roberts, Highway Superintendent  
Mary Kennedy, Town Clerk & Tax Receiver

Absent: Phil Baker, Parks Maintenance Supervisor  
Bill Carrigg, Planning & Zoning Administrator  
Peter Gordon, Town Historian

B. Minutes of the previous meetings -

The minutes of the November 6, 2024 Regular Meeting will stand as presented.

C. Consideration of bids – none

D. Public Hearings – none

E. Reports of Department Heads –

Tyson Stiles, Director of Utilities – reported that he continues to look for new employees for the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He also stated both the Wellhouse replacement and generators projects are coming along nicely.

Rick Pedro, Sole Assessor – requested Attorney/Client privilege after the meeting.

Mike Roberts, Highway Superintendent – reported that leaf pickup is going fairly well, but there are many leaves. He suggested that another leaf vacuum would be beneficial for the future. Next, he stated his crew has also been repairing catch basins and finishing needed patching.

Lastly, he reported they will be preparing the trucks for plowing the snow forecasted for the end of the week.

Mary Kennedy, Town Clerk – reported that after changing the protocol for sporting licenses this summer, the DEC is now allowing agents to charge a \$1 fee for printing tags. **Supervisor Castellucci made a motion to allow the Town Clerk’s Office to charge a \$1 printing fee beginning January 1, 2025 to offset the cost of the NYSDEC unfunded mandate that provided no fiscal assistance while demanding more from the local government. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hellmers and unanimously carried.**

Irene Graven, Town Attorney – no report

Supervisor Castellucci – reported a need for Attorney/Client privilege after the meeting. Next, he stated the Town Clerk’s Monthly Report is on file in his office. He then reported that the event held last week regarding the Town’s recent achievement on becoming a Storm Ready Community went very well, and he commended Bill Carrigg, Planning & Zoning Administrator for his diligent work. Lastly, he reviewed that he sent out a Press Release regarding a voluntary water conservation request for residents in the Consolidated Water Districts in order to avoid a significant shortage due to the current drought situation in our area.

#### F. Privilege of the Floor –

Kelly & Joe Taylor, West Glann Road, complained about the condition of their road and asked for the Town’s plan to fix it.

Beth Saroney Paro, Debra Lee Drive, stated her road turned out well after being redone.

Rose Howard, Sequoia Road, after sharing road concerns, stated that Vestal Asphalt (the vendor) has stated that “they have not had a situation like this where the residents were hostile and they felt unsafe up there.” and this is due to “years of trying to find a solution to a very very bad situation”. She then stated that she feels the official minutes of Town Board Meetings are not accurately reflecting what happens. Next, she asked if there was truth to the rumor she heard about the August 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting that a vote was taken and Tioga Terrace would only receive blacktop roads in the future. She finished by stating that the Highway crews are doing good work with the leaf pick-up and drain repairs.

Susan Lewis Mott, Brookside Avenue West, also voiced concerns about the roads in Tioga Terrace.

Bill Chandler, Sulphur Springs Road, voiced concerns regarding Green and Middle Roads.

#### G. Presentation of Petitions, Communications, Notices and Transfers –

##### 1. Monthly Report of the Supervisor

This report is on file in the Town Clerk’s office.

##### 2. Recognition by Senator O’Mara & Assemblyman Friend

Supervisor Castellucci reviewed that the Town was recognized by our representatives for achieving Storm Ready Community Status.

3. Liquor license 30 day notice – Light Years Fermentation  
 The Supervisor reviewed that this is a point of information only and no action is needed.

H. Abstracts-

**Councilmember Morgan made a motion to approve the following abstracts as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hellmers and unanimously carried on a Roll Call.**

A0 - General Fund	16,288.15
B0 - General Fund-Town Outside	8,898.58
DB - Highway-Town Outside	88,472.43
F0 - Water Districts	133,076.41
FA - Route 38 Water	751.38
G0- Sewer Districts	13,520.58
GA – Route 38 Sewer	244.96
L1 – Lighting District 1	33.45
L2 - Lighting District 2	252.55
L3 – Lighting District 3	67.48
L4 - Lighting District 4B	48.06
L5 – Lighting District 5	43.98
L6 - Lighting District 6	203.18
L7 - Lighting District 7	47.48
L8 - Lighting District 8	35.71
L9 - Lighting District #9	13.51
LA – Lighting District 4A	16.22
LX – Lighting District 10	<u>20.05</u>
	<b>\$262,034.16</b>

I. Unfinished Business - none

J. Reports of Standing Committees –

- Councilmember Hellmers – no report
- Councilmember Morgan – no report
- Councilmember Marks – no report

K. Presentation of Resolutions, Motions and New Business –

1. Adopt 2025 Final Budget

Supervisor Castellucci stated that no changes were made to the budget following the Public Hearing on November 6<sup>th</sup>, and thanked the Board and Department Heads for their efforts to stay under the Tax Cap yet again. He then reviewed the following:

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This summary will focus on the highlights in the 2025 Town of Owego “Preliminary Budget”. The purpose is to give you the Budget Officer’s recommendations based on meetings he had with the Town Board, Department Heads and the Town’s contracted Accountant.

**PRELIMINARY BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS**

**INSURANCE/WORKERS COMPENSATION/RETIREMENT/ASSESSMENT**

- Medical Insurance is up approximately 11%
- Dental Insurance increased 5%
- Workman’s Compensation increased approximately 8%
- Retirement increased 41.78%
- Liability Insurance increased 9%
- Townwide Assessments increased 6,846,888
- Outside Village Assessments increased 4,807,167

**GENERAL FUND (A FUND)**

- Budget is up approximately 6.92% from last year.
- Town personnel will receive on average a 4% increase.

**GENERAL FUND TOWN OUTSIDE (B)**

- The Budget is up approximately 48.64%. This is due to an increase in the amount of funds being transferred to the Highway fund to offset the cost of equipment. The Operating portion of the budget is down slightly by 1%.
- Town personnel will receive on average a 4% increase.

**HIGHWAY FUND (DB)**

- Operating Budget up approximately 18.95%. This is due to equipment purchases. A list of the approved equipment is provided in the budget.
- CHIPS (State Aid) is expected to stay flat
- Town personnel will receive .70/hr. increase.

## **WATER/SEWER DISTRICTS**

### **Water Districts**

- \$42.00 for first 6000 gallons Min. Water bill  
\$87.91
- \$6.25 for each 1000 gallons after Min. sewer bill  
\$91.40
- \$6.00 billing each reading Min water and  
sewer \$179.31
- \$39.91 capital each billing = \$119.73/ year \$537.93 / per 3  
billing cycles
- Beginning January 1, 2025, the minimum usage charge increase 9%. Water bills will be based on a minimum usage up to six thousand gallons at a rate of \$42.00, plus the \$6.00 billing fee for a total of \$48.00 dollars per cycle. There will be a charge of \$ 6.25 per thousand/gallons for additional usage. That will remain the same as last year. Capital charges will increase \$2.46 to \$119.73 per year (\$39.91 per billing cycle). The annual minimal bill will be \$263.73. This rate represents a increase of \$7.38 per year.

### **SEWER DISTRICTS**

- \$50.40 for first 6000 gallons
- \$7.42 for each 1000 gallons after
- \$41.00 Capital charge each billing = \$123.00/ year
- \$153.33 Flat Rate billing = 459.99 /year
- \$2,438/ year Marshland Links
- \$105,000/ year Lockheed Martin
- Sewer bills will be based on a minimum usage up to six thousand gallons at the rate of \$50.40. This is an increase of 5%. There will be a charge of \$ 7.42 per thousand /gallons for additional usage. This is an increase of 6% per thousand gallons. The capital charge per unit will decrease to at \$123.00 (\$41.00 per billing cycle). The annual minimum bill will be \$274.20. This rate represents a increase of \$13.00 cents.
- Homes that have municipal sewer but do not have municipal water will be charged \$430.52 per year (\$143.51/bill), an annual increase of \$1.42 for sewer use. The sewer capital fee will remain at \$105.00 per year (\$35 per billing cycle). Total annual bill will be \$535.52 an increase of \$4.26 per year.

### **ROUTE 38 DISTRICT 7**

#### **Water**

- \$40.00 minimum bill for first 6000
- \$6.25 per 1000 after minimum
- \$5.00 billing each reading = \$20.00/ year
- \$3.00/ 1000 gallons capital charge

### **Sewer**

Flat Rate \$350/ billing \$1400/year  
\$30.00/ 1000 gallons  
\$5.00/ 1000 capital charge

### **LIGHTING DISTRICTS**

- Rates generally remain the same for 2025.

### **New York State Property Tax Cap**

- ❖ NYS limits the amount local governments, and most school districts can increase property taxes to the lower of 2% or the rate of inflation. This year the Town's allowable levy is 2
  - Allowable levy limit is \$3,648,886
  - Taxes proposed In the Preliminary budget to be levied are \$3,628,651
  - The Town is currently under the Tax Cap by \$20,235

### **Tax Rates**

- ❖ **Townwide** taxes are paid by all property owners in the Town and Village
  - Tax Rate is \$1.488127 per \$1,000 of assessment – increase of \$0.07 from last year
  - Example – Home assessed for \$64,033 will pay \$95.29 in total Town taxes – an increase of \$4.45 from last year
- ❖ **Townwide/Town Outside Village** taxes are paid by property owners outside of the Village
  - Tax rate is \$4.544349 per \$1,000 of assessment – increase of \$0.05 from last year
  - Example – Home Assessed for \$96,992 will pay \$440.77 in total Town taxes – an increase of \$4.83 from last year

### **Major Purchases**

#### **Highway**

F350 XL Pick (2)  
F750 Dump Truck (1)  
Bandit Chipper (1)  
Tandem Dump Truck/plow (2)  
Paver 8500 (1)  
Mower Massey/P Boom (1)

#### **Utilities**

Deck over Utility Trailer  
5500 4X4 Dump Truck w/ snow plow

#### **Parks**

Mower

2. Declare emergency at Wastewater Treatment Plant #1

The Supervisor explained that there is a major blockage in the outlaying that needs to be addressed immediately. **A motion was made by Councilmember Morgan to adopt the following resolution declaring an emergency at Wastewater Treatment Plant #1 and authorize the Director of Utilities to make necessary repairs.**

WHEREAS, during a study of the sewer outfall line going into the Susquehanna River, which services the Town of Owego, Sanmina Corporation and Lockheed Martin, it was discovered that the line has several places plugged with root intrusion, up to 95% in spots; and

WHEREAS, this blockage could hinder discharge of treated wastewater from Waste Water Treatment Plant 1;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that circumstances exist which could effect public property and the life, health and safety of the property and inhabitants of the Town of Owego requiring immediate action that cannot await competitive bidding, contracts for public work, or purchase of supplies and material equipment pursuant to the Town of Owego's Procurement Policy; and it is further

RESOLVED that the Town of Owego Utilities Director is hereby authorized to make the necessary pipe repair on an emergency basis without the necessity of complying with the Town of Owego's Procurement Policy or General Municipal Law §103; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Owego does hereby declare that this resolution is adopted in the best interests of the Town of Owego.

3. Foster Valley Road agreement

Supervisor Castellucci explained this project is being grant-funded. **Councilmember Morgan made a motion to approve the Architectural/Engineering Agreement from CPL for the culvert replacement on Foster Valley Road and authorize the Supervisor to sign it on behalf of the Board. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hellmers and unanimously carried.** The agreement is on file in the Town Attorney's Office.

4. Declare emergency at Youngs Road bridge

Councilmember Morgan and Supervisor Castellucci reviewed the situation with the bridge on Youngs Road. **A motion was made by Councilmember Hellmers to adopt the following resolution declaring an emergency at the Youngs Road bridge. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Morgan and unanimously carried.**

WHEREAS, the condition of Youngs Road bridge over Little Nanticoke Creek was assessed by CPL; and

WHEREAS, due to the specific conditions described in the CPL assessment and the current existing deficiencies in the structural integrity of the bridge, it has been determined that there is an emergent need to replace or repair the bridge;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that circumstances exist which could effect public property and the life, health and safety of the property and inhabitants of the Town of Owego requiring immediate action that cannot await competitive bidding, contracts for public work, or purchase of supplies and material equipment pursuant to the Town of Owego's Procurement Policy; and it is further

RESOLVED that the Town of Owego Highway Superintendent is hereby authorized to make the necessary bridge repairs and replacement on an emergency basis without the necessity of complying with the Town of Owego's Procurement Policy or General Municipal Law §103; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Owego does hereby declare that this resolution is adopted in the best interests of the Town of Owego.

5. Youngs Road agreement

**Councilmember Marks made a motion to adopt the following resolution approving the proposal by CPL for the Youngs Road bridge project. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hellmers and unanimously carried.** The agreement is on file in the Town Attorney's office.

6. New Hire – Highway

The Supervisor reviewed the details of the new employee. **A motion was made by Councilmember Hellmers to adopt the following resolution hiring Steven Caram to the Highway Department. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Marks and unanimously carried.**

WHEREAS, the approved 2024 budget for the Town of Owego Highway Department has budgeted for and includes a full time MEO III position; and

WHEREAS, this full time position is vacant and it is necessary to fill this position; and

WHEREAS, Steven M. Caram, who has his CDL B, has been offered and has accepted such position as of December 2, 2024 at an hourly rate of \$20.42 per hour, 40 hours per week, as a permanent appointment with up to 52 weeks probationary period;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, such full time position shall be filled by Steven M. Caram at an hourly rate of \$20.42 per hour, 40 hours per week, with full time benefits, effective December 2, 2024 with a probationary period of up to 52 weeks from date of hire, subject to satisfactory license/background check and meeting all requirements of pre-employment drug testing.

L. Second Privilege of the floor –

Beth Saroney Paro, Debra Lee Drive, suggested the Town develop a plan for paving projects and share it with the residents before any work is completed.

M. Executive Session – none

N. Adjournment -

**Motion by Councilmember Morgan, the meeting was adjourned at 7:24 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kennedy, Town Clerk