

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 20th day of August, 2025.

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

Absent: Town Council: Jennifer Hargrave

Visitors: Sam Dick, Brandi Smith, Desiree Fisk, Jeff Sweeney, Dolores Crooker, M. Ruth Schoonover, Eva Turner

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Dolores Crooker was present to express her concern that the Town Highway crew did work on Town of Campbell property on the Savona-Campbell Road next to her property. She noted they installed a culvert pipe on an adjoining property that is in the Town of Campbell. She also said that Campbell plows and fixes the potholes on that section of road as well. Michael Volino said he was made aware of this situation and said this is a confusing area where part of the property (where the residence has been built) in question is in the Town of Thurston and a small portion is in the Town of Campbell. Ben Smith said the property they placed the culvert on is on our inventory of roads. The property owner paid for the culvert pipe. The Board discussed the matter and said going forward it may be necessary to have a policy to address this type of situation and Michael said he would work on this.

- Sam Dick said the situation with garbage and dogs running at large continued on Smith Road. Michael Volino said he spoke with the Code Officer and Justice, and the owner is scheduled to be in court in September.

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

ACTION ON MINUTES: Motion was made by Dan Gee and seconded by Noel Sylvester that the minutes from July 16, 2025, Public Hearing and Regular Meeting minutes be accepted as presented. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

ACTION ON BILLS: Motion was made by Dan Gee and seconded by Holly Chase that the bills be paid as follows:

-General Fund \$13,116.82 listed on Vouchers A156-A172

-Highway \$29,853.82 listed on Vouchers DA115-DA126

-Trust and Agency \$165.00 listed on Voucher TA8

Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

- **Town Clerk:** Sue Conklin said she collected \$1183.00 in July and of that \$1098.76 stayed in the Town.

- **Historian:** nothing to report

- **Assessor:** nothing to report

- **Justice:** Darlene Smith, Town Justice reported collecting \$70.00 during the month of July 2025.

- **Dog Control:** Randy Akins, Dog Control Officer, reported the following:

-one lost dog later recovered on Tucker Road

-one found dog on Bonny Hill Road later recovered by the owner

- a call from the Fire Chief regarding a dog bite where the dog jumped towards a window and accidentally bit a child

- reported a stray dog in Thurston which was later returned to the owner

-additional complaints regarding dogs running at large in the Smith Road area. This is an on-going problem and owner of the dogs has failed to build a kennel, failed to pay fines, and continues to be in violation

-noted the next **free rabies clinic** will be September 25th from 6pm to 8pm at the Town Highway Shop.

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- Code Enforcement: Nick Nolton, Code Officer reported the following:

-one permit issued for \$50.00

-2 violations for no permit on 333 and 12

-Inspection and certificate of occupancy issued on Shauger/Yost Road

-Smith Road follow-up shows work to clean up that property is still not completed

Fire Department: Desiree Fisk, Secretary for the Fire Department said they have two new members since May and that September 2 is the budget meeting.

- Highway Superintendent: Ben Smith, Highway Superintendent reported the following activity for July:

1. Changed out Driveway pipe on Shauger.

2. Changed out Driveway pipe on Harrison, Windfall end.

3. Changed out Driveway pipe on Smith

4. Filled in washed out spots on Sanford, Tucker, Smith, and Lewis

5. Cleaned up downed tree on Wood Rd.

6. Replaced one of the bands on the water truck and reinforced the support to open and close the water handle.

7. Finished mowing the town roadsides.

8. Repaired the brush hog head that goes on the excavator and cleaned up the bottom of Hanrahan.

9. Replaced driveway pipe on Yost.

10. Changed out a bad crossover pipe on Cahill.

11. Changed out the crossover on Knowles Rd. Increased the pipe from an 18-inch old metal to a 24-inch plastic as during heavy rains the water would overflow the ditch and run down the road.

12. Cleaned out the culvert at the beginning of Hanrahan of creek gravel as it was almost full and was worried about water crossing the road again.

13. Installed a new Driveway pipe on Savona-Campbell Road. The Taxpayer bought the pipe.

14. Yost Rd graded, raked, rolled, and brined

15. Shauger Rd, graded, raked, rolled, and brined

16. Put down some more cold patch around the town.

17. Dixon, graded, raked, rolled, and brined

18. Installed 3 Driveway pipes on Waters. Taxpayer bought the pipe.

19. Repaired Head wall on Starr Rd and added a chute to save from erosion.

20. Harrison Rd graded, raked, rolled, and brined

21. Hanrahan Rd graded, raked, rolled, and brined where it is still dirt.

22. Graded 1/2 of Foster, raked, rolled, and brined.

23. Almost done with the Town wide review and will have sign totals and pricing for the next meeting.

24. Put in a new break away post and stop sign on Griffin (Starr end)

25. Put in a new break away post and put the Jake Rd sign back up on Smith End.

26. Added reflector pieces to the culvert post that was missing them.

27. On a rainy afternoon we worked on Wood Hill, the seasonal part, cleaning back the brush to keep it open by county Route 333.

28. Update on equipment: The Brine Truck had the water pump go bad, has been replaced and is back up and running.

29. Truck 412 Chevy 5500 still down, tried to patch the Diesel tank but it continues to leak as it was too far gone. Bad news is the tank and the sending unit have been discontinued; nobody can find the parts and the aftermarket companies have not yet picked up these items

30. Sonny's Service can have a tank made but it may be a couple of months out.

31. The guys dug out both sides of the back and made it passable for four-wheel drive vehicles at the far end of Hamilton on the seasonal end.

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-Town Supervisor: Michael Volino reported the following for July:

-Smart Growth Application was submitted on July 31

-The month end closing for July was completed and sent to the Town Board at the beginning of August 24, 2025

-He attended the Supervisor's Roundtable hosted by NYAOT on August 6th. He said that next year any public officials who use laptops will have to do cyber training

-CDBG Grant Biweekly check-ins with Labella and STC were on July 29 and August 13

-Michael and Dan Gee met with the Teamsters Union Rep and Highway workers on August 4th and reviewed the new union contract. They agreed on a 3% pay increase over the next three years; also, Highway Workers will begin to contribute \$10.00 per week towards their Health Insurance

-spoke with Gena Benjamin of the Risingville Methodist Church who indicated the Methodist Conference will move forward with gifting the old Community Building on Town Property to the Town

-continuing to work on the 2026 tentative budget and it should be ready to present at the September meeting

-said the first CHIPS reimbursement for \$198,000 has been submitted and should be received by mid-September

-Community Day Picnic was held at the beginning of August and was very successful. Jen Hargrave will coordinate this next year, and the Fire Department will be invited to be a part of this.

Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that the Department reports be accepted as presented. Put to vote, all those present. Carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

South Hill and Seasonal Roads: It was noted that most of the seasonal road signs in Thurston should be replaced as they are very faded. Ben Smith will get prices for the purchase of the signs that need to be replaced (8 seasonal roads in Thurston). Michael said the Town can decide on the dates for the seasonal designations (i.e. November to May) that best suit the public concerns. No decision was made at this time to close any of the seasonal roads.

Language Access Policy: Michael said since the Town of Thurston is obtaining financing from the USDA we are required to have a Language Access Policy for accessibility to our information. The following Policy was presented to the Board for action:

1. Purpose and Authority

a. In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, this policy establishes guidelines for providing language accessible services to individuals that are limited English Proficient and/or Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

2. Definitions

a. Limited English Proficient individual means any individual whose primary language is not English, and has limited or no ability to speak, understand, read, or write English.

b. Interpretation is the process of orally rendering a spoken or signed communication from one language into another language.

c. Primary language means the language that an individual communicates most effectively in.

d. Translation is converting written text from one language into written text in another language. 'Translation' is often misused to mean interpretation, but it is a written medium.

e. A qualified interpreter or translator is a trained professional who is a neutral third party with the requisite language skills, experienced in interpretation or translation techniques, and knowledgeable in specialized content areas and technical terminology to effectively facilitate communication between two or more parties who do not share a common language.

f. Simultaneous interpretation is the process of orally rendering one language into another language virtually while the speaker is speaking with only a very short lag time.

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g. Consecutive interpretation is the process of orally rendering one language into another language after the speaker has completed a statement or question and pauses. The interpreter then renders that statement into the other language.

h. Sight Translation is the rendering of material written in one language, completely and accurately, into spoken speech in another language.

i. Vital Documents are any materials that are essential to an individual's ability to access services provided by the organization or are required by law.

3. How to determine the need for language assistance

a. The public official at the initial point of contact will conduct an assessment for the need for language assistance and notify the individual of the right to an interpreter at no cost. Public officials who have subsequent contact will continue to assess the need for language assistance.

b. To assess the need for language assessment, staff should ask open-ended questions and avoid asking questions that would allow for yes or no responses. For example, asking: "how may I be of assistance?" instead of "do you need help?"

c. The LEP individual may speak more than one language or may have limited proficiency in a secondary language. Public Officials shall identify the primary language of the LEP individual and work to provide language assistance in the primary language of the individual.

d. A Deaf individual may also be limited English proficient and not be proficient in American Sign Language. Staff shall work to identify the primary language of the Deaf individual and provide language assistance in the primary language of the individual.

4. Identifying Language

a. Public officials shall request the individual or companion identify the language of the LEP or Deaf individual.

b. Use in-person, video remote interpreters, or telephonic interpreters to identify the language.

c. Use an "I speak" card or poster to identify the primary language.

d. Public officials should determine if the preferred mode of communication for a Deaf or Hard of Hearing individual is interpretation or Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART).

5. Language Services

a. The Town of Thurston will make available vital forms and materials in the most frequently encountered languages.

b. For other languages, staff should use an interpreter to sight translate the document into the individual's primary language.

c. Written communication to the LEP individual should be translated into the primary language of the LEP individual.

6. Notice of Language Services

a. Signage will be placed on the bulletin board of the Town Hall notifying individuals of the right to request an interpreter at no cost to the individual. Signage will be translated into the languages most frequently encountered by the organization.

b. Public Officials at the initial point of contact will notify individuals of their right to an interpreter at no cost.

7. Training

a. Public Officials will receive training on the content of the language access policy; how to identify the need for language access services; working with an LEP and Deaf individuals; providing language accessible service in a culturally sensitive manner; working with an interpreter; and interpretation best practices.

8. Evaluation

a. The Town Supervisor shall be responsible for monitoring compliance with the Town of Thurston's language access policy.

b. Organization shall collect information on language use and need, including primary language of clients; use and language of interpretation services; distribution of translated documents; frequency of contact with LEP or Deaf individuals seeking services; and referrals of LEP or Deaf individuals and the language of the referred LEP or Deaf individuals.

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c. The Town Board shall conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of the language access policy and make changes as needed at the Organizational Meeting.

9. Resolution: Holly Chase made a motion that was seconded by Dan Gee that Resolution #18 of 2025 be adopted as follows:

WHEREAS the Civil Rights Act of 1964 establishes guidelines for providing services to those individuals who are hard of hearing or not proficient in the English Language, and

WHEREAS the Town of Thurston does not currently have such a policy,

NOW, THEREFORE, the Town Board approves the passing of a Language Access Policy.

Put to roll call vote, Michael Volino, aye; Holly Chase, aye; Noel Sylvester, aye; Dan Gee, aye; Jennifer Hargrave, absent. This Policy was adopted by Resolution on August 20, 2025, by a 4-0 vote of the Town Board of the Town of Thurston.

Website: Michael said we found out from IB Studios that our website will require a total reconfiguration since the GoDaddy site cannot be transferred to a .gov site. NYS has mandated that all municipalities switch to a .gov website by December 21, 2025. The cost for this will be \$2695 and the funds are available for this. This would include setting up .gov e-mails as well. Holly Chase said she would like to see the design before we pay the final bill. Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that we authorize IB Design to continue with setting up our new website. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

Motion was made by Dan Gee and seconded by Noel Sylvester that unfinished business be closed. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

NEW BUISINESS:

Michael said we need to set up **budget work session dates**. Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Dan Gee that the following budget work sessions be scheduled:

The 1st budget work session will be held September 10 at 7:00 p.m.

The 2nd budget work session will be held October 1 at 7:00 p.m.

Put to vote, all those present. Aye. Carried.

Michael said NYS requires municipalities to have their **cemeteries marked with signs**. He said he has researched the cost of signs and has found a vendor that will make them for about \$200.00 per sign for the 5 that are unmarked. The Board will continue to research this for prices. Matt Nowicki has installed a flagpole at the Aldrich cemetery and said he would also install a sign there at no cost to us if we purchase it.

Positive Pay Agreement with Five Star Bank. Michael said with the increase in “check scrubbing” Five Star Bank has suggested we set up an Agreement with them to ensure our checks are not altered before they clear. This would be in coordination with Williamson Law Book Company at a cost of \$300.00 per year. Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that Michael be authorized to sign a Treasury Services Master Agreement with Five Star Bank (attached to official minutes). Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

Desk for Tax Collector Michael noted that currently the Tax Collector uses a table for a desk and consideration is requested to authorize the Town Clerk to order a desk at a cost not to exceed \$720.68. Motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Noel Sylvester that a new desk be ordered as noted. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried. Holly Chase requested that we also order a (baby) changing station for the restroom downstairs as at the recent community day there was no place to change her baby. This will be done.

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Emergency food: Noel Sylvester said one of the purposes of having a kitchenette in the Town Hall is in the event it is used for an emergency shelter. He said we should consider putting shelves in the storage room adjacent to the kitchenette and stocking it with necessities. The Board discussed putting this in the next newsletter.

There being no further new business, motion was made by Holly Chase and seconded by Dan Gee that new business be closed. Put to vote, all those present, aye. Carried.

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