

SENECA FALLS TOWN BOARD REORGANIZATIONAL & REGULAR MEETINGS OF JANUARY 7, 2025

- A. The Seneca Falls Town Board held a regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at the Seneca Falls Town Office, 130 Ovid Street Seneca Falls.
Supervisor Schmitter called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
- B. A roll call was taken of board members the following members of the board were present:

TOWN OFFICER	Present	Absent
Supervisor Frank Schmitter	X	
Councilman Frank Sinicropi	X	
Councilman Jackson Puylara	X	
Councilwoman Dawn Dyson	X	
Councilwoman Kaitlyn Laskoski	X	

Also present were:

Town Manager Peter Soscia		X
Town Attorney Patrick Morell	X	
Director of Parks & Recreation Missy Jones	X	
Town Assessor Deborah VonWald	X	
Zoning Officer Peter Porcelli	X	
Highway Superintendent Jeremy Wendt	X	
Police Chief Timothy Snyder	X	
Chief of Water & Sewer Joesph Tullo		X
Director of Public Works Peter Messmer	X	

- C. The Pledge of Allegiance was followed by a moment of silence.
- D. 2025 Appointments

Deputy Town Supervisor	
Attorney for the Town	
Special Counsel Attorney	
Labor Relations Attorney	
Town Engineering Firm	
Drainage Engineers	
Financial Consultant	
Grant Writing Services	
Deputy Director of Public Works	
Deputy Water Treatment Plant Operator	
Deputy Water/Sewer System Operator	
Secretary to the HPC, Planning & Zoning Boards	
Dog Control Officer	
Member of Recreation Commission	
Alternate Member of Recreation Commission	
Member of Planning Board	
Alternate Member of Planning Board	
Member of Zoning Board of Appeals	
Alternate Member of Zoning Board of Appeals	
Member of Heritage Preservation Commission	
Alternate Member of Heritage Preservation Commission	
Cemetery Commission	
Cemetery Sexton	
Town Historian	
Town Auditors	
Meeting Day	
Banks	
Official Town Newspaper	
Mileage/Per Diem Rate	
Adopt Procurement Policy & Cash Collection Policy	
Adopt Robert’s Rules of Order	

- E. Committee Assignments

COMMITTEE	CHAIR	
Highway	Laskoski	Dyson
Court	Dyson	Schmitter
Public safety	Schmitter	Sinicropi
Personnel	Sinicropi	Schmitter

Sf development corp.	Puylara	Schmitter
Assessment	Dyson	Puylara
Recreation	Dyson	Sinicropi
Website	Puylara	K.lankford
Public works	Schmitter	Sinicropi
Water/sewer	Schmitter	Puylara
Board liaison to visitor’s center	Puylara	Sinicropi
Contract review committee	Schmitter	Sinicropi
Waste management	Sinicropi	Puylara
Zoning	Dyson	Schmitter
SMI committee	Schmitter	Sinicropi

- F. Regular Meeting
- a. Presentations/Petitioners/Privilege of the Floor
 - b. Report of Committees & Projects –
 - c. Old Business:
 - d. New Business:
 - i. Voluntary Recognition of the CSEA Town of Seneca Falls Union – SF-2025-01 – A motion was made by Councilman Puylara and Seconded by Councilwoman Dyson to approve the following resolution: **WHEREAS**, the Town Supervisor received a letter from town employees dated July 26, 2024, stating that a supermajority of town employees had signed union authorization cards designating the Civil Service Employees Association, Inc., Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO (CSEA) as their exclusive representative for collective bargaining; and **WHEREAS**, the Town Board will voluntarily recognize Civil Service Employees Association, Inc., Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO (CSEA) as the employee’s exclusive representative of all full-time and part-time employees for the purpose of collective bargaining pursuant to the request in said letter and excluding managerial, confidential, represented employees, elected officials, town clerk, deputy town clerk, secretary to the town supervisor, police chief, chief water plant operator, assessor, recreation director, assistant recreation director, town manager, highway superintendent, director of the department of public works, and seasonal employees; and **WHEREAS**, the legally required notice will be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the area of Seneca Falls for not less than one day publication no later than January 13, 2025; and **WHEREAS**, The Town of Seneca Falls Town Clerk will disseminate such notice to all employees by any electronic means of communication normally in use for communications between the district and its employees; and post a written notice in a conspicuous place at suitable offices of the employer for not less than five working days starting no later than January 9, 2025; and **WHEREAS** The Town of Seneca Falls Town Clerk will notify every employee organization that has, in a written communication within one year preceding the recognition, claimed to represent any of the employees in the unit; and **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, pursuant to Article 14, Section 204 of the New York State Civil Service Law, the Town of Seneca Falls hereby voluntarily recognizes the Civil Service Employees Association, Inc., Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO as the exclusive representative for the employees of the Town of Seneca Falls. Ayes – Puylara, Dyson, Laskoski, Sinicropi Naves – Schmitter. Motion Carried.
 - ii. Authorize Town Supervisor to invest town monies – A motion was made by Councilwoman Laskoski and seconded by Councilwoman Dyson to approve the Town Supervisor to invest Town monies. All in favor. Motion Carried.
 - iii. Appointment of Deborah VonWald – TS-2025-01 - A motion was made by Councilwoman Dyson and seconded by Councilwoman Laskoski to approve the following resolution: **WHEREAS**, the term of office for the Real Property Tax Assessor expires on September 30, 2025, pursuant to Section §310, Article 3, Title 2, of the Real Property Tax Law; and **WHEREAS**, the current Assessor, Deborah L. Von Wald, is a New York State Certified Assessor and has maintained the State mandated continuing education requirements to continue to hold office; and **WHEREAS**, it would be in the best interest of the Town of Seneca Falls to reappoint an experienced Certified Sole Assessor. **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Deborah L. Von Wald be appointed Sole Assessor, for the standard term of office which commences October 1, 2025, and expires September 30, 2031. All in favor. Motion carried.
 - iv. Per Diem & Mileage Reimbursement Policy – TS-2025-01 – A motion was made by Councilman Puylara and seconded by Councilwoman Laskoski to approve the following resolution: **WHEREAS**, the Town of Seneca Falls recognizes the need to establish a standardized policy for reimbursing employees for travel-related expenses incurred while on official business trips;

WHEREAS, the Town of Seneca Falls desires to provide fair and consistent compensation for meals, lodging, and incidental expenses associated with such travel;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Seneca Falls Town Board adopt the following Per Diem Policy:

Section 1: Definitions

Per Diem: A daily allowance provided to employees to offset expenses for meals, accommodations, and incidental costs while traveling for official business. Please note that Per Diem rates come with defined limits for lodging, meals, and incidentals. Employees must request their Per Diem in advance of their travel.

Mileage Rate: A per-mile rate as established by the General Services Administration (GSA). When using a Town-owned vehicle to travel, no mileage reimbursement is authorized.

Section 2: Eligibility

All employees of Town of Seneca Falls who are required to travel for official business are eligible for per diem reimbursement. Per Diem is paid BEFORE travel. Reimbursement after travel requires receipts for all claims (lodging, meals and incidentals). Mileage reimbursement will only be allowed if the employee cannot use a Town-owned vehicle for their travel. Then, and only then, will mileage reimbursement be authorized.

Section 3: Per Diem Rates

Employees traveling on official business will be reimbursed at the current per diem rate established by the General Services Administration (GSA). Employees who travel using their private vehicle, as a Town-owned vehicle was not available, will be reimbursed at the GSA-established rate. Rates are determined by GSA each year and will be included in the Town's Annual Reorganization Meeting. If GSA determines a change in rates during the year, that change will be effective as soon as the Town is advised.

Section 4: Calculation of Per Diem

The per diem amount will be calculated based on the number of nights spent away from the employee's primary work location, using the applicable per diem rate for the destination.

Section 5: Meals and Incidental Expenses

Employees are expected to exercise reasonable judgment when incurring meal and incidental expenses while traveling, adhering to Town policies. No reimbursement will be made for alcohol or tips on service.

Section 6: Receipt Requirements

For lodging expenses exceeding the GSA rate, employees must submit receipts to be approved for reimbursement.

For meal expenses exceeding the GSA rate, employees must submit receipts to be approved for reimbursement.

Section 7: Approval Process

All travel expenses, including per diem, must be submitted to the employee's supervisor, who will approve same and submit to the Town Clerk prior to reimbursement.

Section 8: Policy Amendments

This Per Diem Policy may be amended by the Town Board at any time, with appropriate notification to all employees.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the above policy is hereby adopted and approved for immediate implementation.

- v. Volunteer Fire Fighter Leave Policy – TS-2025-02 – A motion to approve the following resolution was made by Councilman Puylara and seconded by Councilman Sinicropi. After brief discussion Councilwoman Laskoski made a motion to table the resolution, seconded by Councilwoman Dyson. **WHEREAS**, the Town of Seneca Falls must establish a policy to for the maximum leave credits allocated to Volunteer Firefighters; and

WHEREAS, this policy will apply to full-time Town employees who are volunteer firefighters and must respond to emergency calls;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Seneca Falls Town Board adopt the following Volunteer Firefighter Leave Policy:

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Town of Seneca Falls' regulations regarding the maximum leave credits allocated to Volunteer Firefighters.

SCOPE

This policy applies to full-time Town employees who are volunteer firefighters and must respond to emergency calls.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

If a full-time employee belongs to a Volunteer Fire Company, and must respond to EMERGENCY calls, the Town of Seneca Falls will allow a maximum of 20 hours per year before leave credits (vacation or personal) must be used. As stated above, this policy applies to full-time employees only.

Members of the above-named organizations will be required to provide proof of status of said organization to their department head on an annual basis (first week of January) to receive compensation. Proof of responding to each emergency must be submitted to their department head within five (5) workdays of said emergencies. Department head approval must be granted to leave during normal working hours. Absence must not interfere with departmental operations. All in favor of tabling the

resolution. Motion carried.

- vi. Wastewater Operator Training – Lewis Archer – FG-2025-01 – A motion was made by Councilwoman Dyson and seconded by Councilwoman Laskoski to approve the following resolution: **WHEREAS**, Lewis Archer needs to attend the required 2A Water Treatment Plant Operator course to obtain his 2A certificate and there are 2 courses available with W2O in Cortland being the lower price of the 2; and

WHEREAS, Lewis is aware of the Town policy that requires 3 years of service, or the Town must be reimbursed for said training costs.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The Town board authorizes sending Lewis Archer to said training at W2o in Cortland on March 3rd – 13,2025 for a course fee of \$1,150.00. All in favor. Motion carried.

- vii. Water Leak and Pool Credits – F-2025-01 – A motion to approve the following resolution was made by Councilwoman Dyson and seconded by Councilman Puylara: **WHEREAS**, the total amount of credits for pool fillings and leak credits for December 2024 total \$1,346.76 and comprised of the following credit amounts:

Catherine Acor	\$751.68
Joanna Hamilton	\$595.08

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the credits be applied. All in favor. Motion carried.

- viii. Approve Beverly Animal Shelter Agreement – Dog Control officer and Boarding and Shelter Services 2025 – A motion to approve the agreement was made by Councilwoman Laskoski and seconded by Councilwoman Dyson. All in favor. Motion carried.

- ix. Adopt Policy Regarding Zoning Officer – TS-2025-03 – A motion to approve the following resolution was made by Councilman Sinicropi and seconded by Councilman Puylara: **WHEREAS**, the Town of Seneca Falls has a Zoning Department and Officer that is charged with the duty of enforcing the provision of the Town Code; and

WHEREAS, The Town recognizes that the skills and expertise associated with obtaining a New York State real estate license and working in that field will overlap with those of a Zoning Officer and can be beneficial to the Town; and

WHEREAS, the Town wishes to ensure that the actions of the Zoning Department comply with Section 801 of the General Municipal Law, which prohibits conflicts of interest, and are fair, impartial and beyond even the appearance of any impropriety; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Town Board of Seneca Falls hereby adopts a policy that prohibits any employee of the Town's Zoning Department from entering into any contract to act as a realtor for real property that is located within the geographic boundaries of the Town of Seneca Falls. Ayes: Sinicropi, Schmitter Naves: Dyson, Puylara, Laskoski. Motion to approve failed.

- x. Accept a Gift for the purpose of Installing a Radar Sign on West Bayard Street – TS-2025-04 – A motion to approve the following resolution was made by Councilwoman Dyson and seconded by Councilman Puylara: **WHEREAS**, New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law Section 1660 provides that the Town Board of the Town of Seneca Falls has the authority to regulate traffic by means of traffic control signals and to adopt such additional reasonable ordinances, orders, rules and regulations with respect to traffic as local conditions require; and

WHEREAS, Town Law Section 64(8) provides that the Town Board of the Town of Seneca Falls may receive gifts on behalf of the Town; and

WHEREAS, a resident of the Town, who wishes to remain anonymous, wishes to make a gift to the Town for the purpose of installing a solar powered, LED display, radar speed limit sign in the area of West Bayard Street near the intersection with California Avenue and the Town's park known as Kid's Territory; and

WHEREAS, the Town has received the attached quote from Traffic Systems Incorporated for such a sign with a total cost of \$5,680.00; and

WHEREAS, the Town finds that such a sign would help to regulate the speed of vehicles entering the 30 mile per hour zone that begins at California Avenue; help to make it safer to enter and exit Kid's Territory and California Avenue from West Bayard Street; promote the safety of children and others that utilize Kid's Territory; and be a benefit to the Town.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board of Seneca Falls hereby accepts the gift of \$5,680.00 to be used to purchase the sign pursuant to the attached quote from Traffic Systems Incorporated; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Town Board of Seneca Falls hereby orders that the solar powered, LED display, radar speed limit sign be installed in the area of West Bayard Street near the intersection with California Avenue and the Town's park known as Kid's Territory. All in favor. Motion carried.

- xi. Letter of No Objection – TC-2025-01- A motion was made by Councilman Sinicropi and seconded by Councilwoman Laskoski to approve the following resolution: **WHEREAS**, the business known in the Town of Seneca Falls as Temperance, would like to have live music on occasion and play previously recorded music at their facility; and

WHEREAS, the NYS Liquor Authority has requested a letter of no objection.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Seneca Falls acknowledges Temperance's desire to have live music and previously recorded music at their facility with no objection. Ayes – Dyson, Laskoski, Sinicropi, Schmitter Abstain – Puylara. Motion carried.

- xii. Seneca Falls DRI Grant Administration Outstanding Invoices and Reimbursement – TS-2025-05 – A motion was made by Councilwoman Laskoski and seconded by Councilman Puylara to approve the following resolution: **WHEREAS**, the Town got a DRI grant in 2020, and it is being administered through the Seneca Falls Development Corporation (SFDC); and

WHEREAS, the grant operates on a re-imbursement basis and at this point the SFDC has an accounts payable balance with Labella Corporation of approximately \$60,000.00 that is 100% reimbursable; and

WHEREAS, the SFDC does not have adequate funds available to pay these outstanding invoices and therefore all work has ceased; and

WHEREAS, the SFDC has asked the Town to borrow the funds to pay the invoices and then pass the reimbursement funds back to the Town when the SFDC receives them.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Town will appropriate \$60,000.00 from the A funds unencumbered fund balance to pay these invoices and replace the funds when the SFDC is reimbursed by the State of New York PENDING the approval of the contract between the SFDC and the Town by the Town's attorney and Town Manager. All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion to pay the bills was made by Councilwoman Dyson and seconded by Councilman Puylara. All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing LITIGATION was made by Councilwoman Dyson and seconded by Councilwoman Laskoski. All in favor. Motion carried. Entered executive session at 7:41 pm. Exited executive session at 8:39 pm.

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilwoman Dyson and seconded by Councilman Sinicropi. Meeting adjourned at 8:39 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa G. Brown
Town Clerk