

News from the Supervisor

Chris Legg

As we shift from summer operations to fall operations, some departments are storing items and preparing for the pending winter weather. Most significantly, the Parks and Highway Departments are the busiest with the change of seasons. The Town Hall staff see heavy traffic for hunting/fishing and dog licenses, notary services, building permits/project proposals, and court fees/fines.

The private-public funded pickleball project is nearing completion. All construction costs are paid by \$338,000 in private donations and a NYS Community \$200,000 grant secured by NYS Senator Rachel May. Final acceptance of the Miron Family Pickleball Courts is expected in early October. Public play can begin upon contract final acceptance. Residents are requested to stay off the site until it is open for public play. The tennis and pickleball court nets and windscreens will be removed for the winter about October 15th and restored in the spring for play. To protect the surface of all the courts, bicycles, skateboards, roller skates/blades, or motorized vehicles are prohibited on the courts. When work is completed, the orange fencing will be removed from the walking path to reopen it for regular use. Planning is underway for 2027 construction of a new pickleball waiting area using existing private donations. Thank you for your patience as we continue to improve Austin Park!

Please see the Andrews Road Water Improvement Project update provided by Town Engineer Miranda in this newsletter. The \$7.7M project is entirely funded by a \$4.4M NYS DEC grant, \$1.85M U.S. EPA grant secured by U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer and U.S. Representative Brandon Williams as overseen now by U.S. Representative John Mannion, and an expected 30-year \$1.5M bond paid by Town water customers. At completion in 2027, the project will clear Department of Health firefighting water storage capacity and flow violations for the Town and Village. Work is suspended during the winter and will continue in the spring. A balloon test in August confirmed that the water tower and tank will not be visible from Benson, West Lake, and Rickard Roads, as well as Thayer Park and Skaneateles Lake just south of One Mile Point. As pipe hydrostatic testing is completed, repaving will restore disturbed pavement.

The Town is analyzing bids from haulers for another three-year contract for trash, debris, recyclables, and tire disposal. As expected, the Transfer Station hauler new contract expenses will exceed the current 3-year contract which expires December 31, 2026. A 50% or more expense increase is possible. The contract will be awarded at the October 5th Town Board meeting. The expected increased trash, debris, and recyclables disposal expenses

reinforce the need for residents to separate glass, corrugated cardboard, and metal (cans, bottle lids, scrap metal, etc.). Every pound separated avoids disposal expenses. Tomra hauls away tons of separated glass at no cost to the Town. Every pound of separated corrugated cardboard and metal returns revenue to the Town at current market rates for those commodities.

The department heads and the Town Board are completing line-item reviews of the 2027 Town Budget. Department budget requirements including reserve funds are validated to optimize operations and ensure adequate reserves are maintained to support planned capital improvements and equipment maintenance and replacement. The recent implementation of asset management software is aiding the proper year over year funding of reserves. Concurrently, the Town continues to seek grant funding to reduce the tax burden. Interestingly, 2026 projections indicate that our occupancy (hotel) tax revenue will exceed \$300,000, a significant funding source for park expenses as we continue to address longstanding deferred maintenance.

Hope you enjoy your favorite fall activities!

Chris

