

Dec 2025 Newsletter

Looking ahead, 2026 will bring old and new. For those old enough or too young to remember the Bicentennial in 1976 celebrating the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. The 250th anniversary introduces a new term, the Semi quincentennial.

Jan 1, 2026, starts the new fiscal year. In the 2025 zero-based line by line review of the 2026 budget, the Town Board and department heads carefully examined requirements while finding new efficiencies and revenues that resulted in a 2026 tax levy increase of only \$730.41, just over .01% (one hundredth of a percent). In a time of rapidly increasing costs, the Town is exercising good stewardship of taxpayer dollars. This budget is not an arbitrary cutting of services. It supports increased staff personnel costs along with timely equipment and infrastructure maintenance to continue to provide excellent services. The \$7.9M Town budget is available on the Town website at the Town Board tab.

As an example, shifting the Transfer Station to free glass recycling rather than paying for single-stream recycling disposal, continuing market rate sales of cardboard and metal, and reutilization by the volunteer Swap Shop reduced disposal costs further in 2025. It helps offset increased personnel costs in 2026. Your separation of items for recycling makes it possible. You can purchase your 2026 Transfer Station permit now. The cost remains \$100 for two permits per residence, a very much less expensive rate than commercial haulers charge for their limited service. The Skaneateles Transfer Station offers the highest number of disposal options of any location in CNY, if not the entire state. We provide one stop disposal for a wide array of items at no cost to permit holders: electronics, liquid paint, batteries, food and motor oils, fluorescent light bulbs, smoke detectors, US flags, brush/leaves and grass clippings, mattresses, egg cartons, and deposit bottles/cans with proceeds to the Outreach Office.

The Parks Department enjoyed a busy Farmers' Market season at Austin Park. The Summer Play Day program, youth sports, the Clift Park swimming area, the Town boat launch, Conservation Area and Austin Park facilities experienced heavy recreational participation. The Austin Arena north end project is nearly completed. The electrical upgrade includes a new 100-amp power source that can support soundstage and other high amperage equipment operations. It will see a rapid return on investment since among other uses, it eliminates the annual expense by the Skaneateles Volunteer Fire Department to rent a portable generator. Additional grading and planting will continue in the spring of 2026. Planning for additional renovations to Austin Arena is underway. Public-private funding will enable construction of new pickleball courts in 2026. NYS Senator Rachel May secured a \$200,000 grant to augment \$250,000 in donations from local pickleball players. Resident Tom Fairhurst led the fundraising effort. The site for the new pickleball courts is across the

walking path from the existing tennis courts as previously planned. More details will follow as the grant proceeds.

Pending final approval by the NYS Department of Health, the Andrews Road water district extension and water tank project will start construction in 2026. Its completion will clear longstanding Onondaga County Department of Health violations concerning insufficient firefighting water capacity and fire flow pressure for the Village and Town. As an enterprise fund, all water system expenses are paid by new and existing water district property owners, not the Townwide or Part-Town funds paid by taxpayers.

The Highway Department has entered the snowplow season with an earlier and more significant start than recent years. Some of our trucks are equipped with a new design, articulated plow blades. The articulated blade system consists of several smaller, movable blades rather than a single blade edge to better conform to the road surface. Articulated blades remove more snow than a single blade. Here is a one-minute video ad displaying how the moveable blades work: <https://youtu.be/Xt1Hlfw7Gr0>.

We are very grateful for the many volunteers and donors who share their time, talents, and treasure in a wide variety of committees and activities. The Community Garden volunteers led by Emily Young planted, cultivated, and harvested volumes of vegetables distributed by the Skaneateles Ecumenical Food Pantry. The Swap Shop Volunteers provided free reutilization of items to keep them out of the trash stream. Conservation Area volunteers led by Matt Leveroni maintained trails often assisted by Eagle Scouts. They also supported the Annual Youth Fishing Derby along with others. Generous donors supported rails and the fishing derby. Generous donors also supported our Outreach Office led by Jacque McConnaghy and assists many residents in need throughout the year. If you would like to volunteer or learn about these and other volunteer opportunities, please visit the Town website contact the Town Clerk, jstenger@townofskaneateles.com.

The Town staff and appointed and elected officials look forward to a productive 2026 serving the people of Skaneateles. You are invited to share your thoughts about Town operations and projects through contacts provided at our website under a new .gov domain [New Home - Town of Skaneateles](#) or call or visit during business hours or attend scheduled meetings.

Happy New Year!