

Town of Fowler Newsletter 2021

Assessment Review Board

There are three seats on the Board of Assessment Review. Currently, the Chairman is Donna Brown. Other members are Rich Weaver, and Candy Brown. The Board of Assessment Review holds Grievance Day on the fourth Tuesday of May from 4:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. at the Fowler Town Hall.

Residents who disagree with their assessment are urged to meet with the Town Assessors to discuss their assessments **PRIOR** to presenting their grievance to the Board of Assessment Review. To make arrangements to meet with an assessor at the Town Hall, please call the **Assessors at 315-287-0045 Ext 105** or call the Town Clerk at (315) 287-0045 Ext 101.

After meeting with the assessors residents who still wish to grieve their assessments may do so at the date and time previously outlined. The Board will review grievances and then make a decision to either lower the property owner's assessment or leave the assessment the same. Residents who have filed a grievance are notified of the outcome by U.S. Mail.

Justice Department

Tim Knowlton was elected to a 4 year term as Town Justice for the Town of Fowler commencing January 1, 2021. Fowler Town Court is held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 10AM upstairs in the Town Hall. Fines may be paid at that time or sent in the mail. Individuals who wish to make payments to Fowler Town Court using credit and debit cards may do so through GovPayNet. Go to www.GovPayNow.com and use the Pay Location Code (PLC a0026f). The Court does not accept checks. The Court Clerk is at the Town Hall on Mon. Tues. and Wed. to answer questions and collect fines. If you need to contact the court any other time, please call **(315) 287-0045 Ext 106** and leave a message or fax us at (315)535-4300.

Town Board

In the year of 2021, the town board meetings will be held on the 2nd Monday of each month at 6pm except for the month of October. Special meetings will be advertised in the Gouverneur Tribune Press and/or the Watertown Daily Times newspapers and on the town's website. www.fowlerny.com

The 2021 Town Board will see one change, Scott A Cleveland was elected to fill the unexpired 1 year seat vacated by Ricky W. Newvine when he took over as Town Supervisor. The current Town Board consists of Supervisor Ricky W. Newvine, Deputy Supervisor and Councilperson Karen M. Simmons, Councilpersons Lynn Bishop, Jeff Andrews, and Scott A. Cleveland. The Town Board would like to congratulate and welcome our newest Councilmember Scott A. Cleveland to the table.

Ms. Barbara Finnie will continue to oversee the duties as our bookkeeper in 2021.

Due to COVID-19, we are practicing social distancing and wearing masks to our Town Board Meetings. The town board would like to inform all town residents and visitors they are welcome to attend our monthly meetings in person or via teleconference by contacting the Town Clerk's office for the phone number and PIN number. Visit our website (www.fowlerny.com) to view and download newsletters and other information about the Town.

Sylvia Lake Public Beach 29 Old Beach Road, Gouverneur NY 13642

The Public Beach is owned and operated by the Town of Fowler. The beach is open seven days a week from the end of June to the end of August. Certified lifeguards are on duty during the posted hours of operations. (10:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.) Handicapped and public parking is located in relative proximity to the beach entrance.

The beach has a picnic area with tables and charcoal grills for public use pending any COVID-19 Restrictions in 2021. Changing rooms, rest rooms, and a handwashing station are also on site.

The year 2020 was challenging to say the least. Congratulations to Head-Lifeguard Emily Bush and Town Clerk Tami Gale for developing and enforcing protocol and sanitary measures to allow any who so desired to be able to visit and enjoy this Town recreation site safely.

Hopefully 2021 will allow us to return to unlimited operation of our beach.

If you have special needs, or are planning a special event, please contact Rick Newvine at (315)287-4098 or the Town Clerk at (315)287-0045 Ext 101.

Historian's Office

The Historian's Office is located upstairs in the Fowler Town Hall. Historian Karen Simmons is in the office on Thursdays from 1-4PM or any time by appointment by calling (315)287-4753 or the Town Clerk at (315)287-0045. If you are researching ancestors and/or working on your family genealogy, contact my office as I have some records on hand that may assist you in your search.

Due to the Coronavirus, the Historian's Office was closed from mid-March until mid-July. I did work on a couple of genealogies during that time period.

Since reopening the office in July, I have received several donations from local residents.

I would like to thank Ivan Champine and Richard Clement for the work they did at the Tri-County Marker on County Route 24. Hopefully we will get the new sign placed up there this year.

I am still looking for names of veterans who are from Fowler who served in the Korean Conflict.

Highway Department

The Town of Fowler maintains 56.25 Miles of Town Roads.

In the winter months the town plows 73.75 miles of roads which includes County Route 22 and 24.

We appreciate everyone's patience this past year during our busy 2020 construction season. We have been steadily working on my goal of upgrading the Town roads and equipment.

This year we received a New Holland Boomer Tractor with a broom and mower on it. We have also paid off the 2020 Mack Plow Truck and have ordered a 2022 Mack to replace the 2000 International. This truck like the 2020 truck will be paid for using a USDA low interest bond and grant. I will continue looking for these grants to further my goal of safe roads and good safe equipment for our town.

In 2020 we resurfaced Kilkarney Court Road and 1.9 Miles of the Byrns Road. For 2021 we are planning on continuing our Byrns Road Project and taking a serious look at Swiss Hill Road and the East end of the Shantyville Road.

I would like to extend a special thanks to Jeff Hill who retired from the Highway Dept this year after over 15 years of dedicated service. We have hired Jacob Cunningham, who is a fully certified operator to replace him. Please like and check out my Town of Fowler Highway Department Facebook Page to get current road conditions for our area during these winter months.

In a personal note, I would like to thank everyone for your support this year. It is your support that makes this team so successful.

Best wishes for a happy and safe new year in 2021 from the Town of Fowler Highway Crew: Randy Durham, Nelson Bice, Francis Cole, Larry Allen, John Walsh, David (Dennis) Travis and Jacob Cunningham.

Dog Control

In 2020, Dan Moyer, Dog Control Officer, picked up 2 dogs for roaming at large, and both animals were returned to their owners after a couple of nights in the kennel. He issued a few summons' for unlicensed dogs and other than that it has been pretty quiet. Mr. Moyer would like to remind the residents of Fowler there are laws in the Town of Fowler governing your dogs. If you see a dog on your property or wandering freely call the dog warden at (315) 528-7988 or (315) 771-8103. DO NOT try to handle the dog on your own, no one knows if the dog has had a rabies shot. Due to COVID-19 our Rabies Clinic was a little bit different this past August, but very successful.

Appointments were required at the clinic, mandated by the Department of Health and we anticipate this will be the new normal. We would like to thank Dr. Putman DVM and his assistant from Roput Veterinary, for administering the rabies vaccines, also Ricky Newvine, Karen Simmons, Tami Gale, Kim Reed, Leo Knight, and Scott Cleveland for volunteering to work at the clinic in August.

Watch for our free rabies clinic in August 2021.

Remember, all dogs 4 months of age or older must have a rabies shot and be licensed in the Town in which they live.

If you have any questions, contact Dan Moyer at (315)528-7988 or (315)771-8103 or the Town Clerk at (315) 287-0045 extension 101.

Use of Town Facilities

The Town Hall was not available for parties or special occasions due to the COVID -19 Pandemic in 2020. Hopefully in 2021 we will be able to make the Town Hall available free of charge for use by Town of Fowler residents for all occasions. To check on availability this year contact Karen Simmons at (315)287-4753.

Due to COVID-19 the Sylvia Lake Beach is open to the public seven days a week from the end of June to the end of August in compliance with guidelines from the Department of Health. For more information call Rick Newvine at (315)287-4098, (315)771-2194 or the Town Clerk at (315)287-0045 extension 101.

Groups interested in using the Hailesboro ball field during the summer should also contact Rick Newvine at (315)287-4098, or (315)771-2194. The availability of the Hailesboro Ballfield will depend on the restrictions of COVID-19.

Ethics Board

The Fowler Board of Ethics Committee consists of five members: Lillith Griffith, Vicky Cappellino, Karen Simmons, Alex Mackinnon and Phyllis Shaw. Each member serves a four -year term. Alex MacKinnon's appointment ran out December 31, 2020. He will be re-appointed at our meeting in January 2021. Lillith Griffith resigned as chairperson at the end of December 2020, so we will need to appoint a new chairperson at our January 2021 meeting as well. Any person may file a concern or complaint in writing to the chairperson who in turn will set up a meeting with the other committee members to address the issue. The committee may request an interview with the party or parties involved to discuss the situation further to reach a decision or solution. After the discussion, the committee notifies the party or parties of their decision in writing. There were no complaints in 2020.

From the Assessors

Assessors Sherry Geer, Phyllis Shaw and Kathleen Besaw make up the Assessor Department for the Town.

VETERANS:

If you are a **Veteran** or **surviving spouse** of a Veteran with an **honorable discharge** you may be eligible for one of the following exemptions:

Alternative Veterans Exemption (form RP-458-a) available only on residential property of a veteran who has served during a designated time of war or received an expeditionary medal.

Cold War Exemption (form RP-458-b) available only on residential property of a veteran who served during the Cold War period.

You must apply by March 1, 2021 for the 2021-2022 Assessment Roll. Please call our office at **(315) 287-0045 Ext 105** and we will mail you the necessary application to complete and return with necessary documents. For more information you can reference the following link: <https://veterans.ny.gov/content/property-tax-exemptions-veterans>

STAR EXEMPTION INFORMATION:

If you are currently receiving the basic or enhanced star exemptions NYS Tax department will be doing the yearly qualification for these exemptions. If more information is needed you will receive an information request in the mail directly from the NYS Tax Department office. If you have questions or need assistance, please feel free to call our office and we will try to help you all we can.

If you currently have the **BASIC Star Exemption** and **at least one** of the homeowners **turns 65 before December 31, 2021** you can still apply for the Enhanced Star Exemption with your **local assessor**. You will need to complete the required application and submit proof of age and income. **Income limit for 2021-2022 Enhanced star exemption is \$90,500 or less.** If you qualify you would be able to continue to receive the **exemption** on your school tax bill. **Please contact our office 315-287-0045 Ext 105 if you believe you may qualify for this exemption.** We will mail you the required application to complete and return to local assessor office. This will need to be done by **March 1, 2021 for the 2021-2022 Assessment Roll.**

NEW HOMEOWNERS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE BASIC OR ENHANCED STAR EXEMPTION. NEW HOMEOWNERS MUST APPLY FOR STAR CREDIT WITH NYS TAX DEPARTMENT. WITH THE STAR CREDIT YOU RECEIVE A CHECK FROM THE TAX DEPARTMENT TO APPLY TO YOUR SCHOOL TAXES.

You can apply for Star Credit by calling 518-457-2036 8:30am to 4:30pm or online 24 hours a day, & days a week at www.tax.ny.gov/star

Senior Exemption is eligible for seniors 65 or older upon age, ownership & income qualification. You must earn **below \$17,699** per year to qualify for this. **If you believe you qualify please contact your local assessor at 315-287-0045 Ext. 105** and we will mail you the necessary application for this exemption.

Our office is currently working on updating property record cards for the Town of Fowler as mandated by NYS Office of Real Property. Data Collection is needed to value each parcel of property located within a specific assessing jurisdiction. It is very important that the data be recorded as accurately and consistently as possible as it will serve as the basis of all future appraisal activity in revaluation programs and ORPS market survey process. Not only will this information provide the specific elements needed to value each parcel of property, it will also become a valuable record of information for future use by the assessor's office. If the data collector comes to your property and no one is home a notice will be left so you know we were there. If you could please call the phone number left on the notice that would be greatly appreciated. We might be able to confirm any information needed over the phone and or can set up a time when it would be best to return to your property. This is a work in progress and your help would be greatly appreciated!!!!

Town Planning Board

The Planning Board is made up of five Fowler residents. The members are Chairman Stephen Gale, James Besaw, Dan Kingsley, Roger Refici, and Vicky Cappellino. There are no zoning laws in the Town of Fowler. The Planning Board revised the Land Use Law adopted in 2019 and the Town Board repealed and replaced it with Local Law 2 of 2020, adding mining and water districts to the Land Use Plan. The Planning Board makes its decisions and submits them to the Town Board according to the Town's Land Use Law. You may obtain a hard copy of the Land Use Law at the Town Clerk's Office. Or you may view or print the policy from our website: www.fowlerny.com. Planning Board meetings are held the last Tuesday of the month as needed or when necessary at 7 PM in the Fowler Town Hall. Meetings are advertised in the local newspaper and on the Town of Fowler website.

Code Enforcement Officer

Building permits are required for demolition of buildings, renovations, structural changes on your home or buildings, roof replacement, pools, buildings over 144 sq. ft, and septic systems. Building and use permits are still required for any construction to enlarge, repair, move, demolish or change the occupancy of any building or structure as well as changing or installing any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system.

Effective January 1, 2021, Building Permit applications and fee schedules have been updated, to be more compatible with surrounding Towns. Building Permits and Fees can be viewed and downloaded from the Town website: www.fowlerny.com. It is the responsibility of the **homeowner** to fill out the building permit and call the Code Enforcement Officer **Glen Besaw, at 315-323-0761** with any and all questions pertaining to a building permit before it is turned in to the Town Clerk office with payment.

If residents or contractors have any questions they need to call **Glen Besaw, Town of Fowler Code Enforcement Officer at 315-323-0761**. Glen will make every effort to get any requested information as quickly as possible, which will prevent the possibility of any work stoppage or delay.

If you have any questions about code regulations or concerns about unsafe or unsanitary conditions within the Town, please call Glen Besaw (Code Enforcement Officer) at (315)323-0761.

NEW IN 2021, ANY PERSON STARTING WORK WITHOUT A BUILDING PERMIT WILL BE CHARGED AN ADDITIONAL FEE OF \$50.00. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Town Clerk and Tax Collector

Starting January 4th, 2021 evening hours on one day a week during tax-collection season, will be added for the convenience of the public. Our office is open Monday from 9:00AM to 12:00PM and 1:00PM to **6:00PM**, and Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday from 9:00AM to 12:00PM and 1:00PM to 4:00PM. This office issues dog licenses, hunting and fishing licenses, marriage licenses and disabled parking permits. Voter registration forms, absentee ballot applications and building permit applications, are available at this office. Both Deputy Town Clerk Debra Tupper and Deputy Town Clerk Kim Reed are returning to their appointed office in 2021. Town Clerk Tami Gale and Deputy Town Clerk Debra Tupper are Notaries. I will start collecting land taxes on January 4, 2021. New this year is the ability to pay your taxes with a credit card. To avoid physical contact there is a drop-box at the rear of the Town Hall. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Town Clerk's Office at (315) 287-0045 extension 101.

2021 Town Board Meeting Dates

Meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month at 6PM at the Town Hall.

January 11, 2021

July 12, 2021

February 8, 2021

August 9, 2021

March 8, 2021

September 13, 2021

April 12, 2021

October (TBD)

May 10, 2021

November 8, 2021

June 14, 2021

December 13, 2021

Town of Fowler Online

A local Fowler business, Rainbowtech Designs, created and manages the Town of Fowler's website. You can find minutes of meetings, a business directory, and other information about Fowler. Everything on the site is searchable. www.fowler.com.

Fowler Family Day

While the Circumstances of 2020 forced the cancellation of the 5th annual Fowler Family Day event, we were able to make some progress on building a pavilion with funds received from an anonymous donor. Funds from the Playground and Pavilion accounts were used to purchase and install an impressive new flagpole to proudly display the stars and stripes of the USA. Additionally, we would like to thank Ivan Shampine, Chad Soper, Mike Cappellino, Richard Clement and Byron Woodward, for their donations of time, supplies and labor in building the pavilion.

Plans for the next Fowler Family Day event will commence in February 2021 that include a chicken BBQ, games for the children, vendors, displays and hopefully a completed pavilion for all to enjoy.

SOS (SUPPORT OUR SENIORS) PROGRAM

In March 2020, when the government demanded people to wear masks and practice social distancing because of the Corona Virus, our Town Supervisor, Ricky Newvine, came up with an idea to help the senior citizens of Fowler, thus came the birth of the SOS (Support Our Seniors) Program.

Through donations from Fowler residents, 2 ELKS National Foundation Grants, along with volunteers from Stepping Stones Ministries, and employees of the Town of Fowler, we were able to purchase items for care packages and deliver the care packages to senior citizens 65 years and older. A special thank-you to Jeff & Linda Hill, and Richard & Krista Wainwright for their help.

* NOTE: There is a Drop box located by the back entrance to the Town Hall that is checked twice a day on business days.