

**TOWN OF SARATOGA TOWN BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
12 SPRING ST., SCHUYLERVILLE, NY**

**February 9th, 2026
7:00 P.M.**

Supervisor Ian Murray opened the meeting with the pledge of allegiance at 7:00 p.m.

Roll call: Town Clerk Michelle Conover, called the roll: Supervisor Ian Murray - present, Councilman Michael McLoughlin – present, Councilwoman Ruth Drumm – present, Councilman Gary Squires – present, Councilman Andy Ellis – absent.

Also present: Building Inspector/Zoning Officer Gil Albert, Highway Superintendent Ryan Campbell and other interested persons.

Recognitions/Presentations/ Bid openings/Public Hearings:

Supervisor Murray introduced Sam Haas the conservation and project manager at Saratoga PLAN. Mr. Haas stated he will be presenting on behalf of Turning Point Dairy which is owned and operated by Marty and Patrick Hanehan. Turning Point Dairy is a large dairy operation on route 67 in the Town of Saratoga, with hundreds of dairy cows and currently farm 683 acres of conserved land.

Saratoga PLAN is looking to apply for a grant to place a permanent conservation easement on two of Turning Point Dairy's farmland parcels near the intersection of Route 67 and Fitch Road and the intersection of Route 70 and Cahill Road totaling 126± acres. These farmlands are threatened from development from Saratoga Lake and Saratoga Springs. Saratoga PLAN intends to purchase a conservation easement that prevents development on the Hanehan Farm in perpetuity. Saratoga PLAN is seeking the endorsement of the Town of Saratoga to apply for funding from New York State Department of Ag and Markets farmland implementation grant program to cover the costs associated with this conservation easement.

Mr. Haas thanked the Town Board for their time.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Councilmember Gary Squires and seconded by Councilmember Michael McLoughlin, **to accept the minutes of the January 12th Regular Town Board meeting as written.** Supervisor Ian Murray- aye, Councilman Michael McLoughlin – aye, Councilwoman Ruth Drumm – aye, Councilman Gary Squires - aye, Councilman Andy Ellis - absent.

Carried 4 –0

Town Clerk's report for January 2026: Fees paid to the NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets for the Animal Population Control Program \$57.00. Fees paid to New York D.E.C. for hunting and fishing licenses \$998.65. Fees paid to the New York State Health Department for Marriage licenses \$67.50. Dog license fees to Supervisor Ian Murray \$248.00. Clerk fees to Supervisor Ian Murray \$113.85. Total State and Local Revenues received were \$1,485.00.

Zoning Officer's report for January 2026: 4 Building Permits, 9 Building Inspections, 1 Certificates of Occupancy, 0 Junkyard Permits, 0 Complaints, 0 Fire Inspections, 0 Order to Remedy, 10 misc., 2 Building Permit Renewals and 0 Property Maintenance Inspections. A check for \$1,835.70 was given to Supervisor Ian Murray.

Dog Control officer's report for January 2026: Ed Cross, Dog Control Officer answered 9 complaints, took 1 dog to the shelter, 2 bite cases, traveled 77 miles, issued 5 warnings and 0 summons' were issued.

Town Court report for January 2026: 28 Traffic tickets closed, 1 Criminal/penal law case closed, 3 civil cases closed, 2 DWI cases closed, 4 Encon/DEC closed, 0 Town and Dog cases closed. Supervisor Ian Murray received a check from Justice John McCarron in the amount of \$2,308.00, a check from Justice Charles Sherman in the amount of \$480.00, for a total of \$2,788.00.

Tax Collector's report January 2026: As of February 4th, 2026, 71% of taxes have been collected, with a total to date of \$3,222,751.79. 1,494 mailed in their payments, 224 made payments on-line, 691 wire transfer.

Annual Historian's report:

Summary: The Town Historian is obligated to inform the Supervisor, County Historian, and State Historian of the condition of the Town's historical collection and local historical activities. The annual report focuses on the office's efforts in research and writing, teaching and public presentations, historic preservation, organization, advocacy, and tourism promotion.

Overview: 2025 was a pivotal year for advancing the preservation and promotion of our town's history, marked by significant progress in both local collaboration and national recognition. As Vice Chair of the Saratoga County 250th American Revolution Commission, I have worked to position our region's Revolutionary War heritage on both state and national stages.

This year, our office played a key role in securing national media attention for our community. We collaborated with travel writers and our tourism promotion agency to showcase our historic assets, supported nationally broadcast events at the Saratoga Race Course on Fox Sports Network, and successfully organized our first major 250th commemoration—the Knox Noble Train of Artillery event.

Our ongoing partnership with the Town of Stillwater and broader regional initiatives continues to strengthen as we build toward the Saratoga 250th commemoration in 2026. The foundation laid in 2025 demonstrates our office's capacity to leverage local heritage for regional economic and cultural impact while maintaining our core mission of historical preservation and public education.

Key Achievements:

Historical Collection Preservation: The Town's historical collection remains in excellent condition in a secure, climate-stable facility.

Leadership and Collaboration: Active leadership on the Saratoga County 250th American Revolution Commission, the Town of Saratoga and Stillwater 250th Committee, and as Trustee at the Saratoga County History Center at Brookside Museum has expanded our regional influence.

State and National Engagement: Continued service on the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission during the canal's bicentennial year and participation with the America 250 board at Fort Ticonderoga.

These efforts strengthen historical preservation, foster community engagement, and drive economic growth through heritage tourism.

Public Engagement and Digital Outreach

Connecting with the public remains a top priority, with digital platforms significantly expanding our reach and refining our communication strategies.

Substack Platform - "Past Paths": Launched a consistent publishing 5-days a week schedule with 207 posts over the year, reaching over 17,000 users and building 218 subscribers. This publication promotes local history with emphasis on heritage tourism, the 250th anniversary, and the Battles of Saratoga. The platform has proven invaluable for testing and refining messaging strategies for diverse audiences.

Traditional Publications: Continued regular contributions to Saratoga Today, NY Almanac, and Greenwich Journal, maintaining visibility across regional print and digital media.

Blog Performance: The Historian's blog, linked to the Town webpage, attracted over 10,400 visitors in 2025—a 34% increase—demonstrating growing public interest in our historical content.

Social Media Presence: The office maintains active accounts on X, Instagram, Facebook, Threads, and Bluesky, reaching both local and national audiences with daily historical content and event updates.

These integrated efforts ensure our historical narratives remain accessible across multiple platforms, serving our local community while building national awareness of our Revolutionary War heritage.

Historical Research

Research efforts in 2025 prioritized public history projects and digital storytelling, responding to both planned commemorations and unexpected community needs.

Lafayette Bicentennial Project: The 200th anniversary of General Lafayette's 1825 visit generated extensive research yielding multiple outputs: a public history event with the National Park Service, an academic paper for the Washington County Historical Society, numerous public presentations, and installation of a new Lafayette Trail marker. Our community now holds the distinction of having both the first and last markers on this national trail.

Knox Noble Train of Artillery: Research into Henry Knox's 1775-76 expedition supported our first major 250th commemoration event and produced multiple public presentations and essays. This work continues to inform 2026 programming.

Victory Mill Fire Response: The devastating Victory Mill fire required immediate research and digital storytelling to preserve the mill's history during a critical moment. This effort complemented ongoing collaboration with Field Horne at the Saratoga County History Center and Skidmore College student Nicholas Sisto, who completed "The Company and its Town: Textile Production in Victory Mills and the Community Built Around It." His November 11th presentation at Victory Hall drew a capacity crowd, exploring how the Victory Manufacturing Company (founded 1846) shaped this mill community's economy, identity, and social fabric along Fish Creek.

These projects demonstrate the office's capacity to balance long-term commemorative planning with responsive research that serves immediate community needs.

Public Lectures and Events

2025 featured significant public engagement through both traditional presentations and large-scale public history events that positioned our community as a leader in Revolutionary War commemoration.

Major Public History Events (in partnership with Saratoga 250 and community partners):

Lafayette Bicentennial Commemoration (June 29): Celebrated the 200th anniversary of Marquis de Lafayette's 1825 return to Schuylerville with a community procession from the Champlain Canal Gateway Visitor Center to the Schuyler House, followed by a commemorative program honoring the Franco-American alliance and Saratoga's global impact on democracy.

Knox Cannon Dedication (July 20): More than 75 attendees gathered for a multi-layered ceremony honoring the 248th anniversary of the Battles of Saratoga, the 250th anniversary of Henry Knox's Noble Train of Artillery, and the 148th anniversary of the Saratoga Monument's cornerstone laying. The event featured dedication of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts Knox Artillery Cannon and participation from Masonic leadership, state dignitaries, and heritage organizations.

Turning Point Parade and Historical Week (August 3-9): Coordinated expanded programming for the 30th annual Turning Point Parade and Festival, featuring over a dozen free public programs. The week-long celebration included the traditional parade with over 100 participating groups, plus new educational offerings: Colonial Life for Kids, Writing the Revolution workshops, Women of the Saratoga Campaign lecture, Native New York cultural programming, walking tours, history cruises, and living history presentations. Programming engaged families, educators, and visitors across multiple venues in Schuylerville and Hudson Crossing Park, culminating in the Festival & Fireworks at Fort Hardy Park.

Knox Fest at Fort Hardy Park (December 13): Over 1,000 people braved frigid temperatures for our largest public history event of the year. The celebration featured living history demonstrations, artillery firings, horse-and-carriage rides, and a twilight artillery salute. As the logistical hub for this regional commemoration (four counties and NYS Parks), the Town of Saratoga coordinated housing, meals, and support for living historians at Town Hall, demonstrating our capacity to execute complex heritage tourism events.

Traditional Presentations: Multiple speaking engagements kept community stakeholders informed on 250th planning and regional history, including presentations to the annual meeting of the Friends of Schuyler Mansion, the Daughters of the American Revolution, Hebron Preservation Society, and Ashlar Masonic Lodge.

These efforts demonstrate the office's dual capacity for scholarly engagement and large-scale public event coordination, positioning our community as a regional leader in Revolutionary War commemoration.

Conferences and Professional Development

I Love NY Summit on the 250th of the American Revolution: Attended with Saratoga 250 a tourism professionals and I Love NY staff conference strengthening state partnerships and positioning our community as a premier Revolutionary War heritage tourism destination.

Fort Plain American Revolution Conference: Exchanged best practices with regional 250th organizers and deepened knowledge of Revolutionary War history across New York State.

These engagements built critical relationships with state tourism agencies and regional history organizations essential to executing successful 250th programming.

Tourism Projects

Heritage tourism development in 2025 centered on creating visitor experiences and securing national media exposure for Saratoga's Revolutionary War legacy.

America's Turning Point Heritage Center: Supported the County Historian's leadership in developing this visitor center at the Champlain Canal Gateway in Schuylerville. The facility, funded by a \$200,000 American Battlefield Grant, will feature interactive exhibits including projection tables and augmented reality highlighting diverse Revolutionary War perspectives—Royalist Americans, enslaved individuals, Indigenous peoples, women, and soldiers from multiple nations.

Saratoga Revolutionary Experience (SRE): Contributed to development of this innovative digital platform using augmented reality and spatial storytelling to layer historical narratives directly onto battlefield landscapes. The platform enhances visitor engagement by connecting terrain to tactical decisions made during the 1777 campaign.

National Media Initiatives: Coordinated with the Campaign for Saratoga 250 and living historians from the 2nd Massachusetts Regiment for Fox Nation and Fox Sports video production at Saratoga Race Course during the July 4th Racing Festival. We coordinated activities and maintained informational displays at the oldest sports venue in the country, reaching an audience of over 14,000. We helped host two familiarization tours for travel journalists in October, resulting in national coverage including Travel + Leisure. These efforts, in close partnership with Discover Saratoga, positioned the region as a premier Revolutionary War heritage destination.

These projects demonstrate effective collaboration between town, county, and tourism partners to translate historical assets into economic development through heritage tourism.

Community Collaboration

Collaborative efforts in 2025 strengthened regional partnerships and expanded public engagement with Revolutionary War history.

Siege / Path Through History Weekend: Partnered with County Historian Lauren Roberts to coordinate statewide programming. When the federal government shutdown closed National Park Service sites, we quickly pivoted to alternative venues including Fort Hardy Park, Stillwater Blockhouse, and Gateway Visitors Center.

Surrender Day (October 17): Partnered with Saratoga 250 to plan and execute this annual commemoration of the 1777 British surrender at Fort Hardy Park.

Town of Saratoga & Stillwater 250th Committee: Collaborated with Stillwater Historian to establish joint Semiquincentennial planning committee focused on coordinated Revolutionary War programming.

Turning Point Symposium: Facilitated Saratoga 250's use of Schuylerville American Legion as venue for this symposium featuring national and regional historians examining the Revolution.

Community Events: Maintained historian presence at regional cultural events including Belmont Festival and SPAC's "1812 Overture" concert, connecting historical programming to broader community celebrations. Initiated the partnership that established Heritage Week as part of the Turning Point Parade and Festival.

These partnerships demonstrate the office's role as convener and facilitator, leveraging collaborative relationships to expand historical programming beyond traditional town historian functions.

Historic Preservation Projects

Our preservation work in 2025 encompassed both immediate site maintenance and long-term strategic planning. For National Marker Day, we received specialized training from the New

York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Applying this expertise, we partnered with the town highway department to clean and preserve the Knox Markers throughout the area, ensuring these significant 100-year-old Revolutionary War commemorative markers remain protected for future generations.

Our collaboration with the Village of Schuylerville advanced critical preservation efforts at Fort Hardy, an integral fortification from the Siege of Saratoga. This partnership yielded tangible results: securing grant funding and hiring an archaeologist to conduct professional site assessment and preservation planning. Working alongside the Friends of Fort Hardy Park, we continue developing the site as both a recreational amenity and cultural heritage destination. The NY Forward program provides essential momentum for these preservation initiatives, supporting our vision of revitalizing Schuylerville's historic core while maintaining archaeological integrity.

Our engagement with the Trail Town committee represents another dimension of preservation work—integrating historic resource protection with recreational infrastructure development. This collaboration strengthens biking access, heritage tourism infrastructure, and community economic development. Together, these efforts demonstrate how historic preservation can serve as a catalyst for responsible community revitalization that honors Schuylerville's historical significance while meeting contemporary needs.

Acknowledgments

This work would not be possible without the steadfast support of Deputy Historian Patricia Peck. My thanks also go to Supervisor Murray, Town Clerk Conover and assistant Jones, and the dedicated professionals and volunteers throughout the Town of Saratoga. The team's collaborative energy, particularly around our 250th anniversary initiatives, has been one of our greatest strengths this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Sean Kelleher, Historian

Assessor's report January 2026: No Report.

Highway Superintendent's report for January 2026

- ❖ Cleared large branches, trees & brush from Highways & right of way
- ❖ Patched pot holes throughout Town
- ❖ Repaired/replaced damaged or missing road signs throughout Town
- ❖ Removed Snow & Ice from Town Highways, Parking Lots & Sidewalks
- ❖ Monthly maintenance completed on trucks & equipment
- ❖ Multiple repairs made to trucks & equipment

Supervisor's Report:

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT January 2026

GENERAL FUND – TOWNWIDE (A FUND)

Balance on hand 1/1/2026	\$ 424,243.61
Revenues	+ 75,625.69
Disbursements	- (113,289.05)
Balance 1/31/2026	\$ 386,580.25

GENERAL FUND – OUTSIDE VILLAGE (B FUND)

Balance on hand 1/1/2026	\$ 2,428,252.96
Revenues	+ 867.50

Disbursements	- (1,907.07)
Balance 1/31/2026	\$ 2,427,213.39

HIGHWAY FUND – OUTSIDE VILLAGE (DB FUND)

Balance on hand 1/1/2026	\$ 238,445.34
Revenues	+ -
Disbursements	- (88,143.71)
Balance 1/31/2026	\$ 150,301.63

SCHUYLER PARK 1/31/2026	\$109,576.01
YOUTH RECREATION & SERVICE 1/31/2026	\$ 8,673.85
HIGHWAY EQUIPMENT RESERVE 1/31/2026	\$244,965.95
BUILDING RESERVE 1/31/2026	\$484,429.63
CDPHP & HRA 1/31/2026	\$ 3,750.00
AHC HOME IMPROVEMENT 1/31/2026	\$ 220.00
CDBG PROJECT 1/31/2026	\$ 16,533.20
SCENIC BY WAYS QTRRLY 1/31/2026	\$ 312.57
PARKS RESERVE 1/31/2026	\$376,956.55
GFNB Certificate of Deposit 1/31/2026	\$848,314.69
NYCLASS 1/31/2026	\$822,083.74

January 2026 Distribution - Sales Tax Received - \$ 193,362.00

January 2026 Distribution- Mortgage Tax Received - \$ 13,891.50

Public comments on agenda items: None.

Committee reports:

Landfill: No report.

Insurance: No report.

Youth: No report

Park Committee: No report

Office of Emergency Management (OEM): No report.

WEMS: No report.

New Business:

On a motion by Councilmember Ruth Drumm and seconded by Councilmember Gary Squires, the following **Resolution #26-29 Additional 2025 Fund Transfers** was adopted by vote:

Supervisor Ian Murray- aye, Councilman Michael McLoughlin – aye, Councilwoman Ruth Drumm – aye, Councilman Gary Squires - aye, Councilman Andy Ellis - absent

Carried 4 – 0

RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Saratoga authorizes the transfer of the following 2025 funds:

FROM	TO	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
A1990.4 Contingency	A1330.1 Tax Collector Personal Services	\$1,130	To cover payroll through year end
A1990.4 Contingency	A5132.4 Garage Contractual	\$1,000	To cover year end expenses
A1990.4 Contingency	A5182.4 Street Lighting Contractual	\$500	To cover year end expenses

On a motion by Councilmember Michael McLoughlin and seconded by Councilmember Ruth Drumm, the following **Resolution #26-30 The Town of Saratoga Town Board Supports the Invasive Species (Water Chestnuts) Remediation Plan Proposed by New York State Department of Conservation for The Cove** was adopted by vote: Supervisor Ian Murray- aye, Councilman Michael McLoughlin – aye, Councilwoman Ruth Drumm – aye, Councilman Gary Squires - aye, Councilman Andy Ellis - absent.

Carried 4 – 0

WHEREAS, over the years, the Town of Saratoga has received calls and notices from residents and the boating public about the infestation of water chestnut in the cove restricting navigation; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Saratoga has been contacted by NYS DEC proposing to conduct an Invasive Species removal plan for the water chestnut in the cove; and

WHEREAS, NYS DEC proposes to treat approximately 65 acres of water chestnut infestation in the cove with a foliar application of the herbicide imazamox with will be delivered by drone; and

WHEREAS, the foliar treatment will occur once a year for three years. Said treatment will take place over the course of one to three days in late June or early July; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the project is to reduce the population of water chestnuts to the point where the cove can be maintained via yearly monitoring and minimal hand pulling as necessary,

NOW, THEREFORE, that the Town of Saratoga Town Board fully supports this invasive species remediation plan proposed by NYS DEC,

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town of Saratoga Town Boards goal is to support goal is to support the recreational, economical and safe ecology of the cove.

On a motion by Councilmember Gary Squires and seconded by Councilmember Michael McLoughlin, the following **Resolution #26-31 Providing Endorsement of Saratoga PLAN application for New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Farmland Protection Implementation Grant** was adopted by vote: Supervisor Ian Murray- aye, Councilman Michael McLoughlin – aye, Councilwoman Ruth Drumm – aye, Councilman Gary Squires - aye, Councilman Andy Ellis - absent.

Carried 4 – 0

WHEREAS, Turning Point Dairy Properties, of certain real property consisting of 126± acres of viable agricultural land in tax parcels 181.-1-59.1 and 206.-1-10.111, located at County Road 67 and County Road 70 in the Town of Saratoga, Saratoga County, New York, also known as Hanehan Farm (the “Property”), desires to protect the Property for agricultural purposes by conveying a permanent conservation easement on the land;

WHEREAS, the Property is in active agricultural production and features productive agricultural soils, including 43% Prime Soils, 13% Soils of Statewide Importance and 19% Prime if Drained Soils, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Services;

WHEREAS, the Property is located within Saratoga County’s Agricultural District #1, created pursuant to Article 25-AA of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law;

WHEREAS, Saratoga County adopted an *Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan* in December 1997 that recommends supporting local farmland conservation projects ;

WHEREAS, the Town of Saratoga adopted a *Comprehensive Land Use Plan* in March 2002 that recognizes “the irreplaceability of the Town’s ‘Prime’ agricultural soils, the importance of actively farmed lands to the agricultural industry, the rural landscape character of the community, and the inherent susceptibility to development.” Stating a long-term goal to “to preserve the ‘Prime’ agricultural soils and actively farmed land to the greatest extent possible”;

WHEREAS, the Town of Saratoga adopted an *Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan* in December 2018 which recommends participation in purchase of development rights programs in partnership with Saratoga PLAN;

WHEREAS, Saratoga PLAN is organized for, among other purposes, conserving real property and is a “qualified organization” to accept, purchase, and hold conservation easements under Article 49, Title 3 of the Environmental Conservation Law of the State of New York and Section §170(h) of the Code of Treasury Regulation;

WHEREAS, Turning Point Dairy Properties and Saratoga PLAN agree that the purpose of the conservation easement will be to conserve viable agricultural land by preventing the conversion of the Property to non-farm uses. In achieving such prevention, the Property shall be forever reserved for continued agricultural use;

WHEREAS, Turning Point Dairy Properties is making a charitable donation to cover the gap in funding in order to make these conservation projects viable;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Saratoga Town Board endorses the submission of a grant application from Saratoga PLAN to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets for funding to purchase development rights on the Hanehan Farm Property and for Saratoga PLAN to hold and uphold a perpetual conservation easement on the land.

Communications: None

Privilege of the floor: no one spoke

Upcoming meetings:

- ❖ Regular Town Board meeting – Monday, March 9, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Audit the Bills: On a motion by Councilmember Ruth Drumm and seconded by Councilmember Michael McLoughlin, the following **Resolution #26-32 - Approving the Payment of Bills in Abstract 15G of 2025**, was adopted by vote: Supervisor Ian Murray- aye, Councilman Michael McLoughlin – aye, Councilwoman Ruth Drumm – aye, Councilman Gary Squires - aye, Councilman Andy Ellis – absent.

Carried 4– 0.

RESOLVED, by the Town Board of the Town of Saratoga to authorize payment of the bills listed in **Abstract 14G of 2025 in the following amounts:**

General Fund DB	No. 902	\$ 14,551.91
General Fund A	No. 899-901, 903-905	\$ 3,152.08
General Fund HPO	No. 906	\$ <u>220.00</u>
Grand Total		\$ 17,923.99

Audit the Bills: On a motion by Councilmember Michael McLoughlin and seconded by Councilmember Gary Squires, the following **Resolution #26-33 Approving the Payment of Bills in Abstract 2G of 2026**, was adopted by vote: Supervisor Ian Murray- aye, Councilman Michael McLoughlin – aye, Councilwoman Ruth Drumm – aye, Councilman Gary Squires - aye, Councilman Andy Ellis - absent.

Carried 4 - 0

RESOLVED, by the Town Board of the Town of Saratoga to authorize payment of the bills listed in **Abstract 2G of 2026 in the following amounts:**

General Fund DB	No. 042-055	\$ 12,748.04
General Fund A	No. 025, 039, 041, 056-078	\$ 15,074.37
General Fund B	No. 079-081	\$ 344.09
General Fund H	No. 082	\$ <u>1,500.00</u>

Grand Total **\$ 29,666.50**

A motion was made by Councilmember Ruth Drumm and seconded by Councilmember Gary Squires to adjourn the meeting at 7:21 p.m. Supervisor Ian Murray - aye, Councilmember Michael McLoughlin – aye, Councilmember Ruth Drumm – aye, Councilmember Gary Squires - aye, Councilmember Andy Ellis - absent.

Carried 4 – 0

Meeting Adjourned

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Conover
Town Clerk

DRAFT