

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

**May 11th, 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 – absent, Councilwoman Ruth Drumm – present, Councilman Gary Squires – present, Councilman Andy Ellis - present.

**Also present:** Deputy Clerk Emilee Shevlin, Building Inspector/Zoning Officer Gil Albert, Highway Superintendent Ryan Campbell and other interested parties.

**Posting Dates:** Supervisor Murray read posting dates for the draft minutes, meeting notices and the draft agenda for this meeting.

**Recognitions/Presentations/ Bid openings/Public Hearings:** None.

**Approval of Minutes:** A motion was made by Councilmember Gary Squires and seconded by Councilmember Ruth Drumm, **to accept the minutes of the April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026 Regular Town Board meeting as written.** Supervisor Ian Murray- aye, Councilman Michael McLoughlin – absent, Councilwoman Ruth Drumm – aye, Councilman Gary Squires - aye, Councilman Andy Ellis - aye.  
**Carried 4 –0**

**Town Clerk's report for April 2026:** Fees paid to the NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets for the Animal Population Control Program \$48.00. Fees paid to New York D.E.C. for hunting and fishing licenses \$207.84. Fees paid to the New York State Health Department for Marriage licenses \$45.00. Dog license fees to Supervisor Ian Murray \$220.00. Clerk fees to Supervisor Ian Murray \$185.90. Total State and Local Revenues received were \$706.74.

**Zoning Officer's report for April 2026:** 9 Building Permits, 23 Building Inspections, 8 Certificates of Occupancy, 1 Junkyard Permits, 0 Complaints, 0 Fire Inspections, 0 Order to Remedy, 4 misc., 4 Building Permit Renewals and 0 Property Maintenance Inspections. A check for \$2,623.05 was given to Supervisor Ian Murray.

**Dog Control officer's report for April 2026:** Ed Cross, Dog Control Officer answered 10 complaints, took 2 dogs to the shelter, bite cases, traveled 178 miles, issued 6 warnings and 0 summons' were issued.

**Town Court report for April 2026:** 15 Traffic tickets closed, 1 Criminal/penal law case closed, 3 civil cases closed, 2 DWI cases closed, 0 Encon/DEC closed, 0 Town and Dog cases closed. Supervisor Ian Murray received a check from Justice John McCarron in the amount of \$1,470.00, a check from Justice Charles Sherman in the amount of \$125.00, for a total of \$1,595.00.

**Tax Collector's report April 2026:** No report.

**Historian's report April 2026:**

April marked an exceptionally active and productive period for the Town Historian's Office, defined by expanded public programming, substantial digital growth, and increased regional visibility at a critical moment leading into the Semiquincentennial.

**Digital Interpretation and Public Engagement** Digital storytelling continues to emerge as one of the most effective tools for public history engagement in Saratoga. Daily feedback from residents, visitors, and history audience's underscores both the reach and relevance of this work.

This effort has taken on added importance given current interpretive constraints faced by the National Park Service, particularly in the area of timely digital content. The Town's platforms have allowed for more immediate and inclusive storytelling. One example this month featured Tadeusz Kościuszko, a veteran of the Battles of Saratoga, whose 1798 will directed that his American estate be used to free and educate enslaved people, including those owned by Thomas Jefferson.

This type of narrative—linking Revolutionary ideals to questions of citizenship, dignity, and inclusion—demonstrates the importance of local control over interpretation. It positions Saratoga to lead in telling fuller, more representative stories as heritage tourism expands toward the 250th anniversary.

#### **Digital Metrics and Growth**

Audience engagement across all digital platforms showed strong and measurable growth:

- Substack readership increased by approximately **10%** over the previous month.
- A total of **50 original articles** were published, generating **11,914 views** (an **8% increase**).
- The Town Historian's WordPress site remained stable with **1,100 views**.
- Social media reach expanded significantly, with Facebook views increasing **86%**, totaling **106,000 views**.

In total, the Historian's digital platforms generated approximately **119,000 views** in April alone.

These figures reflect sustained audience interest and confirm the effectiveness of a consistent, place-based digital storytelling strategy.

#### **Public Programs and Outreach**

Public programming also expanded during April, with four sold-out events demonstrating strong community engagement:

- ❖ Four programs commemorating the 250th anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's visit to Saratoga and one on Knox.
- ❖ The annual Saratoga 250 Symposium with leading scholars was well received, in addition we did a walking tour of our community.

In addition, outreach efforts included media appearances with WTEN, further extending Saratoga's regional presence.

#### **Events and Community Engagement**

The Turning Point Parade & Festival was successfully in planning, drawing strong local participation and reinforcing community investment in Saratoga's commemorative programming. The event reflects growing momentum as the community continues to prepare for increased visitation and engagement tied to the Semiquincentennial and the 250th anniversaries associated with the Battles of Saratoga. We are planning on moving the event in 2027 to October 17 starting in the morning to allow for a larger commemoration in the afternoon.

#### **Planning and Forward Strategy**

Planning for current and future programming is proceeding simultaneously, with a focus on:

- ❖ Expanding digital interpretation programming
- ❖ Strengthening regional partnerships
- ❖ Enhancing visitor readiness for heritage tourism growth
- ❖ Positioning Saratoga as a leading destination for Semiquincentennial engagement

The convergence of strong public programming, expanding digital reach, and coordinated planning places the Town in a favorable position as national attention increasingly turns toward 2026 and beyond.

Respectfully submitted,

**Sean Kelleher**

Town Historian, Town of Saratoga

Supervisor Ian Murray stated that they have secured a site on Wilbur Road where 250<sup>th</sup> reenactment will take place. We are meeting monthly with the County DPW, landscape architects and some reenactors. They are trying to keep everything on track for next years events.

**Assessor's report April 2026:** Assessor Nicole Monroe sent an email to Supervisor Ian Murray asking if the Town Board would consider an increase in the stipend for the Board of Assessment Review. B.A.R. members requested this increase last year.

**Highway Superintendent's report for April 2026:**

- ❖ Cleared large branches, trees & brush from Highways & right of way
- ❖ Repaired/replaced damaged or missing road signs throughout Town
- ❖ Patched pot holes throughout Town
- ❖ Multiple repairs made to trucks & equipment
- ❖ Cleaned shop & equipment
- ❖ Repaired catch basin Lafayette St.
- ❖ Finish spring services on trucks & equipment
- ❖ Installed docks at boat launch
- ❖ Installed Veteran banners in both Villages
- ❖ Added certified wood chips to play area at Schuyler Park
- ❖ Work on trial system drainage
- ❖ Prepped & Painted office space in Town hall
- ❖ Assisted in road construction with Towns of Moreau & Easton

**SUPERVISOR'S REPORT April 2026:**

**GENERAL FUND – TOWNWIDE (A FUND)**

Balance on hand 4/1/2026	\$1,007,244.86
Revenues	+ 243,260.84
Disbursements	- (311,505.70)
Balance 4/30/2026	\$ 939,000.00

**GENERAL FUND – OUTSIDE VILLAGE (B FUND)**

Balance on hand 4/1/2026	\$2,428,377.35
Revenues	+ 2,708.20
Disbursements	- (8,685.05)
Balance 4/30/2026	\$ 2,422,400.50

**HIGHWAY FUND – OUTSIDE VILLAGE (DB FUND)**

Balance on hand 4/1/2026	\$ 137,192.99
Revenues	+ 178,216.35
Disbursements	- (134,874.83)
Balance 4/30/2026	\$ 180,534.51

SCHUYLER PARK 4/30/2026	\$ 108,076.01
YOUTH RECREATION & SERVICE 4/30/2026	\$ 8,673.85
HIGHWAY EQUIPMENT RESERVE 4/30/2026	\$ 245,020.74
BUILDING RESERVE 4/30/2026	\$ 484,542.24
CDPHP & HRA 4/30/2026	\$ 3,933.68
CDBG PROJECT 4/30/2026	\$ 16,533.20
SCENIC BY WAYS QRTLRY 4/30/2026	\$ 312.61
PARKS RESERVE 4/30/2026	\$ 376,956.55
GFNB Certificate of Deposit 4/30/2026	\$ 873,415.50
NYCLASS 4/30/2026	\$ 829,209.29

**April 2026 Distribution - Sales Tax Received - \$ 178,137.00**

**April 2026 Distribution- Mortgage Tax Received - \$ 22,169.50**

**Public comments on agenda items:** No one spoke.

**Committee reports:**

**Landfill:** No report.

**Insurance:** Supervisor Murray advised he is working on the renewal for Schuyler Park, which covers the park, the board and the friends of Schuyler Park.

**Youth:** No report.

**Park Committee:** No report.

**Office of Emergency Management (OEM):** No report.

**WEMS:** No report.

**Old / Other Business:**

**Short Term Rentals** - Supervisor Murray and the Town Board Members had a brief discussion regarding Saratoga County Short term rentals registry law that went into effect April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026. The law was enacted due to a New York State mandate requiring such registries and Saratoga County opted in this registry. This is the first step the second step is the Town will have to come up with legislation on short term rentals then it will be up to Code Enforcement to follow up on the legislation.

Code Enforcement and Zoning Officer Gil Albert suggested that we set it up as an operating permit that is paid once a year. This fee should alloting for his time and inspection fee of the rental. If there is any kind of issue with the property the Town can pull the rental operating permit. Councilmember Gary Squires also suggested that there be an occupancy limit with each rental. Code Enforcement Officer Gil Albert definitely agreed, this would be all part of the permitting process. Supervisor Murray also suggested there should be a neighbor protection policy be included in the legislation also.

**Audio Visual** – Councilmember Gary Squires also asked about the audio-visual system for the Schuyler Room. Supervisor Ian Murray stated that he put money into the budget for this project. Supervisor Murray advised he is also working on an economic grant through the County for \$10,000.00 and if we can get this, it will offset some of the expense. We are waiting to hear and Supervisor Murray stated it is absolutely needed.

**Hudson Hoosic Partnership** – Supervisor Ian Murray said that Hudon Hoosic Partnership is looking for a donation for operating expenses. They are still struggling. They have reached out to the Towns of Northumberland, Stillwater and our Town and asked for a \$10,000.00 donation to keep their operating fund functioning. Until the County takes the building over at some time in the future they are just struggling to keep up with expenses. Supervisor Murray thinks the donation is a good thing since tourism is our main industry here. This is a Board decision and he wanted to know what thoughts the Board had.

The Board and the Supervisor had a brief discussion and they feel that this money will would come back to us eventually. Revenue from sales tax is up, this should be a return on our investment for. Supervisor Murray will let Hudson Hoosic Partnership know and we will do a resolution next month for the donation.

**New Business:**

On a motion by Councilmember Ruth Drumm and seconded by Councilmember Gary Squires the following **Resolution #26-42 Authorizing and Directing the Payment of an Increased Stipend to the Members of the Board of Assessment Review (BAR)** was adopted by vote: Supervisor Ian Murray-aye, Councilman Michael McLoughlin – absent, Councilwoman Ruth Drumm – aye, Councilman Gary Squires - aye, Councilman Andy Ellis – aye.

**Carried 4 – 0**

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Saratoga Board of Assessment Review (BAR) is vested with the duty and responsibility of hearing property assessment complaints, exercising judgement and discretion to ensure fair and impartial determinations ; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Assessment Review is required to meet during the designated Assessment Review season (Grievance Day) to process taxpayer complaints; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Saratoga desires to recognize the time and expertise dedicated by members of the Board of Assessment Review to this vital municipal function; and

**WHEREAS**, a stipend is intended to compensate for time spent in training, reviewing assessment files, attending hearing, and deliberating on cases

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Saratoga hereby authorizes and directs the payment of a stipend to the members of the Board of Assessment Review as follow:

**1. Stipend Amount:** The stipend for the BAR chair is \$100 per meeting, and the BAR members are \$80 per meeting during the official Assessment Review period.

**2. Payment Process:** Stipends shall be paid following closing of the Assessment Review hearing upon verification of attendance by the Assessor.

**3. Effective Date:** This resolution shall take effect for the 2026 Assessment Cycle.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this stipend shall not be considered salary, nor shall it confer the status of full-time employees upon the Board of Assessment Review members.

**Communications / Reminder:** Supervisor Ian Murray received a letter from the American Legion Post 278 in Schuylerville inviting him and any representative from the Town to join them on Monday May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026 9 a.m. for a short parade from the Post to the Veterans Park on South Broad Street, proceeded by a flag ceremony at the Post, conducted by Scout Troup 13.

**Privilege of the floor:** Paul Murphy addressed the Town Board.

**7:31 P.M. Councilmember Michael McLoughlin arrived at the Town Board Meeting.**

**Upcoming meetings:**

- ❖ Regular Town Board meeting – Monday, June 8th, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

**Audit the Bills:** On a motion by Councilmember Michael McLoughlin and seconded by Councilmember Andy Ellis, the following **Resolution #26-43 Approving the Payment of Bills in Abstract 5G 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 - aye.

**Carried 5 – 0**

**RESOLVED**, by the Town Board of the Town of Saratoga to authorize payment of the bills listed in **Abstract 5G of 2026 in the following amounts:**

<b>General Fund DB</b>	<b>No. 243, 262-276</b>	<b>\$ 73,044.00</b>
<b>General Fund A</b>	<b>No. 244-246, 248, 248, 259, 277-293</b>	<b>\$ 14,425.78</b>
<b>General Fund B</b>	<b>No. 294-296</b>	<b>\$ 1,382.75</b>
<b>General Fund H</b>	<b>No. 297-300</b>	<b>\$ <u>3,566.95</u></b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>\$ 92,419.48</b>

A motion was made by Councilmember Michael McLoughlin and seconded by Councilmember Gary Squires to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 p.m. Supervisor Ian Murray - aye, Councilmember Michael McLoughlin – aye, Councilmember Ruth Drumm – aye, Councilmember Gary Squires - aye, Councilmember Andy Ellis - aye.

**Carried 5 – 0**

**Meeting Adjourned**

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Conover  
Town Clerk