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# RICHFORD QUARTERLY

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## FROM THE SUPERVISOR

The Town is beginning work on the 2015 budget. The Town Board has voted to override the property tax cap. There are still two legal actions involving assessments and an abandoned property. 2014 has been a time of transition for Richford. Judy Thurston passed away in July after a year-long illness. She succeeded me as Town Clerk in 1988 and served our Town faithfully for over 26 years. Tina Thurston is now serving as Town Clerk; The Town thanks her for helping in this time of transition. There has been vandalism at Rawley Park. Anyone who sees any suspicious activity is asked to contact either a Town official, the State Police or the County Sheriff.

## ELECTION DAY, NOVEMBER 4

Election Day is Tuesday, November 4, from 6 am to 9 pm at the Richford Town Hall, Bowery Lane. Absentee Ballots can be obtained from the Board of Elections located in the County Office Building, 56 Main St., Owego, NY. Phone (607) 687-8261. Candidates and offices they are campaigning for are:

**Town Clerk:** two year term

Velvet Lyke (R) (unopposed)

**Town Judge:** two year term

Peggy Andersen (R) (unopposed)

Three proposals are on the ballot. For details go to:  
([http://ballotpedia.org/New\\_York\\_2014\\_ballot\\_measures](http://ballotpedia.org/New_York_2014_ballot_measures))

**Proposal 1.** The New York Redistricting Commission Amendment will amend the state constitution to create a redistricting commission to establish state senate, assembly and congressional districts.

**Proposal 2.** The New York Electronic Bills Amendment will amend to state constitution to allow legislative bills to be distributed electronically rather than as paper copies.

**Proposal 3.** The New York Bonds for School Technology Act would authorize the [state comptroller](#) to issue and sell bonds up to the amount of \$2 billion. The revenue received from the sale of such bonds would be used for projects related to: Purchasing educational technology equipment and facilities; Constructing and modernizing facilities to accommodate pre-kindergarten programs and replacing classroom trailers with permanent buildings; and Installing high-tech security features in school buildings.

The Planning Board asked all candidates to describe their qualifications and goals. Their responses are printed verbatim below.

## CANDIDATE FOR TOWN CLERK

**Name:** Velvet Lyke

**Occupation:**

**Qualifications (experience, education and training):** I have a Bachelors of Science in Accounting from SUNY Geneseo. I am also a Certified Public Accountant certified in the Maryland. I worked for the Department of Defense as an Auditor for 23 years. I currently am a self employed tax preparer and a Pampered Chef consultant.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to everyone. I am Velvet Lyke and I am running for the position Richford Town Clerk. I have been a resident of Richford for the past 40 years. I am the daughter of Charles and Charlotte Armstrong of Payne Marsh Rd. I currently reside with my husband, Donald, and daughter, Catherine, live at 368 Payne Marsh Road as well. My husband has been a volunteer Fireman and EMT in the past and is currently employed as a Police Officer at Ithaca College and Groton. My daughter, Catherine, is a junior at Newark Valley High School. My eldest daughter and grandson live in Owego, NY.

I am looking forward to bringing my experience and knowledge to the Town of Richford. I believe my past experience will benefit Richford greatly and I hope that you all vote in the November election.

## CANDIDATE FOR TOWN JUDGE

**Name:** Peggy Andersen

**Occupation:** Account Representative, Cornell University, 1998-2014

**Qualifications (experience, education and training):** I have worked as the court clerk in the Richford Town Court from 1972 until 2006 when I was appointed justice to fill a vacancy left by the death of Ray Paul. I was elected town justice in the general election of 2006. I have a Bachelor of Science degree from Binghamton University and an Associate Degree from Tompkins Cortland Community College. I have an accounting certification from Cornell University. Since 2006, I have been required to earn 12 continuing education credits each year through the Unified Court System. I have been a resident of Richford since 1972.

**Goals while in office:** The primary goal of any town court is to process matters efficiently and in a timely manner. To that end, I believe Becky Randall and I have achieved that goal. We made many improvements since 2006 and have passed a State audit with flying colors. A secondary goal is improve the safety of anyone who lives in our township, and this covers all circumstances from traffic control to domestic situations.

## TOWN BOARD NEWS

The entire minutes are available at the Town website [www.richfordny.com](http://www.richfordny.com).

**July 1 2014** – The third and final Public Hearing regarding the Joyce Hyde property on Route 79 (the “burnt house”) to review the report from Cross Excavation. Siding contains asbestos and must be removed by a certified asbestos remediation company. If the town does take possession/ownership of the property it will be responsible for the costs of asbestos removal and building demolition. Concern that rats will enter nearby properties once demolition begins. .

**July 8, 2014** - The town may receive \$24,000 in July and in December from the former health insurance pool. Highway Superintendent Holt reported \$1900 from the sale of pipe and other metals. The highway department is getting stone and oil, working on weak pipes, and tree and limb removal due to recent storms. Superintendent Holt is submitting vouchers for CHIPS reimbursement and is working on a five-year plan for the Highway Department. The garbage truck brakes failed again; discussion about a replacement garbage compactor.

Code Enforcement Officer Report of one building permit issued, one building permit renewed, three certificates of occupancy issued, 2 violation notices, fees collected \$200, and a total of 11 inspections. Justice Court check for June was \$4785. No Dog Control Report. Planning Board sent out a survey and received 107 responses for a 15% return rate. The Planning Board is summarizing the results. Tina Thurston was appointed Richford Town Clerk until December 31, 2014.

**August 12, 2014** - Highway Superintendent Holt reported that the highway department has been oiling and stoning, doing general road maintenance, and are done hauling sand for the year. Vehicle maintenance is ongoing. Work is near completion on Victory Hill, Tubbs Hill, and Anderson Hill Roads and continuing on Barden Road. Some \$99,000 will be reimbursed by CHIPS and \$13,000 from Winter Fund for flooding costs. A resident suggested posting electronic speed signs north and south of town on Route 38, much like Harford has. Holt will contact the state about the process and costs involved. A resident complained about kitty litter being dumped the length of Anderson Hill and the smell it creates. Holt will contact the state police regarding this matter.

Justice Court check for July was \$2780. Dog Control Officer report of missing dog, not found, and barking dog but no one home at visit. Code Enforcement Office report showed 2 building permits issued and one building permit renewal; one building permit inquiry; one certificate of occupancy; total of 5 permit complaint certificates; construction costs \$11,000 and fees collected \$250.

Discussion about the Joyce Hyde property (the “burnt house”). The town’s attorney presented 2 options; pursue prosecution or pursue demolition. The Board voted to pursue demolition as Ms. Hyde was difficult to locate. Council members were surprised that the Town could not take possession but only put

a lien on the property to get the town’s costs refunded. Councilwoman Holcomb brings up the concern that the assessed value of the property with a structure on it is \$18,300, when the house is destroyed the land property value drops to \$8,300. The town spends over \$30,000 to demolish the buildings and clean up the property to have a piece of land that is valued at \$8,300; a terrible loss to the town. The town is now paying to do a title search. Councilwoman Holcomb suggests asking the attorney if the town can fine the owners according to penal law. A resident expressed concern on the amount of money the town has spent on the Joyce Hyde property to only get a lien on the property. He suggested a process server should locate Ms. Hyde to start prosecution.

The Board unanimously voted to hold a public meeting to override the state tax cap for 2015.

**September 16, 2014** - The Highway Superintendent reported that road grading for this year is nearly complete. Board authorized purchase of a 2000 tandem axle dump truck with plow and wing for \$15,000, and to sell the 1989 and 1995 dump trucks at auction, leaving six trucks. Discussion about replacing the garbage truck and the fact that there is no money budgeted for this. Board voted unanimously to override the 2% tax levy limit.

The state suggested moving speed limit signs 1000 feet farther from town to slow people down. Electronic speed posting signs cost \$3200 apiece and are solar powered with battery backup. The state police patrolled Anderson Hill and the dumping of cat litter has stopped. Justice Court check for August was \$3,010.

Councilwoman Holcomb restates her concern that only putting a lien on Joyce Hyde property will not get the town’s money back if the property goes up for tax sale. Holcomb would like to see Joyce Hyde served, by process server, with a letter saying she (Joyce Hyde) will be fined according to our local law unless she takes care of the property or turns the property over to the town. A resident, who is a paralegal, notes the town can take a personal judgment against Joyce Hyde and serve her. Decision to write a letter to Joyce Hyde that the town board will accept the property in exchange for fines, and to hire a process server to serve the letter. A resident suggested that the highway department do the demolition to save the town money.

## AMERICORPS POSITION

The Rural Health Network has received an AmeriCorps Grant Award, enabling an AmeriCorps member to serve part-time with Lourdes Center for Family Health. Rural Health Service Corps is currently recruiting for this position in Richford, as well as others in the Binghamton area. The successful applicant will provide assistance with educational programs offered by Northern Tioga Neighbors Network (NTNN), Richford Summer Youth Program, and health fairs. Part-time AmeriCorps members serve for 11 or 12 months and receive a \$6,050 stipend, a \$2,822 Education Award upon completion of service, and federal student loan forbearance while in service. For more information or to apply call [607-692-7669](tel:607-692-7669) or go to: [www.ruralhealthnetwork.org/AmeriCorps](http://www.ruralhealthnetwork.org/AmeriCorps).

## TOWN SURVEY RESULTS

The Town Planning Board mailed a community survey to all 687 Richford residents and non-resident landowners and received a total of 109 surveys returned, for a response rate of 15.8%. Four topics received the most attention: preserve Richford's rural character and natural environment; economic development consistent with maintaining the rural character; improve Richford's appearance by removing junk and dilapidated houses; and make Town government more efficient and reduce taxes. The challenge facing the community is how to maintain Richford's positive qualities, especially the clean air and water and rural character, while improving the economic base of the Town. The complete Report is available on the Town website ([www.richfordny.com](http://www.richfordny.com)).

### ***Preserve rural character***

Respondents overwhelmingly want to protect Richford's clean air and water, peace and quiet, natural beauty and rural character; these qualities are why respondents choose to live in Richford, and preserving the natural beauty and clean air and water is very important to residents.

### ***Economic development: Housing***

Respondents overwhelmingly want future residential development to consist of single family homes, including vacation and second homes, and do not want mobile home parks, apartment complexes, condominiums or subdivisions. Local residents in particular support development of a senior/assisted living facility in Richford, and also favor 'green' building construction, reflecting the emphasis on maintaining Richford's clean water and air.

### ***Economic development: Business***

Nearly all respondents would like to have more small businesses in Richford, including home-based, service based, and tourism based. Respondents also support agriculture, both conventional and organic, and would like to have both day care and elder care businesses in the community. Respondents especially want a farmer's market. In contrast, large commercial and industrial development are not wanted, nor is high-volume drilling for natural gas ('fracking').

### ***Improve Richford's appearance***

Most respondents expressed concern about the dilapidated appearance of buildings and properties in both the hamlet and the Town. Respondents were very emphatic about the need to remove junk and improve the appearance of many properties, and these two concerns received more written comments than any other topic. Improving the appearance of the Town was almost as high a priority as preserving the Town's clean air and water.

### ***Improve Town government and reduce taxes***

Respondents emphasized the need for pro-active Town government to meet the current and future needs of the community. Respondents wanted lower taxes and more value for the taxes they paid, a theme common to small towns across the nation. When asked if they thought the Town was 'getting better or worse' most respondents indicated that the Town was neither improving nor falling apart, but simply staying the same.

## BERKSHIRE PO ADDS HOURS

The Berkshire Post Office retail window has added afternoon hours and is now open 7:30 - 11am and 2 - 4:30pm, Monday-Friday, and 9-11am Saturday. The Lobby is open 7:30am - 5pm Monday thru Friday and 7:30 - 11:30am on Saturday. A post office will be reopened in Richford in the next 8 - 12 months. In the meantime, the USPS is looking for locations for a trailer where people can pick up their mail.

## NTNN NEWS

Northern Tioga Neighbors Network just received a grant from Tioga County Senior Citizens Foundation to help serve residents of Richford, Berkshire and Newark Valley. NTNN helps transport people to medical appointments, the grocery store and other shopping, and also provide friendly visits and help with light yard work. This all at no cost to the person being served. If you'd like to be part of community building by serving our neighbors, call and leave us a message at: [607-657-2823](tel:607-657-2823) or toll free [1-877-657-2823](tel:1-877-657-2823).

## TIOGA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society will have the O'Tannenbaum Holiday Fundraiser from November 8 to December 13 at the museum on 110 Front St. The Society provides artificial trees and wreaths to individuals and organizations who creatively decorate them. The trees and wreaths are returned to the museum which sells them by silent auction to raise money to cover operating costs. The museum is open Wednesday-Saturday 10 AM-4PM with extended hours after Thanksgiving. For more information call the museum at 687-2460.

## NEW RICHFORD GIRL SCOUT TROOP

A new Girl Scout Daisy troop (kindergartners and first graders) has started up in Richford. They meet at the Hubbard Center on Thursday nights at 6pm and are led by Cyndi Herrick and Jackie Babcock. Brownie/Junior troop 40276 would like to give a huge welcome to their new little Girl Scout sisters!

## NEWARK VALLEY VALEDICTORIAN

Congratulations to Mackenzie Harris, the 2014 Newark Valley High School Valedictorian. Mackenzie also received the University of Rochester Bausch and Lomb science medal award and NYS scholarship for academic excellence. Mackenzie is now at the University of Rochester pursuing an engineering degree.

## RICHFORD SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Cassandra Robinson and Greg McMullin were awarded the 2014 Richford scholarships; each received \$200. Cassandra is attending TC3 and Greg is a student at Clarkson University.

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Fold 2

### *Calendar of Events*

- Oct 29 Special Town Board meeting, to review proposed preliminary 2015 budget. 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Bowery Lane.
- Oct 31 Deadline for signing up for Christmas gifts for infants and youth through 18 years of age. Call Tioga Rural Ministry, 687-3021 for information and hours open
- Nov 1 Deadline for signing up for holiday food baskets, call Emily (657-8158) or Joan (657-2501), ask for pickup time
- Nov 4 Election Day, 6 am – 9 pm, Town Hall, Bowery Lane
- Nov 6 Food giveaway, Richford Congregational Church, 12:30 pm, bring containers

- Nov 6 Public hearing, 2015 preliminary town budget, Town Hall, 7:30 pm,
- Nov 22 Pickup Thanksgiving Food Basket, check for time, Community Building, Jewett Hill Road.
- Dec 4 Food giveaway, see Nov 6
- Dec 9 Fire Commissioner Election, Richford Fire Station
- Dec 13 Pickup Christmas Food Baskets (see Nov 22)
- Jan 3 Food giveaway, see Nov 6

Please check town website, [www.richfordny.com](http://www.richfordny.com), for additional programs and news occurring after the newsletter.

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## **GIRL SCOUTS HELP TOWN**

Congratulation to the Richford Girl Scout Troop 40276 for earning the Girl Scout Junior Bronze Award! The troop meets weekly in the Town Hall and felt that the most sustainable project to help their community, was to improve the look (and smell) of the meeting space. First they scrubbed the outside and pulled weeds in the pouring rain to get the building ready for the Potato Festival. Then they moved inside to repair, sand, and paint all the tables and the floor, scrub all the chairs, walls and cabinets, appliances,

fryer, etc. Generous support was provided by Ithaca Lowes, Ithaca Home Depot, Whitney Point Greene's Home Center, Richford Auxiliary and troop funds. A special thank you to Judge Andersen for letting them store the contents of the town hall in her chambers during the "face lift". A big thank you goes out to the Wright's, Holt's, Westfall's, Slaughter's, Davis', Cunningham's, Truesdail/Barber and Babcock families and their leaders, Vicki Davis and Pam Cunningham for their work! The Town Hall looks fantastic thanks to their efforts!