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# RICHFORD QUARTERLY

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April – June 2015

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## FROM THE SUPERVISOR

Richford experienced another harsh winter but there were no emergencies such as the ones at the Community Building last year. It appears that Rawley Park did not have any damage from the wintry weather. In January the Town received a sales tax payment from Tioga County for over \$6,000 which far exceeded the budget estimate. Highway Superintendent Michael Holt retired at the end of January and Michael Hunt was appointed to replace him. The Town purchased a new multifunction copier/printer for the Town Clerk and is planning to purchase new computers to upgrade the Town's equipment. There is currently one vacancy on the Board of Assessment Review and vacancies on the Board of Appeals. Interested residents are urged to apply for these positions.

## GRIEVANCE DAY

Grievance Day will be held Tuesday, May 26 from 4 - 8 pm at the Town Hall, 7 Bowery Lane, Richford. Grievance Day gives property owners the opportunity to discuss and to seek relief for their property assessments with Board of Review members Flora Karasin, Steve Kotula and another member. By law, Frances Butler, Assessor, must attend this meeting, but she is not a member of the Board of Assessment Review. Property owners whose assessments were changed have been notified directly by mail.

If you want to challenge your assessment, have forms ready before attending Grievance Day and learn how the process works by reading the booklet "Contesting your Assessment", available at [richfordny.com/assessment](http://richfordny.com/assessment). Copies of the required assessment complaint form will be available at the meeting. Forms can also be downloaded from the Richford website [www.richfordny.com](http://www.richfordny.com) or by contacting the assessor (849-6966; e-mail [Town.assessor@gmail.com](mailto:Town.assessor@gmail.com); or mail to P. O. Box 366, Marathon, NY 13803). Also, copies can be obtained from the County Real Property Tax Office, 56 Main St., Owego, NY.

On or about May 1st the tentative Assessment Roll Book will be filed by the Assessor at the Town Clerk's Office for local residents to examine during the Clerk's regular office hours. In addition the roll book will be available at the Real Property Tax Office, 56 Main St., Owego, a link to view it will be on the Town of Richford website at [www.richfordny.com](http://www.richfordny.com) and at the Assessor's Office in Marathon (849-6966).

New York State law requires that any changes in the property assessment after the tentative roll has been filed must be made by the Board of Assessment Review and NOT by the Assessor.

## NEW HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

I'm Michael Hunt, the newly appointed Highway Superintendent for the Town of Richford. After Michael Holt's resignation in January 2015, I applied for and was appointed to this position. Since being appointed I have enjoyed working with the highway department employees, the scope of the work, and the interaction I've had with the residents of Richford. After having served in this position for the short term and being a resident of this area the majority of my life, I can say I really enjoy the work and have only the Town's best interest at heart. I will be running for Highway Superintendent in the fall of 2015. With the Town's support, I look forward to serving this community for many years to come.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan Committee is completing the draft update of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan reflects the ideas and opinions of the community's residents, and all residents are invited to participate in revising this important document. A Comprehensive Plan acts as a road map to guide future growth and development while promoting the health, safety and general welfare of the people.

If you would like to comment on or contribute to this update, please join the Comprehensive Plan Committee Board at any of the bimonthly meetings, held the second and fourth Monday of each month 7-9 pm, at the Hubbard Center on Bowery Lane. For more information, e-mail [planningboard@richfordny.com](mailto:planningboard@richfordny.com), or call Victoria Nuzzo (607-227-1177) or Charles Davis (607-657-8248).

## TOWN BOARD NEWS

**Jan 13** – The Board met in Executive Session to discuss the Highway Employees contract for 2015. The employees asked to bring union representation to the next meeting. The Town Board agreed to recognize the Teamster Union as the Highway employees' representative.

Highway Department was reimbursed \$13,576 in CHIPS state aid for work conducted in 2014. Dog Control Officer reported problems with unleashed dog and missing cat. Justice Court received \$3,180 for December 2014. The Code Enforcement report for November and December 2014 indicated 3 Zoning/Complaint/Violation Notices given, 1 building permit and 7 Certificates of Occupancy issued, and multiple inspections conducted.

The Planning Board is working on the comprehensive plan with a target of May 2015 for completion. The public is encouraged to participate in meetings, held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday nights at the Hubbard. Chair Charles Davis asked the Town Board to conclude their review of the Ethics and Conduct Codes presented to them in early 2014.

Discussion about which law firm to work with this year, as there is dissatisfaction with the services received from True, Walsh & Sokoni. Annual salaries set for Town Board and Town employees. Estimates and Quotes for the new copier need to be reviewed. Councilwoman Holcomb asked about any news on the Hyde property. Supervisor Wilcox did not have any new information, and stated he will get new estimates for demolition costs.

John Schwartz applied for a grant from Stanley Tools for an Energy Audit of the town buildings and for insulating buildings if needed. Mr. Schwartz reported that Frank Howe, Tompkins Community Action Group, surveyed the Town buildings for energy efficiency needs. Mr. Howe offered to meet with the Town Board to discuss his estimates and to meet with residents to discuss how they can obtain an energy audit and receive potential monetary assistance. The Board asked Schwartz to contact Howe to set up a meeting. Supervisor Wilcox has been working on sending letters regarding the costs of utilities for the Town facilities. He will update as information is obtained.

**Jan 27** – Town Board met in executive session to discuss the 2015 highway contract with the Richford Highway Employees and to interview the three candidates for the Town Highway Superintendent position.

In the regular meeting, Michael Hunt was appointed as Town Highway Superintendent. The Board agreed to purchase a copier for \$400. True, Walsh & Sokoni, was appointed as the town attorney for one year.

A resident inquired about the NYSEG bills and how expensive the Town Hall bills are getting. Supervisor Wilcox will make an appointment with NYSEG to discuss the bills.

**Feb 10** – No progress on the 2015 Highway employees' contract. Dave Clark from the Binghamton Post Office told Supervisor Wilcox that people were coming to the Diner today to prepare the location for a PO Box stand.

Town Board wondered if the Code of Public Conduct had already been approved. They will address the Ethics Code at the next meeting.

Town Lawyer sent a petition to the Town Supervisor regarding taking further action to demolish the Hyde property. The petition was signed.

Richard Harrington reported on programs offered by REAP to help various businesses and Towns. He mentioned the following grants and programs: Arbed Grant, County Broadband Internet Study, NY Rising Program, Funding Grant, REAP Set aside Program. If the Town is interested in any of the grants a proposal can be sent to REAP.

**March 10** - Superintendent Mike Hunt asked the Board to approve purchase of a computer for his office, paint for the inside of the shop, and a brush hog. The Planning Board received a request for subdivision of a parcel of land. The initial request was rejected and the landowner will resubmit to be consistent with the town subdivision law.

Girl Scout Troop 4276 held a Bronze Award Ceremony at the Town Hall on March 5, 2015. The Board thanked them again for all their work on the Town Hall.

The Board agreed to settle the Holcomb vs. Town of Richford assessment challenge. Councilwoman Holcomb abstained due to conflict of interest.

The Code of Ethics was given to the Town Board in January 2014. The Board had not read it so will discuss this at the April meeting after members review it. Councilwoman Holcomb wants to change some wording and will have the revisions ready for next month's (April 2015) meeting.

The Board received a letter from NYS DOT that a study performed on the south end of town showed no need for a reduced speed limit, but DOT will place a reduced speed limit ahead" sign on Route 38 south of town.

Discussion about the EMS Contract. Councilwoman Holcomb would like to receive quarterly reports detailing the number of calls; number of calls not covered; response times; and accounting of funds received. The discussion of the contract was tabled until April.

**April 14** - Lengthy discussion about the EMS agreement with Northern Tioga Emergency Medical Services. Declining volunteer participation creates longer response times and more unanswered calls (approximately 50% response rate in 2014). There is currently only one full-time medic. The company plans to hire 5 experienced part-time medics to provide better coverage. Councilwoman Holcomb wants a minimum 65% response rate in 2015. Contract approved for 2015.

No discussion about the 2015 Highway contract, as the EMS discussion lasted over an hour and Mr. Firestone, the Union representative, had to leave. Firestone left a copy of the proposed contract. Councilwoman Holcomb will review the contract, and the Board will then schedule another meeting with Mr. Firestone, and highway department employees. Councilman Miller refuses to attend that meeting.

Planning Board Chair Charles Davis stated a draft Comprehensive Plan should be available by June. Also suggested that Town Board members use separate e-mail addresses for Town and personal communication.

Once again no action taken on the proposed Code of Ethics. Councilwoman Holcomb is still shortening and revising the draft given the Board in January 2014.

Haefelle TV will charge \$60.95/month for digital cable beginning April 1. The Town may lose revenue when residents drop Haefelle due to price increases.

## COMMUNITY AUXILIARY NEWS

The Community Auxiliary will sponsor a chicken barbecue on Saturday, May 9 at the Fire Station to support the Richford Scholarship. \$400 is needed to provide 2 scholarships of \$200 each for a graduating boy and girl who plan to further his/her education. Auxiliary members are asking residents for donations of baked beans, cooking oil, charcoal, salt potatoes, and cash to buy chicken. Call Christina Craft (844-8969) to donate. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated by the Auxiliary members as they work to meet this commitment.

Kiddies Day will be Saturday July 18 at Rawley Park from 9 am on. All youth are invited to attend. A variety of events will be held, including the selection of the King and Queen of Richford and bicycle giveaway. Only Richford children will be eligible to win one of eight bikes. More information is available from Christina Craft. Volunteer help for these events and other Community Auxiliary activities would be greatly appreciated.

## RABIES CLINIC

The next rabies clinic on May 21 is hosted by the Tioga County Department of Environmental Health from 6 - 8 pm at the Newark Valley Fire Station, 7151 Rte. 38, Newark Valley, NY. A \$10 donation is requested (not required) per pet. Clinic is available for dogs, cats and domesticated ferrets. Vaccine will not be administered unless pets are under control with dogs on a leash and cats either on a leash or boxed and both accompanied by a responsible adult..

If your pet has had a previous rabies vaccination, bring that certificate with you, if not the vaccination will be effective for a one-year period. Questions? Contact the Tioga County Health Dept. (607) 687-6585.

## HIGHLAND CEMETERY CARE

The Richford Highland Cemetery Association works hard to keep the cemetery beautiful and respectable. You can help too - Please follow these guidelines when placing flowers or other items at the graves (the complete set of guidelines is posted in the cemetery).

\* Use only metal, clay or plastic containers set at ground level for cut or artificial flowers. Please DO NOT use glass or wire as these will damage the mowers (Glass containers and wire will be removed to protect the mowing equipment).

\* Also, please remove all containers for flowers by Veteran's Day. This gives us a head start for the following spring. Any left after that day may be disposed of by the Sexton without owner notification.

## LIBRARY NEWS

Look for an early summer mailing from the Library which will list all the different activities planned for this summer. The theme for the summer reading program is "Every Hero Has a Story." Librarian Lu Ann Whirl has asked some of the local EMTs, firefighters and others to tell their stories about what they do as heroes in the community, and their stories will add interest to the theme.

The Story Hour continues in Richford through July for children up to 5 and their parents or caregivers. Story hour is Fridays from 10 -11 am at the Congregational Church, Route 38. Sit 'n' Stitch continues on the first and third Thursdays from 7 - 9 pm; learn knitting, crocheting, felting and other textile crafts. The library also needs adult and youth volunteers to help with the summer reading program. Call 657-4418 for information.

## BURN BAN IN EFFECT

A reminder from the NY DEC: A statewide ban on open burning is in effect March 16 through May 15 2015. Open burning is the largest single cause of wildfires in New York State, and the spring burn ban has resulted in 35% fewer wildfires over the past 6 years. The regulation prohibits open burning in all communities during early spring and prohibits burning garbage at all times.

Residential brush burning is permitted for most of the year in towns with a population of less than 20,000 (i.e., Richford). Violators of the open burning state regulation are subject to both criminal and civil enforcement actions, with the minimum fine of \$500 for a first offense. To report environmental law violations call 1-800-TIPP DEC (1-800-847-7332), or report on line on DEC's website. Information is available on DEC's website <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/58519.html>.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Do you have a few hours to help the community? Volunteers are needed for many different activities. If you are interested in fairness, become a member of the Board of Assessment Review. Call Flora Karasin at 657-2526 for information about serving on this board.

Do you want to help with Richford community activities? The Community Auxiliary organizes numerous fund-raising activities and child-oriented festivals, like the upcoming Kiddie's Day. Call Christina Craft (607-844-8969) for information on how you can participate.

Is litter on the roadsides an eyesore now that snow has melted? Join Joe Kral ([585-322-3232](tel:585-322-3232)) on a highway clean-up day May 2. All equipment and training are provided and just 3 hours of your time will make our community a nicer place to live.

Northern Tioga Neighbors Network (NTNN) always needs volunteers. Drive someone to appointments, pick up groceries, or just chat or read a book. All volunteers are trained and some reimbursement for mileage is available. Call [607-657-2823](tel:607-657-2823) and get ready to make some new friends and enjoy a sense of pride as you see the quality of life improve in your community!

## SUBDIVISION REMINDER

Are you thinking of dividing your land into 3 or more lots this year? If so, be sure to check out the Richford Subdivision Law for information about lot sizes and procedures for approval. The law is online at [richfordny.com/locallaws/subdivision\\_law](http://richfordny.com/locallaws/subdivision_law). You can also call Charles Davis (657-8248) or email [planboard@richfordny.com](mailto:planboard@richfordny.com) for information.



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### *Calendar of Events*

April 28 Decision Making Day (learn about wills from a lawyer).  
9 – 11 am. Countryside Community Building, Sheldon  
Guile Blvd, Owego, free to all. Call 687-4120 for info.

April 30 Rabies Clinic, 6 – 7 pm, Newark Valley Fire Station.

May 2 Highway 79 Clean-up. Contact Joe Kral ([585-322-3232](tel:585-322-3232))  
for details.

May 2 Smorgasbord Dinner, 4 – 7 pm, Richford Congregational  
Church. Adults \$9, children 5-12 \$4.50, under 5 free.

May 2 Annul Richford Highland Cemetery Association Meeting  
– 7 p.m., Richford Town Hall.

May 7 Mobile Food Pantry Distribution. 12:30 pm. Richford  
Congregational Church, bring boxes or bags.

May 9 Scholarship Chicken barbeque. 12 noon till done. \$10  
dinner, \$6 per half. Sponsored by Community Auxiliary,  
open to all

May 9 Tire Collection Day, 8 am – 2 pm. Highway Dept. Garage

May 26 Grievance Day, 4 – 8 pm, Town Hall, Bowery Lane.

May 28 Lourdes Mammogram Van, Richford Health Clinic

June 4 Mobile Food Pantry Distribution, see May 7

June 25 Lourdes Mammogram van, Richford Health Clinic

July 6 Summer Youth Program begins. Lunch available . Contact  
Becky Randall at 657-8254 for info.

July No Mobile Food Pantry Distribution.

July 18 Kiddies Day, Rawley Park

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### **TIRE COLLECTION DAY**

Tire Collection Day will be held May 9 from 8 am - 2 pm, at the Town Highway Garage (Rt. 79 east). Bring your old tires – all sizes accepted. The fees to help cover costs are the same as in previous years:

17" or smaller (auto type):	\$1.00	100 lbs and larger: \$6.00 + an additional .05 per lb. (for example: \$7.25 for a 125 lb. tire).
Auto tires, to 17" w/rims, or truck tires 15 - 19" or without rims:	\$3.00	
20" and larger but less than 100 lbs:	\$6.00	