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# RICHFORD QUARTERLY

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January - March 2015

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## FROM THE SUPERVISOR

As in previous years, it was a challenge to prepare the 2015 Town Budget. The Town Board voted to adopt a local law to override the property tax cap. The Board believed it was time to once again add money to the reserve funds, to replace the obsolete computers and to begin setting aside money for replacing our municipal buildings.

There are still several issues that the Town must deal with, including property assessment litigation, removing a burned-out house and completing contract negotiations with the highway employees. The latest news on the post office is that a building will be set up near the Country Folks Diner containing p.o. boxes. The Postal Service still plans to construct a new post office in Richford.

Richford welcomes Velvet Lyke as our new Town Clerk. We thank Tina Thurston for serving after Judy Thurston resigned and passed away. Mike Holt is resigning as Highway Superintendent effective January 30 and the Town Board will be appointing a replacement. The Town Board meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7 pm.

## REMINDERS FROM THE ASSESSOR

Town Assessor Frances Butler reminds residents that applications for all property exemptions must be received in her office by March 1, 2015. If you own property that is your main residence, you are eligible for the STAR (School Tax Relief) exemption. The basic STAR is for all property owners and the enhanced STAR is for seniors who meet income and age requirements. Seniors must apply for the enhanced STAR each year.

Seniors 65 and over, with a yearly income of \$23,999 or less are eligible for an exemption of Town property taxes. Renewal forms were sent to residents who applied last year for the enhanced STAR and/or the aged property exemption. For information or forms, contact Frances Butler by email ([town.assessor@gmail.com](mailto:town.assessor@gmail.com)), phone (849-6966), or letter (PO Box 366, Marathon, NY 13803).

Low income seniors are also reminded that the Newark Valley School District and Tioga County have different income levels for residents to apply for property tax exemptions. Tioga County has a yearly income of \$24,300. Please check with the Assessor if you may be eligible for one or more exemptions. Application forms can also be obtained online at [www.orps.state.ny.is/](http://www.orps.state.ny.is/).

## HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT RESIGNS

At the Year-End Town Board meeting, Richford Highway Superintendent Michael Holt presented the Town Board a formal letter of resignation, effective January 30 2015, citing health and personal reasons. The Town Board reluctantly accepted the letter of resignation and thanked Mike for his service to the Town and its residents. THANKS MIKE for all your hard work.

## ELECTION RESULTS

Peggy Andersen was re-elected Town Justice and Velvet Lyke was elected Town Clerk. A big THANK YOU to Tina Thurston, for her work this past year. Velvet started work on 1 January 2015 and Tina is providing helpful assistance to make this a smooth transfer.

## NEW TOWN CLERK HOURS

Town Clerk new office hours are: Tuesday evening 7 - 9 pm and Wednesday morning 8 - 11 am, and, for January only, Saturday mornings 9 - 11 am.

## TOWN BOARD NEWS

**October 14** - Highway Superintendent Holt reported a possible problem with the town barn drinking water. The highway department cleaned gravel from pipes on Robinson Hollow inlet, and will reuse the gravel on Lacey and Robinson Hollow Roads. Justice Court check for September 2014 was \$5,455.

Discussion of the Joyce Hyde property. One year ago, the Board voted to pursue demolition rather than litigation. Last month Holcomb volunteered to write a letter saying the Town will accept the property in lieu of fines. Supervisor Wilcox voted for the motion but in retrospect wished he had not and now asked the board to rescind the motion. Discussion followed on title search, current location of Joyce Hyde (in South Carolina), cost of hiring process server, what happens to property liens if property is sold for taxes, what happens if liens are too high and no one buys the property for taxes. Conclusion, get result of title search from attorney, written notice from County on issue of liens on properties sold for taxes. Holcomb will draft the letter to J Hyde, but wait on title search and letter from County before sending.

**Oct 29** - Special meeting to review the 2015 Preliminary Budget. Discussion about the Highway Department contract. Miller has looked at the consortium papers and cannot see where the highway department employees fit in. Supervisor Wilcox has no time to search for alternate health insurance. Dave Perry stated that he, as highway department representative, has no access to a computer to research alternatives.

**November 11** - Highway Superintendent Holt reported that town trucks are ready for winter. Mill Street pipe installed on one end (resident would not allow equipment on his lawn to replace pipe on other end). Holt used his personal backhoe as the town's excavator was too large for the job and does more damage than good. Holt expects \$13,000 in CHIPS money in December. Justice Court check for October 2014 was \$5,835. Town Planning Board report presented results of the Town-wide survey, which will be the basis for updating the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Further discussion of the Joyce Hyde property. Town attorney advises board to wait until property comes up for tax sale in June 2015 instead of asking Joyce Hyde to turn over property in lieu of fines. If the town obtains property via tax sale, they will not be liable for liens on property, but will owe back taxes to school and County. Miller asked how much back tax is owed? Supervisor Wilcox will contact County for clarification on getting liens paid out at tax sale; would town lose money if they have a lien on the property and someone buys it for back taxes? Holcomb has not drafted the promised letter to Hyde but will do so, and then wait for letter from County before sending.

Richford Neighborhood Watch representative Mindi Moniz reported that the Tioga County Sheriff's office recommends Neighborhood Watch signs be posted at all four ends of town. The Sheriff's office will try to step up patrols in Richford.

**Dec 9** - Further discussion of the Joyce Hyde property. A letter to Joyce Hyde was sent registered mail and a return receipt was received. Per County treasurer, the cost can be assessed to the tax bill. Before moving forward with demolition the board agrees that a judge's order is needed to protect the town from a lawsuit for entering private property and to give backbone to a lien on the property. The property is listed for sale on Craig's List for \$18,300 (demolition is estimated at some \$30,000). One resident suggested to not demolish but wait for the tax sale in June, since the property will not sell for the cost of demolition and the Town will have to take out a bond to pay for it— let the new owner pay for demolition. No action was taken on this suggestion.

The Town Board will meet with the highway employees December 29, at 6 pm to discuss their contract.

**Dec 29** - At the December 9 meeting the Board agreed to meet with the Highway Department employees at 6pm December 29 (one half hour before regular meeting) to discuss their contract: highway employees were present at 6pm and left in disgruntlement when Board members failed to show up by 6:15.

## ELECTRONIC WASTE

NYSDEC has adopted rules about electronic waste (computers, tvs, etc.) to prevent contamination of soil and water: Beginning January 1, 2015, consumers may no longer dispose of certain types of electronic equipment in landfills, or in "the trash". See <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/66872.html#Covered> for a list of banned items. The Town of Richford is looking into the feasibility and logistics of developing a registered NYS electronic waste collection site for residents, but at this time cannot accept any electronic waste at the solid waste drop-off location (garbage truck) or at the scrap metal drop-off location at the town barn. Residents can dispose of electronic waste in two ways: taking to a registered NYS electronic waste collection sites in Ithaca, Candor, and other locations ([http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials\\_minerals\\_pdf/ewcolsites.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/ewcolsites.pdf)); or taking to a store that sells electronic equipment, such as Best Buy and Staples. Manufacturers must accept their own brand of electronic equipment for recycling, and also *any manufacturer's brand* if the consumer buys the same type of new electronic equipment (for example, replacing an old computer with a new one).

## LIBRARY NEWS

The Trash & Treasures Rummage Sale and Valentine's Romance Book sale will be held Feb. 6 & 7 from 9 am to 4 pm, in the Berkshire Community Hall, Jewett Hill Rd. behind the Berkshire Free Library. Enjoy a hot beverage and home baked treats. All proceeds benefit the library. To donate items call Sandy 657-8272 (no book donations at this time).

Sit 'n' Stitch is a fun way to share and learn knitting, crochet, felting, & other fun textile crafts. Held 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays from 7 – 9 pm at the Library – all are welcome. Story Time is held twice a week for children ages 2 – 5 and their parent or caregiver. Wednesdays: 10 - 11 at the Berkshire Free Library, and Fridays: 10 - 11 at the Richford Congregational Church. Program cancelled on school snow days.

## NEW POST OFFICE HOURS

The USPS has set new retail window hours for the Berkshire Post Office. Beginning February 7, 2015 retail window hours will be 8 am – 3 pm (closed from 11:30 -12:30 pm for lunch) Monday- Friday. Saturday retail hours will be 9 – 11 am.

## HEALTH CLINIC NEWS

The Lourdes Mobile Mammogram Van will be at the Richford Health Clinic on February 26 and March 26. An order from your physician is required. For information about scheduling and financial arrangement, call the Health Clinic at [607-657-8521](tel:607-657-8521). Tracy Miller, FP, is accepting patients in the office on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday; call for an appointment.

## NEED HELP?

Meet with representatives from Congressman Tom Reed's office ([607-654-7566](tel:607-654-7566)) and 124th District Assemblyman Christopher Friend's office ([607-562-3602](tel:607-562-3602)) in the conference room, Tioga County Office Building, 56 Main St., Owego, the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month, from 10am – 4pm (Reed) and 10am – 2pm (Friend).

These meeting times will provide residents with the opportunity to discuss federal or state issues or other concerns with appropriate staff from the two legislators.

## VISIBLE HOUSE NUMBERS ARE IMPORTANT

Fire Chief John Keener reminds residents to make sure your house numbers are clearly displayed on the front of your residence or at the entrance to your property as per the local property identification law. This is important - emergency responders waste valuable time trying to locate your call location and the highly visible house numbers get them to you faster. The Richford Fire Department can, for a nominal fee, provide you with a highly visible white on green address sign. Contact them at 657-4414 to get a sign made. Also make sure your road is properly identified with a street sign. If street signs are missing or inadequate, contact the Highway Department at 657-2770.

**TOWN AND OTHER OFFICIALS 2015 TOWN BOARD**MEETS: 2<sup>ND</sup> TUESDAY, 7PM, TOWN HALL

e-mail: townboard@richfordny.com

- ◆ Martin Wilcox Supervisor 657-8295
- ◆ Cyndi Herrick Councilperson 657-8659
- ◆ Roberta Holcomb Councilperson 657-8644
- ◆ Ricky Brown Councilperson 201-2738
- ◆ Ken Miller Councilperson 657-2789

**TOWN CLERK**

- ◆ Velvet Lyke 657-8090
- ◆ Business hours- Town Hall: Tues, 7-9pm. Wed. 8-11 am.

**TOWN HALL** BOWERY LANE

- ◆ Fax, answering machine: leave a message 657-8090
- e-mail townclerk@richfordny.com

**TOWN JUSTICE**

- ◆ Peggy Andersen Judge 657-8090
- ◆ Rebecca Randall Court Clerk 657-8090
- ◆ Court held 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays 5:30-8:00 pm; Town Hall

**TOWN BOOKKEEPER**

- ◆ Rebecca Randall 657-8090

**ASSESSOR**

- ◆ Frances Butler 849-6966
- e-mail town.assessor@gmail.com

**BUILDING PERMITS AND INSPECTION**

- ◆ Kevin McMahon Phone: (B)539-6700; (C)[745-0004](tel:745-0004)
- Fax: 539-6400. Office hours: 8am – 12 noon Tue. Wed. & Thu. and by appointment.
- ◆ Office: 2670 Slaterville Road [PO Box 136], Slaterville Springs, NY 14881. E-mail at [codeofficer@richfordny.com](mailto:codeofficer@richfordny.com)

**TOWN HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

- ◆ Mike Holt 657-2770

**TOWN GARBAGE TRUCK**

- ◆ Doug Wandell Attendant Highway Garage
- ◆ Business hours: Wed 4-8pm, Sat 8am- 2pm.,\$.10/pound

**BOARD OF APPEALS**

- ◆ Louis Karasin 657-2526
- ◆ Lucille Ingrahm 657-8002
- ◆ Richard Thurston 206-0797
- ◆ 2 vacancy's – volunteer needed

**BOARD OF ASSESSMENT REVIEW**

- ◆ Flora Karasin 657-2526
- ◆ Steve Kotula 657-4462
- ◆ Vacant– volunteer needed

**PLANNING BOARD** MEETS: 1<sup>ST</sup> WED, 7PM TOWN HALL

e-mail: planboard@richfordny.com

- ◆ Charles Davis Chair 657-8248
- ◆ Doris Caskey 220-4161
- ◆ Chuck Merrill 657-2587
- ◆ Victoria Nuzzo 657-8656
- ◆ John Schwartz 657-8512
- ◆ William Stell 856-689-3573
- ◆ Emilie Stuhlmiller 657-2680

**FIRE DEPARTMENT** MEETS: LAST THUR, 6PM FIRE STATION

- ◆ John Keener Fire Chief 972-1336
- ◆ Carrie Keener President 657-4414

**FIRE COMMISSIONERS** MEETS: 1<sup>ST</sup> TUES, 6:30PM FIRE STATION

- ◆ Jeff Holcomb President 657-8176
- ◆ April Andersen Secretary 657-2575
- ◆ Travis Getzke 432-4206
- ◆ Guido Gencarelli 657-9985
- ◆ Donna Gencarelli Treasurer 657-9985
- ◆ One Vacancy, contact Jeff Holcomb if interested.

**COMMUNITY AUXILIARY** MEETS: 2<sup>ND</sup> MON, 6 PM TOWN HALL

commaux@richfordny.com

- ◆ Chris Craft President 844-8969
- ◆ Esther Truesdail Vice-President 539-6466

**DOG CONTROL OFFICER**

- ◆ Ronald H. Raab 426-4567

**TOWN HALL AND RAWLEY PARK SCHEDULING**

- ◆ Rebecca Randall 657-8254

**TOWN HISTORIAN**

- ◆ Bill Sherwood 539-6283

**RICHFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY** 2<sup>ND</sup> MON , APRIL - NOV

- ◆ Bill Sherwood President 539-6283

**Berkshire EMS Inc.**

- ◆ Lee Virtue 642-3451

**RICHFORD REPRESENTATIVES TO:****COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

- ◆ Ed Hollenbeck 642-3201

**County Planning Board**

- ◆ Vacant – volunteer needed

**OFFICIAL TOWN NEWSPAPER**

- ◆ Tioga County Courier 687-0108

**TOWN WEBSITE**

- ◆ [www.richfordny.com](http://www.richfordny.com)

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### *Calendar of Events*

- Jan 26** Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting, 7 pm, Hubbard Center
- Feb 5** Mobile Food Pantry Distribution, Richford Congregational Church, Rt. 38, 12:30- 1:30 pm, bring boxes, bags.
- Feb 6-7** Trash & Treasure Rummage Sale, 9 am – 4 pm, Community Hall, Jewett Hill Rd, Berkshire, refreshments available. Benefit for Berkshire Free Library.
- Feb 7** Soup and Salad, Congregational Church, Richford, Route 38, 4 – 6:30 pm, take outs available, proceeds to benefit Helping Hands Food Pantry, free will donation.
- Feb 9** Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting, 7 pm, Hubbard Center
- Feb 23** Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting, 7 pm, Hubbard Center

- Feb 26** Lourdes Mammogram Van at Clinic, doctor's order needed
- March 2** Deadline for various application forms to Frances Butler, Town Assessor
- March 5** Mobile Food Pantry Distribution, see Feb. 5
- March 7** Soup and salad, Congregational Church, Richford, see Feb 7
- March 9, 23** Comprehensive Plan Committee Meetings, 7 p.m.
- March 26** Lourdes Mammogram Van at Clinic, doctor's order needed
- April 2** Mobile Food Pantry Distribution, see Feb. 5

For additional events, up-dates and much more go to  
[www.richfordny.com](http://www.richfordny.com).

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## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

The Town of Richford is updating its Comprehensive Plan and invites all Town residents to participate in determining Richford's future. The Comprehensive Plan will build on the needs identified by the Town Survey (summarized in the October newsletter). If you have any suggestions or comments on these needs, please come to a meeting or send your comment to [planboard@richfordny.com](mailto:planboard@richfordny.com).

The Comprehensive Plan Committee meets the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month from 7 – 9 pm at the Hubbard Center, Bowery Lane. The next meetings are: January 26, February 9 and 23, March 9 and 23, and April 13 and 27. The Comprehensive Plan Committee welcomes the opportunity to bring their findings to your community group or event. Contact Charles Davis (657-8248) to schedule.