

TOWN OF STARK

County of Herkimer

State of New York

703 Elwood Road

Fort Plain, NY 13339

Richard Bronner, Supervisor
PO Box 45
Van Hornesville, NY 13475
315-858-2740, home phone
315-640-2677, cell

Anthony Grescheck, Jr., Councilman
John H. Voght, Councilman
Emil Ziaja, Councilman
Richard O. Smith, Councilman
David Hajczeski, High Supt.

Lynn Rogers, Clerk
703 Elwood Road
Fort Plain, NY 13339
518-993-3506
518-993-3606 Ph/fax

Introduction

This is the Fall 2023 edition of the Town of Stark Newsletter. We hope this newsletter finds you healthy and safe. We hope you find these newsletters to be both useful and informative. Our purpose is to keep residents and taxpayers up to date on the happenings of the Town of Stark. We welcome your input on these newsletters. If you have a comment or question on the contents, please contact any member of the Town Board.

2023 Fall Dumpster Day and White Goods Collection

The 2023 fall white goods and trash collection day will be held Saturday October 14, 2023 from 9:00 AM until 1:00 PM at the Town of Stark Highway Department Garage in Starkville. Household hazardous waste, batteries or garbage are **NOT** to be collected on this date. Tires will **not** be collected either. White goods (refrigerators, freezers, stoves, TV's etc.) **will be** collected on this day. The Town employees in attendance will be there to assist you and to determine what can be left off at the dumpster. If not acceptable, you will be sent home and perhaps banned from the next trash day. At one Dumpster Day a resident or residents brought household garbage and put it in the dumpster. The Town paid extra to have it removed from the dumpster and disposed of. If found out who did this, you will be fined the amount the Town has to pay extra for disposal and the charge will be placed on your tax bill in January of the next year.

American Rescue Plan Act

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) is the Federal program enacted for the purpose of helping states, and all municipalities located in those states, to help them recover from the after effects of the Corona Virus and losses of revenue associated with the pandemic. This is a program that the Town has complete control over where and how the money is spent. The problem is that all expenditures are subject to review by audit and may be rejected after expenditures have been made. The Town has been awarded a grant total of \$72,922.85.

Thus far, the Town has spend some of the money on repairs and necessary needs for the community. The Fire Department (VHFD) did not receive any funding from the ARPA program, but the Town was allowed to share their award with the Fire Department. The VHFD identified a need and the Town Board agreed to purchase a stand-by generator for the VHFD. The generator was installed by Ed Bello Electric. We all are pleased with the results. Other expenditures included the installation of new computers at the Town for the Town Clerk, Supervisor and Highway Superintendent to improve communication and up-date our data storage.

The Town also has a website now. The Town website location is <https://townofstark.org>. This addition was to improve and speed up communication with the public concerning matters of importance pertaining to the Town of Stark. Meeting minutes for the Town Board meetings are available on the site. Information regarding Town Board meetings are available on the website. New garage doors were installed for the Highway Department using these funds. The Town has contracted with C&J Heating and more, LLC, to upgrade the heating and ventilation system at the Courthouse and Town Offices. The Town will be installing a heat pump system to accomplish this. The installation will begin this October.

TOWN BOARD TOPICS

Election Day for November 7, 2023 will be held at the Town of Stark Justice Court Building from 6:00 AM until 9:00 PM. Local elections are on for this November. Those positions open for election include Town Highway Superintendent, 2-year term currently held by David Hajczewski. Town Supervisor, a two year term currently held by Richard Bronner. Town Councilman Tony Grescheck is running for a four year term. Joe Hubiak is running for the other four year term for councilman, the four year term held by Richard Smith, who is retiring. Eleanor Smith is running for the two year term for Town Clerk, the office currently held by

Lynn Rogers, who also is retiring. We thank Richard and Lynn for all the years of service they have given to the Town of Stark.

Sickler Road Wind

The Town of Stark has been approached by New Leaf Energy with a community wind proposal for the area near and around Sickler Road. The two wind turbines will be located on property owned by Greg Ortensi in the Town of Stark. The electricity produced by the 2 wind turbines will be put directly into the delivery lines which supply electricity to residences and farms and businesses who receive electricity from NYSEG. The Town of Stark will receive what is known as a host community agreement payment as compensation for the Town of Stark having the wind turbines in the Town of Stark.

The Town applied for Lead Agency Status for the project. After notification to a list of Interested and Involved Agencies, and a 30 day waiting period to allow them to respond, and following the 30 days there being no objections, the Town declared Lead Agency for the project. As Lead Agency, the Town asked for and New Leaf Energy is in the process of providing the Town with a Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Town has hired Bernard Melewski as the Special Legal Council for the Wind Project. The Town has also hired LaBella Associates as a review engineer on the project. Fees for both of them is paid for by New Leaf Energy.

Assessing and Senior Citizens Exemption

Senior Citizens who reside in the Town of Stark may be eligible for the Senior Citizen Tax Exemption. The deadline to apply for the the exemption is March 1, 2024. To qualify for the exemption, the property in question must be your primary residence, you must be 65 or older and your annual income must be less than \$18,000.00 If you think you may qualify please contact Assessor Jim Fresco at 315-867-1632. Mr. Fresco may be contacted by email at jffresco@herkimercounty.org. He may also be contacted through regular mail at the following address:

James Fresco, Assessor
108 Court Street, Suite 3200
Herkimer, NY 13350

The Town is still looking for someone to Serve on the Board of Assessment Review (BAR). If interested, please contact any member of the Town Board, or Jim fresco, assessor.

Wiltse Hill Road Project

Herkimer County has informed the Town of Stark that the Wiltse Hill Road Bridge that crosses the Otsquago Creek is proceeding as planned. Work was scheduled to begin in June and to be completed by the time school opens in the Fall. As always happens, some logistical problems

came up and the start of the replacement and construction had to be delayed until July. This caused a delay in the completion until late October.

The span across the Otsquago Creek was classified as a culvert, and the new crossing will be classified as a span bridge. This will provide a wider opening over the bridge for better traffic flow. The opening under the bridge will allow more water to flow and help to prevent a backup of water in the location of the bridge which caused flooding in the past, most recently in 2013. Access to Wiltse Hill Road will remain detoured, meaning no access to or from Van Hornesville. As of this writing, the span has been placed and the back-filling has begun. Everything appears to be going smoothly and hopefully the bridge will be completed as scheduled. We plan to keep you up-dated going forward.

Highway Department

The Town of Stark Highway Department work crew has been busy at work improving the Town roads through the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (Chips). The Town has completed the replacement of the Jordan Road culvert for this year. The rest will be completed next year as we allow the road and culvert to settle through the winter season. Other road improvements included lower portion of Backus road, E. Smith Road, Frog City Road, H. Moyer Road (from State Route 80 to the Montgomery County Line where it becomes Mill Lane Road). The work was mainly stone and oil topping.

A Message from Van Hornesville Community Corporation

VanHornesville and its surrounding communities are a wonderful place to live. Since 1938, the Van Hornesville Community Corporation has been working to retain and enhance the good things about living here. Thanks to the generosity of prior generations, we own properties that continue to serve our community today...but the fact is the world doesn't look the same as it did in 1938 and the VHCC is considering how it might change to address the changes we are seeing.

Because our goal is to be of service to more than just our members, the VHCC is working to find out what matters to the wider community: what are the good things about our community, what needs to be improved and what new opportunities might be created. While there are lots of things we could do, the question is what do people really want? By talking about all the possibilities, ideas will emerge that can be acted on right away.

This kind of research lays the groundwork for writing a Strategic Plan, something we hope to produce in the coming months. Our immediate goal is to gather information to identify gaps and challenges that need to be addressed. We also need to understand how to manage the resources that we currently have for the benefit of the people who live in our neighborhood. Once complete, this process will allow us to apply for funding to support the work we plan to do.

We will be reaching out to our residence and leaders of the Town of Stark and the Owen D. Young School District using surveys, small group discussions, and community forum events. We hope many of you will want to participate and we will keep you updated as we move

forward. Anyone interested in more information, please contact the VHCC Strategic Planning Team via email "info@vhccorp.org" or through our website at <https://www.vhccorp.org>.

Town of Stark
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