

SUPERVISOR
716-778-8531

TOWN CLERK
716-778-8822
FAX 716-638-4183

ASSESSOR
716-778-8827

TAX COLLECTOR
716-778-6052

BUILDING
INSPECTOR
716-778-5947

WATER/SEWER
716-778-8132



TOWN OF NEWFANE

2737 Main Street
Newfane, New York 14108
FAX 716-638-4261

JUSTICE COURT
2896 Transit Road
Newfane, New York
14108
716-778-9292

HIGHWAY
716-778-8844

WATER/SEWER
MAINTENANCE
716-778-8587
6176 McKee Street
Newfane, New York
14108
TDD 1-800-662-1220

WORK SESSION

June 12, 2025
7pm

Present: John Syracuse, Sue Neidlinger, Pete Robinson

Excused: Rick Coleman, Robert Horanburg

Others in attendance: David Schmidt Building Inspector, Town Attorney Jim Sansone, and 3 community members.

The Meeting was called to order at 7:01pm.

The Supervisor asked for a motion to approve the minutes of May 15, 2025 Work Session.

- Sue Neidlinger made the motion
- Pete Robinson seconded
- Motion to approve the minutes passed.

Supervisor Syracuse introduced Jean O' Connell & Sarah Gelnett from J. O' Connell & Associates, who are grant writers. John explained that the Town Board has worked very well together over the past 4 years on many different projects but is looking to achieve more.

- He mentioned that the 16-million-dollar REDI projects are nearing the end.
- The WWTP project is almost complete.
- He explained the different grants that we have received to offset the WWTP project.
- Our Comprehensive Plan needs to be updated. He is hoping that J. O' Connell & Associates, Inc can be helpful in achieving a grant for this, plus others.

The Supervisor let Jean O'Connell take the floor, and she explained that a lot of her successful clients work under contract. She gets to know them and gets them ready for certain grants that will work for the client, in this case, The Town of Newfane. Jean continued that 80% of the grant info is getting to know the

client and any projects. The other 20% is focused on writing the grant. She said Newfane/Olcott

has a lot to go on, especially with the waterfront & areas within.

J. O'Connell & Associates work through the whole grant process with the client. Jean noted that she has worked with Wendel through the years on many projects, so that will be an easy transition with them. Her Team can do any grants for Towns, Libraries, Fire Halls and any State Grants. Her Teams "never give up! They find the issues and fix them!" She wants to get us into the "Grant World" and stay in the grant world moving forward. There are so many available grants out there, and new ones that come about, that her Team is always looking for what grant would fit her client's needs. As a reference, she has also worked with Niagara County. There are "No minimum of Grants to achieve!"

The normal fee for working with J. O'Connell & Associates is \$3,500 a month but because of Sarah's connection to the Town, she is offering their services at \$3,300 a month for 2 years as a special offer. "We want to bring back the return on the Grants that you've been missing and make sure that it suffices her cost as well." They take the time to scope things out on behalf of each individual client. (She's guessing that it will be over 100k invested overall with her to achieve multiple grant winnings.) The CFA grant alone can cost \$5,500.0 for them to write the grant. There are many different steps to go through to achieve the updates that we need for the Town of Newfane. "And we can do it!"

Councilwoman Neidlinger inquired if the Solar Project income funds has been earmarked yet. Could these possibly be applied to the cost for hiring them? The \$5,000 to \$6,000 for the Comprehensive Grant should be well worth it. Let's get in the door and work with them, so that moving forward it will be so much more helpful.

The Comprehensive Plan itself has Zoning changes, and issues that need to be addressed as this has not been updated for many years. There are many items within this Plan that receiving a grant to help with these can help keep things to progress. Moving forward with the Comprehensive Plan update can only benefit the Town. It hasn't moved forward for years and it's definitely time for updates.

The CFA grant is due by July 31, 2025. This grant will help us accomplish the Comprehensive Plan and move forward. By signing up with J. O'Connell & Associates now, it not only saves money (with the \$3,300 per month offer), but gets the ball rolling for other grants to get a head start on for the Town. We need to start planning ahead to accomplish these grants.

After their presentation and discussion, Supervisor Syracuse entertained a motion to go into contract with J. O'Connell & Associates, at \$3,300 a month for 2 years and start the grant process.

- Councilwoman Neidlinger made the motion.
- Councilman Pete Robinson seconded.
- A Roll Call Vote was taken:
 - Councilwoman Neidlinger - AYE
 - Councilman Robinson - AYE
 - Supervisor Syracuse - AYE
- Motion to enter into contract with Grant writers, J. O'Connell & Associates, Inc PASSED

The Supervisor invited JoAnn Harig from the Assessor's office to give an update. Under the guidance of Michael Hartman, acting Assessor, she has been going through all the files and reorganizing according to SBL#'s: making sure each file has accurate information according to State recommendations. She has started taking pictures - getting appropriate inventory of each property. Assessments are more accurate for everyone with all the files updated, and NYS requires a 3-year updated picture of every house, and they are finding that some photos are 20 years old. In updating the files, they are:

- Getting physical pictures of each address.

- Doing an online "EAGLE -VIEW" to research out buildings on each property.
- Attaching any Building Permits for the property, so the files are updated accurately.
 - The Inventory is being updated but no assessments can be changed until a Town-wide assessment takes place. Sections will be broken down and notified when the files are updated and a letter will be given to parcel owners to update their file.
- She explained the difference of assessments and re-assessments / land classifications / tax levy. Land classifications need to be corrected.

The Assessors office, looking towards the future, wants to be able to allow the next person to step in, to be able to pick up where the current staff has left it, making it a very understandable transition.

The Supervisor presented:

- the 2024 & 2025 Town Tax Collections from Terri Iannucci. This is to follow the State recommendation that the Board be presented with this information.
- the Marina Sales report for May, which looks great. The Fish Cleaning Station will recoup itself in no time at all.
- The Interest earned report from the T- Bill investment, is accumulating nicely. Extra money is coming in at 4 %
- The Town Clerk's office submitted checks for the accumulated interest from the Clerk's and Conservation accounts.
- Approval for direction for Supervisor to enter into agreement with Hamer Enterprises for Debit/Credit cards to now be used at the Town Clerks Office.
 - Pete Robinson made the motion to accept this agreement.
 - Sue Neidlinger seconded.
 - Motion Passed
- The Procurement guidelines that were approved at the May 15, 2025 Work Session for Board signatures. Those present signed and the other board members will be notified to come in and sign.

Update:

There was a Solar company Door to Door issue within Town today even after the Supervisor had a phone discussion with owners of company back in April. And another Vendor started door to door sales as well. They were told to come to Town Hall and apply for Peddler / Hawkers license in order to proceed. The Town Constables addressed both issues.

Public Comments:

Larry Dorner, Exchange St appreciated what the assessor's office is trying to do to correct assessments.

Max Russell, Hess Rd asked about Parking Regulations within Town. Discussion took place.

- Updates to Codes are happening. David has been updating a lot and will be meeting with a committee to discuss this and other issues as well. Many items need to be updated.

Jessica Reinhardt, Fuller Rd commended the Board for signing up with a Grant writer. "It is going to be a positive for the Town!!"

The Supervisor asked for a motion to adjourn.

- Pete Robinson made a motion to adjourn.
- Sue Neidlinger seconded.
- All were in favor and motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36pm

Respectively submitted

Mary Zeller
Confidential Secretary