

The Town of Canaan NY

Your town - Your news



A Note from Our Supervisor

Greetings All,

The town has been busy wrapping up projects, working on budgets, and

preparing for next year. The following is both a review of 2024 and a look ahead:

Highlights of 2024

Like each of you, the town continues to spend cautiously due to the higher costs of insurance, fuel, heating oil, goods and services. We've stayed within budget through careful monitoring of expenses, some reductions in spending, additional revenues from Sales and Mortgage Taxes, and judicious use of the Fund Balance. The amount of tax collected by the town will not increase in 2025.

The Highway Department received additional CHIPS funding in 2024 providing opportunities to supplement the planned road maintenance program and to replace aging equipment. The faithful but tired mowing tractor was replaced and its use expanded through the purchase of selected attachments. The town replaced and re-insulated the 40-year-old highway garage roof, having set aside funds for three years to pay in cash. We installed a heat pump in the garage offices to provide heating and cooling efficiencies and to lower operating costs. New radios were installed in the trucks to improve communications between other highway departments and emergency personnel.

With the advent of more frequent storms and more extreme weather, the town worked with local agencies, stakeholder groups, and community members to update and staff its Emergency Management Plan. With ARPA funds the town installed generators at the Town Hall and Highway Garage to ensure the uninterrupted provision of services during power outages and to provide a warming or cooling center at the Town Hall as

needed. The Town Hall was open several days last summer, on heat advisory days, providing an opportunity for residents to get some relief from the heat.

Planning continued with the town participating with Cornell Cooperative Extension and area towns in the production and adoption of the first Columbia County Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Plan. The plan identified local areas, populations, and infrastructure vulnerable to climate change and weather-related emergencies. The town is also working with Columbia County and Tighe & Bond on its five-year update of the Columbia County Hazard Mitigation Plan. These plans are prerequisites for FEMA and other emergency funding should a storm meet the threshold for disaster relief.

The Senior Lunch Program, led by volunteers Stephanie Guelpa and Marcia Jensen, continues to grow and to provide a welcome place for lunch and a social hour at the Town Hall. With expanded programming (speakers, games, crafts, and off-site visits to cultural and food venues), there are more opportunities than ever for seniors to gather locally. Participants worked again this year with the Columbia County Veterans Service Agency to address holiday cards for servicemen/women in local assisted-living homes and for those serving overseas. In partnership with Canaan Neighbors Helping Neighbors, the lunch group “adopted” a Canaan family for Christmas, raising funds to provide food and gifts for a local family.

Several community traditions were observed again this year with Park Clean-Up Day, Community Day, Stony Kill Clean-Up Day, and

commemorative events for our servicemen and women on Memorial Day, Purple Heart, and Veteran's Day, among the favorites.

The Town of Canaan is committed to reducing its energy-related costs and carbon footprint. In 2021, Canaan established a Climate Smart Task Force and has since implemented measures including the purchase of a hybrid vehicle for the Code Enforcement Officer, installing an EV charging station in the park, upgrading street lights and Town Hall lighting to LED fixtures, installing a heat pump in the Town's highway garage, and driving residential purchases of heat pumps and electrical vehicles through educational campaigns and participation in community solar programs. These actions have earned the town Bronze Certification through NYSERDA's Climate-Smart Communities program, and Advanced status on NYSERDA's Clean Energy Communities (CEC) Scorecard. These initiatives have qualified the town for grant funds over the years, most recently \$5000 to purchase electric landscaping equipment for the Highway Garage.

We have been short-listed for a CEC grant application to purchase heat pumps for the Town Hall and solar panels for the Highway Garage. We should know within the next few weeks if these projects will be funded. These actions will also inform future conversations and decisions around further reducing town energy consumption and costs over the coming years.

The Broadband Grant has been moving slowly through the USDA ReConnect program. The application and environmental reviews were completed in November and a contract signed between USDA and

Consolidated Communications this month. Local contracts with the towns are moving forward and the long-awaited build-out is expected to begin *and* be completed in 2025. While this project has taken significantly longer than expected, the project is well ahead of the New York State distribution of federal funds for this purpose.

Have you noticed that it takes longer to make an appointment to fix your car, paint your house, or get your medical check-up? The lack of housing is a serious issue in the Town of Canaan and in Columbia County that negatively impacts residents, businesses, schools, fire companies, and other community groups that provide services to local residents. The town became a certified Pro Housing Community this year, with the goal of expanding and sustaining the housing stock in our community through access to New York State funding to meet those and related needs. Residents, employers, and community groups speak to Town Board members regularly about the need for more affordable housing units and for more diverse housing in Canaan. With the support of this program, we are committed to better understanding the housing challenges of our small rural community and meeting the needs of our residents through housing initiatives.

The 2024 Assessment Revaluation was completed this year. Sales values have remained high; we'll take another look at the numbers in the second quarter of 2025 to determine what steps the town will need take in 2026 to keep it tax roll updated.

The Town is in the process of allocating the last of its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds this month. Approved projects include the

purchase of generators for the Town Hall and Highway Garage, updated office furniture for the Town Clerks' Office, carpet and paint for the Meeting Room, refurbishment of the tennis and basketball courts (the tennis court will become a hybrid tennis/pickle ball court), exterior repair and painting of the Canaan Library, playground equipment for Stoddard Park, a consultant for the upcoming Strategic Plan update, and updating/digitizing the Town Code.

Forecast for 2025

Based on current and projected economic and employment trends, the 2025 Town Budget will not include a tax increase. While we anticipate high costs for insurance, fuel, energy, and services will continue, we understand that you too will be facing those same costs, as well as high costs for food, medical expenses and childcare. The coming year's budget is essentially the same as 2024 with only minor adjustments to Revenues and Expenses. Even with a fiscally conservative budget, we have high hopes for the year as we prepare for several new initiatives. New programs will focus on three areas: community engagement, policies, and community services.

The area of community engagement includes plans for a new website platform that will provide additional capacity and increased functionality. Last updated in 2003, the town plans to update its Strategic Plan. This year-long process will be facilitated by consultant Nan Stolzenburg of Community Planning & Environmental Associates.

Under the heading of community services, new Transfer Station procedures will take place in 2025. The new procedures include a permit

fee requirement and a new town employee to monitor access and use of the facility, ensuring that users of the Transfer Station are eligible to do so.

Under policies, the long-awaited Short-Term Rental Law is moving forward with a draft scheduled to go to a Public Hearing January 13, 2025. The town law will regulate land-use issues with an emphasis on health, safety, and good neighbor issues. A first draft is posted on the website. A revised draft, updated per the discussions at the November and December town board meetings, will be posted before the January 13th hearing. This law is a companion piece to the Columbia County Occupancy Tax which will impose a 4% Occupancy Tax on Short-Term Rentals as of January 1, 2025.

It has been a good year and we have much to look forward to in 2025. The Town Board and I are very grateful for your support and extend special thanks to the community volunteers who make our town the warm and welcoming place we call home.

Happy Holidays and very best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year.

Brenda Adams
Supervisor



*News from Town Assessor
Kimberly Smith*

It is important for the Assessor to have your correct mailing address. Town Departments and Tax Collectors rely on the Assessor's mailing address information. It is your responsibility to report changes. Review your mailing address on your tax bills or other mailings from the town. Report incorrect information directly to the Assessor by phone, email, or mail changes with your tax payment.

Exemption renewals were sent Dec. 1 and are due by March 1, 2025. Please read the forms and instructions before signing or mailing them back. Do not wait until the last minute to reapply. Last year, many exemptions were removed due to failure to renew on time. If you need exemption information or forms, see the [Assessor's page](#) on our website. Forms can also be found in the lobby of the Town Hall.



Canaan Neighbors Helping Neighbors is a not-for-profit organization formed in the Town of Canaan that anonymously connects neighbors facing challenging times with financial support provided by other neighbors.

Anyone who lives, works or volunteers in the Town of Canaan is eligible. Up to \$750 can be applied to bills or used to pay for gas or groceries three times a year.

Application is simple, confidential and requires no financial information. To apply, email CNHN at cnhn@canaannewyork.org or send a letter to CNHN, PO Box 459, Canaan NY 12029



Highway Department Receives New Equipment



The Canaan Highway Department obtained this tractor, funded by the New York State Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement (CHIPS) Program.



The Highway Department also obtained new electric tools from a grant.





*Red Rock One Room Schoolhouse
continues to make progress ...*

The Red Rock Historical Society Schoolhouse Restoration Committee is pleased to report that the exterior landscaping is done, and the outside of the building is repaired, painted and buttoned up for the winter.

... but there's more work on the way!



Now that full electrical service has been restored, volunteers can begin repairing and restoring the interior of the building. As you can see, there is work to be done. Hopefully, it will go quickly. The restoration project will be completed by the Spring of 2025, and we look forward to opening the doors to the public.

Many thanks to everyone who has supported this project with donations of their time and / or money. It's a lovely little building with an unusual vaulted ceiling that makes it even more special. For more information, email the RRHS at rrhsnewyork@gmail.com





Quailwood Fund helps students and non-profits in Red Rock

A few decades ago, Jonathan Schor set up a fund that would provide funds for the non-profits and students of Red Rock upon his death. The fund is managed by the Berkshire Taconic Foundation. Each year, the non-profits in our area can apply for funding for projects to improve their facilities. The non-profits eligible to apply are the Red Rock Historical Society, the Red Rock Volunteer Fire Company, the Red Rock Cemetery Association, Columbia Land Conservancy (Schor Property) and the Canaan Conservation Club. In addition, students who live in the Red Rock Fire District can apply for scholarships. Eligible students include those who are attending college right after high school, or older adults taking courses or re-entering college.

Lastly, there is an emergency fund for Red Rock residents who have an unexpected financial challenge. Contact the [Berkshire Taconic Foundation](#) for more information.



What does YOUR community need?

Chance to Win \$500 or one of five \$100 prizes!



The Community Needs survey is a project of Healthy Capital District, regional hospitals and health departments.

What challenges do you and your community face in taking care of your health? Help us understand by answering a quick, 7-minute survey.

Anyone who completes the survey will have a chance to win prizes.



Visit <https://bit.ly/CRCHS> or click on the QR code below to start the survey.



Note: Your email will be kept confidential and will not be shared.



Editorial services on the Town of Canaan New York Newsletter provided by L. Spencer
Humphrey and Donna Mattoon.

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