

## **Assessor**

Following the grievance hearing held on May 28th, I wanted to provide a summary of the complaints filed. We received a total of nine complaints. Of these, four pertained to commercial rental properties currently in litigation, where the complaint filing is procedural. Two complaints were from telecom companies, which are typically managed at the State level. Of the remaining, two complaints were submitted through a “tax appeal” company and represent repeat filings from the same individuals who file annually with this company. As in previous years, the supporting documentation for these filings contained errors, was incomplete, and lacked merit. Across my towns, we received a total of seventeen filings from this particular “tax appeal” company, the majority of which were repeat cases. Notably, one filing in New Lebanon was submitted directly by the property owner. This owner was present for the hearing, allowing for a productive conversation, and this was the only assessment lowered this year.

In other news, we will soon be commencing our regular rolling data collection. Property owners included in this process have already received notification letters.

Finally, the State plans to begin the rollout of the new online Assessor database towards the end of the year. We are currently awaiting information regarding the specific timeline for our required transition to this new system.

## **Building Department**

No report

## **Business & Economic Development**

No report

## **CAC, Climate Smart & Environmental Management**

### **CAC:**

**Drinking Water Source Protection Plan (DWSP2)** - The CAC restarted FREE testing for 2025. Testing is 100% voluntary by residents. We are interested in information on anything concerning residents, like things that have been buried or dumped uphill/upstream from their wells. Committee members are also exploring funding options in order for the Town to keep testing. Please reach out to [nlcac.munves@gmail.com](mailto:nlcac.munves@gmail.com) to get on the water testing list

**PFAS and NYS LEVELS** - Supervisor Houghtling, Councilmember and CSC Chair Powers, and CAC Chair Munves, along with many other groups, are quoted in a press release being delivered at a press conference in Albany June 3 urging the Governor

and DOH to take action on PFAS in drinking water [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KDDzd-d7ot-YFovKAuQ0INc9\\_25q9MrJn5Kw7nNjLIA/edit?tab=t.0](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KDDzd-d7ot-YFovKAuQ0INc9_25q9MrJn5Kw7nNjLIA/edit?tab=t.0). We urge NYS to adopt the EPA's current lowest standards and work within a timeline by a specific deadline. The CAC and Supervisor Houghtling have been participating for several years now with EANY (ENV Advocates of NY) and several other groups to get PFAS and associated compound levels to the lowest possible levels in private and public systems - PFAS and related compounds are everywhere and it is important rural communities are represented. Even though NL does not have industry that uses PFAS in significant amounts, we do have lots of fire foam around and we know that the landfill wells show high levels of PFAS and related compounds and our High School has PFAS issues that they remediated with filtration.

### **Joint BEDC and Conservation Advisory Council Wastewater Feasibility Study -**

The joint BEDC and CAC committee on Wastewater and Muni water, along with our advisors at RCAP solutions, are beginning our **confidential income surveys** for properties along Rte 20-22 and side streets. This is vitally important information that can enable us to get funding assistance for these projects. We look forward to 100% replies. Folks along the corridor can expect us to be knocking on doors and also getting mailing packets. We will address the TB on this on July 10. The Feasibility study should be ready for comment and review and then presented to the residents for comments and feedback in a public meeting sometime this summer.

**Trees for Tribs** -CAC volunteers have been fixing bent tubes and broken stakes in the park. The plants look very very good and most are thriving. Most are still too small to have tubes removed. The recent wet weather has greatly helped everything to grow!

**HVAHC Pilot Project** - Almost all CAC members participated in the public meeting that was held May 22. We look forward to the next meeting with findings collated and more ideas are shared. Thank you to the residents who came out and to the incredible various folks on the HVAHC committee who have worked very hard to pull useful and interesting NL information together.

**Program for Summer Campers** -- The CAC is once again sponsoring a bird presentation by Sharon CT Audubon on July 25 at 1PM the park pavilion for the Summer Campers. All residents and friends are welcome to attend this fun and informative event.

**Open Space Inventory and DWSP2 Development for Town Website** - The CAC is proceeding to work on creating user-friendly versions of both the OSI and DWSP2 for residents; these will focus more on the maps in these reports.

The Conservation Advisory Council is Bill O'Neill, Peg Munves, Steve Powers, Donald Lamonaca, Bruce Shenker, and Bob Gilson. NOTE: Meeting time has moved - we meet on the second Monday of the month at 5PM. **NOTE THAT THE JUNE 9 meeting only will be at 4PM.**

**CSC:**

NYSEG installed the new transformer at the Community Center and we are waiting for them to return with a net meter that turns backward and will credit the electricity generated by the 80 solar panels on the roof which is more than the Town Hall or the Town Garage.

The CSC plastic recycling program continues to increase in popularity. The new collection box at the Community Center filled up quickly with 9 lbs of plastic bags and film bringing the total of plastic recycled since we started up to 982 lbs! In comparison, we have recycled 1301 lbs of batteries since starting a few years prior to plastic recycling. It goes to show how much unnecessary plastic is consumed in our day-to-day lives.

Bike Tune Up Days at the Community Center are June 19, July 17, Aug 21, Sept 18 and Oct 16 3:30pm-5pm

The CLC is undertaking a Countywide Conservation Plan and has asked that residents take a survey at their website. We will also post it on Facebook.

<https://columbialand.org/countywide-conservation-plan/>

The first Canaan Repair Café will be held in the afternoon during Canaan Day on June 14 from 1-4pm. As usual, New Lebanon volunteer fixers will be on hand to make repairs.

**EMC:**

No report

## Fire, Law Enforcement & Emergency

Fire Calls and Activities - May 2025

1. 5/2/2025 Mutual Aid 2 people 1hr
  2. 5/5/2025 Tree on Wires 7 people 4.1hr
  3. 5/9/2025 Alarm Activation 4 people 1.04hr
  4. 5/9/2025 Mutual Aid 3 people .51min
  5. 5/11/2025 Alarm Activation 3 people .36min
  6. 5/12/2025 Drill 6 people 9hr
  7. 5/16/2025 Alarm Activation 1 person .36min
  8. 5/19/2025 Drill 4 people 10hr
  9. 5/29/2025 Alarm Activation 5 people 1.6hr
- Totals 35 people 28.37hr

- Alarm activation – 4
  - Mutual Aid- 2
  - Wires down-1
- 7 Alarms

□

□ Drills – 2  
2 other activities

## Highway

No report

## Historian & LVHS

### Historian:

Since my last report:

- Met with Glenn Fisher to discuss local history
- Jesse DeGroot from the Chatham Press and I discussed an article on New Lebanon history for an upcoming edition. I will be writing an article on the visit to Lebanon Springs by the Marquis de Lafayette and his son.
- Referred an inquiry on the Tilden Pharmaceutical Company to Steve Oberon of the LVHS.
- Responded to an inquiry about the St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery on Old Mountain Road in Lebanon Springs. Researched Columbia County cemeteries and was able to find the plot numbers for the relatives of the inquirer.
- Spoke with Julie Maresco from NYS Parks and Historic Preservation regarding the LVHS application for the New Lebanon Train Depot. I hope to be working with the LVHS on writing the application for the September meeting of the approval committee.
- Wrote a description of the presentation on Samuel J. Tilden that I will be giving for the Colonie Historical Society on Sunday, January 11, 2026.
  - Samuel Jones Tilden: "I Still Trust the People"  
Born and raised in New Lebanon, NY, Samuel Jones Tilden became a lawyer, leader in Democratic politics, and office holder. Leading the NYS Democratic party, Tilden served in the NYS Assembly and was elected the 32 nd Governor of NYS in 1874. The Presidential Election of 1876 found Samuel Tilden running against Rutherford B. Hayes in what became a highly contested and controversial election. Elizabeth Sheffer-Winig, Town of New Lebanon historian, will share the life and legacy of New Lebanon's most famous son.
- Conducted research on Samuel Tilden concentrating on the Election of 1876.
- Ceremony to honor the visit of the Marquis de Lafayette: June 13, 2025 at 6 PM, at the Lafayette Pomeroy marker.
  - Contacted Julien Icher of the Lafayette Trail, Inc. regarding the ceremony commemorating Lafayette's visit to Columbia Hall on June 13, 1825.
  - An announcement of the ceremony was sent via eblast by Marcie Robertson.
  - The Lafayette Trail, Inc. sent an email blast to subscribers announcing the ceremony.
  - I sent an eblast to the Columbia County Historians group.
  - Slated to speak at the ceremony are Tistrya Houghtling, Joanne Amlaw, Glenn Fisher, Julien Icher, and me. The LVHS has been invited to speak.

**LVHS:**

No report

**Justice Court**

No report

**Library**

No report

**Buildings, Parks & Recreation****Buildings:**

No report

**Parks:**

No report

**Recreation Commission:**

In May, we had a Newcomers event at Woodlife, and a walk that got rained out. We had a great paddle at Tom and Adelia's bog on the rain date, June 1st.

On June 3rd, we have the first MitP with 2 Year Delay and the Notorious Bite food truck.

On June 18th, we have a community paddle at Queechy, at 6PM.

On June 22nd, at 10AM we have our first hike, in Lebanon Springs, RSVP required.

In July, on the 12th, we have a Newcomers event at Roaring 20's, we have a walk planned on the 13th, which may change locations, there's a paddling meet up at Richmond Pond on the 23rd.

**Seniors**

The Office of the Aging meeting was held on May 21st . The new format for the meeting was utilized with modifications. Reports from the various town representatives were presented before the meeting and time for questions was made available. All the towns reported that food insecurity, housing and transportation are the top three concerns. Each town is addressing these issues through Town Board programs and Community Social networks. The OFA assists whenever possible. Special events in the Towns for the month of June and July are available on their websites. Work continues on the County wide survey with the goal to have it to the Board of Supervisors for their June meeting for approval.

The Board of Supervisor representative submitted his report. He reminded the group that May is Mental Awareness month, and County Mental Health programs are available for those who are in need. He also reminded us that the Department of Health has vaccination programs available, just call them especially for RSV,

COVID and Flu. The number of cases is on the rise in the County.

COVID vaccination protocols have changed, so those 65 and older should check with their physician about further vaccination.

The DOH has restarted Environmental Health Inspections, they conducted 33 inspections in May in a variety of areas, including water supply, migrant camps, food service establishments, and Mobile Home parks.

Opioid Intervention programs are full in Columbia County, and we are using Greene County space. The Department of Human Services has set up vending machines in high use areas for Narcan and Fentanyl testing strips distribution in hopes of reducing the number of overdose deaths.

The County has received \$60,000 from DEC to develop a Countywide Climate Action Plan. The County Chairman appointed a committee to look at a variety of Climate issues. I am sure Steve Powers will be able to give us up to date information on their work as it progresses.

Starting in July there will be an Occupancy Tax on certain types of rentals. The County will be working in conjunction with the Towns and properties affected by this tax.

Housing: The Columbia County Housing Coalition which I believe New Lebanon is part of has 7 grants available for various types of new or renovated housing units. Contact the Coalition if you are interested.

TRANSPORTATION: Starting this month there will be transportation twice a week from Chatham to Hudson with connection available to Greenport mall. The exact information was available in the Columbia Paper May 29 th issue. If the program works with enough ridership, the hope is that it will come to New Lebanon as well.

The Lebanon Valley Seniors are meeting twice a month with a wide variety of activities planned. The meeting on June 6 th had the school superintendent Chris Harper come and speak about the new school budget proposal and happenings at the school. Also, Ron Gabriel gave a presentation on War Dogs. It is very interesting to see how dogs were used during both Great Wars to help the soldiers both with intelligence and companionship. We enjoyed a pizza lunch from Jimmy D's, appetizers, salad and desserts provided by the membership.

The June 20th meeting will have the town librarian tell us about the resources available there and a pop-up repair café. Many of our members are not able to attend the café's when they are held on Saturday.

We have three trips left with seats still available this year, Villa Roma, Newport,

and Lancaster, Pa. See the website or the posters at the meeting for more information.

The Lebanon Valley Seniors always enjoy the music programs and the special treatment we receive from the music department. This year we have decided to have a fundraiser for the music department. We will be making and selling crafts and finger foods at the school fair in November. Be sure to stop by our tables to support our musicians.

## **Traffic Safety**

The County road crews have been and will be doing culvert repair and replacement on County 5. The Board approved the application by the Sherriff department for grants for Child Passenger Safety Program and Police Traffic Services. The Safety Board had discussion about bicycle safety education especially where the rail trails cross a highway. School Zone Safety was discussed as well as another school district has asked for the Traffic Safety Board help with signage. This group will try to bring together the people from the State, the County, police, school superintendents, Safe Schools Committee and Assemblyman Scott Bendett for a meeting to develop a plan. Signage has changed to the Complete streets signage which does not include the wording School Zone on it to alert drivers they are near a school.

Per Rob Perry the state budget had an increase in CHIPS funding this year, Pete will get specific information on our share. The lobbying on this issue worked. Due to the plentiful rain, we have had this spring many intersections are having problems with visibility. If there is overgrown vegetation or any other visual block where a road intersects with the state highway, ask the homeowner or the Town Highway department supervisor to address the concern.

Minutes of this meeting were provided to our Highway Superintendent.

## **Volunteers**

No report

## **Zoning Re-write Committee Update**

No report

## **Community Center/Free Store Update**

Here's a breakdown of the Community Center's numbers for May:

Free Store: 671

Game Room sign-ins: 218

Senior Meeting 1: 68

Senior Meeting 2: 72

Seed Starting Workshop: 35  
Repair Cafe: 105  
Housing Meeting: 50  
Jam: 12  
Private 1: 75  
Private 2: 40

**\*\*TOTAL: 1346\*\***

I'd like to extend a special thank you to our anonymous volunteer landscaper for their incredible generosity in providing and planting all of our flowers this year. The beautiful purples, blues, and yellows have truly brightened our flower pots and beds – we are so grateful for this wonderful contribution!

In other news, we're in the final stretch of getting our solar panels up and running. The installation is nearly complete, and we're currently waiting for NYSEG to finish their last bit of work.

## **Shaker Preservation Committee**

No report

## **County Update**

No report

## **Depot Committee**

No report