

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING OF
THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
ON THE TOWN BUDGET FOR 2026
HELD ON NOVEMBER 6, 2025**

Present: Tistrya Houghtling Supervisor
Joanne Amlaw, Councilmember
Scout Metzler, Councilmember
Steve Powers, Councilmember
Craig Skerkis, Councilmember

Recording Secretary: Marsha “Marcie” Robertson, Town Clerk

Others Present: Sharon Powers, IT Website Support, QOL & ZBA Member
Joe Ogilvie, Recreation Commission Member
William Shannon, Ethics Board Member, LV Seniors President
Donald Lamonaca, CAC & ZRC Member
Peg Munves, CAC Co-Chair
Julie Fraad, CSC Member
Carol Reichert, Shaker Preservation Committee Member
Jerome Sherida, Shaker Preservation Committee Member
Susan Tipograph, Recreation Commission Member
Abbie Shoobs, Recreation Commission Chair
Silke Fuchshosfen, BEDC Member
Tony Murad, ZBA Chair & ZRC Member
Winifried Fuchshofen, Shaker Preservation Committee
Member
Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER:

Supervisor Houghtling called the Public Hearing to order at 6:01pm.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE:

The reading of the Public Hearing notice was waived but to be entered into the minutes.

**TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
THE TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
2026 PRELIMINARY BUDGET**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the PRELIMINARY BUDGET of the TOWN OF NEW LEBANON for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2026, including general town funds, highway funds, and fire

protection district funds, has been completed and filed in the office of the Town Clerk at the New Lebanon Town Hall, 14755 NYS Route 22, New Lebanon, New York, where it is available for inspection by any interested persons during regular Town Clerk office hours. The Preliminary Budget for 2026 has also been posted on the town website (www.townofnewlebanon.com) and can be viewed or downloaded from the website.

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Town Board of the Town of New Lebanon shall hold a Public Hearing on the Town of New Lebanon’s 2026 Preliminary Budget on Thursday, November 6th, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the New Lebanon Town Hall, 14755 NYS Route 22 for the purpose of receiving public input on said budget.

The following are the proposed 2026 salaries of the Elected Town Officers of the Town of New Lebanon:

Supervisor	\$44,221
Councilmembers (4)	\$4,120 each
Town Clerk	\$46,378
Highway Superintendent	\$79,638
Town Justices (2)	\$11,259 each
Tax Collector	\$10,812

The following is the proposed amount for 2026 for the Lebanon Valley Fire Protective Association:
SF-1 \$160,059

Participation by the public will be in person at the New Lebanon Town Hall, 14755 NYS Route 22, New Lebanon, New York with members of the public also being able to view the meeting at the following link: https://townhallstreams.com/towns/new_lebanon_ny

You may also still submit comments regarding the LVPA 2026 Preliminary Budget and the Town of New Lebanon 2026 Preliminary Budget to: supervisor@townofnewlebanon.com and they will be included in the record.

By order of the Town Board of the Town of New Lebanon
Marcie Robertson
Town Clerk
10/27/2025

Councilmember Powers commented that he feels that Councilmember Metzler’s presence and any votes going forward are illegal in his view based on the fact that he voted for himself, which Councilmember Powers thinks was illegal at that time.

Councilmember Metzler commented he does not see where there is any evidence saying that what he did was illegal. He feels that the board should be rectifying their mistake and he does not understand why they are not.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Supervisor Houghtling opened the floor to public comment on the 2026 Preliminary Budget as presented.

Abbie Shoobs: Abbie stated, if there are any question on the Recreation Commission budget she is happy to answer them and commented she is in favor of a full-time Supervisor position.

Julie Fraad: Julie stated, she feels they should address the issue of Councilmember Metzler and she feels he should not be present since he swore himself in and it is not legal.

Councilmember Metzler commented, he did not swear himself in. He stated, he was supposed to be serving a statutory term which unknown to him was not what he was appointed to. He stated, according to the state he should be on the board until the 1st of the year. Councilmember Metzler stated, if he is not on the board until the 1st, all of his votes could be taken as void from the start. He stated, he has done his due diligence, talked to the Board of Elections, Department of State, everyone he can at this point and even reached out to the Ethics Board. He reported that once the Ethics Board responded they stated it was not ethical for him to vote for himself because it would be a monetary gain, regardless of the fact that he was not going to receive any pay for serving on the board going forward.

Councilmember Skerkis thanked Councilmember Metzler.

Supervisor Houghtling stated, to clarify for the record, with the original appointment going through the end of day on 11/5/25, Councilmember Metzler's votes until 11/5/25 would count, the attorney put that in writing. She stated, the question is from here forward because it is in writing from the Association of Towns and the lawyer that it is not legal for Councilmember Metzler to vote the way he voted. If it is challenged now, his votes could be in question from here forward. She stated, as far as not accepting pay, he received a paycheck today, she as HR has not received anything in writing from Councilmember Metzler agreeing to no pay going forward and nothing about pay was in the motion to extend his term.

Councilmember Skerkis commented, at the end of the day he has Councilmember Metzler's six, so let's move forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT EMAILS:

Supervisor Houghtling read the following emails received for privilege of the floor on the proposed 2026 Preliminary Budget:

Sara Schonour: Sara emailed in support of a full-time Supervisor and budgeted salary.

Mike Gracie: Mike emailed in support of a full-time Supervisor and budgeted salary.

Mary Wladkowski: Mary emailed in support of a full-time Supervisor and budgeted salary.

Marcangelo Puccio: Marcangelo emailed in support of a full-time Supervisor and budgeted salary.

Paul Rix: Paul emailed in support of a full-time Supervisor.

Richard Adago: Rich emailed in support of a full-time Supervisor and budgeted salary.

JoAnna G. Phillips: JoAnna emailed with budget questions.

Councilmember Metzler commented, for the record the memo from the Attorney also states that it is not an ethics issue because he also knows that Councilmember Metzler stated he was not going to take any money for the rest of the term.

CLOSING OF PUBLIC COMMENT:

Supervisor Houghtling closed the public comment and input section of the Public Hearing. She stated there are some adjustments that need to be made. The Library vote for additional funding passed.

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling to Increase the Library Line A-7410.4 from \$155,000 in the Preliminary Budget to \$170,000 in the Final Budget. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Powers.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilmember Powers -	Aye
Councilmember Metzler -	Abstain
Supervisor Houghtling -	Aye
Councilmember Amlaw -	Aye
Councilmember Skerkis-	Aye

Supervisor Houghtling reported, Highway Superintendent McCagg contacted her this afternoon that he forgot with his new full-time highway employee he needed money for boot and clothing reimbursement, raingear, etc. These items are a general expense under the highway budget. He is requesting to put DA-5130.4 back to \$95,000 and instead take the \$3,648 and put it into A-5010.4 which is where he pays for gear out of.

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling to Decrease DA-5130.4 by \$3,648 bringing the total in the Final Budget to \$95,000 and to Increase A-5010.4 by \$3,648 bringing that total in the Final Budget to \$9,368. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Powers.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilmember Powers -	Aye
Councilmember Metzler -	Abstain
Supervisor Houghtling -	Aye
Councilmember Amlaw -	Aye
Councilmember Skerkis-	Aye

Supervisor Houghtling stated, they typically adopt the final budget at a regular November meeting. They do have a couple other items of business that are time sensitive.

TOWN HALL HEAT - FURNACE:

Councilmember Powers reported, the fourteen year old furnace off of the meeting room broke. The rest of the building on the other side have heat pumps. The person hired to repair the furnace reported, they cannot get parts for the furnace. The furnace will either have to be replaced or consider heat pumps. Councilmember Powers stated, heat pumps are much more efficient which could result in an annual savings of around \$3,000. He is proposing to the board that they opt to install heat pumps.

Supervisor Houghtling stated, the difference between a new oil furnace and heat pump system is \$9,203. There is also a possibility of an insurance claim, which is being looked into.

A motion was made by Councilmember Powers to determine that contracting for the replacement of the recently failed heating system serving a portion of town hall constitutes an emergency exempt from competitive bidding requirements pursuant to General Municipal Law section 103 (4) and from the town's procurement policy pursuant to Town Code section 40-6 (A)(1). The motion was seconded by Supervisor Houghtling.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilmember Powers -	Aye
Councilmember Metzler -	Abstain
Supervisor Houghtling -	Aye
Councilmember Amlaw -	Aye
Councilmember Skerkis-	Aye

A motion was made by Councilmember Powers to authorize the Supervisor to negotiate and execute a contract with the Radiant Store, Inc. for the installation of a Mitsubishi Ducted Heating and Cooling System as set forth in the written proposal reflecting a total cost of \$26,159, with a net customer cost of \$20,959 after application of a NYSEG clean heat rebate, with the terms and conditions thereof to be reviewed and approved by the attorney for the town prior to execution.. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Amlaw.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilmember Powers -	Aye
Councilmember Metzler -	Abstain
Supervisor Houghtling -	Aye
Councilmember Amlaw -	Aye
Councilmember Skerkis-	Aye

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling to authorize the Supervisor to pay two interim vouchers, one for 50% of the project up front and the second 50% upon completion. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Powers.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilmember Powers -	Aye
Councilmember Metzler -	Abstain
Supervisor Houghtling -	Aye

Councilmember Amlaw -
Councilmember Skerkis-

Aye
Aye

RESOLUTION - CONSENT TO JOINT REPRESENTATION:

**TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
RESOLUTION #31, 2025
CONSENT TO JOINT REPRESENTATION
November 6, 2025**

At a duly called and noticed meeting of the New Lebanon Town Board, held on the 6th day of November, 2025, the following Resolution was proposed and seconded:

Resolution by Supervisor Houghtling
Seconded by Councilmember Powers

CONSENT TO JOINT REPRESENTATION

WHEREAS, the Town of New Lebanon has been named as a defendant in a litigation brought in the United States District Court, Northern District of New York, entitled *Long v. Town of New Lebanon, et al.*, Case No. 1:25-cv-00633 (MAD/PJE); and

WHEREAS, in addition to the Town being named as a defendant therein, Craig Skerkis, Elizabeth Kroboth, Steve Powers, Susan Tipograph, and Tistrya Houghtling have also been named as defendants therein; and

WHEREAS, the Town and above-named defendants are jointly represented in the case by Roemer Wallens Gold & Mineaux, LLP (Earl T. Redding, Esq.); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Order to Show Cause issued on or about October 22, 2025, the Court has directed the Town and other above named defendants to, after being informed of potential conflict of interest which may exist or arise from the joint representation, determine whether such defendants seek to continue being jointly represented or, instead, to obtain separate counsel; and

WHEREAS, Roemer Wallens Gold & Mineaux, LLP (Earl T. Redding, Esq.) has informed the Town Board of the potential conflict of interest that may exist or arise from the joint representation; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board has duly considered the potential conflict that may exist or arise in the joint representation of the Town and the other above named defendants and the ramifications thereof; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board seeks to knowingly and voluntarily choose to continue to be represented by Roemer Wallens Gold & Mineaux, LLP (Earl T. Redding, Esq.) and to consent to such firm’s joint representation of the Town and the other above named defendants in the subject case;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

1. The Town Board of the Town of New Lebanon, on behalf of the Town of New Lebanon as a named defendant, hereby consents and agrees to Roemer Wallens Gold & Mineaux, LLP (Earl T. Redding, Esq.) continuing its joint representation of the Town, Skerkis, Kroboth, Powers, Tipograph, and Houghtling in the case captioned *Long v. Town of New Lebanon, et al.*, Case No. 1:25-cv-00633 (MAD/PJE); and
2. The Town Board of the Town of New Lebanon hereby authorizes the Supervisor to execute all such documents, affidavits, and instruments and to take such further action as may be reasonably necessary to effectuate the purposes of this Resolution.

Upon the question of the foregoing Resolution, the following Town Board Members voted “Aye” or “Nay” for said Resolution:

Roll Call Vote:

Councilmember Steve Powers	Aye
Councilmember Scout Metzler	Abstain
Supervisor Tistrya Houghtling	Aye
Councilmember Joanne Amlaw	Aye
Councilmember Craig Skerkis	Aye

The Resolution, having been approved by a majority vote of the Town Board, was declared duly adopted by the Supervisor of the Town of New Lebanon.

Dated: November 6, 2025
Marcie Robertson
New Lebanon Town Clerk

Pat Metzler: Pat spoke on behalf of Councilmember Metzler, her son and expressed her disappointment in how things have been handled relating to his board appointment.

Councilmember Skerkis: Craig commented, he is 100% in support of Councilmember Metzler.

Councilmember Amlaw: Joanne commented, she also finds it difficult to witness what has taken place surrounding Councilmember Metzler’s board appointment.

Further discussion took place pertaining to Councilmember Metzler’s appointment.

CLOSING OF PUBLIC HEARING & ADJOURNMENT:

All persons desiring to be heard, emails received and read, a motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling to close the Public Hearing and input, and adjourn the meeting at 6:37pm. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Powers.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilmember Powers -	Aye
Councilmember Metzler -	Abstain
Supervisor Houghtling -	Aye
Councilmember Amlaw -	Aye
Councilmember Skerkis-	Aye

Respectfully submitted,

Marcie Robertson
New Lebanon Town Clerk