

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OF
THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
HELD ON NOVEMBER 13, 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: Susan Tipograph, Recreation Commission Member
Sharon Powers, IT Website Support, Shaker
Preservation & ZBA Member
Mary Young, NL Rep to CC Office For the Aging &
Traffic Safety
William Shannon, Ethics Board Member & President of
LV Seniors
Peg Munves, CAC Co-Chair
Jim Carroll, Planning Board & ZRC Member
Ed Godfroy, NL Rep to Emergency Mgmt, LVPA
Carol Reichert, Shaker Preservation Committee
Member
Jerome Sherida, Shaker Preservation Committee
Member
Abbie Shoobs, Recreation Commission Chair
Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular monthly meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Supervisor Houghtling. The meeting was held in person at the New Lebanon Town Hall, 14755 State Route 22 North, New Lebanon, NY 12125 with members of the public also being able to view the meeting at the following link: https://townhallstreams.com/towns/new_lebanon_ny

A moment of silence was held, followed by the flag salute. The emergency exits were pointed out.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the **October 16, 2025 Public Hearing (2026 CRS Contract), October 16, 2025 Public Hearing (2026 LVPA Contract), October 20, 2025 Special Meeting /**

Budget Workshop, and October 27, 2025 Special Meeting / Budget Workshop of the Town Board were reviewed.

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling, seconded by Councilmember Amlaw, and approved unanimously to approve four sets of minutes as typed.

FINANCIAL:

Supervisor's Report:

The Supervisor's Report as of October 31, 2025 was available to the public via the Town Clerk's email and the Town website and the Town Board was emailed the Supervisor's Report by Supervisor Houghtling.

A motion was made by Councilmember Powers to accept the Supervisor's report for October as typed. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Amlaw.

Roll Call Vote:

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

COUNCILMEMBER METZLER:

Councilmember Metzler read a prepared statement waiving all compensation and financial benefits associated with serving as a town board member for the remainder of the year after November 4, 2025. Councilmember Metzler requested that the town board acknowledge receipt of this waiver.

"November 12, 2025

Dear Supervisor Houghtling and Town Board members:

As I have stated before, it has been my intent to waive all compensation and financial benefits associated with serving as a town board member for the remainder of this year after the end of day November 4, 2025. Accordingly, I hereby waive all compensation and financial benefits, including without limitation, payment of salary, health insurance and other employment related benefits, and any retirement benefits or service accruals, associated with serving as a member of the Town Board for the Town of New Lebanon, for the period beginning November 5, 2025 and continuing until January 1, 2026. I further request that the Town Board acknowledge receipt of this waiver at its next meeting, and that this waiver be filed with the Town Board records as appropriate. Finally, I agree that I will execute and deliver any and all other documents or instruments as may be reasonably necessary to effectuate the intent of this waiver. Thank you.

Scout Metzler

Councilmember of the Town of New Lebanon"

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling to acknowledge Councilmember Metzler's waiver of any and all compensation and financial benefits associated with

serving as a Town Board member including without limitation; salary, health insurance, other employment related benefits, and any retirement benefits or service accruals associated with serving as a member of the Town Board effective November 5, 2025 through the end of the year. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Powers.

Roll Call Vote:

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

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

In addition to an in-person privilege of the floor, Supervisor Houghtling will read all comments, questions and concerns emailed to supervisor@townofnewlebanon.com during the meeting.

Jim Carroll: Jim expressed disappointment with the conduct at the preliminary budget public hearing and he commented on the HR personnel reviews.

JoAnna Phillips: JoAnna expressed support for Councilmember Metzler and she also addressed the division in town following the recent election.

Bonnie Lichak: Bonnie raised her concerns about ethics issues related to planning and zoning board members participating in their own application reviews.

Margaret Robertson: Meg congratulated all election candidates, noting the difficulty of campaigning in a small town.

Mr. Muadin (Online): Mr. Muadin expressed gratitude for the work put into preparing the budget.

Supervisor Houghtling read the following emails submitted for privilege of the floor:

Tony Murad: Tony wrote in support of the budget and the work the Highway Superintendent and crew are doing.

Tammy Warner: Tammy wrote in disapproval of the Town Supervisor and to commend Councilmember Metzler.

Raymona Griffin: Raymona wrote addressing the Supervisor's treatment towards Councilmember Metzler, commended Councilmember Metzler on his time serving on the board, the overseeing of town boards and committees, and the Supervisor salary concerns.

Gretchen Van Deusen: Gretchen wrote in disapproval of the Supervisor’s treatment towards Councilmember Metzler, and her concerns with the Supervisor’s position.

BUDGET AMENDMENT #11 OF 2025:

General Fund:

- \$ 53.00 from A-1520.4 (Community Center – Contractual Expense)
- \$ 1,200.00 from A-5010.11 (Super. Of Hwys. – Personal Services)
- \$ 10,000.00 from A-7110.2 (Parks - Equipment)
- \$ 8,253.00 from A-7140.47 (Stream Bank Stabilization)
- \$ 30,000.00 from A-7140.48 (Park Court Resurfacing)

- \$ 15,236.00 to A-1420.4 (Attorney – Contractual Expense)
- \$ 53.00 to A-1520.2 (Community Center - Equipment)
- \$ 20,959.00 to A-1620.2 (Buildings – Equipment – for Heat Pumps)
- \$ 4,000.00 to A-1620.4 (Buildings – Contractual Expense)
- \$ 3,500.00 to A-1670.4 (Central Printing & Mailing)
- \$ 1,200.00 to A-5010.4 (Super. Of Hwys. – Contractual Expense)
- \$ 4,558.00 to A-8020.41 (Planning Board - Attorney)

Highway Fund:

- \$ 12,800.00 from DA-9060.8 (Hospital & Medical Insurance)

- \$ 8,000.00 to DA-5130.4 (Machinery – Contractual Expense)
- \$ 4,800.00 to DA-5142.4 (Snow Removal– Contractual Expense)

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling to approve the above noted budget amendment #11 of 2025 as typed. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Powers.

Roll Call Vote:

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

BUDGET AMENDMENT #12 OF 2025:

General Fund:

- \$ 78,581.00 from A-5131.2 (Transfer from Equipment Reserve)

- \$ 78,581.00 to A-9901.1 (Transfer to Highway Fund)

Highway Fund:

- \$ 78,581.00 from DA-05031 (Transfer from General Fund)

\$ 78,581.00 to DA-5130.2 (Machinery – Equipment - Skid steer)

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling authorizing budget amendment resolution #12 of 2025 which will be authorized after the statutory thirty days is up from the passage of the purchase resolution, Resolution #30 of 2025 with no petition being filed in the Town Clerk’s office. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Powers.

Roll Call Vote:

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

AUDIT OF BILLS:

2025 Bills:

General Nos. 491 through 492, in the amount of \$15,167.10; and Highway No. 149, in the amount of \$750.00; As listed on Abstract No. 10A dated November 13, 2025.

General Nos. 493 through 528, in the amount of \$540,201.91; Highway Nos. 150 through 161, in the amount of \$34,015.05; Escrow Nos. 8 through 10, in the amount of \$6,250.00; and SF-1 LVPA No. 4 in the amount of \$38,325.00 As listed on Abstract No. 11 dated November 13, 2025.

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling to pay the bills. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Amlaw.

Roll Call Vote:

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

COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS:

Supervisor Houghtling stated, committee reports as received to her office by Friday afternoon were sent out to the public and the Town Board. She asked if any board members had any questions or need for clarification on any of the committee reports?

Supervisor Houghtling asked the committee chairs that are present, do any of the committees have any further updates or action that is needed by the Town Board?

Supervisor Houghtling expanded on the landfill report, explaining that work had to be halted until spring due to weather conditions. She noted that this was not the contractor's fault, as they couldn't begin until the town had ownership of the land. The delay will result in increased costs:

- Original bid amount: \$1,845,850
- Change Order #1: \$58,686.11 (for more tires and waste than expected)
- Change Order #2: \$60,602 (for demobilization now and remobilization in spring)
- New total: \$1,965,138.11, plus engineering fees of \$345,100
- Grand total: \$2,310,238.11, which remains under the \$2.5 million in state funding

Peg Munves, CAC Co-Chair, requested that Bruce Shenker be appointed as a CAC representative to the ZRC, and that she be appointed as an alternate.

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling, seconded by Councilmember Powers, and approved unanimously to appoint Bruce Shenker as a CAC rep to the ZRC and Peg Munves as an alternate ZRC member representing the CAC, effective immediately.

Councilmember Amlaw raised concerns about signs ordered for the park. She displayed the signs, which were larger than expected, and questioned whether they were necessary since the insurance company did not require them. The board agreed to revisit the issue in the spring.

Supervisor Houghtling announced that the Regional Food Bank might soon resume bringing food to the New Lebanon Town Hall, either weekly or biweekly, as they did during COVID. She asked for volunteers to help with this initiative for when she hears more.

Abbie Shoobs, Recreation Commission Chair received correspondence that all New York Parks have become non-smoking areas and are offering free signs to that effect. She will forward that communication to the Supervisor.

OLD BUSINESS:

Adoption of 2026 Town Budget:

Supervisor Houghtling noted that there were changes to be made to the preliminary budget before adoption.

Councilmember Skerkis expressed concerns about the Supervisor's salary and suggested transferring funds from that line to create an HR department and conduct an audit of the town's finances. He proposed moving \$15,000 from the Supervisor's line to fund these initiatives, stating it would still leave the Supervisor with adequate compensation.

A motion was made by Councilmember Skerkis to transfer \$15,000 from budget line 1220.1 to budget line 1340.4 for the purpose of securing a forensic accountant and an HR professional firm to conduct a comprehensive audit of the town of New

Lebanon’s financial records and to create an HR department. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Amlaw.

Town Board discussion took place prior to the vote.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Supervisor Houghtling stated she would not make the motion to adopt the budget as she would be voting against it due to the change.

A motion was made by Councilmember Skerkis to adopt the 2026 preliminary town budget with the following changes: Increase A-7410.4 to \$170,000, decrease DA-5130.4 to \$95,000, increase A-5010.4 to \$9,368, decrease 1220.1 by \$15,000, increase 1340.4 by \$15,000, and change the ambulance amount on the Historical Summary to \$116,692 as the 2026 final town budget. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Amlaw.

Roll Call Vote:

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

A motion was made by Councilmember Skerkis, seconded by Councilmember Amlaw, approved unanimously with the exception of Supervisor Houghtling and Councilmember Powers who are not in favor, to move that the town board and the town of Lebanon authorize the town clerk to issue a public notice request for letters of interest consistent with Town Law 64, General Municipal Law 104, and the Town’s adopted Procurement Policy for a forensic accountant to conduct a forensic audit or an independent audit on the town's financial records from 2017 to present, and also to go out for a qualified professional or service for independent human resource services, and the Town Clerk shall publish these notices in accordance with the statutory and local procurement with responses due by December 5th, 2025 at 4:00pm.

2026 Contract with Lebanon Valley Protective Association:

A motion was made by Councilmember Powers to authorize the Supervisor to sign the contract with the LVPA for 2026. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Amlaw.

Roll Call Vote:

- Councilmember Powers - Aye

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

A motion was made by Councilmember Powers, seconded by Councilmember Amlaw, and approved unanimously to authorize the Supervisor to sign the charge back agreement with the County.

Authorization to Pay for Skid Steer on an Interim Voucher:

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling to authorize payment for the skid steer on an interim voucher when the 30-day statutory requirement has passed and no petitions have been filed. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Skerkis.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Highway:

Supervisor Houghtling mentioned that Highway Superintendent Pete McCagg had requested approval to pay for winter sand tarps from Country Squire on an interim voucher, at a cost of approximately \$2,500.

A motion was made by Councilmember Powers to authorize the Supervisor to make payment for winter sand tarps on an interim voucher. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Skerkis.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Chatham Rescue Squad – Public Hearing:

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling, seconded by Councilmember Skerkis, and approved unanimously to schedule a public hearing on December 9, 2025 at 5:55 PM for the 2026 Chatham Rescue Squad contract.

NEW BUSINESS:

Policy Review – Code of Ethics and SYP ADA Policy, Procedure & Acknowledgements:

Supervisor Houghtling explained that the Ethics Board had reviewed the Code of Ethics and recommended no changes.

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling, seconded by Councilmember Amlaw, and approved unanimously to mark the Code of Ethics and the Summer Youth Program ADA Policy, Procedures, and Acknowledgements as reviewed with no changes.

Planning Board Attorney – Stephanie Ferradino:

Supervisor Houghtling reported, they received a letter from Stephanie Ferradino, Planning/Zoning Board Attorney, she is not looking to continue her services going into 2026.

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling, seconded by Councilmember Amlaw, and approved unanimously to go out for RFQ's, Request for Qualifications for a Planning Board and Zoning Board Attorney, with letters of interest due on or before 4:00pm on Friday, December 5, 2025.

Proposed Resolution – Amend LL CH47 – Recreation Commission:

A motion was made by Councilmember Amlaw to prepare a resolution to introduce proposed local law amending Chapter 47 of the town code Recreation Commission to update 47-1 to state that the Recreation Commission is charged with responsibility rather than merely granted the authority to establish, equip, operate and, maintain playground, community programs, and facilities and to amend 47-2A to reduce the commissions membership from seven members to five members.

Supervisor Houghtling stated, the Recreation Commission is by local law, they would need the Attorney to prepare a local law and once it is prepared it is presented to the Town Board. After that it is introduced and then a Public Hearing has to be scheduled, this will go into 2026.

Councilmember Skerkis stated, it does not have to go into next year, they have plenty of time to get it done this year.

Supervisor Houghtling stated, she is not comfortable preparing a local law and Councilmember Skerkis stated, he can prepare it. Further discussion took place among the Town Board.

The motion was seconded by Councilmember Skerkis.

Supervisor Houghtling commented before voting on the motion, she does not mind changing the number of members or some of these proposed changes but she feels that process is important. She stated, she is in favor of these changes but does not feel good about rushing this through the process. Further discussion took place among the board members.

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling, seconded by Councilmember Amlaw, and approved unanimously to go out for letters of interest for the Recreation Commission clarifying that the Recreation Commission is going to do maintenance and oversee projects in the park with letters of interest due on or before 4:00pm on December 5, 2025.

Councilmember Amlaw withdrew her previous motion. Councilmember Skerkis withdrew his second to that motion. No vote was taken on the motion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

DECEMBER:

Tuesday, December 9th, 2026 at 5:55pm – Public Hearing – CRS 2026 Contract
Tuesday, December 9th, 2026 at 6:00pm – Regular Monthly Meeting

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

In addition to an in-person privilege of the floor, Supervisor Houghtling will read all comments, questions and concerns emailed to supervisor@townofnewlebanon.com during the meeting.

Michael Deegan: Michael questioned whether another public hearing was needed for the budget given the changes made.

Margaret Robertson: Meg invited everyone to attend an event on Sunday featuring Wally Stock, a former New Lebanon graduate, as a fundraiser for the Friends of the New Lebanon Railroad Station.

William Banker: Bill expressed concerns about town governance and the budget process, and an audit for the town.

Henry Villegas: Henry made personal attacks towards the Supervisor, mentioned taxes and infrastructure.

Abbie Shoobs: Abbie commented on the proposed changes to the Recreation Commission and the letters of interest.

Eileen Raab: Eileen spoke in opposition of reducing the Supervisor's salary and in favor of having a full-time Supervisor, and opposed the way the changes were introduced after the Public Hearing with no opportunity for the public to be heard.

JoAnna G. Phillips: JoAnna commented on the division in town and the need to find a path forward.

Jim Dawson: Jim suggested focusing on substantive issues like affordable housing and increasing town revenue.

Jerome Sherida: Jerome commented on democratic processes and decision-making.

Margaret Robertson: Meg spoke about town finances and her experience as a former supervisor with a much lower salary.

Pat Metzler: Pat commented that the committees are a great thing, and talked about volunteering for the town and better promoting of volunteer opportunities.

Chris Patterson: Chris spoke about volunteer efforts for the walking trails in the park, it was very spur of the moment.

Susan Tipograph: Susan commented, nice to be in the meeting with everyone, time to go home.

Mr. Muadin: (Online) Mr. Muadin supported the idea of an outside audit and emphasized the need for transparency in government.

Chris Patterson: Chris spoke to clarify his previous comment for privilege of the floor.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling, to adjourn the meeting at 8:35pm.
The motion was seconded by Councilmember Powers.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Respectfully submitted,

Marcie Robertson
New Lebanon Town Clerk