

Assessor (Patterson)

All work for the 2026 Tentative Assessment Roll has been completed and submitted to the county for processing. This year was an update year, meaning assessments were adjusted to reflect current market conditions.

Understanding the Update and Why It Was Needed

When the real estate market changes but assessments do not, the equalization rate shifts. The equalization rate functions as our level of assessment. Maintaining 100% keeps things straightforward for taxpayers because their assessment directly reflects full market value.

When we fall below 100%, confusion grows. Many residents assume, “My assessment hasn’t changed, so nothing has changed for me.” In reality, if the equalization rate decreases while the assessment stays the same, the full market value is increasing, even though the taxpayer may not realize it unless they review the tentative roll.

Updating assessments to match the market ensures that:

- full market value is clearly visible,
- taxpayers understand how their value was determined, and
- the system remains transparent and predictable.

We did not complete an update last year, even though the market rose. The state allows limited flexibility, and we used that leeway to continue claiming 100%. This year, however, we needed to account for both last year’s changes and the current market. As a result, most assessments increased, with the amount varying based on market factors.

This was not a full reassessment. A full reassessment is a much more involved and individualized. This year’s project was an update, which uses trending practices to bring values in line with the market without reanalyzing each parcel individually.

Important Reminder About “Tax Abatement” Companies

Residents continue to be approached by outoftown or outofarea tax abatement companies. I strongly encourage anyone contacted by these companies to call the Assessor’s Office first.

These companies:

- handle thousands of cases each year, from Long Island to the Adirondacks,
- do not have individual conversations with property owners,
- do not learn about or understand each property,
- are focused primarily on generating revenue for themselves,
- take half of any tax savings if they are successful, and

If a property owner is truly overassessed, they will always have a better outcome by speaking directly with the assessor. We know the town, we know the properties, and we can address concerns accurately and transparently.

Building Department (Patterson)

No report.

CAC, Climate Smart & Environmental Management (Powers)

CAC:

The Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) is Bill O'Neill co-chair, Peg Munves co-chair, Bruce Shenker, Steve Powers, Donald Lamonaca, Sarah Latifa

CAC and Rec Committee Park Work

Peg met with Recreation Committee in the park March 28 and all agreed to Joe Dwileski/Joanne Amlaw plan to move 10-12 plants when weather is appropriate. Doug Godley aka "the Mulch King", will water moved plants – he has been an enormous help, caring for all the plants since the project inception. CAC will continue to take tubes off and mulch, and Rec Committee agreed to take on and manage maintenance as we transition to CAC doing less work in park; CAC members will still help.

DWSP2

In our testing funding search we approached the LVCC – they are meeting in mid April and will discuss our ask to help us raise money for testing funding. Water test in Springs downgrade of fuel oil spill found no indication of fuel oil; we may do further testing.

Working with NYS DOH:

Stream Assessments: NYSDOH submitted a NYSDEC site solicitation form to request stream assessments of Kinderhook and Wyomanock Creeks, as well as Shaker Swamp. This form does not guarantee site selection; however, New Lebanon is close to priority watersheds for the 2026 round. NYSDOH will keep the CAC updated as they hear more.

Agricultural Environmental Management: NYSDOH and New Lebanon CAC to meet with Columbia County Soil and Water District (CCSWCD) to discuss the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM)

Program: <https://www.ccsxcd.org/agricultural-programs.html> . We met with them to learn more about the county's approach to agricultural runoff in streams and how we can gather useful information

Private Septic Inventory: NYSDOH has been in contact with Columbia County Health and Real Property to consolidate data for a private septic inventory. Note there are no public sewer systems in the town, but we are looking to identify older homes on private septic as a potential threat to the watershed. NYSDOH is looking to talk further with county health since they seem to be working on something similar at their office.

Wastewater Feasibility Study

We are researching legal approaches to ensure that any potential water or wastewater system is “opt-in,” meaning only people who want to connect do so and pay for the service. Because feasibility studies contain financial details, finding such an approach is a pre-requisite for finalizing the study.

Room Enough for Both Report

CAC unanimously decided to pursue recommendation for CEA for Shaker Swamp and Knob and Bog and we will bring this to TB at Tuesday’s meeting.

Open Space Inventory

We are continuing working on this update, however currently there is no money for digital maps. Digitizing the maps would help residents and other town committee to better utilize the OSI information.

CSC:

Compost -

To help compensate for the ongoing closure of the county recycling center that was located in New Lebanon, starting Sunday, April 12, residents can bring their kitchen scraps to the Community Center between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. This service will continue every Sunday between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. and every Wednesday between 2 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. The collected food scraps will be taken to a compost site.

Earth Day Events -

The CSC will host a free screening of the film Microplastic Madness at the library on April 18 at 10am. After the film we will review how individuals can reduce the plastic in their lives to enhance their health. All are encouraged to attend. Snacks will be provided.

Tree planting -

On April 25 th at 9:30am, CSC and CAC members will plant a native Red Oak tree in Shatford Park that was donated by the **Columbia County Soil and Water Conservation District** in honor of Earth Day. All are welcome to attend. The CSC will be working with the CAC to plant it and take care of it.

Roadside Cleanup –

We have scheduled it for April 25, 10am-2pm after the tree planting. Please meet at the Pavilion in Shatford Park. As in the past, we will collect electronics for recycling as well. Thanks to Maverick’s for donating the yummy treats for the clean up crew!

EMC:

No report.

Fire, Law Enforcement, Emergency (Powers)

Fire Calls and Activities - March 2026

- 3/9/2026 Drill 10 people 20hr

- 3/10/2026 Trailer Fire 12 people 3.28hr
- 3/11/2026 Alarm Activation 2 people .26hr
- 3/16/2026 Drill 11 people 22hr
- 3/17/2026 Wires Down 2 people .44hr
- 3/17/2026 Wires Down 4 people 1.16hr
- 3/19/2026 Indoor Fuel Odor 3 people 1.44hr
- 3/21/2026 Alarm Activation 6 people 1.20hr
- 3/24/2026 Alarm Activation 1 person .29hr

Totals 51 people 50.07 hr

- Alarm Activations-3
 - Trailer fire-1
 - Wires down-2
 - Indoor fuel odor-1
- 9 alarms

- Drills – 2

Historian & LVHS (Amlaw)

Historian:

Dear Supervisor and Board,

By way of introduction let me first express my appreciation for being chosen historian. It is an honor to serve a community with such a rich and complicated history. I will approach each aspect of the town's history with balance and professionalism. For over 40 years I've worked at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History holding a research position in the Anthropology Department. The focus of that work has been in cultural preservation. I have a good working relationship with all the past town historians and I hope to be able to encourage each one to continue to pursue their own special, historical interests in our region's past and to gain benefit for the town from their continuing discoveries.

Every historian has a general perspective and an area of specialization. As some may already know, my own is a devotion to saving and understanding the Shaker Swamp and it's relationship to the deep history of our town. Around thirty years ago, a town board member, Jack Yurish asked me what I could do to bring the town of New Lebanon and the Shaker National Historic Site together. It didn't take long to recognize that the Medicinal Wetland was a unique historical connection of national importance. Jack's goal was to find a way to increase visitor traffic and participation in our town and therefore, enhance our general economy. As my good friend and next door neighbor, Doug Banker was fond of saying, "Good History is Good Business". This is true. Good history should be a professional endeavor and it's one of the goals the town historian can work towards.

Thank you,
T.W.Timreck

LVHS:

The LVHS is planning a clean-up of St. Joseph's cemetery in Lebanon Springs on Sunday the 26th of April between noon and 3:00pm weather permitting. We will pick up fallen branches and twigs and clear brush from the interior area and begin documenting gravestone epitaphs. This is part of a larger project to learn more about the settlement of Irish immigrants in New Lebanon in the wake of The Famine in the mid-1800s.

We encourage anyone interested in doing historical or genealogical research connected to this project to contact the LVHS even if you won't be joining us for the clean-up and especially if you have ancestors who came from Ireland during this time. There is all kinds of work to be done to move this project ahead, something for everyone no matter what age or physical ability.

Shaker Preservation (Tipograph)

The committee has been working diligently to work thru the feedback from the public sessions last summer and expects to present proposed changes and additions to the current proposal to the working group and the Zoning Board representative by the end of May.

Library (Amlaw)

No report.

Buildings, Parks & Recreation (Patterson)

Buildings:

The highway garage repair work continues as a result of the fire.

Parks:

Significant progress has been made on the skatepark due to the help of an amazing group of community volunteers! Particularly, an extra special thanks goes out to Jesse Newton, who without his equipment, efforts and expertise, this project would not be possible! Work will begin later this month on the resurfacing and improvements to the playground and is expected to be completed in time for the start of summer camp. Joe Dwileski will be transplanting some of the Trees for Tribs trees to more desirable locations within the park.

Recreation Commission:

In addition to assisting with some of the skatepark construction the Recreation Commission just wrapped up a series of scheduled park clean up and maintenance days. They will be assisting the CAC with the removal of the tree tubes leaving a small section to protect them from weed whackers.

Community Center & Events Committee (Tipograph)

Community Center:

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Game Room Sign in | 226 |
| Free Store | 784 |
| Seniors (2) | 156 |
| Yoga Sculpt(5) | 42 |
| Yoga(4) | 43 |
| Jam(2) | 26 |
| Tai Chi(3) | 24 |
| Blood Drive | 30 |
| Food Club | 130 |
| Project Prom | 60 (43 dresses given away) |
| Private Party(\$100) | 40 |
| Private Party(\$100) | 35 |

Total Guests 1596
Party Revenue \$200
Columbia Kitchen Food Deliveries - 300 meals

The High School's Just Food Club held a free community dinner Thursday March 19. 130 people came out to enjoy chicken, waffles, coleslaw, mac and cheese and desserts and to play in the game room. The kids did an amazing job from set up to break down and we are all so proud of them.

Project Prom was a huge success this year. 43 dresses, 3 suits and a ton of accessories marched out the door. The dresses will stay out in the backroom for a couple of more weeks in case anyone missed the event and still needs something.

Events Committee:

The Community Events Committee had our first meeting in March.

In attendance:

New member Dave McGrath
New member Beth LaGrange (by phone)
Rochelle DiRe
Abbie Shoobs

We discussed plans for the year and picked some tentative dates.

The Town picnic will be on August 9th.

The Doug Banker MITP will be on Sunday September 13th.

The HS band's MITP is tentatively in June 3rd, a date should be finalized soon.

Beth would like to start planning a Shatford Park based monthly playgroup.

We discussed having a weekly or monthly set time for people to meet to walk the park trails, similar to the winter indoor walking at WBH.

We discussed Dave coordinating a hike up to The Knob on his property's trails, and

thought about coordinating with Tom Gerety and Adelia Moore to take hikers down their side towards the Bog.

Abbie has organized the first Community Walk on May 3rd. A flyer will be sent to the clerk in the next week.

Abbie spoke with Bernie Kelleher about painting the pickleball lines in the Shattford tennis courts. When the weather warms up, he'll reach out to Abbie to schedule a date. People will need to keep off the courts for a few hours to let the paint set.

Seniors (Tipograph)

The Office for the Aging met on March 18 th . The Senior Scoop is out and is available on the OFA web site. Some events of note are upcoming trips to various places around the area, the Respite program occurring at the Canaan Congregational Church every Friday. To attend contact the office at 518-828-4258 and ask for (intake) to get registered. The Seniors Volunteers of the Year from Columbia County, Jean Engle and Sharon Hover biographies are included. They will be honored on May 26 at a dinner at the Crowne Plaza. Are you a puzzle lover, the OFA now has a puzzle lending library, just call them to arrange pick up. Included in this issue of the Senior Scoop are included are a couple of fun word puzzles. Information is also included about upcoming programs at the office and throughout the County.

Survey results should be available to town representatives at the next meeting of the OFA Advisory Council meeting in May.

Work continues on the Seniorscape project. The goal is to have in one place names, addresses, phone numbers of business, events, programs and other things Seniors might need. This would be available online to anyone and updated by the OFA.

There is a caretaker forum on May 18th from 10-2 at the college. It is free and is designed to provide support and resources for caregivers. A complimentary lunch and on-site respite care for loved ones during the sessions are available. To register call the OFA office.

May is Older Americans month, watch for programs being put on by towns.

The new 911 center is open and has an exciting new feature. When someone calls in the system will convert the language they are speaking to English automatically and will convert what dispatchers are saying to them in their language.

The health department reports that Lyme cases are already high, as we go out in our yards or start walking trails remember to protect yourself and if you are bitten, seek medical attention.

Each member received a Reach Out and Play Packet sponsored by AARP, which can be used to bring new games to a senior group and reach out to the community for intergenerational fun.

The Lebanon Valley Seniors met with Town Board representative Susan Tipograph and answered questions from the privilege of the floor request, see her report. The Seniors will be celebrating 50 years in August and are planning special events to celebrate. Our next meeting is on April 17th and we will celebrate spring with bonnets and games. The complete list of programs planned so far is found on the town web site and our Facebook page. We hope you all saw the article in The Columbia Paper that reports from the AARP that 65% of adults over the age of 50 that play games and socialize with others have reduced stress, support mental health and their minds are more active. Join us on the first and third Friday of the month for a healthier you.

Traffic Safety (Patterson)

The Traffic Safety Advisory Council met on March 26, and this report was given which may interest New Lebanon residents. Repaving of Route 22 North from the intersection at Rt 20 and 22 near Meisner's Antiques to the County line with Columbia and Rensselaer is scheduled for the end of summer. The County and State DOT are scheduling and starting projects mid-May.

Watch signs as you travel through the County for bridge and road closures and re-routing. Harry Howard Boulevard is closed in Hudson while major repairs are made, an estimate is for 4- 6 more weeks.

Highway departments from the Towns and County have met with the State and legislators to request an additional \$250 million for CHIPS funding in this year's budget. A letter was sent from the Traffic Safety Advisory Council, John Gallo and our County Highway Supervisor, Ben Perry, in support of this increase.

Grant funding requests are being submitted by the Hudson Police Department for car safety seat education and the Columbia County Sheriff's department with the Traffic Safety Advisory Council requesting \$8,000 in funding for Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Education focusing on rail trails and road crossings. The southern part of the County has attracted a large following for use of the Empire Trail. A campaign is being put together, watch for dates and times. The section from North Chatham to Kinderhook is very popular. EMS is requesting mile markers on the trail to assist them in dispatching emergency vehicles to where they are needed.

The sheriff's department is looking into obtaining and using speed lasers which give immediate and accurate speed reading. Columbia County has requested grant funding to obtain metal traffic barriers which are now used at the Fair grounds to be used at other events to prevent "ramming" and driving into crowds. These barriers disable the vehicle when hit.

Progress is being made on developing a Facebook page, this will be an information source and updated by the Advisory committee. It is hoped to be up and running by May. If there is information that the town wishes to be posted, they will submit that information to the Traffic Safety Rep. who will forward the information to appropriate person. The first things to be posted are our By-laws and information on jobs available at DOT for towns, county and state and a reminder to yield to Highway work trucks.

The Council is looking toward fall and will be reminding snowplow drivers that green lights on trucks are for State, County and municipalities only, not private snowplow companies.

The next meeting is May 28th.

Outreach & Marketing & Communications Committee (Tipograph)

The first outreach, marketing, and communications meeting was held on Tuesday, March 31st, at Town Hall. All eight committee members attended, and we had an engaging discussion about goals and what we want to accomplish.

Though each brought different perspectives, we shared the aim of bringing the town together. Many of us talked about how constructive and respectful in-person conversations are at Maverick, the Gallup Inn, or the Free Store. Even when people disagree, they speak to each other with respect in-person, while online discussions often slide into insults.

We also talked about how to address these challenges and agreed to start with community conversations. Residents often miss important meetings or volunteer activities. One committee member presented a trove of information about what people discuss online and during Priviledge of the Floor at Town Board meetings.

Proposed Next Steps

The committee had many ideas for addressing these issues and wants to start by holding public discussions where residents can ask questions. We are still figuring out how the meetings will work. We will likely experiment until we find what works. Potential formats include informal circles at the American Legion or Town Hall for one topic, while Town Hall may function best for another situation.

We plan for our first discussion on April 30 at the Community Center. While details are still being worked out, the plan is for these discussions to be free and open to everyone, with light snacks, and for children to be welcome.

Zoning Re-write Committee (Powers & Amlaw)

A total of 267 surveys were completed, 196 online and 71 on paper. The committee will begin tabulating responses; using AI tools to summarize the responses to the several open-ended questions. A test run of the tool with the first two questions is quite impressive. Members will also assess these summaries to validate them. As reported

previously, the raw data and tabulations/summaries will be posted to the website and otherwise be made available to the public.

The next phase of obtaining public input will be reaching out to established community groups to request meeting time. These proposed meetings will home in on findings from the survey as well as other topics of interest, including ideas generated in the Room Enough for Both project. The committee has identified several community groups. Members will be outreaching to them in coming weeks. The committee is open to meeting with informally organized groups on a request basis. An announcement of this phase of community input will be placed in the upcoming newsletter.

In regard to Room Enough for Both, most committee members attended or viewed the HVAHC final report presentation. The committee - and the Town- has been given much food for thought.

On behalf of the committee, many thanks to David McGinniss for his work on the committee. The committee has recommended to Your Board that additional non-board related residents be added to the committee to help take on the significant tasks that lie ahead.

Walkable Downtown Committee (Powers & Houghtling)

Minutes from the 3/24/26 Meeting:

Attendees:

Tistrya Houghtling
Michael Deegan
Steve Powers
Corey Stall
Josh Young
Tony Murad
Jared Anderson
Don Adams

Discussion:

- Following feedback from the NYSDOT TAP Team and providing guidance on how best to apply, with the potential for additional State funding to supplement the Town match, the Town Board re-approved applying for the new TAP grant, which was successfully submitted on March 12. This is further discussed below.
- Option 3 of the 8 alternative options was also approved by the Town Board if 2025 TAP funding is not awarded. Option 3 will have the same limits as the original 2023 TAP award, use concrete as the sidewalk surface, and minimize the amount of curb relocation needed.
- CM reviewed the Town/DOT meeting of 3/16/26 and noted the following:

- The original application and rationale for the pre-application for the 2025 round was discussed. The pre-application was intended to apply for funds to cover the difference in cost from stone dust to asphalt.
- The TAP review team indicated we could not apply in this manner but provided guidance on how to apply for a “new project” which would need to utilize concrete for the sidewalks and could also expand the limits to Shatford Park. DOT also noted in their pre-application review that they may consider contributing funds to the project.
- The Town was clear in the application and at the 3/16 meeting that the Town’s \$500,000 bond is the maximum amount the Town can contribute to the project. Therefore, acceptance of the grant, if awarded, is contingent upon confirmation that the DOT will supplement project funding, so the Town match remains no larger than \$500,000.
- CM/the Town reiterated the project’s goal of reducing the travel lane width to 11’ to help calm vehicle speeds, as stated in the original 2023 TAP Application. The speed limit is 40 MPH and the 85th percentile speed is 47 MPH, just west of the project, as of 2024.
- It was discussed that the Town would benefit from expanding the scope of the current project to include the Shatford Park extension, so DOT may conduct an environmental review the full potential corridor. Without a change in scope, DOT is only permitted to review the original 2023 TAP scope. If CM determines the scope change should be pursued under the current project to allow for environmental review of the entire potential project area, the Town will work with CM to provide a scope change letter making this formal request.
- CM will conduct some preliminary screenings to ensure that the scope change and expanded environmental review should be pursued at the current time.
- DOT stressed the importance of moving the project forward toward design approval and not letting it go dormant, so current funds remain available.
- The Town/CM will provide DOT with design criteria, preliminary plans and typical sections depicting the proposed change to lane/shoulder width, proposed crosswalk locations and available sight distances, and a description of the Town’s goals – particularly around traffic calming.
- If the project does not receive 2025 TAP funding, the addition of curb and drainage improvements will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.
- Cutting of the slope on the property between Midtown Mall and Blueberry Hill was discussed. This resulted in a brief discussion the right-of-way acquisition process and the potential for securing a grading release in lieu of an easement. CM will review the situation with DOT for guidance.
- Josh Young has a good relationship with the property impacted by future grading and the property owner is fully on board to participate in whatever way is needed. Josh can speak to them about potential easement donation or a grading release.
- The tree cutting window of November 1 to April 1 was discussed in the context of the trees on the slope of the affected property. Contracting a local tree company

to do any necessary removals was mentioned. This will be reviewed closer to the end of 2026.

- Adding members to the committee was discussed. After some back and forth, it was determined that the committee will accept the current interested parties for membership and ask that the Town Board cap the number of members at that total.
- CM will set up a separate discussion with Tistrya to go through the reimbursement process.

Meeting ended approximately 7:15 PM

Supplemental Information regarding the 85th Percentile Speed:

Available NYSDOT speed data can be found on NYSDOT's "Traffic Data Viewer" at the following link:

<https://nysdottrafficdata.drakewell.com/publicmultinodemap.asp>

Zooming into New Lebanon, we see a green triangle west of our project, near where Route 22 joins US 20. Clicking on that triangle brings up a box of data that has been recorded at that location, where it lists the 85th percentile speed at the bottom. In 2024, it was noted as 47mph. In 2022, it was 46mph. This is the closest available DOT source.

NYSDOT uses the 85th percentile speed (the speed at or below which 85% of drivers are going) as a measure of how to set design parameters such as lane width, shoulder width, curve radii, etc. so that roads are designed safety for the speed people are generally comfortable going regardless of the speed limit. Speed limits are often set below the 85th percentile speed.