



Bottom LtoR: Sue Keller, Deputy 1, Michele Moran, Town Clerk. Top LtoR: Theresa Messa, Deputy Registrar and Denise Hensel, Secretary



Jim Messa, New Hartford Town Supervisor and Michele Moran, New Hartford Town Clerk



A New Year Brings a New Chapter at Town Hall

From the Supervisor's Office.

Since taking office on January 1, 2026, the Messa administration has been focused on the basics residents expect from local government: clear information, responsive service, and steady follow-through. Our goal is simple - make it easier for residents to understand what the Town is doing, why it matters, and how to get involved.

Supervisor Jim Messa has emphasized a practical, resident-first style of leadership - showing up, listening, and making sure Town Hall communicates in a way that people can use. That means fewer assumptions and more clarity: what's on the agenda, what decisions are being made, how taxpayer dollars are being managed, and where things stand on ongoing projects and most importantly, what is happening in their "backyards".

A key partner in that work is Town Clerk Michele Moran, who is bringing a strong customer-service mindset to the Clerk's Office. Michele has appointed Sue Keller as Deputy Town Clerk ("Deputy One"), expanding the office's capacity to support residents efficiently and consistently.

The Town also welcomes Vincent Pristera, who is new to the Town Board and was elected to fill the First Ward Councilman vacancy. Vincent has stepped in with a readiness to learn, contribute, and represent residents with a thoughtful, community-centered approach.

To support communications and transparency initiatives, Supervisor Messa has appointed Christine Martin as Confidential Secretary to the Town Supervisor in a part-time capacity. Christine will assist with strengthening resident communications and

building practical systems that make Town information easier to find, follow, and understand.

What's already underway:

1) Launching a Stormwater Committee (resident-driven).

Supervisor Messa introduced reestablishing the Stormwater Committee with full support from the board. The committee will address stormwater concerns, with resident input and expertise. A notice will be posted on the Town website requesting a letter of interest and a resume from residents who would like to serve. Submissions will be accepted through March 3 for Town Board consideration. The committee is expected to include 4-6 residents, with representation encouraged across the Town—ideally 1-2 residents from Ward 1, 1-2 from Ward 2 (including a resident from NYM), and one resident each from Wards 3 and 4. This is one of several ways the Town intends to bring more voices into the work and improve outcomes through shared problem-solving.

2) More informative Town Board meetings—starting with visual, structured updates.

Beginning this year, Councilmembers and Department Heads will prepare monthly PowerPoint presentations. These presentations will be submitted alongside agenda items and displayed on monitors during Town Board meetings. They will also be treated as part of the meeting materials and posted on the Town website when the agenda is posted so residents can review information in advance and follow along in real time.

The goal is straightforward: better understanding, full transparency, and clearer accountability. Councilmembers will share updates from their ward perspectives such as constituent concerns and issue trends, while Department Heads will provide department-level updates in coordination with the appropriate Standing Committee Chair and Co-Chair. This is a meaningful change in how information is delivered, and it is designed to make meetings easier to follow and more valuable for the public.

3) Getting audits and financials back on schedule.

The Town has made important progress on financial reporting. The 2023 audit has been completed and submitted, and we are now working to complete the 2024 audit. This puts New Hartford on a path to be current with required audit filings so that when the 2025 audit takes place in 2026, we will be operating on schedule. Keeping audits up to date is foundational to transparency and good stewardship and it's a priority we are treating with the seriousness it deserves.

A Special Farewell

As the Town moves forward, we also want to recognize Barb Schwenzfeier who is retiring after 24 years of service. Barb served as Personnel Director, but her impact reached far beyond her title—she became a steady, trusted part of the Town's day-to-day operations for many years. Congratulations, Barb, and best wishes for what comes next.

This monthly space is one way we'll stay connected with residents. The invitation is open: reach out, stay engaged, and help shape what's next for New Hartford.

