

**TOWN BOARD MEETING OF THE TOWN BOARD
OF THE TOWN OF NEW HARTFORD, NEW YORK,
HELD AT TOWN HALL, 8635 CLINTON STREET, NEW HARTFORD, NY ON
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2026 at 6:00 P.M.**

Town Supervisor Messa called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. The roll was then taken with the following Town Officials and Department Heads being present during the progress of the meeting.

TOWN BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councilman Vincent Pristera
Councilman John Latini
Councilman David M. Reynolds
Councilman David Tehan – Deputy Supervisor
Supervisor James J. Messa

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS/EMPLOYEES PRESENT:

Town Clerk, Michele Moran
Town Attorney, Herbert Cully
Superintendent, Richard Sherman
Codes Officer, George Farley
Police Chief, Ronald Fontaine
Assessor Darlene Abbatecola
Deputy Clerk, Susan Keller
Finance, Christina Lacy
Assistant Director of Personnel, Barbara Schwenzfeier

Thereafter a quorum was declared present for the transaction of business.

I. BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The following Resolution was then introduced for adoption by Councilman Latini and duly seconded by Councilman Reynolds.

(RESOLUTION NO. 14 OF 2026)

RESOLVED, that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby approve the Board Meeting minutes for the January 1, 2026 Organizational Board Meeting.

The Town Board voted upon roll call, resulting as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-	Aye
Councilman Latini	-	Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-	Aye
Councilman Tehan	-	Aye
Supervisor Messa	-	Aye

The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly **ADOPTED**.

Town Clerk Michele Moran advised the Board that Minutes for December 10th and 19th, 2025 were not prepared by the prior administration prior to leaving office and that the new administration staff would be working on compiling them as time allows after getting settled in.

II. PRESENTATION/PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a. Omar Massoud – Roberts Road. He misunderstood and thought that a Public Hearing was being held on the Solar Moratorium. He will reserve comment until which time a Public Hearing is scheduled (February 4, 2026).
- b. Philip Davis – Hamilton Street. Indicated that there is an issue with plowing Church Street due to parking violations. Plow trucks are not completing the route but rather, turning around as there are cars parked alongside the road, preventing the plow from getting through. Highway Superintendent Sherman and Chief Fontaine will work together to alleviate the situation.
- c. Taj Major – Tamarack Drive. Expressed concern with stormwater runoff issues in the Tamarack Drive area. She believes same are associated with the deforestation on the former St. Thomas building and a decrease in plant matter across the street and uphill from St. Thomas Church on Clinton Road due to construction. This matter will be addressed once the Stormwater Committee is re-established.

III. PUBLIC HEARING

The following Resolution was then introduced for adoption by Councilman Reynolds and duly seconded by Councilman Latini.

(RESOLUTION NO. 15 OF 2026)

RESOLVED, that the Solar Moratorium was voted on at the December 10, 2025 Town Board Meeting, but legal notice was not submitted for publication. Rescind December 10, 2025 motion and reschedule a public hearing for February 4, 2026 meeting. Attorney Cully to draft publication and Town Clerk to advertise/publish same.

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly **ADOPTED**.

IV. VOUCHERS

Councilman Reynolds introduced the following Resolution for adoption and duly seconded by Councilman Latini:

(RESOLUTION NO. 16 OF 2026)

RESOLVED, that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby approve the vouchers.

The Town Board voted upon roll call, resulting as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye (Abstain from ADK bank voucher(s))
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly ADOPTED

V. CONTRACTS

Agreement – Storage Tank Liability Insurance Policy with Highstreet

Upon recommendation of the Town Attorney, Councilman Latini offered the following Resolution for adoption; seconded by Councilman Tehan:

(RESOLUTION NO. 17 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby authorize and direct the Town Supervisor, or in his absence, the Deputy Town Supervisor to enter into and to execute an Agreement between the Town of New Hartford and Highstreet Insurance & Financial Services in the amount of \$2,695 for Storage Tank Liability Insurance on tanks at Sanger Building, 111 New Hartford Street. The Town Board voted upon roll call, resulting as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly ADOPTED

Agreement – Highstreet Financial Services

Upon recommendation of the Town Attorney, Councilman Reynolds offered the following Resolution for adoption; seconded by Councilman Latini:

(RESOLUTION NO. 18 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby authorize and direct the Town Supervisor, or in his absence, the Deputy Town Supervisor to enter into and to execute an Agreement between the Town of New Hartford and Highstreet Insurance & Financial Services for Excess Employer’s Liability with a premium of \$1,692.00 and Terrorism Coverage with a premium of \$17 (included in \$1692.00). The Town Board voted upon roll call, resulting as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was unanimously carried and duly ADOPTED

Agreement for Fire Protection - Town of New Hartford Fire Department Districts 1 & 2

Councilman Reynolds moved the following Resolution for adoption and Councilman Latini seconded same:

(RESOLUTION NO. 19 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that after Public Hearing on November 10, 2025, the Town Board of the Town of New Hartford does hereby authorize and direct the execution of the one-year Fire Protection Contracts commencing January 1, 2026 and ending December 31, 2026 between the Town of New Hartford and its Fire Department, as follows:

- Districts 1 and 2 - **\$807,246.00**

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly **ADOPTED**.

Agreement for Fire Protection - Village of New Hartford Fire Department District 3

Councilman Reynolds moved the following Resolution for adoption and Councilman Pristera seconded same:

(RESOLUTION NO. 20 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that after Public Hearing on November 10, 2025, the Town Board of the Town of New Hartford does hereby authorize and direct the execution of the one-year Fire Protection Contracts commencing January 1, 2026 and ending December 31, 2026 between the Town of New Hartford and the Village of New Hartford and its Fire Department, as follows:

- District 3 - **\$66,462.81**

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly **ADOPTED**.

Agreement for Fire Protection - Willowvale Fire Company, Inc., District 4

Councilman Reynolds moved the following Resolution for adoption and Councilman Tehan seconded same:

(RESOLUTION NO. 21 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that after Public Hearing on November 10, 2025, the Town Board of the Town of New Hartford does hereby authorize and direct the execution of the one-year Fire Protection Contracts commencing January 1, 2026 and ending December 31, 2026 between the Town of New Hartford and District 4, Willowvale Fire Company, Inc., in the amount of \$379,942.90.

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly **ADOPTED**.

Agreement for Fire Protection – Village of New York Mills Fire Department, District 5

Councilman Latini moved the following Resolution for adoption and Councilman Reynolds seconded same:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that after Public Hearing on November 10, 2025, the Town Board of the Town of New Hartford does hereby authorize and direct the execution of the one-year Fire Protection Contracts commencing January 1, 2026 and ending December 31, 2026 between the Town of New Hartford and District 5, Village of New York Mills and its Fire Department., in the amount of \$195,754.39.

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly **ADOPTED**.

VI. MATTERS SUBMITTED BY TOWN SUPERVISOR

1.) Town Hall Main entrance door and key swipe – repair or replace?
Highway Superintendent to get quotes for a cloth canopy and a structure to shield door from ice and rain runoff.

- 1) Town Hall main entrance door and key swipe – repair or replace?
 - a) Highway Superintendent Sherman to obtain quotes for awning and a permanent structure to protect from snow and rain. Superintendent Sherman also suggests a whole new door be installed.
- 2) Create and establish a Stormwater Committee
 - a) Post on website to request letter of interest and resume from residents – to be submitted to town board by March 3rd.

Town Supervisor's Confidential Secretary – Set Rate of Pay

Councilman Latini moved the following Resolution for adoption and Councilman Reynolds seconded same:

(RESOLUTION NO. 23 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that the Town Board of the Town of New Hartford does hereby set the hourly rate of pay for a Part-Time Confidential Secretary at \$20/hr. This position will be part-time with no benefits.

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Abstain

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly **ADOPTED**.

Bookkeeper / Highway Secretary

Councilman Latini moved the following Resolution for adoption and Councilman Reynolds seconded same:

(RESOLUTION NO. 24 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that the Town Board of the Town of New Hartford does move Christina Lacy from part-time to full-time status, effective 1/14/2026 or sooner. Rate of pay will be \$25/hr and the position will be full time with benefits. Job responsibilities will include Bookkeeper and secretary to Highway Superintendent.

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly **ADOPTED**.

- 3) Discuss Term Limits for Town Supervisor and Councilmen. Attorney Cully advised there is currently a bill pending in the NYS Assembly to set a 4 year limit. If passed, same would be at discretion of Town to enact and would require a Mandatory referendum to be placed on the ballot in the Fall. He will track the Assembly bill and follow up.
- 4) Supervisor Messa recommends that Councilmen and Department Heads create monthly PowerPoint Presentations. Town Supervisor will provide outline for PPT Presentations. These will be submitted with agenda items, and will be displayed on monitors at the monthly town board meetings. PPT will be part of the agenda and will be placed on the town's website when the agenda is posted. This will help residents to be more informed and will provide full transparency and accountability.
 - a) Councilmen will provide details from their perspective Wards, to include but not limited to, number of constituent calls, concerns and matters related to their geographic areas, etc.
 - b) Department Heads to work in conjunction with Standing Committee Chair and Co-Chair. The department head will provide a PPT presentation with related information pertaining to the specific department.

Resident concerns

- 1) Commercial Drive corridor between Best Buy and Walgreens – received email stating safety concerns due to lack of lighting and has formally request additional street lighting – please see attached email that was sent to the town board. Highway Superintendent Sherman to contact NYS DOT regarding a possible lighting district as it is a State road.
- 2) Received an email related to upkeep of snow removal for Seneca Turnpike – resident stated concern for public safety for those walking in that area and stated the importance of these being maintained to keep pedestrians off of the main roads. Highway Superintendent Sherman clears the sidewalks as his crews have the manpower and time. There has recently been a lot of snow to keep up with. Councilman Reynolds asks Police Chief Fontaine if any enforcement measures can be taken in regards to pedestrians in the roadway. There is a section of law, but it's not easily enforceable.

VII. MATTERS SUBMITTED TOWN ATTORNEY

- 1.) Local Law to re-instate Town Supervisor salary to the rate it was from previous years (less health benefits). Matter tabled to get local law draft from Town Attorney.
- 2.) Executive Session – to discuss PBA Contract.

VIII. REPORTS OF TOWN DEPARTMENTS

A.) Town Clerk – Michele Moran

- 1.) 2026 tax collection underway. Warrant Disbursed. There were some delays in getting software and banking resources set up, but staff pulled together and quickly got things on track to begin with as little inconvenience to the public as possible.
- 2.) Computer/ IT / Email set up status – Some delays with onboarding Clerk and Deputy clerk with access. Continuing to work with IT for full access to Town records & computer programs.
- 3.) Raffle Application - Sons of American Legion

The following Resolution was introduced for adoption by Councilman Latini and duly seconded by Councilman Tehan:

(RESOLUTION NO. 25 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby grant permission to Sons of New Hartford American Legion, Post 1376, 8616 Clinton Street, New Hartford, an organization duly granted a Games of Chance Identification Number 30-215-201-08744 by the New York State Racing and Wagering Board, to sell Bell Jar raffle tickets at Post 1376, in accordance with all rules and regulations of said Racing and Wagering Board; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Clerk be, and she hereby is, authorized and directed to execute Form GC-4&5, Raffle Consent Form.

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly **ADOPTED**.

4.) Reaffirm Deputy Registrar

The following Resolution was introduced for adoption by Councilman Tehan and duly seconded by Councilman Latini:

(RESOLUTION NO. 26 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby reaffirm the appointment of Deputy Registrar, Theresa Messa.

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Abstain

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly *ADOPTED*.

5.) Appoint Sub Registrar(s)

The following Resolution was introduced for adoption by Councilman Reynolds and duly seconded by Councilman Latini:

(RESOLUTION NO. 27 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby appoint Susan Keller and Denise Hensel, Sub Registrar to act in times of absence of Registrar and Deputy Registrar.

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly *ADOPTED*.

B.) CHIEF RONALD FONTAINE

Agreement – Kirkland Shelter Agreement

Upon recommendation of the Police Chief, Councilman Reynolds offered the following Resolution for adoption; seconded by Councilman Latini:

(RESOLUTION NO. 28 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby authorize and direct the Town Supervisor, or in his absence, the Deputy Town Supervisor to enter into and to execute an Agreement between the Town of New Hartford and the Town of Kirkland, wherein the Town of New Hartford will provide animal shelter services to the Town of Kirkland during calendar year 2026, in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth therein.

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
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Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly ***ADOPTED***.

Agreement – Kirkland ACO Agreement

Upon recommendation of the Police Chief, Councilman Reynolds offered the following Resolution for adoption; seconded by Councilman Pristera:

(RESOLUTION NO. 29 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby authorize and direct the Town Supervisor, or in his absence, the Deputy Town Supervisor to enter into and to execute an Agreement between the Town of New Hartford and the Town of Kirkland, wherein the Town of New Hartford will provide animal control services to the Town of Kirkland during calendar year 2026, in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth therein.

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly ***ADOPTED***.

Agreement – Paris Shelter Agreement

Upon recommendation of the Police Chief, Councilman Latini offered the following Resolution for adoption; seconded by Councilman Tehan:

(RESOLUTION NO. 30 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby authorize and direct the Town Supervisor, or in his absence, the Deputy Town Supervisor to enter into and to execute an Agreement between the Town of New Hartford and the Town of Paris, wherein the Town of New Hartford will provide animal shelter services to the Town of Paris during calendar year 2026, in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth therein.

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye

Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly ***ADOPTED***.

Agreement – Whitestown Shelter Agreement

Upon recommendation of the Police Chief, Councilman Pristera offered the following Resolution for adoption; seconded by Councilman Reynolds:

(RESOLUTION NO. 31 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby authorize and direct the Town Supervisor, or in his absence, the Deputy Town Supervisor to enter into and to execute an Agreement between the Town of New Hartford and the Town of Whitestown, wherein the Town of New Hartford will provide animal shelter services to the Town of Whitestown during calendar year 2026, in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth therein.

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly ***ADOPTED***.

C.) PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

Removal of Former Employees with no resignation submitted.

Upon recommendation of Assistant Personnel Director, Barbara Schwenzfeier, Councilman Reynolds offered the following Resolution for adoption; seconded by Councilman Latini:

(RESOLUTION NO. 32 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby accept the resignation of John Abounader from the Court Department.

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly ***ADOPTED***.

APPOINTMENT OF MOTOR EQUIPMENT OPERATOR (MEO) TO FILL VACANCY AT HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Upon Recommendation of Highway Superintendent, Richard Sherman, Councilman Latini introduced the following Resolution for adoption and seconded by Councilman Pristera.

(RESOLUTION NO. 33 OF 2026)

RESOLVED, the Town of New Hartford Town Board does hereby approve to appoint David Stephenson as Motor Equipment Operator (MEO) to fill 1 of 5 openings. Start date immediately. Rate of pay is starting at \$22/hr, full time, permanent with benefits.

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly ***ADOPTED***.

IX. MATTERS SUBMITTED BY COUNCILMEN

a. Councilman Reynolds

- i. Total number of fire inspections completed in December – 10, with 6 re-inspections. Total fees collected in 2025 - \$89,320.00.
- ii. Bed Tax – Update requested from Attorney Cully. Waiting for a response from NYS Senate and Assembly on same. City of Utica also awaiting answer. Attorney Cully will follow up.

b. Councilman Tehan

- i. Fence Enforcement, 44 Oakdale S. A fence was erected without a permit which is encroaching on the neighbor's property by 19". Pictures provided to board members. Codes has been notified and has looked into the matter and a Court hearing is pending.
- ii. Finance & Accounting support – Bonadino & Co., LLP. Appendix A details proposed accounting services, which would outsource support for finance and

accounting to gain additional support to bring the Town current with bank reconciliations and audits.

Finance and Accounting Support Proposal – Bonadio & Co., LLP.

Councilman David Tehan introduced the following Resolution for adoption and seconded by Councilman Latini.

(RESOLUTION NO. 34 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that the Town Board of the Town of New Hartford does hereby authorize and direct the execution of the one-year agreement commencing January 1, 2026 and ending December 31, 2026 between the Town of New Hartford and Bonadio & Co., LLC. in the amount of \$9,200/monthly. Per Attorney Cully, he would “approve it conditioned upon the word “gross” (preceding negligence) being stricken from the Indemnification section.

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly **ADOPTED**.

- c. **Councilman Latini** – No matters
- d. **Councilman Pristera** – No matters

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Latini introduced the following Resolution for adoption and seconded by Councilman Tehan:

(RESOLUTION NO. 35 OF 2026)

RESOLVED, the Town of New Hartford Town Board does hereby approve to go into Executive Session (7:20pm)

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly **ADOPTED**.

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Councilman Latini introduced the following Resolution for adoption and seconded by Councilman Tehan:

(RESOLUTION NO. 36 OF 2026)

RESOLVED, the Town of New Hartford Town Board does hereby approve to come out of Executive Session (8:16 pm)

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly ***ADOPTED***.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Town Board, upon motion of Councilman Tehan and second by Councilman Pristera, the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

(RESOLUTION NO. 37 OF 2026)

RESOLVED that the New Hartford Town Board does hereby accept and approve as submitted the approval to adjourn.

Upon roll call, the Board members voted as follows:

Councilman Pristera	-Aye
Councilman Latini	-Aye
Councilman Reynolds	-Aye
Councilman Tehan	-Aye
Supervisor Messa	-Aye

The Resolution was declared unanimously carried and duly ***ADOPTED***.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Moran
Town Clerk
1/15/26