

State of New York
County of Fulton
Town of Caroga

Minutes of the Caroga Town Board regular monthly meeting held on March 11, 2026, at 6:30 pm at Town hall with the following board members in attendance by roll call. The salute to the flag followed.

Supervisor John Glenn - Here
Council Member Richard Sturgess - Here
Council Member Matthew Cooper - Here
Council Member Kimberly Walker - Here
Council Member Greta Frasier – Here

After the salute to the flag a moment of silence was held for George VanAllen. He was a lifelong resident of Caroga Lake and an employee with the highway department with more than 25 years of distinguished service.

Also in attendance were guest speakers – Christina VanValkenburgh – Town of Johnstown Supervisor and Jim Groff – Town of Northampton Supervisor, Jeremy Manning – Wheelerville Bike Trail Manager, Leigh Anne Loucks - Assessor, Steve Stedman - Greens Keeper, Roy Stock – Highway Superintendent, John Livingston – Board of Assessment Review Member, Mr. Voght – building maintenance, former Highway Superintendent Steve Putman, former Town Supervisor Scott Horton and his wife, Anita Long – Secretary to the Comprehensive Planning Committee, two highway employees, Arthur Wadsworth – alternate member to the Planning Board and Comprehensive Plan Liaison, four participation in Government students, and eleven members of the public.

The speakers this evening have gone through and are about to go through the battery warehousing situation. Supervisor Glenn noted when there is a fire you can't put it out. Mr. Groff noted that once they started talking about the project to their Planning Board it moved forward to a public hearing and the application was approved. Then the Adirondack Park Agency reviewed the project and approved it. Now the Town of Northampton is trying to put a moratorium in place. They have hired a lawyer. One of the needs to have a battery storage facility is a substation. Supervisor Glenn did not think Caroga had the infrastructure to support this type of project.

Council Member Walker asked how this is stopped. Mr. Groff noted it is like a business; you can't stop it. "You can't stop a public utility." It was noted that the town can establish where this would be allowed.

Christina Van Valkenburgh is the Supervisor of the Town of Johnstown. They have about 17 solar fields. She is not against solar. When she took office there were four solar farms looking to come into the town. At that point the board decided to put a moratorium in place to examine this issue. During this time, she began gathering information and found that to put out an electric fire a \$5,000.00 blanket is needed. As more was learned it was decided to add battery storage facilities to the moratorium. In the Town of Johnstown this falls under a special use variance. She noted

that the safety regulations had to be established. The Supervisor from the Town of Glen helped them through this process. Then the town attorney reviewed it. Supervisor Van Valkenburgh noted there are various agencies that review these projects. Supervisor Van Valkenburgh recommended towns consider a moratorium until planning and zoning boards work out the rules.

The public had some questions. It was noted that these companies are leasing land from individuals. The taxation of these properties was discussed. Supervisor Van Valkenburgh stated they are not paying their fair share. Our law will determine when the size deems it a solar farm. Once the energy is being sold for a profit it is a commercial/industrial complex.

Council Member Sturgess asked about the battery storage... Supervisor Van Valkenburgh noted that solar farms are a battery energy source. If the grid can't take the energy being produced at that time it goes to the back up batteries to be sold back to the grid. In Northampton there is no solar. What is happening is "they" are purchasing power during off peak hours and put it into battery storage and reselling it back to the grid. They can only store energy for 4 hours. Supervisor Groff thought this was a scam. Supervisor Groff noted the town should make sure there is enough money for decommissioning through a cash bond.

A member of the public asked if there were any areas in our town conducive to battery storage facilities? Supervisor Glenn thought there was an area near the town dump dedicated for a solar farm. Council Member Sturgess thought this would need to be researched. He didn't think we didn't want them at all just that the town wanted the ability to put them in an area where it would be beneficial. Supervisor Groff stated people don't want them at all. Supervisor Groff stated they can bring in a great deal of money to support the town's infrastructure. He noted they have to be placed near overhead power lines near a substation. Supervisor Van Valkenburgh noted the contaminants and how Caroga is a recreational town. If there is a fire, there has to be an evacuation. She did note the technology is getting better. Council Member Sturgess noted the contaminants would go to the Johnstown watershed if put near our substation. Sometimes these companies say they create jobs but that is only true during construction. Supervisor Groff noted Lewis County has allowed them.

Assessor Loucks wanted to address the revenue stream. She noted it is not substantial. Council Member Frasier noted when she was looking into a solar farm the money was lifechanging. She was looking at a 25-year transferable lease.

Supervisor VanValkenburgh is not trying to tell people what they can do with their property but at the same time it should not affect everyone else that is around them.

Supervisor Glenn received a call from Fulton County Planning today about the moratorium. He thought they would help with suggestions on creating a law. A draft local law was created from the Town of Johnstown moratorium. It was reviewed by the Code Officer and still needs to be reviewed by the attorney. The board will receive a copy of the draft document. It was noted that the Town of Johnstown took a year and a half to develop their law under the moratorium.

Council Member Sturgess suggested a resolution to see if the board wanted to move forward with consideration for a moratorium.

RESOLUTION #2026-028 to move forward with a moratorium process for a battery storage plant was offered by Supervisor Glenn at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on March 11, 2026.

WHEREAS, this evening the board had two guest speakers, both of whom are dealing with solar farms and battery storage facilities in their towns, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move forward with a moratorium and does further **RESOLVE**, that the draft moratorium be reviewed by the Town Attorney.

Adopted by a vote of five (5) Ayes: Glenn, Sturgess, Cooper, Walker, Frasier

The speakers were thanked for their attendance this evening. At this time 3 people left the meeting.

Supervisor Glenn made a motion to waive the reading of the minutes. Council Member Sturgess seconded the motion. All board members were in favor of the motion; Glenn, Sturgess, Cooper, Walker, Frasier.

Department Reports:

Wheelerville Bike Trail – Mr. Manning reported the trails are open day to day for winter use. Check the Facebook Page and website for updates.

The town was the recipient of the tourism award by the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce. It will be awarded on April 2nd. Council Member Cooper asked where this would take place. Mr. Manning will find out.

The town was also awarded the round 8 Smart Growth Grant in the amount of \$125,000.00 for use over 3 years (once started) to update the current trails and for adaptive trails.

Mr. Manning was asked to be a presenter at a conference up in Saranac Lake. He and three others will be on a panel to discuss the usage of municipal lands and how it can be used for recreational tourism purposes.

Council Member Sturgess asked what the total amount of money in grants Mr. Manning has written for the Wheelerville Bike Trails. Mr. Manning asked why he asked. It is a staggering number Council Member Sturgess noted. The public perception to everything is to get a grant. He would like the amount posted on the website, so people know we are trying to write grants to keep taxes down. Mr. Manning has been successful 6 out of 7 times.

Council Member Frasier asked if the grant dictates how the money is used, or can it be put away for future maintenance? Mr. Manning stated it is for use during that time period. When he does a budget, he will do say 25% for maintenance and X toward adaptive trails. You allocate in your budget, exactly what you are going to do. The money cannot be tucked away for maintenance five years from now. Every grant he writes he puts in for maintenance. He writes the grant to align with the state's priorities.

Mr. Putman complained about the parking on the west side of route 10 & 29A during events at the bike trails. His private property was blocked. The permit says Kasson Drive is to be

monitored. His concern is there may be an accident there as you couldn't see coming out of the intersection. Mr. Putman thought there shouldn't be parking 50 yards before Kasson Drive and 50 yards beyond it at the minimum. The worst part, Mr. Putman stated, was that there was a camper parked by his house with a dog (barking) in it all day. Mr. Putman was offered a T-shirt by Mr. Manning. He asked Mr. Manning to look into this.

Mr. Manning noted that NYS Dept. of Transportation issued the permit. Mr. Manning & Mr. Putman continue talking over each other and are gaveled to stop. Mr. Manning apologized and noted typically that section is coned off.

BTI - Kunath – No Report

At 7:15 pm Supervisor Glenn opened the public hearing on Proposed Local Law #1 of 2026 “Establishing the Residency Requirements for the Appointed Office of Deputy Highway Superintendent for the Town of Caroga”

Mr. Quinn asked what was wrong with the guy being from out of town. Supervisor Glenn thought the purpose of the law was to be able to choose from a larger geographical area. The way the law is now the deputy has to be from Caroga Lake. This way we can use someone from whatever counties touch our boundaries.

Mr. Wadsworth wondered if there weren't people in town who wanted the position. It was explained that this is for the deputy. Mr. Wadsworth thought the person should live in town. Council Member Sturgess explained that if there are 5 highway employees who live in town and not one of them wants the position of Deputy Highway Superintendent and they have to live in town what is the solution. Mr. Wadsworth thought an ad could be placed for anyone in the town who wants to fill the position. Council Member Cooper noted that there is a highway employee who does not live in town who is willing to be the deputy, but he can't be appointed because the law states they have to live in town. There are two new employees who are not even off probation yet. Council Member Sturgess noted you have to have someone qualified for the position. Mr. Quinn thought even if the Highway Superintendent was away out of state, he could check radar to see what is going on.

Mrs. Wager didn't think a road that had been blown in could be pinpointed from a computer.

Mr. Putman questioned the qualifications of the deputy. Council Member Sturgess noted that is the Highway Superintendent's job to select the most qualified. Mr. Putman noted it is a safety issue... look at what happened in Pine Lake. If the deputy were 30 minutes away – help was needed immediately. Council Member Sturgess noted the Deputy Hwy Superintendent could place a call for the highway crew to go to the scene and begin work while he traveled to Caroga. Council Member Sturgess noted this is the time for the public to tell the board what they want. It was noted that this is only in the event that the Superintendent is not around. Mr. Putman began talking about safety checks on town vehicles, which was off topic.

The town clerk noted part of the reason the deputy had to live in town was because if in the event the Highway Superintendent was no longer able to serve the person taking over would have to be an elector of the town.

Mr. Wager stated then you couldn't pull like you did last time when you re-appointed him (Mr. Stock) as deputy after he quit. Council Member Sturgess stated that is not what we are talking about and suggested he call the lawyer about what they did. "It's public knowledge."

Sole Assessor – Leigh Anne Loucks reported on a new address change form going forward that people have to sign off on. It will be placed in their permanent file. Sales are being entered. The Assessor put in a legal notice pursuant to Real Property Tax Law 501. Ms. Loucks continues to answer calls and send in paperwork for exemptions for new homeowners.

The clerk asked that the Assessor send over the legal notice so it can be posted.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector/Registrar/RMO – The clerk Linda Gilbert reported that about 340 second tax notices were sent out last week. The clerk noted the 2025 books are again presented for audit. So far two board members have audited them.

Tax Collector – to date collection is \$3,562,635.87 of that is \$2,098.23 in penalties. The clerk told the Supervisor that a second check will be cut to him for the penalties. That leaves \$806,180.12 to be collected. There are corrections of errors in the amount of \$2,801.29. There was a problem with the credit card monthly report which took about five weeks to resolve.

The clerk noted that customers continue to comment on the smell in the building when they come in to pay taxes. The clerk noted the (ceiling) tiles outside the gym are wet and stained.

The second deputy was very good and quickly learned the tax collection process.

The Planning Board just set a meeting dated of March 18, 2026, to discuss rezoning particular municipal parcels for future projects.

The agenda of the upcoming County Planning Training meeting has been changed to include a session on Comprehensive Planning. The meeting is on Tuesday March 24 at 4 pm at FMCC college. Registration is through the county.

Code Enforcement & Sanitation – Mr. Fancher submitted a written report. He asked for board approval to attend the Adirondack Park Association conference on May 6 – 7 in Saranac.

RESOLUTION #2026-029 to approve the Code Officer attendance at a training on May 6 – 7, 2026 in Saranac Lake was offered by Supervisor Glenn at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on March 11, 2026.

WHEREAS, Mr. Fancher Code Office submitted his written monthly report noting his desire to attend an upcoming training, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to approve the Code Officer attendance at a training on May 6 – 7, 2026 in Saranac Lake.

Seconded by Council Member Sturgess

Discussion: Council Member Cooper reiterated to Council Members Walker and Frasier that a motion was made to allow the code officer to attend a training session. (they had been having a discussion)

Adopted by a vote of five (5) Ayes: Glenn, Sturgess, Cooper, Walker, Frasier

Mr. Fancher reported that he issued 3 permits collecting \$1,725.00 in fees and with a valuation of \$4,018,000.00. He conducted 10 inspections and is working on the yearend state report due in April. He is also working on expired permit letters and closing out old permits. He is updating the current list for yearly fire inspection.

Dog Control – No Report, but the clerk noted that Mr. Dutcher was sent electronically a list of 13 delinquent dog license renewals from 2025.

Golf Course – Mr. Stedman reported that he is working on painting markers etc. which he does every two years or so. He hopes to begin working outside in not too long. He is picking up trash along the road, opening up the drainage pipes. After that he will begin removing tree debris from the course. He will continue working on the projects on hole #'s 4 & 5. Club events are being planned, and carts have been ordered as needed. Two years ago, there was a damaged cart. It cost \$1,100.00 for the lease company to fix it. This year another car had the same issue, and he fixed it for \$250.00. All the seasonal employees will be returning. He will do some minor ordering for the club house.

Council Member Sturgess (liaison) reported he and Council Member Cooper met with CT Male last Tuesday regarding the clubhouse project. There are a couple of different options the town has right now so a work session will be called for in the next 30 days. Council Member Sturgess noted it will be announced on the town website, and he hopes to find a way to zoom the meeting.

At 7:38 pm the public hearing on the proposed Local Law # 1 of 2026 was closed.

Highway – Roy Stock submitted a written report. He submitted two quotes for a new box for truck #17. He is waiting for the third quote. They are fixing the trucks as needed, plowing snow and keeping the roads open. He is getting ready to post a 5-ton weight limit on the roads on March 18, 2026. Council Member Cooper (liaison) noted that the box is junk. He noted they are waiting for the third quote.

Lakes Management Program – Supervisor Glenn reported that the town was advertising for a lead diver. There are two applicants. The application process will be closed on March 15. A committee of three, Jim Hogan, Marcus Harazin and Supervisor Glenn will conduct the interviews. He expects this process to happen sometime in May.

Town Hall Building – Council Member Cooper reported that he has three quotes to update/replace the mini split system for this building. They are for the old clinic area and the clerk's office. Once quote is for the 6k heads and is the cheapest. The others assessed that two of the heads should be larger and the quotes are far greater. One quote is for \$8,900.00 to the most expensive at \$14,000.00. In the middle was a quote for \$12,000.00. The board will review the

quotes. Council Member Cooper will check with the code officer and the contractor about the gym door replacement. Council Member Sturgess did talk to him but will send a text to the contractor about when the work will begin.

Tourism Committee – Council Member Frasier reported that she is meeting with the county tourism department on the 24. She has been gathering information from local businesses and groups about any events for the America 250 Celebration this summer. Council Member Frasier noted that events should be posted on the 44lakes.com website.

Council Member Frasier stated there were counselor positions available for summer recreation. Applicants must be 18 years of age. It is a Monday – Friday 9 – 2 job, and you have to like kids. Reach out to Colleen Ricciardi if interested.

Supervisor’s Report:

- 1) Supervisor Glenn noted he had a meeting on March 2nd with NYS DOS Project Manager Cass Leopold regarding the Comprehensive Plan.
- 2) As previously noted, the cutoff date to apply for the lead diver position is March 15.
- 3) Supervisor Glenn noted the board budgeted \$10,000.00 for two speed limit signs. The town received a quote from All Traffic Solutions LLC in the amount of \$7,416.58. Council Member Sturgess thought the two signs were to be used for the golf course. He stated for another \$1,125.00 we could purchase a third one. We have to figure out the legality of posting them. The Highway Superintendent will have to help figure that out. The thought was to cover the roads coming into town. Council Member Walker asked about the lake front. Council Member Sturgess noted that there are signs posted there already.

Mr. Wadsworth asked if there was any way caution lights could be placed by the golf course. There are golf carts and pedestrians crossing. Council Member Sturgess replied that this would do that and stated we can ask the state about that. It was stated they run on battery and solar. Council Member Cooper noted that Department of Transportation had to come out and do a survey before the crosswalks were put in. This is the same process to have lighted signs.

RESOLUTION #2026-030 to include ordering a third speed limit sign was offered by Council Member Sturgess at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on March 11, 2026.

WHEREAS, during the 2026 budget process former Supervisor Ralph Palcovic and the board put \$10,000.00 on line item A3310.4 in anticipation of ordering two traffic control signs showing your speed, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to purchase three signs with the cost not to exceed \$11,200.00 the additional funding would come from Contingent A1920.4.

Seconded by Supervisor Glenn

Mr. Wadsworth asked if there was a camera on the signs. Without a camera he stated you don't have control. Council Member Sturgess would like to see a camera that also sends tickets, but this is a start. The tickets are on a whole other level.

Adopted by a vote of five (5) Ayes: Glenn, Sturgess, Cooper, Walker, Frasier

Council Member Sturgess asked for the balance sheets from the bookkeeper for last month. The supervisor left them on the table in his office.

4) Also previously discussed the board will have CT Male attend a future board meeting.

****Public Comments and Questions** opened at 7:45 pm. No one addressed the board.

Old Business:

Procurement Policy review does the board want to change any of the limits? Make a resolution to accept that all of the current amounts are OK. Tabled.

The clerk noted the policy was sent out with the agenda for the board to review. Council Member Sturgess noted the information is hard to find on his phone. Council Member Frasier printed the agenda with attachments from her phone and said she didn't have the policy. The clerk offered to print the packets for the board members. Several board members wanted that to happen.

Mrs. Holliday asked about the limits. Council Member Sturgess noted that dollar amounts in the procurement policy are low when authorization is needed to spend funds with board approval. The clerk noted that Association of Towns also wrote an article recommending that the policy be reviewed.

Clarification from Council Member Cooper on terms of the lease on the Toyota Tacoma. He noted that last month when the board approved leasing from Steete Toyota the paperwork listed \$2,000.00 cash down. The town is not paying the \$2,000.00, it is the residual value of the lease vehicle when we turn it in. The initial payment will only be \$439.32.

The Clerk gave an update on phone problem whereby AT & T callers cannot connect to the automated system to reach an extension at town hall. Dan from Frontier came in earlier this week and he looked at the system. He sent a text saying that Beth from the main office is working with an engineer and will set up a date to do test calls so they can watch a trace. When Derek did a preliminary check on why the AT & T calls weren't coming through, he recommended the trace test be done. It will be at no cost. The clerk used one of the numbers for Frontier from the supervisor's office.

Council Member Sturgess noted that the clerk has been using her cell phone to receive calls during this problem. He was in favor of giving the clerk credit for the use of her phone for x amount of weeks or months this has been going on. A voucher can be prepared for next month's meeting for approval.

New Business:

Supervisor Glenn reiterated that an updated version of the proposed moratorium will be sent out to the board members.

Correspondence:

Thank you note from The Caroga Museum for the Town's continued support.

Letter to board from Steve Putman re: various concerns. Mr. Putman asked if he was supposed to talk about this before or could he do it now? Supervisor Glenn stated there would have to be 2/3 of the board in agreement to have him speak out of order.

Supervisor Glen made a motion to allow Mr. Putman to talk out of turn. Council Member Walker stated he could talk (seconded the motion). Discussion: hearing none A vote was recorded of 3 opposed. Glenn, Sturgess, Cooper.

Council Member Cooper will work with the building maintenance person about the new water testing requirements for the summer recreation program.

RESOLUTIONS:

Council Member Sturgess made a motion to approve the minutes of the February Town Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Cooper. All board members were in favor of the motion. Glenn, Sturgess, Cooper, Walker, Frasier.

Supervisor Glenn made a motion to approve the bills as presented for audit. It was noted that the February Highway abstract was amended to include a payment to Hill Top Tire for \$1,944.00, that the general fund was amended moving payment in the amount of \$74.99 for alarms to Highway, and that the \$45.00 charge to Town Clerk from Derby Office, for an IT problem was charged to buildings. The motion was seconded by Council Member Sturgess. All board members were in favor of the motion. Glenn, Sturgess, Cooper, Walker, Frasier.

RESOLUTION #2026-031 to adopt Local Law #1 of 2026 was offered by Supervisor Glenn at the regular monthly meeting of the Caroga Town Board held on March 11, 2026.

WHEREAS, the proposed Local Law was discussed and presented at the February 11, 2026, town board meeting, and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was advertised in the Leader Herald newspaper on February 24, 2026 and was also placed on the town website and bulletin board, and

WHEREAS, the public hearing was held earlier this evening with comments being heard from the public questioning the need for the local law, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does hereby move to adopt Local Law #1 of 2026 a law "Establishing the Residency Requirements for the Appointed Office of Deputy Highway Superintendent for the Town of Caroga."

Section 1 – Legislative Intent and Purpose

By adoption of this Local Law, it is the intent and purpose of the Town Board of the Town of Caroga to supersede Public Officers Law § 3 and Town Law § 23 to provide that the person appointed to and holding the office of Deputy Superintendent of Highways of the Town of Caroga need not be a resident or elector of the Town of Caroga, provided that such person is a resident of the County of Fulton, New York or of a county adjoining Fulton County.

Section 2 – Authority

This Local Law is adopted pursuant to Municipal Home Rule Law § 10(1)(ii)(a)(1), which grants to local governments authority to enact local laws pertaining to the qualifications of local officers.

Section 3 – Residency Requirement for the Appointed Office of Deputy Superintendent of Highways of the Town of Caroga

The person appointed to and holding the office of Deputy Superintendent of Highways of the Town of Caroga need not be a resident or elector of the Town of Caroga, provided that such person is a resident of the County of Fulton, New York or of a county adjoining Fulton County.

Section 4 - Supersession

This local law shall supersede the residency requirements set forth in Public Officers Law § 3 and Town Law § 23 in regard to their application to the appointed office of Deputy Superintendent of Highways of the Town of Caroga.

Section 5 - Inconsistency

All other local laws and ordinances of the Town of Caroga that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Local Law are hereby repealed; provided, however, that such repeal shall only be to the extent of such inconsistency, and in all other respects this Local Law shall be in addition to such other local laws and ordinances pertaining to the subject matter encompassed by this Local Law.

Section 6 - Savings Clause

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, word, section, or part of this Local Law shall be adjudged by any Court of competent jurisdiction to be unconstitutional, illegal or invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, word, section, or part directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment shall have been rendered.

Section 7 – Effective Date

This local law shall take effect upon the filing with the Office of the Secretary of State of the State of New York.

Seconded by Council Member Cooper

Discussion: Council Member Walker noted this was for the Deputy Highway Superintendent, right? He lives in a different town. Council Member Sturgess thought in this case ½ of the deputy's house was in Caroga and the other ½ is not. Council Member Cooper stated you could not have a deputy who did not live in the town currently. The deputy right now lives in Caroga, but the law is so you can appoint a deputy who is a current employee and has been an employee

but does not live in Caroga. He lives in Ephratah. The law provides that if you live in a county that touches Caroga you can be the Deputy Highway Superintendent.

Adopted by a vote of five (5) Ayes: Glenn, Sturgess, Cooper, Walker, Frasier

Council Member Sturgess received a text back from Mr. Hale who was awarded the bid to replace the gym door. He painted the door yesterday and the process is moving forward. There was a mention of replacing the kitchen door in the text. It will be discussed in the future.

At 8:02 pm Supervisor Glenn made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council Member Cooper. All board members were in favor of the motion. Glenn, Sturgess, Cooper, Walker, Frasier.

Submitted by Caroga Town Clerk

Linda Gilbert RMC, CMC

General bill #'s 59 to 82 \$20,123.48

General Park bill #'s 13 to 19 \$1,083.74

Highway bill #'s 35 to 49 \$16,486.27

Prepaid bill #'s 50 to 73 \$28,213.40