

State of New York
County of Fulton
Town of Caroga

Minutes of the Caroga Town Board public hearing on the 2027 Preliminary budget held on Monday October 19, 2026, at 6:00 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 – Dailey – Here (known as Council Member Walker)
Council Member Greta Frasier – Here

CM before a name indicates “Council Member.”

Also in attendance were Joanne Young Budget Officer, Jeremy Manning – Wheelerville Bike Trail Manager, Roy Stock – Highway Superintendent, and four members of the Caroga Lake Volunteer Fire Company. There was also one member of the public present.

The public hearing was opened at 6:01 pm.

CM Sturgess noted there were two things to get set in stone this evening the fire company and the code officer salary. Council Members Cooper and Sturgess discussed and noted that the budget asked for by the fire company can be brought forward. It is either this year or next year. CM Sturgess stated that we will be over budget on sales tax this year, so the funds can be pulled out of the general fund. The difference in numbers right now is \$22, 711.00. The amount requested by the fire company contract was \$258,272.00. The budget officer noted the tax rate per thousand would change. The amount being raised by the fire company sufficiently funds the fire company. They are a separate taxable base. The tax rate per thousand for the fire company would increase to \$1.55, and the rate in the general fund would decrease to \$1.20 as we do have a fund balance to offset our expenses. There is no fund balance in the fire department.

Supervisor Glenn stated we are having some issues right now with codes. He thought the salary should stay where it is until we find out where we are going with that. Page 5 was reviewed. CM Sturgess was in favor of having a secretary. He also thought there should be a minimal raise like 2%. The code salary in 2026 is \$61,780.00. CM Sturgess did not agree with the amount requested with everything going on. Former Supervisor Sullivan noted it has always been a policy of the board to give raises on an annual basis. The line-item A3620.1 was placed at \$63,015.00. The secretary was left at \$9,200.00.

CM Sturgess next discussed the salary for the bike trail manager. Mr. Manning requested \$34,000.00 for the position. It is a \$10,000.00 raise a 40% increase. The reasoning from Mr. Manning is there will be more supervision of the continuing trails. The first part of the trails is done. How does he justify that raise? The Supervision on the new build is done. Mr. Manning stated that by the end of next year there will be twice the amount of trails. He stated he is up there daily. After what happened this summer it is more important to check that stuff. The grants

fully cover the salary and were approved by the state. Mr. Manning noted everything expands, the festival all that stuff gets bigger and bigger. It is a ton more work. Once the construction is over Mr. Manning noted he will have less staff. This year he had no staff except for a couple small projects done over the year, until the last few weeks. In years he wants to keep our employees working on maintenance – there is where some of the funding is supposed to go. He tries to do as much as possible.

What he put forth from the revenue standpoint is, Mr. Manning stated, all of what they could see and it is all there – covering all the expenses. If you knock that down you will have to raise the personal costs. CM Sturgess noted it is covered expenses by the grant doesn't see what your salary was prior to this. Mr. Manning stated there is a by-year allowance amount for the trail manager in there. CM Walker asked what happens when the grants are all done? Mr. Manning replied it hasn't happened yet. He foresees getting grants for the next year or two. CM Sturgess noted in the past during the budget process it is clear if the grant is coming through. The money doesn't get spent until it is approved. Mr. Manning stated he is working on other revenue streams. There are programs to go after. In two years from now if we don't have those funds and there is no capacity for grants then at budget time we will have to modify some things. Knowing the amount of work for next year, Mr. Manning stated, and the construction, and oversight, events and what it takes to run the place it takes tons more to focus every single year. CM Cooper wanted to know what other things out of the town's scope are Mr. Manning working on. Mr. Manning stated 501c3 is underway. This will give him the capacity to really go out and fundraise. He also has private conversations going on that he can't talk about. He continues to go after NYS Parks Grants, RPT Grants, and more Smart Growth Grants.

CM Sturgess asked as we move forward with the connector trail there is going to be a time when it comes off of the Town of Caroga's land and moves onto private land. Mr. Manning noted that is the point of the 501c3. There will be, like with the snowmobile clubs, annual agreements that will be in place to allow people over their property. Mr. Manning noted he cannot use town funds on private property. Mr. Manning noted he doesn't work on that; it is between the trail builders and the landowners. Mr. Manning stated there is another 6 miles of looping trail behind the cell tower. CM Walker asked if there was an accident on private land who is liable for that. Mr. Manning stated it is the same as the snowmobile club. CM Cooper stated the clubs have insurance to cover the landowner. CM Sturgess noted the trails are going to double in size to 18 miles, will there be a presentation to the board? Mr. Manning is preparing one for the county so at some point he can also show this to the board. CM Sturgess noted right now the board doesn't know what Mr. Manning is doing. The board hasn't been given that information this year. Mr. Manning noted the most recent Smart Growth Grant is for the adaptive trials system. He will be working on existing trails to be adaptive.

CM Cooper noted with this being the connector trail to bring commerce downtown that essentially won't happen until we get portions of the trail done on private land. It is on the way. CM Cooper was concerned that we would build to the end of our state land and then we are dead in the water and didn't create the connector trail. We just extended our trail system closer to the downtown. Mr. Manning stated it is laid out; our trail stops at Steve Smith's property. It will now continue through that property. It was asked what is the timeline to be downtown? Mr. Manning replied his plan is to have it operational next summer, by the bike festival. CM Cooper asked about the bridge. Mr. Manning replied it looks like the bridge will be in by then too.

Supervisor Glenn asked when the trail crosses private property does he get paid by the grant for the trail? Mr. Manning replied, “no, no we can’t.” You can do it through the RPT Grant, but you have to sign a 20-year lease agreement for the land, and no one wants to sign that. Supervisor Glenn asked how many people are maintaining these trails. It depends was Mr. Mannings response. For every grant he has about 20% maintenance. He has never actually fully used that amount. He only needs about two people to really keep things moving up there. Generally, Mr. Manning stated he does most of it. He noted there were volunteer days. That gives him a few hundred volunteer hours throughout the whole summer. With potentially 18 miles of trails, Mr. Manning was asked if it can be done with just two people. That will have to expand. Mr. Manning stated there wasn’t a ton to do right now. He is talking to other networks [in Vermont, Quebec and New Hampshire] about potential user fees and how they do that. Very few trail systems charge. It will cut down your user base. Some degree of ownership of the system has people contributing to it. Most networks are free. Kingdom Trails a 100-mile trail system is on all private land and run on agreements. That day membership fee is \$20.00 an annual individual maybe \$200.00. If it’s a fee then the insurance is different, than if you call it a membership. Two people have been sufficient to maintain the trails. Mr. Manning does have people he can call. The maintenance staff are included in line A7145.1. In each grant Mr. Manning includes 20% maintenance on current/existing trails. The Town’s amount for next year is \$12,500.00, it is the amount of the local match for the Smart Growth Grant.

Next week Mr. Manning will attend a county committee meeting to discuss the \$10,000.00 match for the RPT Grant. That money was put in three years ago by Scott Henze in 2023 when he first applied for the grant. We received the grant the money was put into the capital project. The money sat there for two years but last year the county pulled it. Mr. Manning will ask the board to release those funds again. He wants to get the funds to use them on the connector trail project. That would offset the town’s local match by \$10,000.00.

Supervisor Glenn asked if there was anyone doing safety patrols like they have at ski resorts. Mr. Manning stated it is not required. If we went to a full pay system then it is required. Mr. Manning stated he goes up there daily to inspect things. Supervisor Glenn asked Mr. Sullivan how the ski patrol at Royal Mountain works. They are there all day long. Conditions are checked in the morning, and once again in the afternoon, then at night they make sure no one is left on the trails. It is part of the EMS system of the mountain. It is a volunteer position. They do fundraise.

CM Sturgess stated the part that is questionable that no one on the board knows the time or hours that are put in by Mr. Manning’s position. It is not documented. CM Sturgess does not like the increase feeling like our hands are tied because of the grant. CM Cooper stated everyone else is getting 2%. Mr. Manning replied that there isn’t another job that changes that much in a year. CM Sturgess is extremely nervous that in the future grants are not available for this project that it would put a huge burden on the taxpayer, or a project that goes dead. That is not what anybody wants. CM Sturgess did note the cost to the town is only \$12,500.00 on this program for the town. CM Cooper noted a grant in general is not free money, it is all taxpayer funded.

CM Walker asked if there was a way to make a resolution that if no grants are coming then the salary would drop back. Mr. Manning stated if it’s not there it’s not spent. So, a resolution is not needed. It was stated that the grant pays for the salary.

Shirley Holliday asked if the town gets any of that grant money. CM Sturgess replied every dollar of it. He explained that the bike trails will cost the town \$12,500.00 for 2027. It was her opinion that it didn't bring a lot of business into town.

Mr. Manning stated he would make a spread sheet for CM Sturgess to show him how it is written. The board could not review the trails lines because Mr. Manning wasn't at the last meeting.

The budget officer stated if there are no other changes the board wants to make to the preliminary budget except for the fire contract change and the change to the code personal Services changes the first page as follows:

Appropriations for the general	\$2,233,893.00
Fund balance to be used is	\$ 191,712.00
Amount to be raised by taxes is	\$ 197,662.00
The tax rate is now	\$1.20

Appropriations Fire Contract	\$ 258,373.00
amount to be raised by taxes	\$ 258,373.00
The tax rate is now	\$1.55

The total tax rate stayed at \$8.45 per thousand

This will keep the town under the 2% tax cap by \$500.00.

The budget director stated if the board agrees with all of the changes she just listed the code salary and the changes to the front page the board can then make the preliminary budget the adopted budget.

Mr. McIntosh stated he really appreciated what the board has done. It puts them back in a better position for the fire district.

Mrs. Holliday asked who the secretary to the supervisor was. It is to be determined after the first of the year. Supervisor Glenn stated he had no idea at all.

At 6:42 the public hearing on the budget was closed.

RESOLUTION #2026-102 to move the preliminary budget to the adopted budget with the changes made this evening was offered by Supervisor Glenn at the meeting for the public hearing on the 2027 budget held on Monday October 19, 2026.

WHEREAS, the Budget Officer and Town Supervisor have spent numerous hours reviewing and discussing the 2027 tentative, and preliminary budgets, and

WHEREAS, the board members have also reviewed and given their input on the budget process, and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held this evening without comment from the public, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board does move the Preliminary 2027 Budget to the Adopted 2027 Budget with the changes made this evening to the appropriations to the fire contract increased to \$258,373.00 and to line A3620.1 Code Enforcement Personal Services placed at \$63,015.00 as discussed.

Seconded by Council Member Cooper

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

Joanne Young noted the bill came in from Suburban propane. The last delivery they charged \$6.85 per gallon. CM Sturgess noted we were supposed to be locked in with them. The locked in price when the bookkeeper called them was only good until May of this year. She called three different places. Suburban could lock the town in for another year until May at \$2.99. They also charge the town service fees and delivery charges which end up to be about \$25 - \$30. Blue Flame quoted a price of \$3.99 – we would have to switch out the tanks. A-Tech would not lock the town in, but the current price is at \$2.29, and he does not have delivery or maintenance fees. He would also give the town a tank with no rental on the tank. We need to make a decision before they make another drop. The last drop was 400 gallons. Council Member Cooper noted last winter Suburban let us run out of fuel and it was a day and a half before they could get to us. It was a longer response time than he expected. It was noted that the golf building uses A-Tech and there is a thought to consolidate services. CM Sturgess noted A-Tech quotes a percentage above rack. He has used him for 15 years.

RESOLUTION #2026-103 to switch the propane carrier for town hall to A-Tech was offered by Council Member Sturgess at the meeting for the public hearing on the 2027 budget held on Monday October 19, 2026.

WHEREAS, the bookkeeper noted the price the town was recently charged for propane at town hall was \$6.85 per gallon, and

WHEREAS, three quotes were received for propane as follows:

Suburban \$2.99 plus service fees and delivery charges

Blue Flame quoted a price of \$3.99

A-Tech with a current price at \$2.29 now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Caroga Town Board moves to switch the propane carrier for town hall to A-Tech to be the supplier on an annual basis.

Seconded by Council Member Frasier

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

Highway Superintendent Roy Stock gave the board three quotes for steel for the bridge on Cape horn they were from: DI Highway Sign & Structure Corp. PO Box 123 40 Greenman Ave. New

York Mills NY 13417 for \$54,013.00, Jeffords 4398 Route 22 PO Box 40 Plattsburgh NY 12901 at \$55,235.00, and DA Collins Construction Co, Inc. 269 Ballard Road Wilton NY 12831 for \$55,700.00.

RESOLUTION #2026-104 to give the Highway Superintendent the authority to make the purchase of the steel for the Cape Horn Bridge in the amount of \$55,013.00 was offered by Council Member Sturgess at the meeting for the public hearing on the 2027 budget held on Monday October 19, 2026.

WHEREAS, the highway Superintendent has worked closely with his clerk and liaison to be able to order the steel for the Cape Horn Bridge, and

WHEREAS, three quotes for the materials were obtained those being from: DI Highway Sign & Structure Corp. PO Box 123 40 Greenman Ave. New York Mills NY 13417 for \$54,013.00, Jeffords 4398 Route 22 PO Box 40 Plattsburgh NY 12901 at \$55,235.00, and DA Collins Construction Co, Inc. 269 Ballard Road Wilton NY 12831 for \$55,700.00 now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Highway Superintendent the authority to make the purchase of the steel for the Cape Horn Bridge in the amount of \$55,013.00 from DI Highway Sign & Structure Corp. PO Box 123 40 Greenman Ave. New York Mills NY 13417.

Seconded by Council Member Cooper

Discussion: CM Sturgess asked if there was money in this year's budget for this purchase. The reply was there was a budget adjustment made at the last meeting to make sure there was enough money to cover the purchase this year.

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

The clerk received a call from property owner Gary Valk on Lane Road south of the sand pit. He stated people were firing guns there and also then traveling south onto his property which is posted. While posting his signs he noticed old, posted signs on the town's property. A few weeks ago, the board discussed the use of town land for hunting which they had no objection to. No one knew about the town land being previously posted. Mr. Valk talked to an Encon officer who stated all property is posted unless you have permission from the landowner. CM Sturgess stated it was not the board's job to police someone else's land. "It is not our problem." CM Cooper though the only area to be posted was the stump dump.

At 6:50 pm Supervisor Glenn made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council Member Sturgess. All Board Members were in favor of the motion. Glenn, Sturgess, Cooper, Walker-Dailey, Frasier.

Submitted by Caroga Town Clerk

Linda Gilbert, RMC, CMC

