

State of the Town of Ossian 2023

1. As the new year, 2024, begins I would like to extend my appreciation to our town employees, officials and volunteers who work throughout the year to make the Town of Ossian run as efficiently as possible. This effort gives our town a well-respected reputation within Livingston County.

2. Town Board

The Ossian Town Board continues to operate in a fiscally conservative manner. This is exhibited in the fact that the Town carries no debt and has healthy fund balances.

The NYS Comptroller, in his annual fiscal stress scores of all municipalities, has given the Town of Ossian a best or least fiscally stressed score.

I would like to thank Councilman David Mark for his many years of service to the Town of Ossian as he steps down from the Town Board.

At the same time, I would like to welcome back Councilman and Deputy Supervisor Chris Pero for another term with the Town Board. Replacing Councilman Mark will be Nathaniel Barron. The Town Board looks forward to working with him as a Town Board member.

3. Highway Department

2023 was another busy year, as usual, for Highway Superintendent Keith Young and his crew.

All dirt roads were graded, along with ditches cleaned, driveway pipes replaced and 8 miles of road oiled and stoned.

In preparation for 2024 CHIPS projects, Keith and crew have been wedging, tiling and putting down gravel as needed. Some of these roads will receive a coat of oil ~~or~~ ^{and} stone. The stone has already been hauled in at a lower price than the 2024 price.

The Highway Department took possession in 2023 of a new 2023 Western Star 10-wheel dump truck, and a new flail mower head for the boom mower which improves mowing of roadsides and ditches.

The Highway Department also received, thanks to ARPA, or COVID relief funding, a propane powered back-up generator which starts automatically when the electric service is interrupted. This will ensure continued operation during an emergency.

When driving past the Highway Department garage, look closely and you will see, looking like new, Ossian's original pull-behind road grader.

4. Town Clerk/Tax Collector

John VanHeusen has ~~settled into~~ ^{finished} his second year as Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

Records' management is a big part of being Town Clerk. John and Deputy Clerk, Natalie Welch, have been in contact with Livingston County Records Management in an effort to reorganize and prioritize the Town's written records. This effort will continue into 2024. Thanks to Natalie, the town's local laws have been listed on our town website.

In 2023 the town hall had installed a new propane powered back-up generator and a new propane furnace. In 2024 the town hall will receive a new steel roof and a complete update and rewire for the computer system.

These improvements will all be paid for with ARPA funding (American Rescue Plan Act).

5. Code Enforcement

After many years as Code Enforcement Officer for the Town of Ossian, Robert Bourgoine has officially retired. We thank Bob for his many years of dedicated service to our town.

Since Bob's retirement, Tammy Malone has stepped in to provide code enforcement services. In a short time, she has started working with the Town's Junk Law and Camping Trailer Ordinance.

It is always a big job to start where someone else has left off.

6. Zoning Board of Appeals

ZBA chairman, Tom DePuy, reports that there were no hearings held in 2023 to consider variances. He attributes this to good code enforcement communications.

7. Town Justice – Don Wilson

Judge Wilson indicates a sharp decline in DEC issued tickets in 2023. This is possibly a result of a decline in the number of DEC officers.

Judge Wilson also reports a decline in non-DEC cases from 6/mo. in 2022 to 4/mo. In 2023. In addition, getting people to appear in court remains a problem.

Court hardware, computer, monitor and printer had to be replaced due to malfunctions. Town of Ossian IT (information and technology) person, Larry Brockington, kept operations running smoothly.

8. Assessor

Assessor Smalt reports duties and responsibilities of her office continue to be completed in a timely fashion. Field review of new construction, open permits, verifying sales and keeping office files up-to-date continue on a monthly basis.

The tentative tax roll was filed with the Town Clerk May 1st. Grievance Day was June 5th and the final assessment roll was filed with the Town Clerk July 1st. Assessor Smalt has also fulfilled all requirements for continued education and training credits for 2023.

9. Livingston County Seniorama & Teen Recognition

The 28th annual Livingston County Teen Recognition event was held April 26, 2023 at the Willow Creek Event Venue in Lakeville, NY. Six teens from the Town of Ossian were honored at this event and they were Tyler Harris, Kaitlyn Lee, Olivia Levee, Taylor Tucker, Karlie Wlaker and Breanna Young.

David Mark was chosen to represent the Town of Ossian at the 42nd annual Livingston County Seniorama ceremony. This event was also held at the Willow Creek Event Venue on May 6, 2023.

A special thanks to Heather Pero and Roxanne Mosch for representing the Town of Ossian at the Livingston County Youth Board and the Livingston County Office for the Aging

Goals for 2024 are to stay the course, working to make the Town of Ossian a place we are all proud to call home.

Sincerely,
Dwight Knapp
Supervisor
Town of Ossian