



Town of Ulysses

FALL NEWSLETTER

10 Elm Street, Trumansburg, NY • ulysses.ny.us

September 2014

Ulysses Municipal Boards

Town Board

Meets 2nd & 4th Tuesday at 7pm

Town Supervisor

Liz Thomas 387-5767 Ext. 232

Town Council Member

Rich Goldman 592-4673

John Hertzler 220-3901

Dave Kerness 227-0536

Nancy Zahler 279-4792

Planning Board 1st & 3rd Tuesday at 7pm

John Wertis Sr.— Chair

Sarah Adams

Andy Rice

Rich Garner

David Blake

Board of Zoning Appeals 3rd Wed. 7pm

George Tseleki—Chair

Andy Glasner

Andy Hillman

Bob Howarth

Carl Mann

David Means (alternate)

Ulysses Town Offices

Open Mon - Fri 8-4, Sat 9-12 • 387-5767

Town Clerk

Carissa Parlato—Clerk Ext 221

Patty Halloran—Deputy Ext 223

Town Court

Mon 1-6PM, Tues—Fri 8am-4pm

Tom Schlee—Justice Ext. 225

Mark Dresser—Justice Ext. 226

Angela Champion—Court Clerk Ext. 224

Code Enforcement and Zoning

Alex Rachun—Building Inspector Ext. 231

Darby Kiley—Planning & Zoning Ext. 222

Rod Ferrentino—Fire Code

Accounting & Payroll

Mary Bouchard Ext. 227

Deputy Town Supervisor

Michelle E. Wright Ext. 234

Highway Department

Jim Meeker—Superintendent Town Barn 387-6230

Dave Reynolds—Deputy

Town Historians

John Wertis Sr. 387-4331

Michele Mitrani 387-9466

Remembering Doug Austic with Gratitude

Town staff and residents alike were deeply saddened by the sudden passing this past April of former Town Supervisor, Doug Austic. Doug was an incredibly dedicated, long-time public servant for the Town and we miss his depth of knowledge, energy, and quirky sense of humor.

Doug Austic was a man of many talents. Whether as Town Supervisor, Code Enforcement Officer, Bookkeeper, Water District Operator or expert carpenter, Doug performed each job with dedication and skill. Not many could juggle jobs requiring such a range of talents. As Town Supervisor, he served for 16 years, from 1994 to 2010.

Doug was known as an unyielding advocate of youth programming and understood the importance of providing safe, educational opportunities for youth of all economic brackets. With his keen eye for the Town's future, Doug was also closely involved in the Town's first comprehensive plan.

After the devastating leak from the gas station in Jacksonville, Doug ambitiously took on the complicated project of providing municipal water to the hamlet. Once completed, Doug stayed on as Water District Operator, becoming licensed and learning a whole new set of skills.

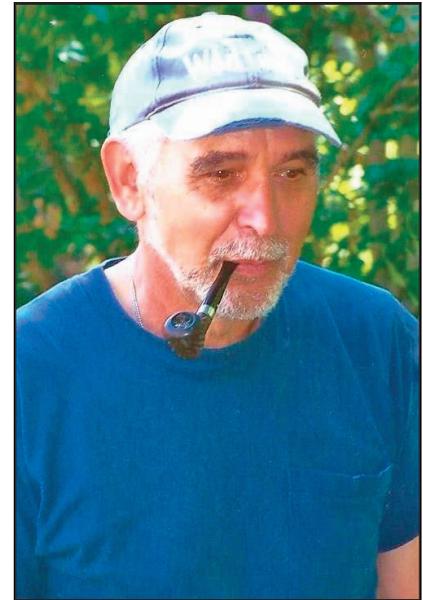
For those of you who remember, the building that existed where the town hall sits now, was an unremarkable box. Doug worked to expand the cramped space and transform the old structure to the cobblestone building it is now.

He was a judicious manager of the budget. He carefully put away funds, keeping the town from needing to borrow when capital projects were needed, such as the town barn that was built in 2009.

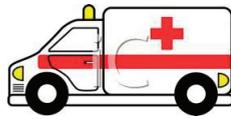
We certainly miss Doug and are sad for the loss to his family, friends and the town. The Town of Ulysses remembers Doug with gratitude and much respect.

Thanks to our Highway Department

After Doug Austic's untimely death, the Town needed to continue monitoring its water systems on a daily basis. Our Highway Department staff stepped in while the Town explored its options for how to manage operations in the future. This summer, after each of our multiple storms and flooding events, the same crew worked overtime to make sure that the cleanup and road repairs were taken care of promptly. The Highway Department staff continually impresses us. Thanks guys!



EMS and the Budget



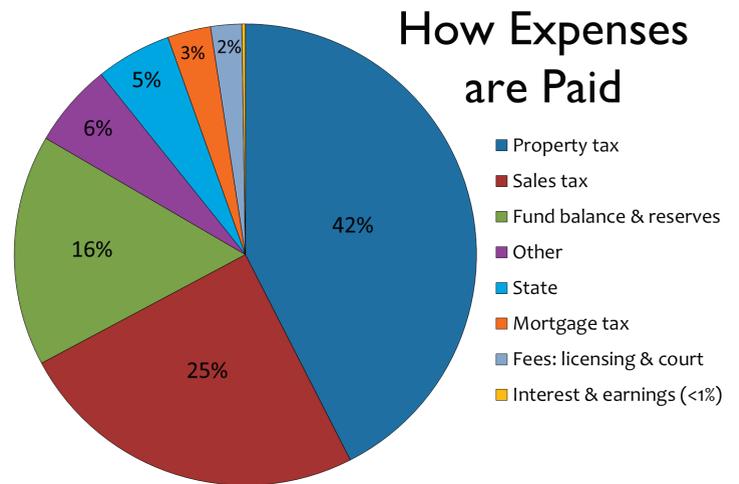
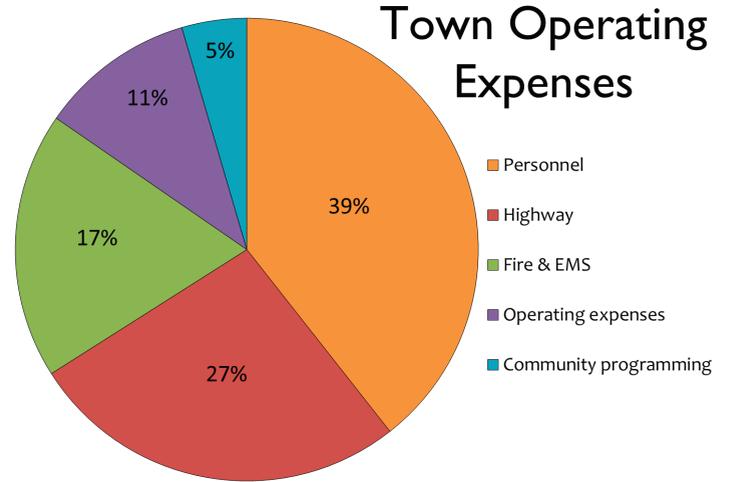
The Town contracts with the Village of Trumansburg for excellent fire and EMS services. We are incredibly indebted to the volunteer firefighters who provide their time, free of charge, to protect town and village residents. To ensure staffing when it is critically needed, the ambulance service now pays professionals to be available 24/7. The mandated costs related to equipment, training, and supplies for fire and EMS continue to climb. The 17% of the Town's budget that is spent on Fire and EMS services represents 45% of the 2014 property tax levy.

To reduce the impact of increasing Fire and EMS costs on property taxes, the Town Board has concluded that billing EMS users for services is one appropriate strategy. The Village of Trumansburg, and towns of Covert and Hector are already billing for EMS.

The Town Board in Ulysses is now discussing joining other municipalities in charging those who use ambulance services. In most cases, ambulance patients are covered by Medicare, Medicaid or private insurance. The town is creating a policy to protect low income patients from having ambulance bills become a financial hardship. In order for billing to begin, the town must create policies for billing, accommodations for low income patients, and adopt a fee schedule.

Before adopting any final policies, the Town Board will hold special meetings on this topic. If you want to know more, come to the town board meetings, or either call, email or make an appointment to see any Town Board member or the Town Supervisor. See the agendas on the home page or at <http://www.ulysses.ny.us/council/tbmeetings/>. We are also beginning to send out notices of special topics such as this to our growing email list. Let our Town Clerk know if you would like to be added.

2014 Ulysses Budget Profile



Code Enforcement

Public Information Session and Public Hearing

September 23rd at 6pm at Town Hall

In 2007 the Town passed a local law to implement enforcement of the State Building and Fire Prevention Codes. In response to citizen's requests, the Town Board is taking action to amend its local law to provide the Town with more tools to address unsafe structures and properties with significant exterior maintenance violations, such as accumulation of junk on a property. In the most serious cases, if all other existing strategies fail to correct chronic problems, the new law would enable the Town to make the needed repairs and then add those costs to the owner's property tax bill, a legal remedy used in other local towns. The draft local law is available at ulysses.ny.us. Active farms are exempt from this legislation and it applies only to town, not village residents.

Public Information Session: when a topic is reviewed with the opportunity for the attending public to ask questions.

Public Hearing: when members of the public are invited to share verbal and written comments for the record regarding proposed law. The Town Board will carefully note, without direct response, all comments from the *Public Hearing* and take them into account when deciding how, or whether, to proceed.

Shared Services, Taxes, and State Mandates

In the 1980s, 8% of income taxes taken in by the state were shared with local governments. This amount has shriveled to ~1% and that reduction, in combination with the recession, has eroded funding for local governments, while mandates have increased. Over time, the state has effectively shifted the financial burden of many health, education and social services to the County, but with no accompanying funding to pay for them. The County estimates property taxes could be reduced by nearly 50% if the state would fund its own mandated programs. In spite of this shift, the State has passed legislation to cap property taxes, and couples this with calls for municipalities to share services or consolidate to lower local costs.

What have we done?

Ulysses is doing its best to keep property taxes in check, and had the LOWEST rate in Tompkins County in 2013, and was second lowest in 2014 (tompkins-co.org/assessment/townrates.pdf).

Through the Tompkins County Council of Governments (TCCOG), Ulysses has joined with other municipalities to share services with the goal of efficiency. Examples include being part of the health care consortium where municipalities self-insure at a savings. We are one of only two counties in NYS with a county-wide assessment department. We've joined forces with other municipalities for youth services, recordkeeping, dog control, and we collaborated to evaluate how hydrofracking might impact our area and what we could do in response. We jointly contract with the Soil and Water Conservation Service for their expertise on stormwater issues.

Ulysses and Trumansburg cooperate through their joint Youth Commission, highway departments, historians, and recently applied together for funding to expand the sidewalk system in and around Trumansburg.

What can we still do?

Tompkins County already has a culture and proven record of successfully working together and we continue to look for ways to do more. Ulysses serves on a subgroup of TCCOG looking into areas where municipalities could achieve savings or efficiencies by working together. The Ulysses Town Board is moving forward on billing for ambulance service to partially offset costs. Trumansburg and Ulysses are increasing collaboration. By closer monitoring of the Summer Recreation Program, the Town and Village were able to reduce costs. The Village of Trumansburg and the Town of Ulysses met in July to discuss efficiencies on a more local level. We are currently cooperating on an inventory of historic buildings with the goal of paving the way for grant funding. We discussed shared code and zoning enforcement in the future, joint training for our Planning Boards and Zoning Boards of Appeals, and finally, we tentatively agreed to evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of consolidation or further shared services.

What can you do?

Quality of life items like trails, environmental monitoring, libraries, senior services, historic preservation, recreation, and beautification are the items left behind when budgets get tight, along with more essential services such as road maintenance, sheriff road patrols, and paid ambulance staffing. If these are important to you, please contact your state representatives Thomas O'Mara and Barbara Lifton to register your concern over the shift in state funding to local property taxes.
Thomas O'Mara: NYS Senate, omara@nysenate.gov; 607-735-9671
Barbara Lifton: NYS Assembly, LiftonB@assembly.state.ny.us; 607-277-8030

Clerk's Corner

Dog licenses

To help prevent rabies, dogs are required to be licensed in the Town of Ulysses. If your dog is not licensed, please stop in anytime during office hours with a proof of rabies vaccination. If your dog is spayed or neutered, the fee is \$13.50. If not, you will pay \$20.50. Licenses are valid for one year. To license your dog by mail, download a form from our website ulysses.ny.us/departments/dept-clerk/clerk-dog-control/.

Rabies Clinics

The Tompkins County Department of Health hosts rabies clinics where residents can have their pets vaccinated at no cost. Clinics are held around the county:

FALL (Sept/Oct) - in the City of Ithaca, Trumansburg, Caroline, Groton and Newfield.

SPRING—in the Town of Ithaca, Enfield, Dryden, Danby and Lansing.

WINTER: at the SPCA.

For specific dates, see the Department of Health website or sign up for the Ulysses email list by contacting clerk@ulysses.ny.us.

While the vaccines are free with the goal of having all pets immunized for the benefit of the community, this is a tax payer expense. We encourage those who can afford to vaccinate their pets to have this done as part of their regular vet check.

Hunting and fishing licenses

The clerk's office is currently issuing sporting licenses, including hunting licenses. Deer management permits are also available, through Oct. 1.

The DEC has made some changes to the licensing system but most of the kinks seem to be worked out. Stop in any time during office hours to get your license, or get one online at <http://licensecenter.ny.gov/sporting-and-recreational-licenses>.

Town of Ulysses
10 Elm St
Trumansburg, NY 14886



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Help for home owners and buyers

Ithaca Neighborhood Housing

First time home buyers & owners looking for home improvement financing can take advantage of Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services (INHS). INHS is committed to creating energy-efficient housing and sustainable communities that benefit residents of all income levels and occupations. Contact Mr. Paul Mazzarella at 607.277.4500, info@ithacaNHS.org, ithacanh.org.

Better Housing for Tompkins County

Better Housing for TC works together with INHS to support programs for low income and elderly homeowners. Contact the Construction Grant Manager, Christine Carreiro at construct@betterhousingtc.org or (607) 273-2187.

Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation

Home repair grant money is available to single family homeowners. Repairs include furnaces, roofs, electrical work hot water heaters, bathrooms and kitchens. For more information, call (585) 657-4114 or email sheen2@rochester.rr.com

DSS Satellite Office in Ulysses Town Hall

The Department of Social Services opened a satellite office at the Ulysses Town Hall in July. **Every Wednesday from 1:00 - 4:30PM**, DSS staff are available to meet with new or returning clients to help with food stamps, Medicaid, daycare, emergency assistance, etc. Contact DSS at 274-5345 for more info.

ELECTRONIC DELIVERY: Help us save time, money and resources. Receive this newsletter and other notifications by email (about 2 notices/mo). E-mail clerk@ulysses.ny.us to be added to the electronic delivery list.