



Town of New Lisbon

908 County Highway 16

Garrattsville NY 13342

(607) 965-2112

2018 IN REVIEW

As the year winds down, we look back at what we accomplished this year and some of the things we hope to do in 2019. The main three items we hear that residents want or need are better cell service, better internet and lower taxes. We'll try to address what is going on with these issues in this newsletter. Also, remember that you can keep up-to-date with Town news, meeting minutes, etc. on our town website: townofnewlisbon.com. You are also invited to come to Town Board meetings, which are the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm at the Town Hall at 908 County Highway 16, Garrattsville.

CELL PHONE SERVICE

In the past, we were very close to erecting our own tower, but major cell phone carriers were not interested in servicing us because there are not enough people here. The Town Board leased land behind our Highway Garage to Otsego County to erect a tower for improved Emergency Communications. Besides improving communications for our Fire Company and EMS, the Town Board requested that the County work with cell phone carriers to lease space to them on this tower. The tower is up and we are continuing to impress upon the County the importance of working with cell phone carriers to improve service in New Lisbon.

INTERNET

We were hopeful when Time Warner Cable was bought out by Charter Communications (now called Spectrum), that we might get some additional residents on that cable/internet system. Part of their merger deal was that they were to add to their service area. We tried to pursue this and get an additional road added with the residents even signing a petition, but it was turned down. They have specifics as far as how many homes, how many feet from the nearest connection, etc. to determine if they would add on and we didn't meet the criteria. We are continuing discussions with Spectrum. We have not received any positive response from Verizon or Frontier. The good news is that Otsego Electric Cooperative is installing new fiber in parts of New Lisbon. For those who are serviced by them, you will soon have the option of better internet service. The Town Board continues to push our County and State officials for better internet for all.

TAXES

Since New York State mandated a cap on increases in property and school taxes, the Town of New Lisbon has never gone over the cap. Many years there has been no increase and the 2019 taxes reflect a 2% increase, which is well below our tax cap. The increase is needed because we have put off purchasing new plow trucks for too long and, as a result, our fleet has become very costly to maintain. There are many factors in determining how much money needs to be raised by taxes. Each year the Town Board reviews expenses, revenues and unexpended funds (surplus) from prior years. The Town Board has determined that some funds must be saved for emergency situations and for when we have to pay for items and wait for reimbursement. The 2019 Budget uses \$127,281.00 from surplus funds in the General Fund to reduce the tax burden. No highway surplus funds were used because of the need to purchase additional new equipment in 2019.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

The Highway Department accounts for approximately 75% of your town taxes. The Town Board has been working to get our fleet into shape by purchasing new equipment to cut down on repairs. 2018 was a costly year for repairs with an extra \$70,000.00 having to be put in the repair account from our surplus funds. A new truck will be coming in December 2018 and plans are in the works to purchase another one in 2019. We currently are running '97, '01, '04, '08 & '09 model year trucks. Vehicle maintenance, fuel usage and repairs are now being logged and tracked. This year using our state money (CHIPS) for road projects and equipment, we purchased a new mower tractor, replaced many culverts and paved Gilbert Lake Road and Gregory Road. Pegg Road is on the schedule for paving in 2019. Meanwhile, Hwy. Superintendent Bill Whitaker will retire at the end of 2018 with thanks from the Town Board for his years of service and dedication to the Town. The Town Board has appointed Town resident Donald Smith to fill out Bill's term, which expires December 31, 2019. Don brings experience working in highway departments plus mechanic skills.

FIRE DEPARTMENT/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SQUAD

There is a small increase in your Garrattsville Fire Tax due to a NY State mandate that Fire Companies must provide cancer insurance for all interior firefighters.

The town is working with the County to find a county-wide solution to the problems faced by volunteer fire companies and EMS. Consider joining the Garrattsville Fire Department & EMS as a way to help keep costs down and to serve your community.

DO YOU NEED HOME REPAIRS/UPDATES??

The Town has applied for a Community Development Block Grant to reimburse the full costs of certain housing rehabilitation. This grant would cover replacing windows, roofs, heating systems, wells/septic, handicap accessibility, etc. We won't know if we get the grant for a few months but anyone who might be interested should contact Charlene or Ed as soon as they can so we'll be ready to get started if the grant is approved. Since this is a federally funded program there are guidelines for eligibility such as:

1. Applicant must be the homeowner.
2. There can be no mortgages or home equity loans on the property.
3. Land & School taxes must be current.
4. Only stick built homes are eligible, but we may be able to get exterior items, such as handicap ramps done on mobile homes, double wides, and modulars.
5. The homeowner must remain in the home for a period of five years, or all or part of the cost of the repairs would have to be repaid.
6. Preference will be given to persons of low to moderate income.

DOG CENSUS

There are plans to have our Dog Control Officer, Elizabeth Fish, complete a door-to-door dog census in 2019. The last one was done in 2013 and with the incidents of rabies around us, keeping dog licenses current is a way to help protect our residents. License fees are \$8.00 for a spayed/neutered dog and \$15.00 for an unspayed/unneutered dog. A current rabies shot certificate is required to obtain a license. An additional \$5.00 fee per license will be assessed to any unlicensed dogs found during the dog census, so get in and get your dogs licensed before the census begins. Dog licenses are issued by the Town Clerk and the dog license application is on the Town website.

SUMMARY

Good things are happening in New Lisbon! We are working to find ways to improve cell phone and internet service, stayed below the tax cap, completed inspections and repairs of Town buildings, are getting our Highway equipment in shape and are looking into grant opportunities to help residents and to reduce tax burdens, all while keeping up with new County and State mandates. We welcome any input from residents on how we can improve our operations.

HAPPY NEW YEAR !!

Supervisor: Ed Lentz
Deputy Supervisor: Nancy Martin-Mathewson
Councilmen: Bob Eklund, Flo Loomis, John Pegg

Justice: Bill Burdick
Clerk/Collector: Charlene Wells
Assessor: Pam Dyn-Gohde