

Regular Meeting

The Regular Meeting of the Ephratah Town Board was held at 6 PM on Wednesday, January 14th, 2026 at the Ephratah Town Hall. Roll call found the following members present:

Supervisor	Todd Bradt
Councilman	Andrew Chorlton
Councilman	George Cosselman
Councilwoman	Eleanor Smith
Councilwoman	Paula Keppler
Clerk	Cynthia Wesselmann
Highway Superintendent	John Polenski Jr.
Code Enforcement Officer	Devon Percival
Attorney	Michael Albanese

The meeting was opened with Salute to the Flag, led by Supervisor Todd Bradt.

Eleanor Smith made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the regular meeting on December 8th, 2025. 2nd by Andrew Chorlton. 5 Ayes, carried.

Andrew Chorlton made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the Organizational meeting on January 1st, 2026. 2nd by Eleanor Smith. 5 Ayes, carried.

George Cosselman made a motion to pay General bills, Abstract #1, claim 7 thru 12 in the amount of \$14,482.59. 2nd by Eleanor Smith. 5 Ayes, carried.

Paula Keppler made a motion to pay Highway bills, Abstract #1, claim 13 thru 23 in the amount of \$43,743.78. 2nd by George Cosselman. 5 Ayes, carried

Communications:

- The Ephratah Transfer Station will be closed on Monday, January 19, 2026 for the Martin Luther King Holiday. The station will be open Tuesday, January 20th from 10am till 6pm.
- The Fulton County Planning Board will be have a training for municipal officers, including Planning and Code Enforcement, on Tuesday, March 24th, 2026. The training will be held at the Suny FM RAO theatre. Participants can contact Aaron Enfield at (518) 736-5660 for class times and to sign up.
- The Fulton County Board of Elections sent the tentative election dates for 2026. The Primary is scheduled for June 23rd, and the General November 3rd, 2026.
- The Town Clerk has received a Foil request from LaBella, an Environmental Engineer, regarding the National Grid plans for the transmission lines running through the Town of Ephratah.

Public Input:

- None at this time.

Reports:

Code Enforcement Officer:

- Code Enforcement will be doing a walk through in Brookside. They are working with the Health Dept on the septic system and hopefully by late spring will be applying for a liquor license again.

- Mr. Percival has fines out for excess cars on Tillboro Rd and it was stated that there may not be a dismantler's license on file.
- Code Enforcement is checking on an eviction for a property on School House Rd. They are getting things worked out in court with the property.
- There is a house on Co Rte 119 with a debris issue that is being addressed.
- All the solar projects that were slated in town are now off the table and done, possibly due to funding.
- The National Grid 115 kilovolt project for the substation affects 46 properties in the town. They have requested knowledge of any buildings or water ways in the 100' right of way. The project will be going through parts of New Turnpike Rd, Saltsmans Rd, Woods Rd, Rte 10 and Rte 67. Code Enforcement stated that this would fall under Public necessity and that we currently have a 69 kilowatt feed line. This project would increase the reliability of the grid. Mr. Percival has estimated 8-10 hours of work would be needed for the foil requested.

Resolution 86

Eleanor Smith made a motion to accept Resolution 86 to approve the hourly rate charge of \$100/hr for 8-10 hours of work to be done for the Foil requested by LaBella. 2nd by Paula Keppler. 5 Ayes, carried.

Planning Board:

- The new Chairperson, William Claes, held a special meeting and after reviewing information submitted in December, the simple split was approved.
- The next scheduled meeting will be held on March 9th, 2026. The September meeting would fall on Labor Day in September so the board agreed to move that meeting to August 31, 2026.
- The Vice Chair, Carl Ovitt Jr. inquired about using AI to transcribe the meeting minutes. Mr. Albanese said he could provide more information at the next meeting for them about that.

Highway

- Highway Superintendent, John Polenski Jr. told the Town Board about an agreement with National Grid he is trying to get worked out before hand regarding them traveling newly paved roads. They are requesting to transport a transformer on the New Turnpike Rd and Woods Rd, along with any other equipment needed. Mr. Polenski Jr. would like a bond in place and to get compensation for the use and or damages to the roads as the transformer itself could weigh as much as 110,000 lbs. These roads are currently posted and he will be cc'ing the attorney on any correspondence.
- Mr. Polenski Jr. and his deputy Steven Cornaire have been working on the 550 trucks backup cameras.
- The Highway Dept said that Applacy won the salt bid and is taking as much as 8-10 business days to get. If it does take longer than 4 days, they would need to reimburse orders with \$100/day. The highway superintendent said he would hold them accountable because they need to make sure the roads are sanded and salted when needed.

Resolution 87

Eleanor Smith made a motion to accept Resolution 87 for the Highway Department to purchase another mower for \$6,700; providing the price is still locked in. 2nd by George Cosselman. 5 Ayes, carried.

Youth:

- Abby Cretser said they have the calendar of events done and will be getting that out. They currently have nothing going on until spring.

Assessor:

- The Assessor's office has hours on Tuesday evenings from 6-8 pm and by appointment as necessary.
- Senior and Ag Exemption renewal forms have been mailed out and are due back to their office before March 1st. They have already had a few homeowners stop in and drop off their renewal forms or new applications and all approved applications have been put on for 2026.
- NYS has sent out letters to Enhanced STAR recipients requesting them to verify their 2024 income on the Homeowner Benefit Portal found on the NYS's website. For any seniors who have received this letter and are having difficulty navigating the website, or do not have access to a computer, they have been and will continue helping complete the online income verification form in their office.
- There have been new bills that have passed recently in NYS. One of which increases the Senior Exemption from 50% to 65%. This change is optional and must be adopted by each taxing jurisdiction by resolution or local law.
- The Assessor is in the process of gathering information about town wide assessments. There are state aid programs for municipalities looking to do reassessment under the condition that the town commits to reappraisals of all properties at least once every four years. Mrs. Tabor believes the Town could benefit from this aid and use it to their advantage. She will be providing more information at a later date.

Supervisor:

- The Bookkeeper is closing out the books and will have the reports at the next meeting.

Historian:

- The Historian, Abby Cretser, said the NYS Dept of Ed has received their paperwork for the Charter.

New Business:

- The Rockwood Cemetery will be holding a meeting at the Town Hall on January 27, 2026 at 6pm.

Resolution 88

Eleanor Smith made a motion to accept Resolution 88 to renew the James Brennan Humane Society contract for 2026, for \$2,200. 2nd by Paula Keppler. 5 Ayes, carried.

Resolution 89

Eleanor Smith made a motion to accept Resolution 89 to approve the St. Johnsville Ambulance Contract in Ephratah for \$2,000/month, for a 3year contract. 2nd by Paula Keppler. 5 Ayes, carried.

Eleanor Smith made a motion to go into an Executive Session for the Sale of Land. 2nd by Andrew Chorlton. 5 Ayes, carried. 6:46pm

Paula Keppler made a motion to come out of Executive Session. 2nd by George Cosselman. 5 Ayes, carried. 7:02pm

George Cosselman made a motion to adjourn the Town Board meeting. 2nd by Eleanor Smith. 5 Ayes, carried. Time 7:06 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Wesselmann
Town Clerk, Town of Ephratah