

The Town of Hamilton – Looking back at 2015 and into 2016

With spring arriving and 2016 well underway its time to look back on 2015, and ahead at the to work to come. Last year was a busy one for the Hamilton Town Council with challenges and progress on some key issues. Here is an overview of 2015 and a look towards next steps for 2016.

Late in 2014 it became clear that SOMAC (Southern Madison County Volunteer Ambulance Corps.) would need more financial support to continue its operations in our Town. An Ambulance District was proposed to collect the revenue needed to make up the shortfall in operating funds. The district did not pass, but the need for revenue remained. As promised, the cost was made part of a budget line in the town taxes, which did create an increase in the tax levy. Through the hard work of the Town Office and Council we were able to continue tightening the budget elsewhere and keep the increase as low as possible. SOMAC used the funds from our Town, as well as from Colgate, to hire professional staff and thereby improve response time and create new operating efficiencies. Priority 1 calls (lights and siren emergency) had an average 2.28 minute response time for 2015 as opposed to a slower 3.98 minutes for 2014. In addition, call volume was up in 2015, not including transfers. The SOMAC board now includes non-voting members from the municipalities it serves—Hamilton, Lebanon, and Earlville.

If you have visited the Town Garage lately you will notice the new salt shed. The DEC found that salt had been leaching from the previously unsheltered salt pile into the Sangerfield River. The Town acknowledged the problem and agreed to build a salt shed, not only to protect the environment but also to conserve salt. The shed cost \$300,746 with additional costs for preparing the grounds, engineering, and lighting. Construction includes concrete panels that are factory designed and manufactured for this purpose, with reports that similar fifteen-year old panels show no sign of deterioration. The Town of Hamilton was awarded up to \$255,000 from the New York State DEC Water Quality Improvement Program which will pay up to 75% of the cost of building the new salt shed.

Staff at the Town Garage have also been implementing changes, with road signs replaced and extensive shoulder and road repairs well underway. Superintendent Glazier has been working with the County to re-examine speed limits for safety reasons on some of our roads such as Poolville Road, Earlville Road, Payne Street

Over the last 3 years the Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) has been working with a community planner, Nan Stolzenburg, to gather input from the community and revise the existing plan. After a series of public and informational meetings in the fall of 2015 the draft plan was edited to reflect community comments. Now the Town Council is reviewing the document and adding their thoughts to the mix. Once the plan is again edited, it will be the subject of a public meeting in late spring, with another opportunity for the community to review and share comments on this

updated version. The new draft of the plan will be available for the public to read well ahead of the public meeting.

The Town supports the activities of the Partnership for Community Development (PCD), which continues to work on a number of town-wide projects. The tax dollars invested in this work has already brought new opportunities to our community—a \$50,000 grant for the Village of Hamilton to market the Mid York Airpark, the establishment of a home ownership center with grants available to first time homeowners, and a \$241,000 grant/loan for the Good Nature Brewing expansion.

The Town Council is looking forward to moving to its new home on Milford Street within the next year. The old railroad building was purchased in 2015, for \$125,000. The objective is to create a modern, handicapped accessible building with room for public meetings and offices. The change will free the existing office space on Broad Street for revenue generating retail space. Funding obtained through Magee and Valesky's office will help offset the cost of the project by \$150,000.

The Town Council looks forward to working with the community on these projects, and others as we make our way through the year. Please join us at our monthly meetings to learn more, visit our website, or contact us through the Town of Hamilton office. The Hamilton Town Council meets on the second Thursday of the month at the Town of Hamilton office at 16 Broad Street in the Village of Hamilton at 6:30 pm. We invite and encourage you to join us. For more info visit www.townofhamiltonny.org

Submitted by: Chris Rossi, Hamilton Town Council