

## Notes from the November Hamilton Town Council Meeting

The November Hamilton Town Council meeting opened with two public hearings. The Earlville and Hamilton Fire Protection districts contracts were approved with no comments from the public.

Budget Officer Darby opened the 2018 Budget Public Hearing with a line-by-line review of the proposed budget. Attendees asked questions about the most significant expenses—ambulance, town office, cost of employee benefits, code enforcement hours, and road maintenance. Along with bookkeeper Wilcox, Darby reviewed the Town's budget history, putting next year's currently projected average rise of approximately 9% in perspective. Attendees participated in a discussion about the cost of keeping the town running in a cost-efficient manner. The Council approved a resolution to move this "Tentative Budget" to a "Preliminary Budget," which is posted on the Town website. The next budget meeting is on November 20, 7pm, at Hamilton Library.

After listening to public concerns and suggestions regarding the Town Hall building project the Town Council passed a resolution to rescind the original proposal. Therefore, the Town of Hamilton Referendum on the Town Hall Project has been cancelled. There will be no vote on November 16. The Town is forming a committee that will be working to find lower costs for the project, focused primarily on our current building site and plan. Other possibilities will also be explored. Once a new estimated cost for the project is determined it will go back out to public notice and most likely to referendum.

Highway Superintendent Florenz reported on local roadwork—ditching and shoulder work, cutting dead trees and brush. The crew installed new road and stop signs around the Town. New members of the highway crew are performing practice runs with the snowplows in readiness for the winter.

The Town received \$24,955, from Madison County, which was the Town's share of revenue generated from the Yellow Brick Road Casino in Chittenango. CHIPS money for maintenance of Town roads has also been received from the State.

How to address abandoned or "zombie" houses—residences where a bank holds the mortgage on a vacant home—was discussed. Under a new program there could be a way to move those buildings on to the market instead of leaving them vacant. The Town is exploring the process further.

With the guidance of planner Nan Stolzenburg, the Zoning Update Committee has been working to bring our regulations in line with the new Comprehensive Plan. Solar generation for offsite usage is the current focus, as it is not addressed in the Town's Zoning Law.

Through the Clean Energy Communities program the Town has been awarded a \$50,000 grant. The money was destined for energy saving features on the new Town office. With the project on-hold the Town has been allowed an extension on the project application.

The Hamilton Town Council meets on the second Thursday of the month at the Village Courthouse in the Village of Hamilton at 6:30 pm. Our next meeting is December 14. We invite and encourage you to join us. For more info visit [www.townofhamiltonny.org](http://www.townofhamiltonny.org)

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Submitted by Chris Rossi, for the Hamilton Town Council