

TOWN BOARD PROJECTS

TOWN OF COPAKE 2020-2023

INFRASTRUCTURE

Church Street Municipal Lot. 2023 \$350,550 This expanded, improved Municipal Lot will be completed in the Spring of 2024 but the first phase including a first course of asphalt and installation of curbs was completed at the end of November 2023. It will provide just short of 40 spaces. Separately EV chargers are being installed in the lot with financial assistance from a NYSERDA grant.

Cold Storage Building -2023 \$449,950 (plus \$40,000 Engineering fees)

The Highway Department had run out of space to store trucks and other equipment. The Town contracted with an engineering firm to design a storage building which would be unheated. The project will be completed in December 2023.

Memorial Garden- Copake Memorial Park 2023 \$16,870 (plus \$710 design fee)

This project which includes the restoration of the Memorial Garden, including new plantings and new stonework has been complete.

Bandshell for Copake Memorial Park 2023 \$139,290 This project has been approved by the Town Board. The foundation for this bandshell will be poured by the end of 2023 or during the winter. It will be completed as soon as weather permits, and prior to the 2024 concert season.

Ice Rink/Pickleball Courts 2023 \$39,493.40 In response to requests from the public, the Town built four outdoor courts on the Ice Rink in the Copake Memorial Park. During the winter, the same space will be an ice rink for skating.

Yonderview Road Repaving 2023 - \$257,927.49

Park Building Parking Lot –2022 \$120,650 The Park Building is used for the summer camp and social events and is also the site of the Columbia County Office for the Aging Luncheon Program. In 2022 the Town paved the lot and in so doing, expanded it to include more handicapped spaces and a turnaround area very close to the front entrance.

Generators 2022 \$100,000+ The outdated generators at the Park Building and Town Hall were replaced this year with automatic, energy efficient generators. (The Generators were paid for in part by ARPA funds.)

LED Streetlights- 2022 The Town converted NYSEG owned streetlights to LED. The cost to the Town was \$3678.26

TOWN HALL

Copake Iron Works Painting– The Church of St. John in the Wilderness has loaned this historic painting by Hillsdale native John Bunyon Bristol to the Town to commemorate its Bicentennial. The painting is now hanging in the Courtroom and is on loan until September 2024.

Town Hall Project - August 13, 2022 was the grand opening of a permanent historic exhibit in Copake Town Hall including 24 historic panels, in addition to a display of enlarged historic post cards and various original paintings of Copake scenes. Particularly exciting are two paintings by Nick Fritsch which are on loan to the town and depict the First Meeting House and an old railroad depot. The three-person committee which created this exhibit included Nick Fritsch, Howard Blue and Vana Hotaling.

Energy Audit and Improvements to Town Hall 2022-2023 \$10,000 The town received an \$8000 grant from Local Champions - Partners for Climate Action. NYSERDA paid 50% of the cost of the audit, so the total cost of the audit will be paid for with NYSERDA and Local Champions funds. The audit was completed in spring of 2022. The Town is budgeting \$50,000 in the 2024 budget to convert to LED lights in Town Hall.

Light on the American Flag 2020 The light on the American Flag in front of Town Hall was no longer working. The very first thing that the Town Board did in 2020 was to install a new light to illuminate the flag.

TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Access to Town Meetings 2021 The Town purchased an OWL during COVID. Now all Town Board meetings are conducted with online access

Town Emails - As of 2020, all the town emails were with Fairpoint Communications. town board members were using their own personal email for town communications. This presented numerous issues, including threats to cyber security. As of 2022, all town board members and all employees have TownofCopake.org email addresses (and the Google suite capabilities which go with it).

Town Website – 2022 \$4274 The original town website was created circa 2013. It has been long outdated and could not be upgraded. A new website was designed and was launched in 2022. The redesign was paid for with ARPA funds.

Copake Connection The Town continues to publish a monthly newsletter via Constant Contact. Roberta Roll is Editor and Clerk Lynn Connolly publishes this newsletter.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Short Term Rental Working Group and Short Term Rental Law- This ad hoc committee was appointed in 2022. The Town Board is considering a Short Term Rental Law which is expected to be adopted in December 2023. The Town has over 150 short term rentals which is believed to be the largest number of short term rentals in any town in the County.

Affordable Housing Law The Town appointed an ad hoc committee to address the housing crisis in January 2023. In September the Town Board adopted a law which is considered to be groundbreaking.

CEDAC– 2020 Copake Economic Development Advisory Committee - This committee was created in 2020. It is chaired by Tom Goldsworthy who also chairs the Roe Jan Ramble Bike Tour.

CONSERVATION, HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND CLIMATE SMART

2023 Bronze Certification It is expected that the Town will file an application for Bronze status by the end of the year.

Copake Conservation Advisory Committee – In 2022 CAC added two sub-committees: the **Climate Smart Committee** and the **Historic Preservation Committee**. In 2023 the **Mohican Allyship** subcommittee was added.

Historic Marker Project This project is being pursued by the Historic Preservation Committee and will result in up to 100 plaques being installed on houses and buildings which were built in the first 100 years that Copake existed.

Mohican Artifacts 2022 Through the efforts of Town Historian Howard Blue, the Town accepted a 500 piece collection of artifacts found in Copake. These artifacts date back 700 to BC.

FINANCES

In 2021 the Town appointed Robert Patterson as accountant. With Mr. Patterson's assistance the Town has increased transparency by posting a Cash and Fund Balance Summary and a Budget to Actual Report every month on the Town website.

With Mr. Patterson's guidance and assistance from our attorney Jon Tingley, the Town passed, for the first time, a Fund Balance Policy. The Town has adhered to the policy such that the funds in Reserve have increased as has the overall fund balance.

The Town also enacted updated Procurement and Investment Policies.

The Town has instituted updated payroll procedures by switching to ADP to handle payroll. The Town now has direct deposit for employees. Employees can log on to view and or make changes to their account. The Town has regularized the schedule for payroll and check runs, and updated the process for paying claims.

NYS Deferred Compensation Plan – 2022 The town approved a NYS Deferred Compensation Plan, which became available to employees beginning in January 2023.

Investments In December 2022 the Town invested in a CD with TD Bank. The CD has matured twice and each time the Town has reinvested. As of November 2023 the Town had reaped close to \$46,000 in interest.

The Town has also been proactive in securing high interests on our other interest bearing accounts. As of November 30, the Town has earned over \$140,000 in interest in our accounts.

TOWN GOVERNMENT

Purple Heart Town In 2020 the Town adopted a Resolution to become a Purple Heart Town. In August Senator Daphne Jordan joined us for a ceremony where Richard Barton of Copake Falls, who fought in the Vietnam War, and Avery (Prope) Dietter, Sr. of Ancramdale, who fought in the Korean War, were both honored.

Also honored was the late Gary Peck who lived in Copake, and the late Clayton Boughton a resident of Copake Falls. Mr. Peck fought in Vietnam and Mr. Boughton served in Korea.

Policy Manual Through the four years the Town Board has enacted numerous amendments to the Policy Manual to bring it in line with the Town's practices and to clarify some policies. In **2023**, to comply with changes in the law the Town enacted a new Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

Confidential Assistant Administrator to the Supervisor 2022 The town board passed a law to create this new expanded administrative position to increase the efficiency of town government. The town hired Gwen Menshenfriend to fill this new position.

Legal Assistance Previously the Town had one Town Attorney who handled all of the Town's legal issues. In 2021, the Town appointed Jon Tingley Esq to be our Town

Attorney. Mr. Tingley attends all Monthly Town Board meetings and is also available to give advice on all of our general issues. Ken Dow, Esq. represents the Town on Land Use matters and advises both the ZBA and the Planning Board. He also advised the Town regarding our new Affordable Housing Law and the Short Term Rental Law. All of our labor and or employment issues are handled by Elena DeFio Kean and Ben Wisniewski represents the Town with regard to the Hecate application and our dealings with ORES.

Town of Copake Emergency Response Plan In 2023, working in conjunction with Columbia County Director of Emergency Management David Harrison, Jr., as well as Copake Fire Chief John DeRocha and Deputy Chief Randi Shadic, the Town wrote and adopted an updated Emergency Response Plan.

TOWN OF COPENAKE BICENTENNIAL – The Town is planning its Bicentennial for 2024. This will include an original play about the founding of the Town, to be performed at the Copake Grange; a “Come Home to Copake” picnic at the Copake Memorial Park in July 2024 and a Bicentennial Parade followed by a Town wide Party in August which will feature live music and conclude with fireworks. The Party will be held at Catamount. The Town has received a grant of \$30,000 from Rheinstrom Hill, payable over two years and has received funds from the Columbia County Board of Tourism to help fund this event.

December 14, 2023