

Town Board Meeting
Thursday
November 13, 2025
7:00pm

This meeting is being held "in-person" in Town Hall. The access information for the meeting has been posted and there are members of the public present virtually.

Members Present: Supervisor Wolf, Councilperson Gansowski, Councilperson Gabaccia, and Councilperson Morningstar; Councilperson Haight, absent

Present: Town Clerk Lynn DeRocha, Attorney Jonathon Tingley (*virtually*)

Call to Order

At 7:00pm, Supervisor Wolf calls the Town Board meeting to order. Supervisor Wolf opens the Town Board meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Supervisor Wolf mentions that this meeting is being held in person in Town Hall but we are allowing remote access. This meeting is being recorded and the recording will be posted online within five business days.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Councilperson Morningstar and seconded by Councilperson Gabaccia to waive a further reading and accept the Minutes as written for the Public Hearing/Town Board Meeting of October 9, 2025.

Four in favor. Motion approved.

Announcements

Supervisor Wolf announces several community events, including a free Thanksgiving dinner on Thursday, November 27th, from 2:00pm until 4:00pm, at the Park Building, sponsored by area churches.

The "Adopt a Tree" program sponsored by the Grange will be collecting dedication donations for twenty trees. Tree decorating will happen on Main Street on Saturday, December 6th at 10:30am. Forms can be found in the Town Clerk's office, Dad's Diner, the General Store, or contact Noel Fair.

There will be a delivery from Vana Hotaling and her team, of holiday poinsettias to people who are home-bound or need cheer during the holiday season.

The Roeliff Jansen food pantry is accepting cereal donations for Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets before Friday, November 21st, at the back vestibule of the Hillsdale Fire Department.

The Columbia County Clerk is sponsoring a program to Keeping Identities of Seniors Safe (K.I.S.S.), where documents with personal identifiers can be brought to Town Hall for shredding.

There will be a Knit Club fundraiser featuring baked goods, soup, and a craft sale on Saturday, December 6th, 10a-3p, at the Copake Memorial Park Building.

Copake Town Hall is a drop-off and pickup location for lunches from the Office for the Aging to combat food insecurity due to the reduction or interruption of SNAP benefits.

The Holiday Parade will be held on Saturday, December 13th at the Copake Fire House at 5:00pm. Board members are requested to bring cookies to the park building for the holiday party.

Correspondence

From-Grant Langdon, several correspondence and phone calls

From-Liana Jensen, Park Commission Chair, regarding the Holiday Light Parade

From-Catherine Mikic, Historic Preservation Chair, memo requesting funding for a Cultural Resources Survey for Copake

From-Steve Savarese, Planning Board member, resignation letter

From-Liana Jensen, Park Commission Chair, reappointment letter

From- Catherine Mikic, copy of letter to the Director of ORES, and Deputy Commissioner of the State Office of Historic Preservation regarding the Shepherd's Run application; attached to the letter was SHIPO's adverse determination finding that the Shepherd's Run application would negatively impact five National Register eligible properties in Copake.

Supervisor's Report

In two weeks, we will celebrate Thanksgiving. Copakeans will gather with family and friends and give thanks for the opportunity to be together, to eat together, and, especially if they gather here in Copake, to give thanks for the beautiful town in which we live and the sense of community that we share.

At the same time, it is important that we remember those among us who are less fortunate. According to the Census Reporter's analysis of U.S. Census information as many as 11% of Copake residents have reported income below the poverty level. For a household of two, this means an income of \$21,150 or less; for a household of four, \$32,150.

Of Columbia County's 60,000+ residents, nearly 5,100 receive Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program benefits, formerly known as food stamps. I do not know how many Copake residents receive SNAP benefits, but there certainly are SNAP recipients among us. As you know, recent uncertainty about SNAP benefits has resulted in delays and increased "food insecurity." This is why we offered to have Copake Town Hall and the Park Building serve as distribution locations for Columbia County's Office for the Aging's Grab-n-Go meals program. On Mondays and Wednesdays, sandwiches will be available at Town Hall, on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at the Park Building.

Those who are able to do so should consider making donations to local food pantries, including the Roe Jan Food Pantry and the Dwyer Program Food Pantry in Hudson, which serves veterans. The Copake

Grange is collecting cereal and other nonperishable items for the food pantry, as well as winter hats and coats, and other items of clothing for the Taconic Hills School Care Closet.

At the Park Building on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, from 2:00pm until 4:00pm, area churches are once again hosting Thanksgiving Dinner which is free to all. People are invited to eat with neighbors in the Park Building. A take-out option is also available.

We urge everyone to continue the generosity that you so often demonstrate, and wish everyone a happy, healthy, and safe Thanksgiving.

Solar Update-October 2025

The NYS Office of Renewable Energy Siting and Electric Transmission (ORES) informed Hecate on September 19th that its application for a siting permit to construct a 42-megawatt solar factory in Craryville had been deemed “complete.” The 60-day deadline for a decision from ORES is fast approaching, and we will soon know whether it intends to allow Hecate to build Shepherd’s Run on more than 200 acres of mostly prime farmland in Craryville.

A recent letter to ORES should give it pause. We hope ORES reads, and acts upon, a November 4 letter from Catherine Mikic, President of the Arcadian Alliance, which she sent to the Executive Director of ORES and the Deputy Commissioner of the State’s Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). In her letter, Ms. Mikic points out that ORES has “withheld from the public record” a “Letter of Adverse Determination”, dated May 15, 2024, in which SHPO concluded that Shepherd’s Run will have an “Adverse Impact” on five Copake properties that are eligible for National Register designation. SHPO made a critically important recommendation: that the solar installation be effectively screened from the five properties. The SHPO letter, which Ms. Mikic obtained through a FOIL request, noted that the planned screening “showed large gaps between the trees making the solar arrays highly visible even after five years of growth.” SHPO said Hecate needed to develop a “meaningful” mitigation plan, and to do so it should reach out “to a variety of (local) history-based organizations.”

It’s been 18 months since SHPO’s letter, and Hecate still has made no effort to reach out to Copake’s Town Historian or any of the several local history groups.

One procedural matter is pending. The Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) proposed that public hearings be scheduled during the week of January 19, 2026. The problem is that Monday, January 19 is a national holiday, Dr. Martin Luther King Day. We are concerned that people with school-age children may be away for the holiday and unable to attend. So we have asked the ALJ to schedule the hearings for the following week, and Hecate has not objected. We are awaiting a response from the ALJ.

Department Heads/Committee Reports

Highway Department-Superintendent Gregory

Highway Superintendent Gregory requested two budget transfers to address equipment repair and garage contractual needs. Specifically, he asked to transfer \$25,000 from the sand/salt materials line and \$10,000 from the general repairs contractual line into machinery repair line. Also requested is a \$4,000 transfer into the garage contractual line for unexpected expenses like a hot water heater. There will be Resolutions for these transfers later in the meeting.

Highway Superintendent Gregory asked the board to surplus a 1982 International Fire Truck, as the town is purchasing a new one, and a 1995 Starling trailer, following the purchase of the new tilt deck trailer. A Resolution for these items will be considered later in the meeting.

Conservation Advisory Committee Report

CAC Chair Mary Ann Carrick reported on the NYSEDA grant program, thanking Bill Gregory for his work on the requests for proposals. Ms. Carrick also announced a talk on forest habitats co-hosted by the Taghkanic Conservation Committee this Saturday.

Public Forum

Jean Halloran, homeowner in West Copake and a participant in Sensible Solar for Rural New York, spoke against the expected draft permit for Shepherd's Run, urging continued opposition and noting the company's financial problems and pending federal permits as potential obstacles.

Roberta Roll, Copake resident inquired about the status of the Casino project, with Councilperson Gansowski confirming that the developer has not started anything new, and the last permit requested was denied. The Code Enforcement Officer will be checking on this.

Ms. Roll also asked Superintendent Gregory about efforts to reduce road salt usage. Superintendent Gregory responded that they use a sand-salt mixture and use less salt than the state and county. Concerns were raised about the delays of the road project, which is now scheduled to begin construction in the spring of 2027.

Ms. Roll mentions that the Grange is having their open house on Saturday, December 13th from 3pm until 5pm.

Ms. Roll mentions the lighting in the Town Hall parking lot, maybe solar lights by the driveway.

Karen Vicki Sander, Copake resident, noting the fatigue in the community regarding Shepherd's Run, but encouraging continued engagement, citing the company's financial disarray, and a letter from Senator Michelle Hinchey urging ORES to reject Hecate Energy's application.

Diana Jameson, a member of the Park Commission, proposed spending up to \$675 for holiday decorations for the music shed and park area, with plans to potentially expand decorations along a future walking path. Supervisor Wolf raised a concern regarding recent purchases for the Halloween party, emphasizing that the Town Board expects pre-approval for expenditures from town committees, rather than retroactive reimbursement, especially when the current spending limit without board approval is being reviewed.

New Business

a. Reimbursement for Halloween Party expenses (Park Commission)-\$255.72

A motion was made by Supervisor Wolf and seconded by Councilperson Morningstar to retroactively, approve the expenditure of \$255.72 for the Halloween Party.

Four in favor. Motion approved.

b. Request for \$500 for Light Parade Expenses (Park Commission)

A motion was made by Councilperson Gansowski and seconded by Councilperson Morningstar to authorize a \$500 cash advance to offset the anticipated costs of the Park Commission.

Four in favor. Motion approved.

c. Request to reimburse Copake Grange for purchase of six Christmas trees-\$360.00

A motion was made by Councilperson Gansowski and seconded by Councilperson Gabaccia to authorize the expenditure of \$360 to purchase six trees for the Grange's Holiday Tree Program.

Four in favor. Motion approved.

d. Retroactive approval for Supervisor to sign Charge-back agreement with County for Emergency Medical Services (Rescue Squad)

A motion was made by Councilperson Gabaccia and seconded by Councilperson Morningstar to retroactively authorize the Supervisor on behalf of the Town to have entered into the Chargeback Agreement with the County for Emergency Medical Services (Rescue Squad).

Four in favor. Motion approved.

e. Set date for Year-End Town Board Meeting

The Town Board agrees to set the date of Monday, December 29, 2025 at 9:00am, for the Year-End Town Board Meeting.

f. Tax Certiorari Matter-Tax Map Karpov vs. Assessor

Town Attorney, Jon Tingley presented a negotiated proposed resolution for a tax certiorari matter involving two properties. The proposed settlement includes assessment reductions for both parcels for 2024 and 2025, and a three-year freeze on assessment changes, subject to certain exceptions.

A motion was made by Councilperson Morningstar and seconded by Councilperson Gansowski to authorize the town attorney for the town of Copake to negotiate and settle the Karpov vs. Assessor in the tax certiorari litigation by reducing the assessment on parcel number 66.20 from \$850,000 to \$743,500 in 2024, and from \$850,000 to \$719,000 in 2025, and on parcel number 66.112, from \$945,000 to \$926,500 in 2024, and from \$945,000 to \$855,000 in 2025 with RPTL 727 to apply.

Four in favor. Motion approved.

g. Roof Solar Panels

Supervisor Wolf mentions that Councilperson Gabaccia has arranged for Hudson Solar to inspect the Town Hall solar installation to investigate recent billing issues from NYSEG, which appears to be charging the town for solar usage instead of reducing bills.

Old Business

a. Adoption of 2026 Final Budget

This will be addressed in Resolutions.

b. Community Preservation Fund

Councilperson Morningstar provided an update on the Community Preservation Fund, noting that they are still awaiting the fund to be signed but that training is planned for Councilpersons Morningstar and Gabaccia, and CAC Chair Mary Ann Carrick, among others, to prepare for implementation.

c. Proposal from Granicus-STR compliance monitoring company

Supervisor Wolf will be signing an agreement with Granicus to become the new short-term rental compliance monitoring company, effective December 1st, following review by Mr. Tingley. After staff training, Granicus will go live on January 1st, providing improved services like easier information access, a 24/7 hotline, and better non-compliance enforcement and online permitting for owners.

Resolutions

TOWN OF COPEN

RESOLUTION

**TOWN OF COPEN
RESOLUTION**

Number 27 of November 13, 2025

To Make a Budget Transfer in the 2025 Budget

WHEREAS, the Town Board desires to make a transfer in the 2025 Budget to ensure that an adequate appropriation is made to fund the landscaping of the walkway connecting the Church Street Municipal Parking Lot to Empire Road; now, therefore

It is hereby **RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Copake hereby authorizes and directs the following budget transfer in the adopted 2025 Final Budget:

<u>Change</u>	<u>Fund/Line</u>	<u>Description of Fund/Line</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Decrease	A917	Unassigned Fund Balance	(\$9,190.00)

Increase	A54102	Sidewalks, Equip, Capital	\$9,190.00
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Roll Call Vote: The foregoing Resolution, offered by Councilperson Gansowski, and seconded by Councilperson Gabaccia, was duly put to a roll call vote as follows:

Resolution No. 27

Dated: November 13, 2025

Copake, New York

Roll Call Vote:	Supervisor Wolf	yes
	Councilperson Gansowski	yes
	Councilperson Gabaccia	yes
	Councilperson Haight	
	Councilperson Morningstar	yes

Lynn M. DeRocha, Town Clerk

(seal)

TOWN OF COPAKE RESOLUTION

Number 28 of November 13, 2025

To Make Budget Transfers in the 2025 Budget

WHEREAS, the Town Board desires to make transfers in the 2025 Budget to ensure that adequate appropriations are made to fund Highway equipment repairs and Garage expenses; now, therefore

It is hereby **RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Copake hereby authorizes and directs the following budget transfers in the adopted 2025 Final Budget:

<u>Change</u>	<u>Fund/Line</u>	<u>Description of Fund/Line</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Decrease	DA5142.4	Snow Removal Contractual	(\$25,000.00)
Decrease	DA5110.4	General Repairs Contractual	(\$10,000.00)
Increase	DA5130.4	Highway Machinery Repair	\$35,000.00
Decrease	A19904	Contingency	(\$4,000.00)
Increase	A5132.4	Garage Contractual	\$4,000.00

Roll Call Vote: The foregoing Resolution, offered by Councilperson Gansowski and seconded by Councilperson Morningstar, was duly put to a roll call vote as follows:

Resolution No. 28
Dated: November 13, 2025
Copake, New York

Roll Call Vote:	Supervisor Wolf	yes
	Councilperson Gansowski	yes
	Councilperson Gabaccia	yes
	Councilperson Haight	
	Councilperson Morningstar	yes

Lynn M. DeRocha, Town Clerk

**TOWN OF COPAKE
RESOLUTION
Amended**

Number 29 of November 13, 2025

**To Adopt the 2026 Preliminary Budget as the Annual Budget
for the Town of Copake for the Fiscal Year Beginning January 1, 2026**

WHEREAS, the Town Board of the Town of Copake accepted the 2026 Tentative Budget as the 2026 Preliminary Budget on September 26, 2025; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Town Law §108, the public hearing was held on October 9, 2025, where comments by the public were solicited both in favor and against the 2026 Preliminary Budget, as compiled, and for and against specific items in that budget, but no comments received by the Board from the public, now, therefore

It is hereby **RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Copake hereby adopts the 2026 Preliminary Budget as the Annual Budget for the Town of Copake for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2026.

Roll Call Vote: The foregoing Resolution, offered by Councilperson Morningstar, and seconded by Councilperson Gabaccia, was duly put to a roll call vote as follows:

Resolution No. 29
Dated: November 13, 2025
Copake, New York

Roll Call Vote:	Supervisor Wolf	yes
	Councilperson Gansowski	yes
	Councilperson Gabaccia	yes
	Councilperson Haight	
	Councilperson Morningstar	yes

Lynn M. DeRocha, Town Clerk

(seal)

A motion was made by Supervisor Wolf and seconded by Councilperson Wolf to add Resolution No. 30, To Approve the Highway Superintendent's Sale of 1982 International Fire Truck and 1995 Starling Trailer, to the Agenda.

Four in favor. Motion approved.

TOWN OF COPAKE

RESOLUTION

Number 30 of November 13, 2025

To Approve the Highway Superintendent's Sale of 1982 International Fire Truck and 1995 Starling Trailer

WHEREAS, the Highway Superintendent has determined that a certain 1982 International Fire Truck (Vehicle Identification No. 2HTD10450CCA19803) (the "Fire Truck") owned by the Town will no longer be needed by the Town; and

WHEREAS, the Highway Superintendent has determined that a certain 1995 Starling Trailer (Vehicle Identification No. 13YFS1621SC056080) (the "Trailer") owned by the Town will no longer be needed by the Town; and

WHEREAS, the Highway Superintendent seeks Town Board approval to declare such Fire Truck and Trailer as surplus and to authorize the Highway Superintendent to dispose of such Fire Truck and Trailer by sale at auction; now, therefore,

It is hereby **RESOLVED**, that the Town Board declares that the Fire Truck and the Trailer are surplus equipment that are no longer needed by the Town; and

It is hereby **FURTHER RESOLVED**, that pursuant to Highway Law SEC. 142(5), the Town Board approves the Highway Superintendent's request that he be permitted to sell the Fire Truck and the Trailer at auction.

Roll Call Vote: The foregoing Resolution, offered by Councilperson Gansowski and seconded by Councilperson Gabaccia, was duly put to a roll call vote as follows:

Resolution No. 30

Dated November 13, 2025

Copake, New York

Roll Call Vote:

Supervisor Wolf	yes
Councilperson Gansowski	yes
Councilperson Gabaccia	yes
Councilperson Haight	
Councilperson Morningstar	yes

Lynn M. DeRocha, Town Clerk

(seal)

Appointments

The board agrees to advertise for two members for the Planning Board and three members for the Park Commission.

Budget-Approval of Budget to Actual Reports and agreement to post

a. Preliminary Budget to Actual Report-October 31, 2025

b. Agreement to post Budget to Actual Report

A motion was made by Councilperson Gansowski and seconded by Councilperson Morningstar to approve and post the budget to actual report for October 31, 2025.

Four in favor. Motion approved

Councilpersons' Reports

Councilperson Morningstar reported on attending a business forum on October 27th and CEDAC is discussing an upcoming new event called "Rock around the Clock" in August 2026.

Councilperson Gabaccia reported on arranging the solar inspection and expressed hope that any issues with the aging system can be corrected.

Councilperson Gabaccia mentions that the Historic Preservation Committee is continuing work on the design plans around the clock area and is seeking funds for a cultural resources survey.

Councilperson Gabaccia was a judge at the park's Halloween party, along with Judge Schermerhorn and Tanya Carter, which was a fun event, though attendance was lower than desired, but they are optimistic about future growth.

Councilperson Gabaccia mentioned routine activity with the ZBA, including issues regarding setbacks from lot lines.

Councilperson Gabaccia mentions the training for the next couple days that Councilperson Morningstar was speaking about earlier.

Councilperson Gabaccia also attended the countywide conservation plan town hall and suggested reviewing the maps once available.

Councilperson Gansowski reports that Lisa Zacarolli as the new cleaning person at the park, assisting Bob Callahan, which has led to a big improvement in the park building, and future upgrades are being considered.

Councilperson Gansowski mentions that a food bank operation at the Catholic church starting at noon and running until 4:00 PM or until food runs out, noting that about 75 families typically attend, and it is open to the community.

Supervisor Wolf mentions that the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee met on October 27th and the November meeting included discussions with non-profits, where a significant need identified was for community transportation, especially for older residents.

Supervisor Wolf is exploring a joint transportation solution with Hillsdale Supervisor, Mike Dvorchak who is already working with folks from Great Barrington.

Public Forum

Marcia Becker, Copake resident congratulated Councilpersons Morningstar and Gabaccia on their successful election to full terms on the Copake Town Board.

Approval of Bills

Done

Executive Session

None

Next Meeting Date

Thursday, December 10, 2025, 7:00pm

Adjournment

A motion was made by Councilperson Gansowski and seconded by Councilperson Morningstar to adjourn the meeting.

Four in favor. Motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn M. DeRocha