

Town Board Meeting
Thursday
July 9, 2026
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, Councilperson Morningstar, and Councilperson Haight

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 Gansowski to waive a further reading and accept the Minutes as written for the Town Board Meeting of Thursday, June 11, 2026.

All in favor. Motion approved.

Announcements

Supervisor Wolf announced the completed installation of the automatic doors at the main entrance of the town hall.

Supervisor Wolf announced that the Music in the Park series continues July 11th with Rhythm and Brews. Copake Falls Day is scheduled for July 18th, 10am until 4pm. The Roeliff Jansen Historical Society Summer Exhibit opens July 18th. The Copake Lake Conservation Society's Big Blue Bash fundraiser on July 18th will take place at The Green's starting at 6pm. The Rock Around the Clock party is scheduled for July 25th, 5pm until 8pm. The American Red Cross is hosting a Blood Drive at Copake Memorial Park, Saturday, August 29th, 8am until 12pm.

Supervisor Wolf announces a public hearing regarding the proposed development of the Roe Jan School into a hotel and spa will be held by the Zoning Board of Appeals on July 23rd, at 7pm.

Additionally, a Hazardous Waste Collection event is scheduled for October 10th in Ghent.

Correspondence

From-Copake Lake Conservation Society, flyer regarding the Big Blue Bash fundraiser

From-Sensible Solar, press release

From-NYSDOT, letter regarding plan to conduct a traffic study

From-ZBA, two letters regarding appointment recommendations to the Zoning Board of Appeals

From-Park Commission, letter regarding appointment recommendations to the Park Commission

Supervisor's Report

Supervisor Wolf reports three project updates;

County Route 7A Roads Project

I should have known better. Naively, I began last month's Supervisor's Report with the following sentence: "We've just received an important indication that the long-awaited, much-delayed County Route 7A "Reconstruction and Preservation" Project actually may begin in the Spring of 2027." Events quickly dashed this hope.

At a public hearing convened on June 27, Columbia County Department of Public Works Commissioner Ray Jurkowski surprised and disappointed everyone in attendance by announcing that the start of the roads project has been delayed for yet another year, until the spring of 2028. The news was met with an audible, collective gasp. As recently as two weeks earlier, I was told the project was on schedule and would begin in the spring of 2027. After the hearing, Commissioner Jurkowski said he had just been informed that the Federal Highway Administration needed to conduct a further review of the project, hence this latest delay.

Supervisor Wolf also announced that the county will begin the process of acquiring property from sixteen landowners. Just compensation offers will be made. If a landowner refuses an offer, the county will initiate eminent domain proceedings.

State Route 22 – Bridge Reconstruction

Last week, Highway Superintendent Bill Gregory and Supervisor Wolf met with State Department of Transportation officials and their design consultants, to get briefed on plans to reconstruct the bridge over Bash Bish Brook. The bridge is located just north of Weed Mine Road on Route 22. It was built in 1945 and rehabilitated more than 40 years ago. Project construction is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2027 and should be completed by the end of the year. Traffic management plans should minimize inconvenience to motorists and cyclists. Much as the county did with the Valley View Bridge, DOT intends to renovate one side of the bridge at a time. One lane will remain open at all times, with monitoring stop lights at each end of the bridge, controlling traffic flow. No detour will be required.

Pathway around the perimeter of Copake Memorial Park

When we applied last year for a grant to upgrade Copake Memorial Park, we sought funds to rebuild the tennis and basketball courts and to create a pathway around the park's perimeter to provide a safe location for walkers and young children riding tricycles and bicycles. We did not receive the grant, but we learned a lot about what Copakeans wanted in their park. Of the more than 100 letters and emails in support of our grant application, 85 voiced strong support for the pathway. We heard you. The town board decided that the town should self-fund a pathway, and allocated sufficient funds in the 2026 budget to do so. We solicited bids and awarded a contract to Colarusso. The Highway Department will provide significant assistance to help hold costs down. Construction will take place, and be completed, in the fall. Finally, some good news!

Solar Update-May 2026

On June 25, the Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) issued their decision on our "Issues Statement" and application for party status in the Shepherd's Run case. The 226-page decision is a mixed bag of rulings, some of which support Copake's positions and others that go against us. We initially were given 5 days to appeal. Given the size and scope of the decision, we requested additional time. Without opposition, our motion for additional time was granted. Copake's appeal was filed on July 10.

In their decision, the ALJs granted Copake "limited party status." This is an ORES first – never before has a "host community" been granted party status of any kind! I'm not sure what is meant by "limited" party status, but it may be tied to the ALJs' ruling that there will be no adjudicatory hearings to allow the parties to have discovery, present evidence and cross-examine witnesses regarding the issues that we have raised. They decided although the issues are "significant" – which is the test for whether party status should be granted – each issue is purely legal in nature; there are no fact questions to be resolved. Legal issues are decided by judges.

Simply put, we disagree. Our arguments will be presented in our appeal to the ORES executive director. (You may recall that the last time we appealed an issue to the ORES executive director, Hecate's original 60-megawatt Shepherd's Run application was dismissed.)

The ALJs' decision does support several of our positions: ORES cannot waive compliance with Section 135 of the Town Code, which requires Hecate to obtain from Copake a permit to place solar facility components in floodplain areas; wetland delineations from 2020 are too old to provide currently accurate information, so Hecate must complete new delineations (which could affect where facility components could be placed); the projected salvage value of facility components cannot be used to reduce the value of required decommissioning security; additional traffic studies must be completed to determine the impact of construction on traffic near the Taconic Hills School campus; and Hecate's failure to engage in meaningful consultation with us violates the spirit of ORES regulations.

Unfortunately, however, the ALJs upheld ORES' decision in the draft siting permit to waive almost all of Copake's local laws and regulations as being "unduly burdensome." The judges also decided that, should ORES grant Hecate a final permit, several deficiencies in Hecate's application could be "cured" thereafter. This is a notion with which we strongly disagree, because it suggests that Hecate's application is "incomplete." If it is incomplete, the "Notice of Complete Application" was issued by ORES in error.

In sum, the ALJs' decision raises many issues that we are pursuing in our appeal. Responses to our appeal, and to any other appeals that may be filed, including Hecate's, are due on July 24th.

Department Heads/Committee Reports

Conservation Advisory Committee

Brian Bloom, chair of the Conservation Advisory Committee, reported on a potential application for New York State climate smart community grants, which requires a 50/50 match from the town. The CAC is considering focusing on energy efficiency upgrades for either the highway garage or the park building, including the installation of heat pumps, to meet grant requirements. The board requested that the committee provide a recommendation with cost estimates to determine feasibility before calling a potential special board meeting.

Brian Boom discussed the poor condition of the pathway between Empire Road and the municipal lot, noting concerns regarding the original landscaping and weed growth. The CAC plans to review the contract to determine options for remediation.

Public Forum

Lindsay LeBrecht Copake Lake resident, expressed gratitude to the board for the installation of the new automatic doors at the town hall.

New Business

a. Presentation by Fire Company No. 1

Jason Mato from Copake Fire Department presented on the ongoing crisis of volunteer shortages. The department will host a recruitment event on August 29th, 2026, and requested support from the board to promote the event to the community.

Old Business

a. Approve permit for Performance Auto

A motion was made by Councilperson Gabaccia and seconded by Councilperson Haight to approve the 2026 Auto/Storage Permit for Performance Auto.

All in favor. Motion approved.

Resolutions

TOWN OF COPAKE

RESOLUTION

Number 18 of July 9, 2026

**To Temporarily Waive Enforcement of Town Code
Chapter 80, Section 80-3, For Rock Around the Clock Event**

WHEREAS, the Rock Around the Clock block party is scheduled to be held Saturday July 25, 2026, from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm, on Main Street in the Hamlet of Copake; and

WHEREAS, Town Code Chapter 80, Section 80-3, prohibits the consumption of alcoholic beverages and possession of open or unsealed containers of alcoholic beverages in public places within the Town of Copake; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Copake Town Board desires to temporarily waive enforcement of Town of Copake Town Code Chapter 80, Section 80-3, at the Rock Around the Clock block party; now, therefore,

It is hereby **RESOLVED**, that the Town Board hereby waives enforcement of Town Code Chapter 80, Section 80-3, at the Rock Around the Clock block party, during the period from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm on Saturday, July 25, 2026 in the Hamlet of Copake.

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. 18
Dated July 9, 2026
Copake, New York**

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

Lynn DeRocha, Town Clerk

(seal)

July 9, 2026

TOWN OF COPEN

RESOLUTION

Number 20 of July 9, 2026

To Increase Funds in the Highway Department Budget

WHEREAS, on June 11, 2026, the Copake Highway Superintendent and the Copake Town Board entered into an amended 284 Agreement; and

WHEREAS, New York State has provided additional CHIPS funding to the Town of Copake; and

WHEREAS, the it is the desire of the Copake Town Board that the additional CHIPS funding will facilitate increased road maintenance and improvement work outlined in the amended 284 Agreement; now, therefore,

It is hereby **RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Copake hereby authorizes and directs the following amendments to the 2026 Final Budget as follows:

<u>Change</u>	<u>Fund/Line</u>	<u>Description of Fund/Line</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Increase	DA3501	State Aid – CHIPS	\$81,732.10
Increase	DA51122	Highway Improvement – CHIPS	\$81,732.10

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

Resolution No. 20
Dated July 9, 2026
Copake, New York

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

Lynn DeRocha, Town Clerk

(seal)

July 9, 2026

A motion was made by Councilperson Gabaccia and seconded by Councilperson Gansowski to add Resolution No. 21 of July 9, 2026, to the Agenda.

All in favor. Motion approved.

TOWN OF COPAKE
RESOLUTION

Number 21 of July 9, 2026

To Make a Budget Transfer in the 2026 Budget

WHEREAS, The Town Board wishes to make a transfer in the 2026 Budget to ensure that adequate appropriations are made to fund Town Committees, now, therefore

It is hereby **RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Copake hereby authorizes and directs the following transfer in the adopted 2026 Final Budget:

<u>Change</u>	<u>Fund/Line</u>	<u>Description of Fund/Line</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Decrease	A86874	Economic Dev Contractual	(\$100)
Increase	A86884	Committees	\$100

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

Resolution No. 21

Dated: July 9, 2026

Copake, New York

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

Lynn M. DeRocha, Town Clerk

(seal)

July 9, 2026

Appointments

A motion was made by Councilperson Gansowski, and seconded by Councilperson Morningstar to retroactively appoint Aryanna Montana, Nathan Foster, Everly Garrand, Xavier Castle, Samantha Henderson, Alexis Weed, and Drake Higueros as counselors for the Copake Summer Park Program.

All in favor. Motion approved.

A motion was made by Councilperson Gabaccia, and seconded by Councilperson Haight to appoint James McNamee as a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

All in favor. Motion approved.

A motion was made by Councilperson Gabaccia, and seconded by Councilperson Morningstar to appoint Marissa Mongiello as Clerk of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

All in favor. Motion approved.

The Town Board will continue to advertise for vacancies on the CAC, CEDAC, and the Park Commission.

The Town Board agrees to continue to advertise for a member vacancy, and an alternate member vacancy on the ZBA.

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

a. Preliminary Budget to Actual Report-June 30, 2026

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 June 30, 2026.

All in favor. Motion approved

Councilpersons' Reports

Councilperson Morningstar mentions the upcoming "Rock on the Clock" event scheduled for July 25th, which will include a magician, car show, kids' activities, craft vendors, and potential bed races.

Councilperson Gabaccia reports that the ZBA has been busy. There will be a public hearing regarding the proposed Roe Jan Resort on Thursday, July 23rd, at 7pm. The Historic Preservation Committee continues to advocate for the design for the Memorial Clock that was agreed upon

Councilperson Haight reports that the Roads Advisory Committee was disappointed in the delay of construction on the CR 7A roads project. The Planning Board is anticipating the Roe Jan Resort project, and hopefully it will go smoothly.

Councilperson Haight and Councilperson Gansowski both spoke about the new American flag at Brothers Contracting in Craryville.

Councilperson Gansowski reports that the Park Summer Program started this week. Music in the Park happens every Saturday in the summer at 6pm. The new refrigerator has been installed in the Park Building.

A motion was made by Councilperson Gabaccia, and seconded by Councilperson Gansowski to appoint Danielle Farwell, Meghan Parmalee, and Cheri Reed as members of the Park Commission.

All in favor. Motion approved.

Supervisor Wolf reports that the Comprehensive Plan Committee is now in the process of going through each of the recommended actions and will continue doing so next month.

Public Forum

None

Approval of Bills

Done

Executive Session

None

Next Meeting Date

Saturday, August 8, 2026, 9:00am

Adjournment

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

All in favor. Motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn M. DeRocha