

SUPERVISOR'S NOTES: Wow – another year starting and with it some changes to your town. We have a new Town Clerk, Annette Thayer. She is trying very hard to transition with her first big task – tax collection – people have been calling about not receiving their bills. The bills have all been put in the mail, but if you didn't receive yours she will gladly send you another copy, call her at 607 657 8647 and leave a message. Her office hours are Tuesday and Thursday 6:00 – 8:00 PM and Saturday 9:00 – 11:00 AM. Her office is in the newly renovated area of the Town Office building at 18 Railroad Avenue. Speaking of taxes, your town had no increase in taxes again this year. There were increases in the County and Recycle and a very small increase in the Fire Tax. Even though we did not increase taxes we have still planned on providing all the services that you expect from your Town. The second change to your town – a new Town Justice, Kelly Sharp. Kelly has been to Albany for her training and is now sitting on the bench for our town.

Last year's Blueberry and Books Festival was so widely accepted they are planning to make the event an annual event. The town welcomes this activity as it was one of the items in the survey that residents asked for (more community events). We have budgeted to give money for some advertising and to insure the activities through the town insurance carrier.

Our Planning Board is working a comprehensive plan for our town. They will be presenting sections to the Town Board for review and approval this year.

The Town Assessor is reviewing all tax parcels in our community to assure fair and equitable tax assessments for all property owners.

The Highway Superintendent and Code Enforcement Officer are going to be working with the County on the Hazard Mitigation plan for the Town.

The Board and I are looking for ways to improve the items brought to our attention in the survey while balancing costs versus benefits.

This was just a brief update on what your town is working on – come visit us at Town Board meetings on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall. You are encouraged to view your town Web site at www.BerkshireNY.com or view us on Facebook (Town of Berkshire). Ron McEwen

Town Board Members: [Ron McEwen](#) 607-372-3096, **Town Supervisor**

[Lillian Hoffmire](#) 607-657-2769 [Ronald Sharp](#) 607-657-5555

[John Stoughton](#) 607-657-2501 [Fraser Williams](#) 607-657-2742

Town Board Meetings: Berkshire Town Hall 18 Railroad Avenue

Workshop - Tuesday before Board Meeting at 5:30PM Regular Monthly Meeting 3rd Monday at 7:00PM

Town Attorney: Nicholas R. Canizio 607-642-8500

Bookkeeper: [Sue Bierl](#) 607-657-8312

Town Clerk, [Annette Thayer](#) 607-657-8647 Berkshire Town Hall 18 Railroad Avenue

Tax Collector, Records Management Officer and Registrar of Vital Statistics:

Tuesday and Thursday 6:00PM to 8:00PM Saturday 9:00AM to 11:00AM

Highway Superintendent: Karl Spoonhower 607-657-2705

Town Justice: Kelly Sharp 607-657-8286 **Court Clerk:** Rebecca Randall 607-657-8090

Town Court: 3rd Monday at 5:00PM

Town Assessor: Mike Maxwell 315-391-8323

Dog Control Officer: Ron Raab 607-426-4567

Code Enforcement Officer: [Rachel Jacobs](#) 607-744-9383 Every Thursday 5:30PM to 7:00PM

Planning Board: Ken Ceurter, Chair 607-657-2831. Meeting 1st Tuesday each month at 6:30PM Town Hall

County Planning Board Rep. Tim Pollard, 607-657-8210

Town Historian: Nancy Hunt 607-657-4416

Town REAP Representative: Dick Bierl 607-657-8312

HIGHWAY NEWS: What a winter!!! I love it!!! We still have 80% of our sand pile reserve. Last year we were replenishing every day that we did not have to plow. Overtime is down and we are able to spend a lot of time repairing and doing preventive maintenance on our equipment. The weather has been nice enough that we have the chipper and chain saws ready for roadside brush cutting - in January. If this mild weather continues, maybe we will be able to afford a bit more road work. The price of tar for the oil & stone has been so high that for several years we did not have enough money to recoat many roads, but hopefully the price will be lower this season. Soon as the spring thaw is behind us (if we ever get any serious freezing) we will see what roads will benefit most from recoating. IWe plan to finish reworking and pave the rest of McMahan Road this summer .Also part of N. Ketchumville needs work and I would like to rebuild and pave some more of Akins Road.

Karl Spoonhower

BERKSHIRE FIRE COMPANY: Well old man winter has hit us. Just a reminder to everyone to be sure your chimney is clean and be careful using space heaters. We don't want to see anyone lose their house especially in the cold winter weather. Winter is good time to come out and see all your friends and neighbors at the fire station. We have been hosting several dinners and pancake breakfast and would like to see you there. Watch our sign for dates of all events. Thank you to all that have supported us. 2015 was a busy year for us as always. We had a total of 177 calls in 2015. Of our 177 calls 51 were in Newark Valley, 23 were in Richford and the remaining 103 were right here in Berkshire. We do often get called to assist our neighbors as they get called to assist us from time to time. So you can see our volunteers do keep very busy. In order to keep providing this high quality of service we always need new volunteers. We have plenty of jobs for everyone so don't be afraid to offer your help. We need fire police to close roads and protect our members, pump operators to supply water, both exterior and interior firefighters, support members to help with tools and hose on scenes, ambulance drivers, EMTs, people to help at fund raisers, and many other task. You give as little or as much time as you can. We provide all the necessary equipment and training at no charge to you. It is the combined effort of everyone that makes our department so successful.

We meet the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00PM at the station. All are welcome to and see what your fire company is doing and pick up an application. Or you can call me at any time and I can meet with you and show what being a volunteer fire fighter is all about. The satisfaction from helping others in need is priceless.

Bret Welch, Chief

BERKSHIRE FIRE DISTRICT AMBULANCE: Berkshire Fire District Ambulance members would like to thank the voters once again that came out in support of purchasing a new ambulance! The new ambulance has been built and is currently in service! This ambulance is a 2016 Ford chassis. And is serving our needs nicely! Pictures of the new ambulance can be seen on the Berkshire web site at <http://berkshireny.net/fire-district.html> Our old ambulance was purchased at the end of 2010 and then it was already 10 years old; so we put it to good use in the last 5 years. Unfortunately, the last year or so it had started to become unreliable.

Your ambulance has been busy! With neighboring agencies having issues with getting crews and even closing their doors, we had started seeing some of those effects on us. Your current squad is run by very few volunteers, if you've ever had the desire to help out your community, but was not sure what you could do, we're always looking for more volunteers to either drive the ambulance and or become a CFR or EMT! No medical background is required! We have opportunities for training and will be paid for as long as you're a member in good standing in our organization. If you're interested in helping out, squad meetings are held the first Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the fire station. With the ambulance being run by volunteers, there may come a time during the day/evening/night that one of the two current EMT's are not available. This would result in another squad coming into our district to take care of your emergency needs. In 2015 we were dispatched 139 times, this consists of fire calls, EMS calls, and motor vehicle accidents, and mutual aid calls to neighboring towns! Melinda Russell
2016 Squad Officers: President: Rodney Russell, Vice President: Greg Colson,
Secretary/Treasurer: Kelly Sharp, Squad Captain - Melinda Russell, Lieutenant – Cindy Ceurter

BERKSHIRE PLANNING BOARD: The Berkshire Planning Board has some changes in membership. We thank Bette Johnson for her service and wish her well after her recent resignation. At the same time, we welcome back Jim Lacey, who has accepted appointment as an alternate member. Jim has many years of experience with the planning board, starting with its inception in the early 1990's thru 2013. Keith Flesher has also joined the board, accepting appointment as a regular member. We still have one open alternate position available. Alternate members serve one year terms and are not expected to hold an office or do major research unless they desire to do so. They have voting privileges only in the absence of a regular member. We meet the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30 in the Town Hall. Our focus for the foreseeable future is to create a Comprehensive Plan for the town. A comprehensive plan articulates goals and approaches pertaining to the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the municipality. All three adjoining towns in the county have either adopted new plans recently or are in the process of updating their plans. For several months we have been gathering data from the survey and other sources as part of the process in drafting the plan.

Planning Board volunteer members have a unique opportunity to assist the Town Board in planning and assisting with the direction of the town. Please contact Ken Ceurter at 657-2831 for more information about becoming a member or helping with the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Board members are: Ken Ceurter, Keith Flesher, Frank Kunik, Marty Mattrazzo and Tim Pollard and an alternate, Jim Lacey.
Ken Ceurter, Chair

CODE ENFORCEMENT: Happy New Year Everyone! As we all know, winter is here and as unpredictable as always. Please remember to inspect and clean your chimney if using wood, pellets, or coal. Make note that if you install or have a company install any new heating source such as a wood stove, pellet stove, coal stove, boiler furnace, gas furnace, or any type of fire place insert you need to get a permit for the installation of such heating sources and as well as the new unit needs to be inspected by Code Enforcement prior to its use. I am still working on correcting many ongoing property maintenance and unlicensed vehicle issues. It is a long tedious process but I am seeing progress so it is worth the time and effort. I will continue to work hard to get Berkshire cleaned up and community integrity restored. You may have seen some progress on Route 38, in regards to clean-up. You will also see more soon along Mill St - including the old Factory.

I have just completed my year end report for NYS. We had a total of 30 permits and 15 complaints in 2015. My new office hours in Berkshire are Thursday evenings 5:30-7 PM but I can be available through phone at (607) 744-9383, as well as through e-mail at racheljacobsceo@gmail.com. I am more than willing to set up appointments to meet with residents to discuss any issues. Rachel Jacobs

BERKSHIRE POST OFFICE HOURS:

Post Office Retail Window Monday - Friday 8:30AM - 11:30AM and 12:30 PM - 3:00PM
Saturday 9:00AM - 11:00AM
Post Office Box Lobby Monday - Friday 7:30AM -5:30PM Saturday 7:30AM - 11:30AM

ASSESSOR NEWS: Berkshire Property Revaluation - There were some missing inventories that I found, for example camps/ pole barns etc. For the most part no dramatic changes but the higher end properties may see some increases.

The change notices will be going out end of Feb/2016. I will meet with those property owners in March 2016 that want to review the new assessments. On May 1, 2016 these values will become the 2016 Tentative Roll. Grievance Day is Thursday May 26, 2016 from 4-8pm at the Town Hall. I will be in the office in May/2016 to review/assist any property owners with the new assessments.

Office hours for the Berkshire Assessor at the Town Hall on Railroad Ave. are as follows:

Monday, Feb 15, 8:30 – 10:00am

Monday, Feb 29, 8:30 – 10:00am

Reminder: All exemptions must be filed by March 1.

Assessor : Mike Maxwell ph 315 391 8323 e-mail: maxappraisal@hotmail.com

BLUEBERRIES GALORE: MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Delicious Food, Family Games, Raffle Baskets, Arts and Entertainment... that's what you'll find at Berkshire's 2nd annual **Blueberry & Books Festival** on Saturday, **July 23, 2016** (rain or shine). Festival activities will be held in the Berkshire Library, Fire Station, and Community Hall, with parking in the town ball field. The town is hosting this community event, with help from enthusiastic volunteers from the library (Berkshire & Richford residents), Fire Department, First Congregational Church, and Berkshire Community Association. Fresh blueberry pancakes will be served from 7 - 10 a.m. with main events running from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. **Vendor spaces** are still available -- reserve by March 1 with a \$10 donation for 10'x10' space. As Henry Ford once said, "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." This is YOUR annual community event with a shared responsibility to make a difference for your local non-profit services, so please think about what your role might be. Can you attend the event, invite your friends and relatives to go, bake for the blueberry bake-off and bake sale or take a shift to help out at one of the activities that day? If you would like to share an idea, join in the planning phase, or know some vendors who would be interested in participating, please let me know! All are welcome to our planning meetings on the 4th Tuesday of each month, 6pm at the library. Karen McNally 657-8558, mcnally@htva.net

BERKSHIRE FREE LIBRARY: Even though we are in the middle of winter at the Berkshire Free Library, we are thinking Spring and Summer! Please put these dates on your calendar for upcoming events.

LIBRARY BOOK SALE Saturday, March 5 and Tuesday, March 8 to Saturday, March 12 from 9 - 4. There will be a Bake Sale on Saturday, March 5 and Saturday, March 12. The sale will be closed on Sunday, March 6 and Monday, March 7. We have a wonderful selection of books, new and used, for sale. Come support the library and take home a book and some sweets.

FAMILY EVENING ENTERTAINMENT - Wednesday, March 23, Richford Congregational Church, storyteller, songwriter and entertainer, Story Laurie will read and perform for the whole family. A family dinner will follow. Everyone is invited. Watch for more details

STORY TIME - Besides all these special events come see all the new books at the library. Some of your favorites authors are featured on our new book shelf. Authors such as Clive Cussler, Jude Deveraux, JoJo Moyes, Emma Miller, Carolyn Hart, Stuart Woods, Jan Karon and many more. We have a large selection of knitting, crochet, cross stitch and other craft books available. Winter reading is the best!

ADOPT-A-BOOK - If you don't see the book you want, you have the opportunity to ADOPT-A-BOOK. Let me order the book for you and be the first to read the book. When you are finished, then we will put it on the shelf for other readers with your name plate in the book. Come see me so we can fill the library with your favorite books. **Students** - Don't forget the library is a perfect place to do your homework and work on school projects.

Friday Night Fun -After school until 7:00PM. If you would like to come in and have some fun all you need to do is bring in one of your favorite board games with a few friends. We have had young adults stop by with cards, and games. Come have family fun on Friday. We would love to see you here.

Look for us on Facebook - Berkshire Free Library - Please message me with your suggestions for books or ideas for the library. Fran Miller, Berkshire Free Library

BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY HALL - an update: It has been 10 years since the restoration efforts on the Hall began. Even though much work still needs to be done, the program has to be considered a success. Both floors are useable and are being used – OFTEN. The handicap accessible first floor houses the Helping Hands Food Pantry. The remaining area, which includes a handicap accessible restroom, is host to meetings, youth activities, parties and Berkshire Free Library functions. The second floor includes a stage and a completely refurbished basketball court. Tioga County Council on the Arts holds an annual round and square dance featuring live music. Weddings and wedding receptions, anniversaries, graduation parties, public meetings, a variety of youth and scouting activities, dances, Zumba classes and Library Summer Youth Programs are increasingly common second floor events. The newly refinished and equipped basketball court, made possible by the generosity of Alan Westfall, a former Berkshire resident who played basketball in the Community Hall as a youngster, is extremely popular. Two Newark Valley Middle School teams regularly practice there. Young adult pickup games are common and groups of supervised youngsters are using the court with rapidly increasing frequency. It is fully anticipated that Hall usage will exceed 250 events this year. With that kind of utilization it is obvious that there exists a need for such a facility and that the local area Community has accepted the return of this unique historical Community Treasure.

How did all this happen? In 2005, The Berkshire Community Association (BCA) previously known as the Berkshire Resident Action Group, a non profit organization formed in 1999, decided to investigate the restoration of the abandoned Berkshire Community Hall as a potential project. The Berkshire Fire District acquired legal ownership of the building and in turn leased it to BCA for the purpose of restoring it. Many thousands of dollars in grants, exceedingly generous donations from individuals and local businesses and thousands of hours of volunteer labor have made this resurrection possible. BCA is pursuing: improvement of the stage, insulation for the second story hall/court area, floor covering and possibly a kitchen for the first floor and a handicap lift connecting both floors to the ground level main entry and restrooms.

It has truly been rewarding to witness and be part of returning such a unique treasure as the Berkshire Community Hall to residents of Berkshire and Northern Tioga County. If you are interested in participating in your Community, specifically by providing a facility for not only social and festive gatherings with friends and neighbors, but also a safe, healthy environment for a wide variety of youth activities, consider joining the Berkshire Community Association. BCA, a 501©3 organization, is currently comprised of eight Directors and 15 at large members. Involvement and commitment are strictly up to you. The Directors are the decision makers and meet monthly. The Board currently has a Director vacancy and is seeking an Assistant Treasurer. At large membership carries no commitments whatsoever, and voluntary involvement ranges from helping at an occasional work party, to submitting ideas or suggestions to the Board, or merely staying informed of events, trends and decisions. If you think you might be interested in knowing more about the Community Hall, or BCA, or if you would just like a tour of the Hall, contact me at 657 2742, email fraserw@citlink.net or Skip Hartwig, BCA Secretary, 657 8418 email skhartwig@frontiernet.net.

Fraser Williams, BCA President

: OPTIONAL ARTICLE if space permits

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY: We want to make sure you get the Town Quarterly newsletter. Keeping the address list current is still one of the most difficult and time consuming things that we do. We really need your help. Please let us know if: you or someone you know is not receiving a newsletter or getting duplicates; have a change or correction of a name or address or email; you can receive the newsletter via email saving us printing and mailing costs; are receiving the newsletter but it is addressed to Current Resident or Boxholder. We would like to have your **name** on our address list. Contacts: Fraser Williams, 657 2742, fraserw@citlink.net or Skip Hartwig 657 8418, skhartwig@frontiernet.net

TOWN WIDE EMAIL LIST : We maintain a list of email addresses to disseminate information of significant happenings in and around Berkshire such as major projects, meetings, fundraisers, public hearings, new or proposed legislation, etc. We have 200 addresses on the list and have been using it to help keep you informed for more than 14 years. It has proven to be a very effective way to get near real time communications to those people in Town who have email capability and wish to keep up with what is happening around Berkshire and surrounding areas. The program also serves as an excellent way for us to receive feedback. As a protection against personal use and SPAM, messages are sent out as Blind Carbon Copies so the entire list will never be sent to any recipients. Comments on the information provided and the use of the list has been very positive. To be placed on the list or to change an email address, contact Skip Hartwig - 657 8418, email skhartwig@frontiernet.net.

