

February 2014 TOWN NEWSLETTER

Published by the:
Berkshire Community Association

BCA
PO Box 113
Berkshire, NY 13736
Phone: 607-657-2742
www.BerkshireNY.net

Vol: 2014 Issue: #1

SUPERVISORS NOTES

Just trying to stay warm while I write this, I am so ready for the return of warm weather. The highway crew has been putting in long hours and using tons of sand and cinders to keep our town roads safe. Some may think that our roads are not being taken care of properly, but the truth is that they are keeping them safe at a cost that won't break the budget this early in the year. It is hard to please everyone but they work very hard to try. We, the Board and I, are happy that even with the June storm damage we were able to keep the increase in taxes at a minimum. Now that I start my 3rd year as your supervisor I am happy to say we are continuing to try to make improvements in your community. Many of you have heard about working on a "consolidated plan" for the Town. The real meaning of this is to have a plan for the future of our community. The future, whether it is your business, personal life, or our community, requires a plan on where we are going and how we intend to get there. In this endeavor we have asked the Planning Board to take the lead in establishing a survey to send out to all Berkshire residents. They have formed a group of residents to work with them on this project. We hope to use the survey as a positive step to involve all of the Berkshire residents in a community vision of what you, the residents, want Berkshire to be tomorrow and in the years to come. For this to be a beneficial process for all of us, this must receive the input from as many as possible. We are looking into ways that the survey may be answered – mail, email, from the web site or drop off sites. If you wish to answer and not be identified that will also be a consideration. The important thing is that for your feelings to be included you must give us your feelings. When this survey does arrive at your household we only ask one thing – keep your thoughts positive in nature so that the results will also be positive for "your" community. Neither I nor the Board proclaims to have all the answers. The one thing that we do realize is that whatever is done with the outcome of the survey results we must still be able to keep tax increases as low as possible. I personally know that we have a really good community with a lot of talent in many different areas and "together" we can strive to make it even better. Please help us to make sure your feelings are taken into consideration by answering the survey when it arrives in the next few months. I also wish to thank you for again electing me as your town supervisor during this crucial endeavor of planning for our town's future. As one final note, whether or not you support, condone or are neutral on the subject of gambling it did get voter approval in the November General Election. With that being said, Tioga Downs in Nichols has a beneficial revenue stream for all communities in Tioga County. They have supported several community projects and disaster recovery projects within the County, Towns and Villages. We hope that you all will help to insure that they get the newly established license in Tioga County and not let it go to Broome or another area. They have been a beneficial community partner to have and we do not want to lose that partnership. As always follow the town activity on our Web site www.BerkshireNY.net and you can follow the fire department at www.BerkshireFireDepartment.com. Until next time, I hope you get a chance to come see us at the Board meetings on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00PM in the Town Hall. Your Supervisor

Ron McEwen

BERKSHIRE FREE LIBRARY

I hope everyone is keeping warm. To help with warm thoughts come in and check out one of our books on plants and gardening. What? You might ask. This is the best time to start planning your vegetable and flower gardens with all the seed catalogs coming in the mail. Get out some paper and start mapping where you want to put that new tree or where you want to move the tomatoes in the garden this year. You don't want to put them in the same place as they were last year. This cuts down on pest problems. Moving to a different spot also helps prevent powdery mildew on your squash or pumpkins. We will be having a "Trash & Treasure" and bake sale on Saturday February 15 from 9am – 4pm at the Richford Congregational Church. It will be like an indoor garage sale. Money will support the Berkshire Free Library. If you want to donate any items for the sale please drop them off at the library before Feb. 14 or contact Sandy Negus at 657-8272 for details. We will have food and snacks available for sale too. Please stop by and see what treasures you may find. We are still having Story Time at the library on Tuesdays from 10-11 and in Richford at the Congregational Church Fridays 10-11. Any child not yet going to school can come. The children have had lots of fun jumping to the "5 Little Monkeys" song, making snowman puppets and listening to great stories. We will not have Story Time if school has been canceled that day because of weather. We are starting to plan the Summer Reading Program for this year. If anyone would like to volunteer to help in Berkshire or Richford please call the library during business hours and let us know. We are also looking for teens to help with both programs this year. If interested, please contact LuAnn Whirl. Thanks to everyone who donated to our Annual Fundraiser this year. You are helping to keep the Library open for another year. Thanks also to everyone who helped at the Holiday Open House and all who came. Everyone had a great time. Hours: Tues. 12-5, Wed. 1:30-7, Thurs. 1-5, Fri. 1:30-7 & Sat. 9-2 Ph 607-657-4418 e-mail – bfl@htva.net Everyone keep warm and read a good book. *LuAnn Whirl – Director*

BERKSHIRE PLANNING BOARD

The Planning Board is happy to announce the following appointments to regular positions: Marty Mattrazzo, who had previously been serving as an alternate member, is filling the vacant term ending in 2017; Frank Kunik is filling the vacant term ending in 2016; and Sarah Albrecht has been reappointed to an additional 5-year term ending 2018 and continues to fill the positions of Vice Chair and Secretary. Ken Ceurter continues as Chair, and Tim Pollard continues as our representative to the County Planning Board. In addition to our ongoing work on Road Use, the Planning Board is coordinating the meetings of a small committee convened at the request of the Town Board for the purpose of developing a town-wide survey. The results of the survey will inform Town Board decisions and aid in the development of a Consolidated Plan. The committee is chaired by Sarah Albrecht and the members of the committee are Jerry Acton, Carol Kania, Bill Leonard, and Tara McKenzie. Keep watch for the survey in the coming months and have your opinion heard! You may also notice some “no snowmobiles” signs around downtown. These signs are erected to remind snowmobilers to stay off the sidewalks so that the sidewalks remain usable by pedestrians, and also not to cross private property for which they have not expressly been given permission to do so. If you are a snowmobiler and need information about local trails, please contact one of the local snowmobile clubs listed at: http://www.snowmobilingusa.com/Snowmobile_Clubs.htm. If anyone thinks they might be interested in the work of the Planning Board or joining our team, our meetings are the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall (18 Railroad Avenue). There are still openings for Alternate members, which have one-year terms and voting privileges when regular members must be absent. If you are interested in more information, please contact Ken Ceurter at 657-2831.

<http://berkshireny.net/planning-board.html> Sarah Albrecht

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HIGHWAY NEWS

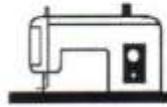
So far it has been a real winter. Even though we have had a few short unusually warm spells, snow started in mid-November and we have had a lot of it. In October, I thought that our sand pile was more than enough to get us through the whole winter. Wrong!! Many days we spread more than 120 tons. That rate eats up a pile fast. Much of our plowing and sanding has taken place on holidays and weekends, the overtime chewing into our salary budget. To make matters worse, sand is very hard to find in the area. The one supplier who still has any has a lower quality product than I like, but we have no choice. Hopefully the remainder of the winter season will give us a break. Every Town and every Highway Superintendent does snow removal differently. Factors include equipment, terrain, road condition and road use. Since most of the 40 miles of road that we take care of are oil and stone or gravel, I use very little salt. Not only is salt very expensive, but with the makeup of our road coverings, salt can be very damaging. Heavy concentrations on gravel roads creates spring-like softening anytime the temperature rises above 25 degrees and refreezing will make roads very rough. Town roads are narrow and do not have paved shoulders and salt eats away at the edges of the pavement causing frequent and costly repairs. When cinders were available we would mix sand with them. Since cinders are no longer readily available, I use coarse sand mixed with size 1A stones. That combination results in good abrasion and traction. When and how often do we plow? I have had many discussions with the Town Board over the years and there really is not a single simple answer. Safety comes first but I have a very limited budget. On weekdays I try to time the plowing and sanding with the school bus and major commute times. Typically I check the weather about 3:30AM and if warranted I start inspecting the roads by 4. If needed, I call the boys and have them start their routes by 5. We often go out again about 2 in the afternoon, again for school buses and the return home commute. For big storms we do what we can to permit travel and fire equipment access. On weekends, I make frequent checks and rely on my judgment and calls from you about trouble spots. It is nice to have all our equipment indoors again. It makes routine and preventive maintenance much easier. All the equipment seems to be holding up. If all goes according to plan we will be acquiring a new plow truck in 2015. The 20 year planned lifespan for the trucks, with 5 year interval replacements, is working out very well, giving us reliable equipment and reduced maintenance costs.

Karl Spoonhower

BERKSHIRE HISTORY MUSEUM

When was the last time you visited the Berkshire History Museum? Our town's museum brings Berkshire's past to life, telling its story through display of artifacts and photography. The Museum celebrated its 30th anniversary last November with an afternoon of kids' activities, museum tours, and a special appraisal clinic courtesy of Binghamton antiques specialist Bob Connelly. You may also have noticed the new "History Museum" sign outside the Library; funding came from a grant award by The Community Foundation for South Central New York. Recent monetary donations from the Berkshire History Buffs and United Methodist Women are also enabling exciting updates. Improvements to exhibits, better lighting, and additional archival storage for new donations are coming to fruition. The museum is located within the Berkshire Free Library at the corner of Route 38 and Jewett Hill Road. Stop by to see the current mini-exhibit on family genealogy in the entrance hall of the library, open during regular library hours. Winter hours for the main museum space (second floor) will be the first Saturday of the month, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Look for spring hours and special events to be posted in the library and post office, and announced via the townwide email list. If you would like to find out more about the museum, call 657-8648 or email BHM@htva.net. *Nancy Reddy*

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NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

Our goal is to get this newsletter to everyone in Berkshire. Obtaining and keeping the address list current is one of the hardest and most 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 OFFICIALS & MEETINGS

Town Board Meetings 3rd Monday, 7:00 pm

Supervisor: Ron McEwen 657-8678 h 657-2531

Town Board: John Stoughton, Fraser Williams, Lillian Hoffmier, Ron Sharp 657-8678

Planning Board Chair: Ken Ceurter 657-2831 Meetings - 1st Tuesdays, 6:30 pm

Highway Superintendent: Karl Spoonhower 657-2705

Town Clerk: Connie Liddington 657-8131 12421 St. Rt. 38. M-Thur 6-8pm, Sat 10 am – 2 pm

Justice: Charles Brundza, 657-8286 Court 3rd Monday- 5:00pm

Assessor: Michael Maxwell 315-391-8323, 657-8635
18 Railroad Ave.

Town Code Enforcement: Lee Virtue 657-8635 c 760-5551 - Thursdays from 1 to 7 pm

Dog Control Officer: Ron Raab 426-4567

Berkshire Fire Commissioners: Don Liddington, Chair, Bob Waite, Donny Liddington, Butch Ceurter, Rodney Russell -
Meetings 4th Wednesday, 7 pm

Fire Chief: Bret Welch

Berkshire Fire District EMS Squad Captain: Darlene Wait

**RECYCLING NEWS**

RECYCLING NEWS: No more sorting - just place all your recyclables together in one recycling bin. They are separated at a state-of-the-art recycling facility located in Tioga County. Check the list below for what can be recycled. **Putting in a non-recyclable item will contaminate an entire batch, which must then be deposited in the landfill, defeating the entire purpose of recycling.**

Paper: Newspaper, Magazines, Catalogs, Junk mail, Office paper, Telephone books, Soft cover books, Hard cover books with cover removed, Greeting cards, Wrapping paper (non-metallic only).

Cardboard: Corrugated and Single Layer cardboard, cereal & tissue boxes, egg cartons, Gable Top Milk and Juice Cartons.

Do not recycle Waxed cardboard, Food, Soiled paper, Styrofoam egg cartons, Tissues, Napkins, Paper Cups or Plates.

Glass: Unbroken clear, brown or green glass bottles and jars only - no Drinking glasses, glass plates or glass cookware.

Plastics: Bottles and jugs with recycling symbol # 1 – 7. Rigid plastics including 5-gal buckets and flower pots, dish drainers, plastic cups and bowls, Plastic hangers and chairs, toys etc.

Metal: Tin and aluminum cans, clean aluminum foil and pans, completely empty aerosol cans.

Do not recycle: Styrofoam, Light bulbs, Automotive Fluid Containers, and ABSOLUTELY NO PLASTIC BAGS OF ANY KIND. Please recycle plastic grocery bags at your local grocery store. If you have questions or need a replacement bin, call 607-687-8274.

BERKSHIRE FIRE COMPANY NEWS

Well we are still getting settled into our new station and doing some finishing touches, having the room to work has been great. We are still very excited to have a new home. We are currently hosting a Certified First Responder class for Tioga County. We have had several events and have several more planned. There will be a lasagna supper sponsored by the auxiliary on February 15th, a pancake breakfast sponsored by the fire company on February 16th, and a pork chop dinner sponsored by the fire police on February 22nd. So if you want a break from cooking we have plenty of opportunities for you to get out of the house. Then, on March 8th we will be having our annual awards dinner at the station. I would like to remind you all of the open burning law with spring on the way. Effective on October 14, 2009, all open burning is prohibited in New York with several exceptions including the following:

- Campfires less than 3 feet in height and 4 feet in length, width or diameter are allowed.
- Small cooking fires are allowed.
- Fires cannot be left unattended and must be fully extinguished.
- Only charcoal or clean, dry, untreated or unpainted wood can be burned.
- Ceremonial or celebratory bonfires are allowed.

In towns with a total population less than 20,000, you may burn tree limbs with attached leaves. The limbs must be less than 6 inches in diameter and 8 feet in length (also referred to as brush). However, this is not allowed from March 16 through May 14 due to the increased risk of wildfires.

Elections were held in December the officers for 2014 are...

Chief: Bret Welch, President: Butch Ceurter: 1st Asst.: Ken Bean, Secretary: Kelly Sharp, 2nd Asst.: Ron Sharp, Treasurer: Bill Leonard, Captain: Jeff Brown, Squad Captain: Darlene Wait, Lieutenant: Dean Beldon, and Squad Lieutenant: Bob Wait.

In 2013 we had a total of 181 calls, with an average of a call almost every other day it takes a lot of volunteer hours to answer them as well as stay trained and ready to answer them. So, when you see any of your local volunteers take a minute to thank them for all they do. But remember if we can't find you we can't help you so it is important to be sure your house number is clearly posted. If you would like a reflective number on green metal background we do have them for sale and we will install it for you. Leave a message at the station 657-2727. We will call you back. Now that we have a nice new home, feel free to stop by the first Tuesday of any month at 7:00PM and check it out. Then, you can stay for our meeting and hopefully decide to join. The one thing we always need is more volunteers, or, if you would like to talk to me about joining call my cell anytime (607)427-0964.

Bret Welch, Chief

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ASSESSOR NEWS

Office hours in the Berkshire Town Hall: Feb. 10th and 24th and March 3rd 8:30AM to 10:00AM.

Grievance Day is May 29, 2014 4:00PM-8:00PM.

Assessor's Office Hours 2PM -4PM for assistance to property owners.

All Senior Star/Enhanced Star and Ag renewals have to be in by March 3, 2014.

All new Basic Star have to be in by 3/3/2014.

Renewals for the BASIC STAR have to be done on line or by calling 518-457-2036.

Assessor will be checking new construction in early March.

FYI- if you split a parcel or merge one the process has to be completed before March 1 to get a correct tax bill for the following school/county-town tax cycle. *Mike Maxwell 315-391-8323*

CODE ENFORCEMENT

This has been a real winter so far and the cold weather has taken its toll on all the heating appliances: (ie: furnaces, wood and pellet stoves, and electrical). Please check the chimneys for creosote buildup and clean them. Creosote buildup and electrical fires are the most common fires. Please make sure you are not overloading your circuits with electrical heaters, DONOT plug electrical heaters into extension cords or the expandable outlet units. By doing so, you can overload a circuit and cause a fire. SO PLEASE be careful and SAFE. The installation of wood stoves and pellet stoves need permits. This is a State requirement and it is to make sure Code or the Fire Marshall gets out to check on them. Questions call or email me. Any time you see Connie and fill out an application for a building permit and pay for it is just that an application. Until I issue you a permit you cannot start the job. There are so many changes going on and new requirements for construction that I need to start reviewing projects more closely. New York State is getting tighter and tighter on regulations like Energy Code, build Green and everyone needs to understand the requirements. I do have office hours on Thursday days but I know it is hard for people to get in touch with me at that time. So Call or email me to set up a time when we can meet. I'm usually very flexible and have a new calendar to schedule activities. Contact info is: Phone 607-760-5551 email: berkshirecode@gmail.com *Leon Virtue*

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SPECIAL THANKS

We are very grateful to our faithful helpers. Telessa Bean spends a lot of time organizing and laying out the plain vanilla version of the newsletter that we hand her each quarter. Artfully inserting the many ads from our sponsors is no easy task. Barbara Williams, Millie Stout, Louise Beebe and Tina Williams are always there to help with the time consuming task of labeling and preparing the newsletter for delivery. Please take note of our sponsors who make it possible to bring you the newsletter without using a penny of your tax money. *Fraser Williams*

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TOWNWIDE EMAIL

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 190 addresses on the list and have been using it to help keep you informed for more than 11 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.

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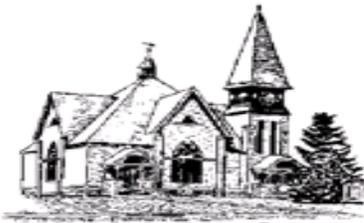
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Berkshire Town Newsletter

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