

Berkshire Community Association
PO Box 113
Berkshire, NY 13736
www.BerkshireNY.net

May 2015

BERKSHIRE TOWN NEWSLETTER

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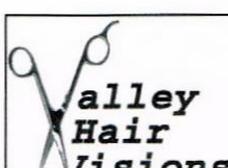
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SUPERVISORS NOTES

Spring is here – I think; if those little white things from the sky stop falling summer may even be around the corner. Regarding the Route 38 progress, the reduced speed ahead signs have been installed on the north and south ends of town. The sign on the north has to be moved as it was installed after you are already in the 40 MPH zone. As of April 28th, the State survey crew is already working on laying out the work to be done on the highway through Berkshire. Seems good to see some progress taking place after all the promises for years. Also, there is no firm date as of yet, the State DOT will be holding a public information session at the Town Hall in either May or June to discuss and show the plans for replacing the bridge. Please try to attend. The town finances are in great shape after the first three months. As always, we hope for more aid from the State and Federal government to help us do more. The State has given us notification of an additional \$14,000 for winter road repair; that will help. As we look ahead, the Town Board and Highway Superintendent are reviewing the 5-year plan for reconstruction of town roads. It is becoming more difficult to fund the work without raising property taxes. It is estimated that it costs approximately \$38,000 per mile to reconstruct the road and the town has 44 miles of road to maintain. To do this with the 5-year plan would cost the town about \$334,400 each year alone, not counting the cost of normal maintenance, snow removal and damage repairs from the spring rains and winter freeze. We are continually looking for other funding sources and other alternatives to keep the town roads up to a standard that is balanced between tax revenue and safety. Last summer's survey results are still being used for working on the community desires. Last month the Town Board designated the Town Planning Board the lead group in developing a Comprehensive Plan for the future of Berkshire. Fraser Williams has been designated the Town Board liaison for this process to work with the Planning Board. We have had meetings with the Tioga County Planner and the Department head for County Economic Development and they have been more than helpful and offered assistance in any way possible. They can help the town prosper in this effort. We continue to look for volunteers to help with the flowerbeds on both ends of town as well as helping to make the town office yard more attractive. If anyone has connections with the school, girl scouts, boy scouts, 4-H or others that could help with these projects. Please keep the town in mind for some of their efforts. Until next time, please attend Your Town Board Meetings, check out the new sign, and help us help you make beneficial changes in our community. Please visit our Web Site for current information at <http://www.berkshireny.com> and you will now find us on Facebook "Town of Berkshire New York", please like us and follow current posts. Your Supervisor
Ron McEwen

SOLAR ENERGY IN BERKSHIRE

By the time you are reading this article the solar information session has been held. It was held on May 3rd at the Berkshire Community Hall. The purpose of the session was to inform residents of Berkshire, Richford, and Candor about home solar energy generation. Information about the various generation methods that exist, how it works, how wide spread it is throughout the world, and, of course, the costs and benefits. Since the session has not occurred as of this writing we will have a more in-depth report in the next newsletter. *Dick Bierl*

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BERKSHIRE FREE LIBRARY

Finally spring is here and the daffodils are blooming. If you are thinking of putting in a garden this year or want to make changes in an old one come on in and check out one of our gardening books. The summer will be here before you know it so start planning for the Summer Reading Program. Our theme this year is "Every Hero Has a Story". We are looking forward to some home-town heroes and some super heroes. We are looking for volunteers to help with our programs. We welcome teens' help too. Anyone wanting to help with the Berkshire or Richford programs please call LuAnn during normal week day business hours at the Library – 657-4418. We have received the Rosen Library Fund Grant again this year so we can continue our Story Time in both Berkshire and Richford. Everyone with children not yet in school (ages 0-5) are welcome to join us at the library on Wednesdays from 10-11 or at the Congregational Church in Richford on Fridays from 10-11. If you have transportation problems please call and we might be able to help. We have lots of fun things planned for this spring and summer including a visit from "Story Laurie" who loves to sing, dance and have great fun with all children. Over the past six months we have had a representative, Stacy Pickering, from NY State of Health meet with families in our area and help them apply for health care. Anyone wanting to set up an appointment to meet her here at the library can call 607-621-6466. If you just have questions about the health care programs you can also meet with Stacy or talk to her on the phone. Stacy has helped many families in Berkshire and Richford already. Our "Trash & Treasures Rummage Sale" brought in more than \$1,000.00 that will be used for general expenses at the library. Lisa & Michaela Michaud and Kathy & David Platz joined me on my annual trek to Albany to talk to our representatives about supporting libraries more - and it worked!!! This years' state budget has approved a \$5million increase. We are still about \$12million behind where we are supposed to be with state funding but we are getting closer. Thank you to all who have voiced your support of our libraries. We at the individual libraries do not see much of the money directly. The bulk of the state funding goes to the library systems and we all see it in the form of services such as: interlibrary loan items, outreach programs, computer services for the library and many more. We are still working on our building this year. We have not received word yet if we are getting the state construction grant funds to finish the work we started last fall. We will be starting on the windows sometime soon and plans are in the works for a new landing and ramp for the handicap access. Keep your fingers crossed that we will be able to continue to make improvements to our library to make it accessible and better for everyone in our communities. Enjoy the warmer weather. **Library Hours: Tuesday: 12-5,**

Wednesday: 1:30-7, Thursday: 1-5, Friday: 1:30-7 & Saturday: 9-2

LuAnn Whirl, Director

BERKSHIRE PLANNING BOARD

The Planning Board has met with the Town Board and with members of the Tioga County Economic Development and Planning office regarding the results of the town-wide survey and next steps to be taken in regard to that information. As a result of those meetings and at the request of the Town Board, the Planning Board will be turning our focus to updating the Town of Berkshire Comprehensive Plan, which was last updated in 2000. Because this work is a priority, we will be suspending our activity on local laws until this work is accomplished. Fraser Williams has been assigned as the official Town Board liaison with the Planning Board and will work with us on updating the Comprehensive Plan. Since none of the current Planning Board members were involved in the development of the previous Comprehensive Plan, we are particularly looking forward to participating in this important process. If you would like to be involved, there is still an opening for an additional alternate member. You can "try us out" at our regular meetings on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall, or you can contact Ken Ceurter at 657-2831. *Sarah Albrecht*

BERKSHIRE ASSESSOR

NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF THE TENTATIVE ASSESSMENT ROLL 5/1/2015 (Pursuant to Sections 506 & 1526 of the Real Property Tax Law)The Assessment Roll has been left at the following location for your inspection. Berkshire Town Hall 18 Railroad Ave, Berkshire NY. The Assessor will be in attendance of said roll: May 9th 8-10:30am, May 12th 4-8pm, May 13th 1-4pm, May 27th 1-4pm **Berkshire Grievance Day May 28, 2015 4-8pm** Property owners may call to make appointment at 315-391-8323. Michael Maxwell/Sole Assessor

BERKSHIRE FIRE COMPANY

Dear Friends, Family, and Neighbors of the Berkshire Fire Company: Spring has finally sprung and everyone is outside cleaning up. Remember, there is no open burning allowed until May 16th. To report illegal burning have the address ready and call Tioga County's non-emergency line at (607) 687-1010. Beginning on May 16th you may burn brush up to 8 feet in length, have open camp/cooking fires and ceremonial bonfires no bigger than 3' by 3' by 4'. Burning of trash is always illegal. If you have any open burning be sure to keep the area around it clear of all combustibles and have something available to extinguish unwanted spread of fire. A garden hose or fire extinguisher will work well for this. The number of brush and grass fires has been down in the district the last few years and we would like to keep it that way. Also, the 4th of July holiday is right around the corner. NY has passed a new law allowing sparkling devices such as wood handled sparklers, cones, fountains, handheld sparkling candles, and smoke bombs. Nothing that launches a projectile or has a report (bang) is legal. We ask that everyone be safe during the holiday and celebrate wisely. Many of you may remember that six years ago we were given permission by the Department of Health to reinstate our volunteer ambulance service. In February of 2010 we bought a used 2000 Ford ambulance from a paid service just outside of Utica NY. That rig has served us well in getting back on our feet. Lately the maintenance cost on it has been steadily increasing. The repair cost as well as the concern of dependability has caused us to start considering a new ambulance. The ambulance is the most frequently used vehicle we have and it regularly makes several trips to the hospital on a monthly basis. At times it has made several trips in one day. The Fire District has joined a consortium that will give us national bid pricing, and save us having to secure bids from local vendors, saving thousands while streamlining the purchase process. Once we have a price for an ambulance that will suit our and your needs, we will be coming to the voters to ask for permission to spend the money. This purchase will not increase taxes as we have been putting money in a savings account for the purchase of apparatus for a few years now. When our last payment was made on the rescue truck, we started putting the amount of that payment in a capital reserve every year so we can gain interest instead of always borrowing money and paying interest. We would greatly appreciate your support with a "Yes" vote in the very near future. On April 25 we participated in a state wide recruitment drive called Recruit NY. The need for volunteers within volunteer fire departments and ambulance squads is at a dire level throughout the country. Many volunteer departments, ambulance squads in particular, are folding across the U.S., due to lack of volunteers. Some of you may have been witness to squad calls not only in our district but in adjoining districts being dropped because those mostly volunteer departments could not get a crew together. It causes a significant increase in the amount of time it takes from when the 911 call is placed to the time help arrives because oftentimes the paid service has to come from further away. The only way to stop that from happening is for the people within the community to step up to serve their community. Currently within our squad, which is entirely volunteer, we have three Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and all have daytime jobs. We have two Certified First Responders, one a senior in high school, but they can only render care on scene. They cannot transport on an ambulance per NYS Law. That starts at the EMT level. At the beginning of this year we had three members start the class to become EMTs and one start the class to become a CFR. They test on May 21st and are highly motivated to meet the needs of their community. The best asset we have is our volunteers and the more we have the more efficient service we can provide. While most of the two hours of Recruit NY was spent with just a few of the same faces waiting for all of you who are not members to stop by and see what Berkshire Fire Department is all about, we did have one new applicant walk in. We were very pleased to see him and welcomed him with open arms. Seeing an eager smiling face made the whole two hours very much worth it and we can't wait to start training another member of our family. He is in good company with the several new members that have joined over the last couple of years as well as all the men and women that have selflessly served their community through Berkshire Fire since 1913. *continued on page 4.....*

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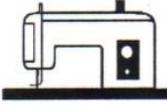
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.....continued from page 3

You can join our department at 16 and there is no maximum age. We have many, still active, "life members" that have been in our department for 25 years or more. Contrary to common misconception, you don't have to run into burning buildings or ride in the back of our rig to help us help our community. There are many different areas within our department that all work together for the good of the community. Fundraising and Marketing are perfect examples that do not fall under the stereotype of volunteer firefighter but really helps. We do many fundraisers, including concessions at the hair scrambles as well as hosting events at the station. Social media marketing has helped us reach the younger generation and reach out to more people in and around our community faster. The Auxiliary is another good example. Among other things, the Auxiliary provides Essential Support Services to the men and women actively working on fire scenes. Lift assist is something else that is a big help but often overlooked. This is when the Squad calls for extra muscle to help move and/or lift a person they were dispatched to help. There are a variety of reasons lift assists are called, a common reason being all the multiple story houses in our community and needing to get an injured or ill person down to the main floor and out the door to the ambulance. If you're looking for something more hands on, you can be trained to become an Interior (green tag) Firefighter, an Exterior Firefighter (yellow tag, firefighter from the outside only which can include apparatus drivers), Fire Police (who gain and keep control of a scene thus helping protect the people and equipment fighting the fire or working on a Motor Vehicle Accident), Emergency Medical Technician (main care provider on our ambulance), or Ambulance Driver. Most importantly, we provide all the training at no cost to you. We accept members not only from our district but from adjoining districts as well. We invite you to stop by the first Tuesday of any month at 7:00 PM for our monthly meeting and talk to some of the members, many of whom you may recognize as your friends or neighbors. Or you can call me anytime with questions at (607) 427-0964. *Chief Bret Welch*



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

BERKSHIRE POST OFFICE HOURS

Post Office Lobby Monday - Friday 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM Saturday 7:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Retail Window Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM - 3:00 PM Saturday 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Call Martin Kilmer, Post Master with any questions at phone number 607-642-3611

Berkshire Fire District

Commissioners:
Bob Wait - Chairman
Don Liddington
Rodney Russell
Butch Ceurter
Bill Morris

Fire Company:
Bret Welch - Chief
Ken Bean - Assistant Chief
Jeff Brown - 2nd Assistant Chief
Clair Rupert - Captain
Butch Ceurter - Lieutenant

EMT Squad:
Darlene Wait - Captain
Bob Wait - Lieutenant

Fire Police:
Roger Howland - Captain
Bob Wait - Lieutenant
Cheryl Ceurter - 2nd Lieutenant

Sunshine Committee - Cheryl Cuerter
Safety Committee - Bill Morris, Rodney Russell
Executive Committee - Roger Howland
Audit Committee - Roger, Robbie, Bret, and Ron Sharp

Sergeant at Arms - Bill Morris

Bret Welch



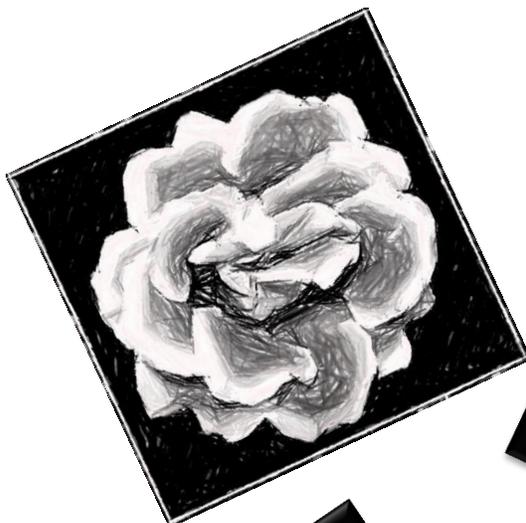
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HIGHWAY NEWS

. Looks like winter is finally behind us. In the last newsletter I mentioned that at that point the snowy season was less severe than the 2013/14 winter. So much for that observation. Coldest February on record and more than average snowfall not only used up our sand reserve, but we had to spend many days hauling sand just to keep up and now we have to completely rebuild our stockpile. Berkshire still does not have access to a gravel bed so I am reviewing options for this year. It looks like we will either have to buy gravel outright or crush the stockpile of river gravel stored behind the Town Hall. The choice will depend upon the availability of a crusher and the cost. This year I plan to finish rebuilding N. Ketchumville Rd. and pave the portion that we did last year. I also plan to finish working and repave Rejmer Rd. With the extremely high cost of petroleum paving products, any other roadwork other than routine maintenance will not fit within the Highway budget. We can no longer rely on the propane storage site in Harford Mills as a reliable source of salt brine that we use to keep dust down on our road construction and unpaved roads. The good news is that what they currently have in stock will be given to us at no charge, however when that runs out we will have to make our own. I have a load of salt on hand for that purpose. We have been discussing a 5 year highway improvement plan with the Town Board. Once again with the price of road paving materials so expensive, we are limited as to how much advancement will be possible without significant additional funding and certainly higher taxes are NOT the answer. I will be using some part time help this summer since one of our long time employees will miss most of the season because of surgery and recuperation. *Karl Spoonhower*

BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY HALL

There is a lot of activity at the Berkshire Community Hall, both recently completed and ongoing. In addition to the twice a week Zumba classes and the very active Helping Hands Food Pantry there have been a number of events on both floors. Last month, the Tioga County Council on the Arts hosted their third annual Square/Round dance at the Hall. Live music and a nice crowd resulted in a very pleasant and successful evening. There is currently a lot of progress in the continuing restoration of this intimate piece of Berkshire history. Thanks to a couple of very generous donations by Alan Westfall, a former Berkshire resident who as a youth played basketball in the Community Hall, the basketball court portion of the second story has been resurrected to even better than original condition. New glass backboards with safety padding have been installed on both ends, allowing for full court play. The hardwood floors have been sanded and completely refinished, with court lines and markings just as they were in the 1930s. The all-weather entrance located in the West Wing addition is being insulated and sheet rocked – funded by BCA and performed by volunteers. Also under way is the completion of a completely handicap accessible restroom on the first floor. This project will include an available shower and hot water. This expensive venture was made possible by very generous grants from the Mildred Faulkner Truman Foundation and the Tioga County Senior Citizens Foundation, Inc. If you are unaware of what this historic gem is and the opportunities it offers, or if you have not seen recent renovation results, please feel free to contact Skip Hartwig – 657-8418 – skhartwig@frontiernet.net or Fraser Williams – 657-2742 – fraserw@citlink.net, and we will be happy to give you a tour.

