



**TOWN OF HILLSDALE
TOWN BOARD MEETING
May 20, 2025
Minutes**

NOTE: After a public hearing on April 25, 2024, and at a Special Town Board Meeting the Town Board approved a resolution to allow "Extraordinary Circumstances Videoconferencing", "ECV". this allows a Town Board member who has a qualifying disability to attend, be part of a quorum and vote at all Town Board Meetings.

The regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Hillsdale, Columbia County in the State of New York was held at the Town Hall, 2609 State Route 23, Hillsdale, NY 12529 on May 20, 2025, at 7:00 pm.

Board members present:

PRESENT: Supervisor Mike Dvorchak
Councilmember Joanna Virello
Councilmember Irwin Feld
Councilmember Steve Tiger

ABSENT: Councilmember Jamie Carano Nordenstrom

ALSO PRESENT: Robina Ward Town Clerk
Emily Stalker Deputy Town Clerk
Richard Briggs Highway Superintendent
Ken Dow Town Attorney
Bart Ziegler Deputy Supervisor
Jim Zarroli Planning Board Clerk

PRESENT ON ZOOM: George Schmitt Town Engineer

OTHERS PRESENT: Members of the public.

TRADITIONAL VIDEOCONFERENCING NOTICE:

Notice of said meeting was posted on the Town Website. The public is invited to participate at the town hall or the videoconference meeting location at 2609 State Route 23, Hillsdale, NY 12529.

Supervisor Dvorchak called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance. He welcomed Steve Tiger back to the Town Board and Bart Ziegler as Deputy Supervisor.

State budget includes 2.4 million for bridge on Harlem Valley Rail Trail

Supervisor Dvorchak thanked Diddi Barrett, Michelle Hinchey, Governor Hochul and Linda Cooper for making this happen. Acknowledged local business owners and residents for their efforts in lobbying: Steve Bluestone, Matthew White, Irwin Feld, Anthony DeCaria, Kevin Hindes, Jose Calle, Edgar Masters, Jeanne Mettler, Bart Ziegler, the Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association Phil Meeks and Lisa DeLeeuw, New York State Parks Linda Cooper and Copake Supervisor Richard Wolf

Public Comment

Public Comments made to suggest running a marathon as Wassaic to Hillsdale is 26.5 miles. Questions in reference to the Gift Committee and timetable. A statement about using CHIPS money for culverts. A statement about taxpayers and the cost of maintaining roads.

Approval of Minutes

April 15, 2025, Public Hearing Minutes and Town Board Meeting
On a motion of Councilmember Feld, seconded by Councilmember Virello.

The motion was

ADOPTED	Ayes 3	Dvorchak, Virello, Feld
	Abstain 1	Tiger

The Town Board approves the April 15, 2025, Town Board Meeting Minutes.

April 23, 2025, Special Town Board Meeting

On a motion of Councilmember Feld, seconded by Councilmember Virello.

The motion was

ADOPTED	Ayes 3	Dvorchak, Virello, Feld
	Abstain 1	Tiger

The Town Board approves the April 23, 2025, Special Town Board Meeting Minutes.

May 15, 2025, Special Town Board Meeting

On a motion of Councilmember Feld, seconded by Councilmember Virello.

The motion was

ADOPTED	Ayes 3	Dvorchak, Virello, Feld
	Abstain 1	Tiger

The Town Board approves the May 15, 2025, Town Board Meeting Minutes.

Correspondence

Davidson, Amy – May 9, 2025, Culvert Replacement/CHIPS
Lob, Dianne – May 13, 2025, Protestors at Farmers Market

Supervisor's Report

April Financial Report

Supervisor Dvorchak reported that Hillsdale remains in a good financial position.

Abstract Disbursements for April 2025:

General Account, 63-95	\$22,114.38
Highway Fund, 50-60	\$229,736.91
Sewer Fund, 10-13	\$91,985.10
Park Fund, 2-3	\$ 1,058.90

Abstracts 4/14/2025 and 4/28/2025 were reviewed by Town Board members, Dvorchak, Feld, Carty, Virello, Carano Nordenstrom and Highway Superintendent Briggs, with approvals from Dvorchak, Feld, Carty, Virello and Highway Superintendent Briggs.

County Report

Short Term Rental

Supervisor Dvorchak reported that the short-term rental law will be starting July 1, with the 4% county tax.

There is a FAQ sheet attached to the agenda. New York came in with their own state tax for airb&b's. Notice will be sent to short term rental property owners about paying the tax to the county which will be managed by Granicus.

Budget Amendments

None

Town Clerk Report

Town Clerk Ward stated that they were working on updating the Town website, the summer youth program was full.

Sewer District Report

Status of Fabric & Panel Replacement

Supervisor Dvorchak introduced George Schmitt. The CREST grants paid for new fabrics and new nozzles and a new fiber optic control panel. The work will be completed this week.

Current Balance - \$114,998.50

Supervisor Dvorchak reviewed the spread sheet line by line calculating the current balance of the Sewer Fund.

Absorption Bed Issue

Supervisor Dvorchak reported that the leach fields are failing. The DEC was onsite for the annual inspection on May 8. While the DEC is supportive of the work we are doing to upgrade the system, they are now insisting that the absorption field be remedied this year.

Town Engineer George Schmitt reported that the estimates are in two parts, one with prevailing wage and one using the Highway Department. The first estimate is \$685,000.00 and includes contingencies, engineering, legal and prevailing wage costs, the second, using the Highway Department is for \$478,000.00 approximately. Using funds from the sewer and the remaining funds from the Hinchey grant the number comes down to \$325,000.00. Supervisor Dvorchak stated that he has spoken to a representative from Rheinstrom, they are considering a grant to the town. Hudson River Bank and Trust are meeting tonight. The EFC Planning grant would be used for future Sewer Plant work. The current system has lasted 10-12 years, and the new beds should last at least 10 years, but a more permanent fix will be required.

Supervisor Dvorchak has had discussions with Hinchey and Barretts people over further grants. He also met with Josh Riley, but we will not receive federal funding by September. If the Sewer District has to borrow the money from the General Account, it will have to be refunded within a year.

Emergency Declaration

Supervisor Dvorchak reported that this is an emergency situation. If we do not do the work, we will be fined by the DEC. The Town Engineer has written a letter to the Town Board that the board declares this situation an emergency which will speed the process of bidding. Town Attorney Dow stated that it does qualify as a public emergency and as such cannot wait for competitive bidding, GMU Chapter 24, §103.

Resolution 77- 2025

On a motion of Supervisor Dvorchak, seconded by Councilmember Virello.

The motion was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Dvorchak, Virello, Tiger, Feld

The Town Board approves declaring the remediation of the leach field as an emergency.

Grants

Resolution 78- 2025

On a motion of Councilmember Virello, seconded by Councilmember Feld.

The motion was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Dvorchak, Virello, Tiger, Feld
The Town Board approves the Supervisor to seek a Hinchey CREST grant.

Resolution 79- 2025

On a motion of Councilmember Feld, seconded by Councilmember Virello.
The motion was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Dvorchak, Virello, Tiger, Feld
The Town Board approves the Supervisor to seek a Barrett CREST grant.

Relocation of Light Poles on State Route 23

Resolution 80- 2025

On a motion of Supervisor Dvorchak, seconded by Councilmember Feld to go out to bid.
The Town Engineer reported that the DOT is happy with the prepared plan, they are waiting for us to put it out to bid and award it and complete the final portion of the permit.

The motion was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Dvorchak, Virello, Tiger, Feld
The Town Board approves the relocation of the Light Poles to go out for bid.

Salt Shed SEQR

Town Engineer explained that the new Salt Shed would be placed closer to the road than the current storage which is closer to the wetlands. This is a new construction and therefore qualifies for the grant, due July 30, 2025, and that the town is serious about completing the project.

The permissive referendum was posted for the time period required. There is the long form SEQR.

Supervisor Dvorchak talked through part one.

Town Attorney Dow stated that the Town Board could continue with SEQR parts 2 and 3. There are a series of 18 questions in part 2, which are category questions. General discussion and answers for the long form SEQR.

Town Attorney moved on to part 3.

Resolution 81- 2025

On a motion of supervisor Dvorchak, seconded by Councilmember Virello.

The motion was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Dvorchak, Virello, Tiger, Feld
The Town Board approves a negative declaration, unlisted action, for long form (1) SEQR for the construction of a Salt Shed at the Town Garage.

Highway Superintendent's Report

Highway Superintendent Briggs submitted his monthly report.

Superintendent Briggs reported that they had been inundated with work on the dead Ash trees and the dead oak trees.

The state budget was passed and includes more funding for the CHIPS program and the 284 will be amended for the June meeting.

Superintendent Briggs addressed the letters that were received about the culvert pipes. In 2019 we partnered with Trout Unlimited about culvert pipes that were inefficient, the inlets and outlets are higher than the fish can jump, and we are not getting the aquatic movement. Trout Unlimited worked with the town grant person to apply for grants. CHIPS money was never designated to replace the culvert pipes on TriBrook, Breezy Hill and Mitchell Street. With 37 years of experience, the culvert pipes are adequate for the roads. Superintendent Briggs stated that he thought it was more important for the board to have the grants committees to move forward with Trout Unlimited and all the grants that are available for these precise culvert replacements and not take it away from the Highway Improvement Programs.

Hawthorne Valley Permit Fee Exemption Request

Attorney Dow reported that this is something that the town is not authorized to do. An opinion from the State Comptroller says that building permit fees may not be waived or reduced for a church or other non-profit organizations. Certain classes may be established to be exempt. License fees and permit fees are supposed to cover the cost of regulation and administration, not supposed to be profit centers. General discussion on request. Determined that on the advisement of the Town Attorney the Town of Hillsdale is unable to grant the request.

Memorial Day Parade Update

Supervisor Dvorchak stated that the parade will start at noon.

Hamlet Committee

The town was notified that the Hamlet Committee was awarded a grant from the Bank of Greene County Grant for \$500. There will be a photo opportunity at the bank for the committee.

Resolution 82- 2025

On a motion of Councilmember Feld, seconded by Councilmember Virello.

The motion was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Dvorchak, Virello, Feld, Tiger

The Town Board accepts the grant of \$500.00 from the Bank of Greene County.

Safe at Home Mission Statement

Mission Statement revised- "The Safe at Home Committee was established in 2018. The mission of the committee is to ensure that seniors living in Hillsdale get the knowledge they need to remain safe at home, and services that will ensure the highest quality of life. The committee will offer residents information about local resources and services, engage with the town's seniors to assess needs, provide opportunities for socialization and will make recommendations to the Town Board as needed."

Resolution 83- 2025

On a motion of Councilmember Feld, seconded by Supervisor Dvorchak.

The motion was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Dvorchak, Virello, Feld, Tiger

The Town Board accepts the mission statement for the Safe at Home Committee.

Roe Jan Park

The park is a public space, and the principal of free speech applies. Discussion on the incident at the park.

Off-Leash Dog Issue

Councilmember Virello stated that over the past few months there were more complaints about dogs off leash and jumping on people. There was a discussion with Richard Wolfe, the Copake Supervisor, about signage. Copake has a leash law and Copake does fine a dog owner for up to \$250.00. Councilmember Tiger asked who the fine paid to. It is paid to the Town of Copake. The park is in another Town. General discussion on Copake leash law.

Resolution 84- 2025

The motion is to allocate up to \$1,000.00 to the Animal Control officer, Kyle Miller, for additional hours at the park, paid out of the Roe Jan Park funds. On a motion of Supervisor Dvorchak, seconded by Councilmember Virello.

The motion was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Dvorchak, Virello, Feld, Tiger

The Town Board approves paying the Animal Control officer up to \$1,000.00 for additional hours at the Roe Jan Park for dog control.

Councilperson Virello stated that she would like to get “No Parking” signs for the Hilltop Barn location

Resolution 85 - 2025

Motion to spend up to \$500.00 on 4 No Parking signs and 4 Dog fine signs.

On a motion of Councilmember Virello, seconded by Supervisor Dvorchak

The motion was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Dvorchak, Virello, Feld, Tiger

The Town Board approves ordering signs.

Councilmember Virello stated that the pea gravel in the Hilltop Barn has disappeared. General discussion with the Highway Superintendent

Resolution 86- 2025

On a motion of Councilmember Virello, seconded by Supervisor Dvorchak.

The motion was

ADOPTED Ayes 4 Dvorchak, Virello, Feld, Tiger

The Town Board approves spending up to \$1,000.00 on pea gravel for the Hilltop Barn.

Adjournment

With no further business before the Town Board, on the motion of Councilmember Feld, seconded by Councilmember Virello,

Voted Ayes 4 Dvorchak, Virello, Feld, Tiger the meeting was adjourned at 8.12 pm.

Robina Ward, Town Clerk