Town of Newport
Town Board Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2026

I. Call to Order
Supervisor Lowell called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance
Supervisor Lowell led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

III. Attendance
Attendance was taken with the following Town Board officials present:

Present: Supervisor Lowell, Councilmember Coleman, Councilmember Dodge, Councilmember Goodman, Town Clerk Dodge

Absent: Councilmember Damone

IV. Minutes Approval
On motion of C. Dodge, seconded by C. Coleman to approve the August 10, 2026 and September 14, 2026 Town Board meeting minutes.
All in favor (4-0). Carried.
Councilmember Coleman: Aye
Councilmember Damone: Absent
Councilmember Dodge: Aye
Councilmember Goodman: Aye
Supervisor Lowell: Aye

V. Public Expression
Supervisor Lowell opened the public expression period, emphasizing that public expression is an opportunity for individuals to comment on matters involving Newport other than those pertinent to Public Hearings that day, that time reserved for public expression is not a question-and-answer period, and that if one needed to address a specific situation and did not feel comfortable speaking at the meeting to contact the Supervisor directly. Supervisor Lowell noted speakers would be limited to 2 minutes. The following individuals spoke during public expression:

Seeing no individuals wished to speak, Supervisor Lowell closed public expression.

VI. Monthly Reports
1. Supervisor
Supervisor Lowell reported that he has been meeting with Town residents during his office hours on Mondays from 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and encouraged people to schedule an appointment online or walk-in if they would like to speak with him.

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Supervisor Lowell then reported that he received an answer from Highway Superintendent Carney on Councilmember Dodge's question at the last meeting regarding what type of Town snowplows perform snow removal services. Lowell said that Carney said the Town uses both the large snowplows that require a CDL driver and the small snowplows for services on that road.

Supervisor Lowell then reported a reminder that the Planning Board has been assigned the task of developing recommended data center zoning regulations while the one-year moratorium the Town placed on data centers and commercial cryptocurrency mining operations is in effect. The Planning Board will start with listening sessions with the public and end by sending recommendations and draft amendments to the Town Board for consideration.

Lowell said that from September to December, the first fifteen minutes of each Planning Board meeting are dedicated to listening to people about data centers. He noted that at the last meeting in September, a resident attended and shared their thoughts.

Supervisor Lowell then reported that the New York State Comptroller's review of the 2025 Annual Financial Report (AFR) for the Town has been completed and that the Town received its fiscal and environmental scores.

Lowell said that the review produces data that helps inform public officials and taxpayers about factors that impact local governments' fiscal health. It evaluates local governments on financial indicators including year-end fund balance, cash-on-hand, short-term borrowing, fixed costs, and patterns of operating deficits and creates fiscal stress scores. The system also evaluates information such as population trends, poverty, and unemployment in order to establish a separate "environmental" score for each municipality, which can be used to help describe the context in which Newport and other local governments operate.

Lowell said that for the second year in a row, the Town has received a fiscal stress score of 0.0, the best possible score. He said that the Town's environmental stress score increased from 10.0 to 16.7, due to the Town's rising percentages of the population under 18 and over 65, as well as a 3.8% increase in the unemployment rate in the Town.

The Town's fiscal stress scores and designations are summarized below:

	Fiscal Stress		**Environmental Stress**	
FYE	**Score**	**Designation**	**Score**	**Designation**
2022	6.7	No Designation	16.7	No Designation
2023	3.3	No Designation	10.0	No Designation
2024	0.0	No Designation	10.0	No Designation
2025	0.0	No Designation	16.7	No Designation

Lowell said that the Town will continue to monitor the Town's financial condition in the current and upcoming budget cycles to continue to ensure long-term fiscal health.

Supervisor Lowell then reported that as is required by New York General Municipal Law Section 3-C, he filed the Tax Cap Form for the Town for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2027. Lowell said that he would go over that during the budget presentation.

Supervisor Lowell then reported that he met with the project consultants for the Town Trail Development Project on September 28, 2026. Lowell said that Barton & Loguidice have completed the Project Destinations and Existing Conditions Inventory & Analysis portion of their report, which overviews Regional & Community Destinations, Recreation & Amenities, Community Connections & Access, Destination & Connectivity, and the opportunities and constraints with the project area.

Lowell then went on to say that on Wednesday, October 21, 2026 at 6:00 p.m., he will hold a public workshop with the consultants at the Town offices to formally introduce the project to the community, present work completed and key findings to date, as well as present an initial program for future development of the site. He said that this will help prompt those who are participating to give us their ideas for future site use, needs, concerns, etc. He said that the project remains on schedule to be completed by the end of the year and then went through a summary of the 76 survey results received through the Town Trail Development Project public survey.

Supervisor Lowell said that the monthly financial report from the accountant was not done yet due to the earlier date of the meeting this month and that he would present it for review at the next meeting in October.

2. Animal Control Officer
Supervisor Lowell noted that no report was submitted.

3. Assessor
Supervisor Lowell noted that no report was submitted.

4. Codes and Zoning Enforcement Officer
Supervisor Lowell noted that no report was submitted.

5. Highway Superintendent
Supervisor Lowell reported that the Highway Department has been active with planning road repairs for next year. Lowell said the Town Board would be having discussions on two items.

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i. Discussion on Draft Fiscal Year 2027 284 Agreement for the Expenditure of Highway Funds
Supervisor Lowell opened a discussion on the draft 284 Agreement, specifically on the roads to be repaired next year. Lowell said that he hoped that the Town Board had time to think about the issue. Lowell said that currently, the draft Agreement proposed repairing the following roads in 2027: Bell Hill Road, Cole Road, First Street, Gage Road, Harris Avenue, Lindsay Road, Spain Gulf Road, Tanner Road, Tower Road, and Woodchuck Hill Road.

Deputy Supervisor Coleman questioned whether the Town should focus on the roads in the worst condition or the roads with the most people or are more traveled. Coleman said that she believed it would be better to start with the roads that impact the most people and look at those first. Supervisor Lowell asked Councilmember Goodman if she had any thoughts. Councilmember Goodman said she did not have any thoughts at the moment. Councilmember Dodge said she still kind of stuck with her first thought that the condition of Voelkle Road is not acceptable, and that while she hears what people are saying about there only being two families, she was concerned about liability issues if the road remains in its condition and there is an accident, but that obviously majority wins. Supervisor Lowell said that this was not something the Town Board would decide today and encouraged the councilmembers think about it more and to contact the Highway Superintendent and ask him about it. Lowell said that he did speak with Highway Superintendent

Carney about the proposed roads to be repaired and that he was in agreement. Councilmember Dodge said that she would also like to hear from the Town employees that plow the roads to see what they think. Lowell went on to say that this is a big project for the Town and probably not something that the Town will undergo at this scale again for the foreseeable future, so it is something the Town Board should really think about because it will have long-term consequences for a lot of people.

Deputy Supervisor Coleman asked whose call it is for what roads should be repaired. Supervisor Lowell said that Highway Law Section 284 requires the Town Board and the Highway Superintendent to make an agreement for the expenditure of highway funds, so the two have to agree. Councilmember Dodge reiterated that she is concerned about liability and said she would feel better about it if there was some kind of set schedule for when Voelkle Road would be repaired. Councilmember Goodman asked if there was any kind of patch work that could be done on Voelkle Road. Supervisor Lowell said that is something he thought about too and asked the engineer. Lowell said the engineer said that since Voelkle Road is in such poor condition, it is really an all or nothing approach. Lowell said again for the Town Board to think more about this and to talk to the people they represent and that they would vote on the agreement at the November Town Board meeting.

ii. Discussion on Highway Department Annual Inventory of Machinery, Tools, and Implements
Supervisor Lowell opened a discussion on the annual inventory of machinery, tools, and implements saying that each year the Highway Superintendent is supposed to submit an inventory of everything the Highway Department has and its value. Lowell noted that Highway Superintendent Carney submitted an inventory to the Town Board and is not proposing any equipment purchases for the next year. Lowell said that something he would like to next Highway Superintendent to think about is whether or not there is any surplus equipment in the Highway Department that could be auctioned off in order to buy a mower to mow the sides of the road or rent something for that, just to make sure the Highway equipment the Town has is used in the most efficient way possible. He said that this could be something they think about next year when they do the budget.

Councilmember Goodman asked if the Town is doing a rotation of purchases for Highway equipment, like they had been. Supervisor Lowell said that the Town replaced the Highway Department pickup truck in 2025. Councilmember Goodman said she was talking about the large snowplows. Supervisor Lowell said that Highway Superintendent Carney was getting a quote for a snowplow but that he had not heard any updates on that, and that the Town should have is a Capital Improvement Plan to replace equipment, at least every ten years. Deputy Supervisor Coleman asked if the highway department staff would know what could be auctioned off. The Town Board then had a brief back and forth about equipment. Supervisor Lowell said he would reach out to the Highway Department about potential surplus equipment and get back to the Town Board with what they say about it.

6. Historian
Supervisor Lowell noted that no report was submitted.

i. Discussion on History Center Location
Supervisor Lowell opened a discussion on the current location of the History Center. Lowell said that the History Center has been located at 435 Main Street, Newport, New York 13416 since 2008, which is a space that is rented out. He said that in the past the costs for rent and certain utilities were shared between the Town of Newport and the Village of Newport. Lowell said that this year in their budget, the Village suspended financial support for the History Center. Lowell said that combined with the landlord now requiring the tenant to pay for fuel oil to heat the space would significantly increase the amount the Town is spending on the current location. Lowell said that if the History Center were in a different location, the cost could be limited significantly.

Supervisor Lowell went on to say that the Town reached out to the History Center about potentially moving locations and that the History Center staff were concerned about separating the records form the place they will be working out of because a lot of the time when people come in they want to see specific things. Lowell said that the Town also reached out to the Village of Newport

about potential storage opportunities and that the Village Clerk, on behalf of the Village, said that they have no interest in storing History Center records there or having a space for the History Center staff to work out of. Supervisor Lowell said he thinks the Town should move the History Center staff to the Town office building next year and potentially have the History Center rent a space on their own for additional storage. Lowell said that he believed the cost of the History Center would now be too much for the Town to bear alone but that is just something he is proposing and the Town Board will have the opportunity to decide what to do, but that he does not want the Town to kick the can down the road on it, because it would lead to the Town spending more and more money each year.

Deputy Supervisor Coleman questioned whether the Kuyahoora Community Hall could house the History Center, as they are looking for income and have space. Supervisor Lowel said that the Deputy Clerk called the Kuyahoora Community Hall and that the Town would have to wait and see what they say. Councilmember Goodman said there may be others in the Village of Newport to talk to. Lowell said the Deputy Clerk reached out to some of the Village of Newport trustees and they said the same thing the Village of Newport Clerk said. Councilmember Dodge questioned why the Village did not want to help and said it should go both ways. Lowell said the Town Board could think about it and decide when they vote on the annual budget for the Town of Newport.

7. Town Clerk
Town Clerk Dodge submitted a written report saying that the Town Clerk's office collected fees in the amount of $340.00 for the month of September. The full report is available on the Town website.

8. Planning Board
Supervisor Lowell reported that the Planning Board has been working to collect feedback from the community on data centers and develop recommendations for the Town Board to review.

9. Zoning Board of Appeals
Supervisor Lowell noted that no report was submitted.

VII. Public Hearings
Supervisor Lowell noted there were no public hearings for the meeting.

VIII. Old Business
Supervisor Lowell noted there were no old business agenda items for the meeting.

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IX. New Business
1. **Resolution 2026-136**
Budget Transfer 2026-8

Result: Adopted [UNANIMOUS] Mover: C. Dodge Seconder: C. Goodman Ayes: Coleman, Dodge, Goodman, Lowell Absent: Damone

2. **Resolution 2026-137**
Approval of Town of Newport 2027 Tentative Budget

Supervisor Lowell gave a presentation on the Town of Newport 2027 Tentative budget, saying that Budget maintains currently provided Town services, cuts expenditures where able, and funds capital improvements to Town roads.

Lowell said that under this Budget, a combination of revenues, taxes, state aid, and local reserves fund $1,646,210.15 in expenses and other uses, with a tax rate of 1.171316. The total Town tax levy is $151,000.00, compared to the levy of $147,638.00 in 2026. For the median assessed value of owner-occupied housing in the Town, assessed at $193,000.00, this represents an increase of about $5.07 in Town taxes from fiscal year 2026.

Lowell said that this year's Budget completes the Town's long-term plan of gradually bringing Town Wide General Fund taxes back to a sustainable level over a three-year period and brings the Town closer to a structurally balanced budget while also ensuring Town services, operational improvement initiatives, and investments in our workforce and community are not hindered by budget or program cuts. Lowell then went through the budget line by line with the Town Board.

On motion of C. Dodge, seconded by C. Coleman to amend Resolution 2026-137 to correct the typographical error under the salaries listed as 2025 and should say 2026.
All in favor (4-0). Carried.
Councilmember Coleman: Aye
Councilmember Damone: Absent
Councilmember Dodge: Aye
Councilmember Goodman: Aye
Supervisor Lowell: Aye

Result: Adopted as Amended [UNANIMOUS]
Mover: C. Dodge
Seconder: C. Coleman
Ayes: Coleman, Dodge, Goodman, Lowell
Absent: Damone

3. **Resolution 2026-138**
Authorization to Sign Intergovernmental Agreement for the Provision of Endpoint Protection and Response Services (Phase II)

Result: Adopted [UNANIMOUS]
Mover: C. Dodge
Seconder: C. Coleman
Ayes: Coleman, Dodge, Goodman, Lowell
Absent: Damone

4. **Resolution 2026-139**
Authorization to Sign Rome Environmental Solutions & Testing, LLC Limited Asbestos Survey Agreement

Result: Adopted [UNANIMOUS]
Mover: C. Dodge
Seconder: C. Goodman
Ayes: Coleman, Dodge, Goodman, Lowell
Absent: Damone

5. **Resolution 2026-140**
Authorization to Sign Public Sector HR Consultants, LLC Employee Handbook Review and Update Professional Services Agreement

Result: Adopted [UNANIMOUS]
Mover: C. Dodge
Seconder: C. Goodman
Ayes: Coleman, Dodge, Goodman, Lowell
Absent: Damone

6. **Resolution 2026-141**
Authorization to Advertise Grant Writing Professional Services for the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Council (HOCTC) Local Bridge Preliminary Engineering Program Request for Proposals

Result: Adopted [UNANIMOUS] Mover: C. Dodge Seconder: C. Coleman Ayes: Coleman, Dodge, Goodman, Lowell Absent: Damone

7. **Resolution 2026-142**
Authorization to Pay General Fund Bills

Result: Adopted [UNANIMOUS] Mover: C. Dodge Seconder: C. Goodman Ayes: Coleman, Dodge, Goodman, Lowell Absent: Damone

8. **Resolution 2026-143**
Authorization to Pay Highway Fund Bills

Result: Adopted [UNANIMOUS] Mover: C. Dodge Seconder: C. Goodman Ayes: Coleman, Damone, Dodge, Goodman, Lowell Absent: Damone

X. Announcements
Supervisor Lowell stated that there would likely be a special meeting on October 19, 2026 for the tree cutting services bid document advertisement, but he is not sure yet. Supervisor Lowell asked the Board if they had any other announcements. The Board did not have any announcements to share.

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XI. Adjourn
On motion of C. Dodge, seconded by C. Coleman to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 p.m.
All in favor (4-0). Carried.
Councilmember Coleman: Aye
Councilmember Damone: Absent
Councilmember Dodge: Aye
Councilmember Goodman: Aye
Supervisor Lowell: Aye

Respectfully submitted,
Stella Dodge
Town Clerk