

Town of Keene Board Meeting
January 27, 2026
Town Hall / Zoom
5:30 PM

Meeting #2-26

Board Members Present:

Joe Pete Wilson, Supervisor; Teresa Cheetham-Palen; Christopher Daly; Ann Hough; Robert Biesemeyer

Absent:

Town Officials Present:

Robyn Shumer (Town Clerk); Ryan Hall (Highway Superintendent); Savana Li (Water Superintendent)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at **5:33 PM**. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by **Bob**, seconded by **Ann**, to approve the **January 13, 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes** as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Privilege of the Floor

There were no members of the public present for Privilege of the Floor.

Town Clerk Report

- The Town Clerk inquired about Essex County sales tax distribution. It was confirmed that Essex County distributes a portion of sales tax revenue to towns, with payments issued by the State on an irregular quarterly schedule.
- Discussion was held regarding the Town Clerk's use of **Nextdoor** as an informational platform only, with comments disabled. The Board expressed support and noted this is within the Clerk's discretion.
- The Town Clerk requested assistance sending a **text alert** reminding residents that tax payments must be **postmarked by February 2** to avoid penalty.
- Discussion held regarding future **cash tax payments** being accepted **in person only** due to safety and accountability concerns. The Board agreed this should be explored further, including consultation with the Town Treasurer and review of applicable policies.

- It was noted that statutory penalties cannot be waived due to postmark delays, and residents are encouraged to request hand-cancellation at the post office when mailing payments close to the deadline.

Highway Department Report

- Update provided on procurement of a new **tandem axle truck**. Two vendors have been consulted, and pricing is pending.
- Discussion held regarding the option of purchasing a pre-built vehicle to reduce delivery timelines, which are currently estimated at 18–24 months for custom builds.
- The Board discussed fleet reliability challenges during recent storms and commended the Highway Department for maintaining operations without public complaints.
- Recommendation made to convene the **Highway Committee** to review the Asset Management Plan to support purchasing decisions.

Grant & Financing Updates

- Update provided regarding **NBRC (Northern Border Regional Commission)** funding. The Town is awaiting further guidance and authorization.
- The Board discussed requirements tied to federal and grant funding compliance.

Public Hearing – Water Law Amendment

- The Board discussed proposed amendments related to fire department water usage and hydrant fees.
- Due to feedback received from fire departments, the previously scheduled hearing will be revised.
- **Motion made by Ann, seconded by Theresa, to schedule a Public Hearing on February 10, 2026 at 5:00 PM** to receive public comment on the proposed Water Law amendment. Motion carried.

Organizational Resolutions Review

The Board conducted a page-by-page review of the Organizational Resolutions and discussed the following:

- Summer meeting schedule and maintaining bi-monthly meetings as business meetings.
- Clarification and corrections to titles, appointments, and language throughout the document.
- Library Board appointments to remain unchanged pending updated information.
- Correction of references from “Animal Control Officer” to “Dog Control Officer” where applicable.
- Confirmation of SPCA contract as the Town’s designated dog shelter at an annual cost of \$500.
- Clarification of wage rates and allowances.

Clothing Allowance

- Employees requested an increase in the clothing allowance from **\$150 to \$400**.
- Proposal to establish a direct purchasing account with **IBC** to streamline tax-exempt purchases.
- The Board agreed to both changes.

Deputy Supervisor Allowance

- Proposal to increase the Deputy Supervisor allowance from **\$500 to \$1,000**. Approved by consensus.

Motion made and seconded to adopt the Organizational Resolutions with the discussed revisions.
Motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor's monthly report balances, Teresa motioned to approve, Bob seconded, all in favor.

New Business

- **Doc Lopez Run:** Motion made by Bob, seconded by Teresa and approved to grant permission for use of **Route 73**, beginning in Keene Valley.
- **Resolution in Support of NYS Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act:** Motion made by Bob, seconded by Teresa, and approved unanimously. An official copy will be forwarded to state representatives and the Governor.
- Resolution to pay online bills made by Bob, seconded by Teresa, all in favor.
- Resolution to pay monthly invoices made by Ann, seconded by Teresa, all in favor.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 603PM, motion made by Bob and seconded by Teresa.

Respectfully submitted,

Robyn Shumer

Town Clerk