

Regular Meeting, Town Of Otto

A regular meeting of the town board of the Town of Otto, Cattaraugus County and the State of New York was held at the Otto Town Hall, 8842 Otto- East Otto Road, Cattaraugus, NY on the 20th day of January 2026.

Present:

Randy Beenau	.. Town Supervisor
Marlene Gregory	.. Councilmember
Brenda Mallaber	.. Councilmember
Paul Stang	.. Councilmember
Kevin Walker	.. Councilmember
Trisha Priest	.. Town Clerk
Robert Barber	.. Highway Superintendent
Jeff Holler	.. Code Enforcement Officer

Others Present: Planning Board Members: Karen McAndrew, Terri Steinbar, Marsha Salisbury, Bethany Tojdowski

Supervisor Beenau called the regular board meeting to order at 7:13pm with a quorum present.

RESOLUTION 2026-03

Approval of minutes

On a motion made by Councilmember Gregory and seconded by Councilmember Mallaber, the following resolution was

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Beenau, Gregory, Mallaber, Stang, Walker

 Nays 0

Resolved that the minutes of the December 2025 Regular Meeting of the Town Board is approved with correction.

Privilege of the Floor : The Planning Board met on January 12th to discuss the possibility of the Town hosting a celebration for America's 250th Birthday. They presented ideas to the Town Board. They are seeking approval and financial support to organize the celebration.

Town Supervisor Randy Beenau Discussed changing the Otto Town Seal. Suggested the Town have a picture on it that better represents our area such as agriculture, the museum or mill on it.

Mr. Beenau reviewed the bank statements with the Town Board members.

Highway Superintendent Robert Barber reported on the activities of the Highway crew.

1. Snow plowing and sanding the roads.
2. Mr. Barber only received one sealed bid from his request for proposals to purchase a new pickup truck.
3. Again the windows in the court house were found open. They are in bad shape.

RESOLUTION 2026-04

Award of Bid -2026 4x4 pickup truck

On a motion made by Councilman Walker and seconded by Councilman Stang, the following resolution was

APOPTED Ayes 5 Beenau, Gregory, Mallaber, Stang, Walker

 Nays 0

Resolved that the Ed Shultz at 300 Fluvanna Avenue in Jamestown NY 14701 be awarded the contract for the purchase of one new 2026 Chevy Silverado 2500HP 4x4, Crew cab pickup truck with trade in allowance for their low bid of \$33,795.00.

Code Enforcement Officer Jeff Holler presented his monthly report from 12/17/2025 thru 01/20/2026

1. He took eight calls.

2. Completed two inspections.
3. Issued 1 permit

9064 Otto-E.Otto Road for a wood shed

Fifty Dollars was turned over to the Town Clerk for the permit.

Mr. Holler answered questions posed by Councilman Stang regarding the East Otto Solar projects.

Town Clerk The monthly review of the town clerk activities for the month of December 2025.

\$150.00 was collected during the month of December. The following disbursements were made:

Town Supervisor	\$124.55
Department of ag & markets	\$16.00
Catt Co. DPW	\$0.00
DEC	\$ 9.45
NYS-DOH	\$0.00

The Town Clerk's Monthly report was distributed to the Board.

The Town Clerk Administered the Oath of Office for elected officials.

Tax Collector Tax Collection is seemingly slower this year compared to the last few years. The Town's portion of taxes has usually been collected within the first two weeks of January. We have only collected roughly half of the Town's budget. Mail has been noticeably slow. With the changes to the way USPS is post marking the mail now and the weather mail is delayed.

Assessors Report via Email

The December report is as follows:

- Renewal applications for Agricultural Assessment and Senior Citizen Exemption are being submitted and processed. Thus far 58% of Agricultural Assessments and 5% of Senior Citizen renewal applications have been returned.
- These applications are due March 1, 2026. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Assessor's Office Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm with any questions. Our extended town hall hours for exemption season continue through February and can also be found online at: <https://maps.cattco.org/taxes/assessors.php>
- The Assessing Office has corresponded with several property owners about their assessments, tax bills, and exemptions.
- You may have heard about a new Veterans with 100% disability exemption. This bill was passed in December by Albany. It's an opt-in exemption, meaning that all taxing entities have the option to allow it. If a taxing jurisdiction does not adopt it, the exemption does not apply within that jurisdiction. This is a very poorly written law that is causing much confusion. There are a number of restrictions that have to be met. One of them is that they must qualify for the VA's specially adapted housing grant. When we asked the county's Veteran Services Director about it, he stated that in 14 years he has only known two vets that qualified for it and they are both no longer in our area.
- There were 2 property transfers in November. You can find more information about these sales here: <https://www.cattco.org/real-property-and-gis/sales>

Waste Water Operators Report

A sludge blanket has been developing in the bottom of the clarifier. This is normal up to a certain depth

however the depth of the blanket has been increasing. Record drawings show a dedicated sludge return pump and line which is used to recycle this sludge back to the beginning of the treatment system. I see no actual evidence of any such pump that exists. There are no operators notes or records which indicate one way or the other that this occurrence is seasonal/cyclical so I am forced to believe this is an abnormal condition based on knowledge of clarifiers and sludge characteristics.

On 12/22 Kevin Maine of New York Rural Water Association (NYRWA) made a visit to the treatment facility after having been in Cattaraugus on a water system inquiry. I explained to Kevin the developing sludge blanket and his conclusions were the same as mine.

After further review and comparison of drawings to the actual system I determined that the same electrically driven air pumps that aerate the RBC also are meant to lift sludge from the bottom of the clarifier up to a receiving pipe which then hydraulically (no pumps) transports the sludge back to the flow splitter box which is the entry point of waste to the facility.

Following up with Kevin he confirmed my beliefs based on findings from a nearly identical facility located near Rochester. Knowing the principles of operation for the sludge lift system I can now confirm that some portion of that system is not performing properly. As a work around while diagnosing the issue I have sourced a dedicated pump with which I can manually pump the sludge periodically. This practice seems to be working. It may be necessary to take down the clarifier completely in order to inspect the bottom and inlets to the sludge lifting lines. Solving the issue is a work in progress and not something to be alarmed about at this time. Change is slow and that is key. Kevin and I have been in touch on a weekly basis just for update purposes.

On 1/1 after my truck became stuck in the mud in the area immediately below the RBC hut it was noted over phone call by Superintendent Barber that conditions on site have been noticeably worse in terms of groundwater compared to normal. This may not be any cause for alarm simply be of the weather pattern we have been experiencing. However this condition will be monitored to determine if additional drainage provisions may need to be made in the future to keep excess ground water away from the in-ground assets at the facility. The stuck truck was removed by me without further incident.

On 1/3 Clerk Priest reached out looking for confirmation of testing for which the town had been billed. During plant operations on 1/4 I pulled files to confirm the charges were legitimate and testing services had been provided. The question was asked if there are other options for testing which may be better or more economical. In my opinion the answer is no. A full descriptive answer will be included at the bottom of this report for anyone interested.

On 1/5 Delmar electric was on site to perform work as described in quotes previously approved by the board. One of the parts (breaker) that was furnished by Delmar's supplier was not a correct fit, but he did change out one starter as quoted. The scope of work included in the quote evidently did not match the scope which I had come to understand verbally. This is not a problem. Because Delmar will need to return in the future to complete the approved scope I have requested additional quotes from him which will be passed along for approval once they are received.

-DEC reports were submitted on 1/5.

-The next set of monitoring samples will be taken on 2/4.

A more complete answer to lab testing questions..

Test Assured (Fran Conner) is not a laboratory. He is simply a courier. This means that he actually utilizes multiple labs (BioTrax, ALS, Life Science Labs etc..) and gets "bulk rates" based on the number of tests/customers he has on contract. This is somewhat of a common practice and I know of other individuals (commonly former lab techs or licensed system operators) that employ this business model.

Laboratories in my experience tend to go in patterns of good customer service and bad which is something that he as the courier worries about and takes the burden away from the operators. He spots the trends faster than an individual would because he's essentially looking at dozens of sets of results on a weekly basis.

Fran's prices have not changed in quite some time, just the prices the labs are charging which he has to pass along. Fran is in the process of being bought out by ALS Laboratories based in Rochester. I'm not sure how that will turn out but for now Fran is still the most economical service I know of. He also provides service for me locally in Cattaraugus as well as Salamanca, Angelica, Delevan and Friendship just to name the ones I know are his clients.

RESOLUTION 2026-05

Audit of Claims

On a motion made by Councilmember Gregory and seconded by Councilmember Walker, the following resolution was

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Beenau, Gregory, Mallaber, Stang, Walker

 Nays 0

Resolved that the bills contained on Abstract #001 in the amount of \$ 40212.90 have been reviewed by Town Board and are authorized for payment in the following amounts:

General Fund	No.	1	through	14	\$11,520.85
Highway Fund	No.	1	through	12	\$26,075.97
Water District	No.	1	through	3	\$1342.06
Light District	No.	1			\$699.12
Sewer District	No.	1	through	2	\$574.90

With no further discussion, on a motion of Councilmember Gregory and seconded by Councilmember Mallaber, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm. Carried unanimously.

The next monthly board meeting will be held on February 17, 2026 at 7PM at the Otto Town Hall.

Respectfully Submitted,
Trisha Priest, Otto Town Clerk