

Town of Hammond Newsletter

Fourth Edition - Fall / Winter 2012

Beautiful Chippewa Bay Sunset

Please enjoy the following newsletter from the Desk of Supervisor Bertram and the Town Board!

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GENERAL ELECTION REFERENDUM ~

Election Day is Tuesday, November 6th – don't forget to exercise your right to vote in this year's statewide and federal election! Polls are open from 6 AM – 9 PM at the Fire Department. This year there will be a referendum on the ballot to extend the terms of office for the Town Clerk, Highway Superintendent and Town Supervisor. The referendum will be to change the office terms from the current 2 year term to a 4 year term. A petition was brought to the Town Board by citizens wishing to have these terms extended and the Board chose to put the issue on the ballot for a public vote. If passed, the change would take effect for the next elected terms of these three offices.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS ~

By working with the Hammond Fire and Rescue Squad, we would like to encourage people with cell phones to program their phone with a contact to dial (315) 386-4591 for all 911 emergencies in St. Lawrence County. You can program your phone to autodial this number under an emergency heading for St. Lawrence County. In the absence of this setting – when dialing 911 from your cell phone – the call may go to another county or Canada. If this were to happen, it would slow the response time in emergency situations greatly. If you need assistance in programming your cell phone with this contact, the officers of the Hammond Fire and Rescue can assist you. In addition, the fire department suggests programming your cell phone with an emergency contact of a family member or friend listed under I.C.E. – which stands for "In Case of Emergency."

NEWSLETTER MAILING LIST ~

Several questions have been asked in regards to the newsletter mailing list and how it is put together. The list is compiled by combining existing property tax records and voter registration lists. Only one newsletter is sent to each household address to ensure costs are kept under control and all households receive a newsletter. The name of the recipient is not factored in so much as the address that it's being sent to. If you no longer live or vote in Hammond, we encourage you to have your name removed from the voting list in Canton by contacting the Board of Elections. For this mailing, the Town is experimenting with 'Every Door Direct Mail' offered by US Post Office to reduce mailing costs further, therefore all local Hammond delivery addresses will read "Local Postal Customer."



NEW COMBINATION PLOW / DUMP TRUCK ~

The Town of Hammond has recently ordered a new 2012 Combination Plow / Dump Truck and it is expected to be delivered soon. The new truck will be replacing our prior 1992 model. The new purchase should help to reduce repair bills substantially. The truck was purchased using reserve funds and will not cause an increase in the tax levy at this time.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ~

The construction of our Comprehensive Plan has begun and we are expecting the plan to be done and presented to the public very soon. Some key items we see emerging from the community meetings are improving and developing the tourist industry with our lake and river as well as promoting and developing alternative forms of agriculture. Additional items brought up were improving and promoting our community as a great rural place to live which could in turn increase our population and help preserve our school. Many other excellent ideas were presented and will all be addressed in the plan. We encourage people to continue to submit their thoughts and concerns to the County Planning Board as the plan nears completion. Before adopting the plan a public hearing will be held and the Town Board will consider all concerns.



NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE PROPOSAL ~

The Business & Economic Development Group of Hammond & Chippewa Bay NY is proud to announce the launch of their new website, www.VisitHammondNY.com. You can also follow the Group on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/VisitHammondNY>. The website will continue to be updated as the year progresses and serves to provide exposure to the various businesses in Hammond and Chippewa Bay. Visitors can stay up to date on events, tourism opportunities, clubs and organizations within our community, business news highlights, employment listings and membership discounts. In September, the Group made a request to the Town Board to establish a volunteer committee of 5-7 people answering to the Town Board that would continue the endeavors of this group, but allow for more structure and community involvement. At this time the Town Board believes that when the Comprehensive Plan is completed a committee would be necessary to oversee the plan and that the efforts of the Group could also be incorporated into the purpose of this committee as well. We would like to thank Erica Demick and Mike Stock for getting this necessary project off the ground.



TAX ASSESSMENTS ~

Concerns have been raised in regards to the increase of tax assessments for some and not others proportionately. Annually, our Assessor is sent updated lists by the State Board of Assessment detailing the amounts that similar properties are selling for. The Town in turn sets up their values to reflect different selling prices for different property types such as farmland, wood lots, home building lots, waterfront lots, etc. If our Assessor does not maintain our valuations at close to 100% of these selling prices, our equalization rate will drop. Keeping as close to the 100% mark is very important. The county and school use their equalization rates and charge rates proportionate to the town's equalization rate. A town with an equalization rate of 80% will pay a larger tax rate than a town at 100%. Given this, it is within our best interests to keep our property values consistent with sale prices of similar properties. Our Assessor does not raise certain parcels over others indiscriminately but utilizes a system based on selling prices of similar parcels supplied by New York State. Our Assessor can be reached at 324-5321 ext. 14 with any questions that you may have.

BUDGET INFORMATION ~

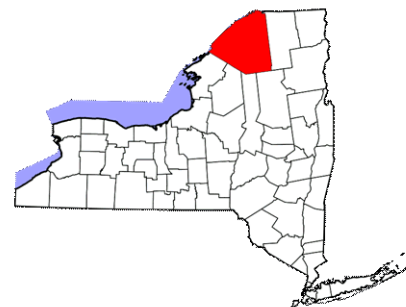
Throughout this past year the town finances remained stable and fund balances have remained constant and in good shape. However, retirement and medical insurance costs are rising again this year. The interest rates we are receiving on investments coupled with negotiations with the Teamsters Union are making the budget process very difficult. We are also faced with an increase in the Village fire contract for the first time in seven years and the Board is dedicating funding for future equipment purchases for the highway program. The Town Board will continue to be as conservative as possible in keeping the tax rate low while striving to improve our town and the services we can offer.

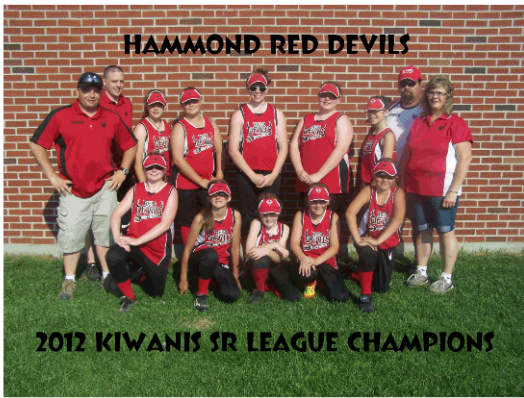
CHARGE BACKS ~

We would like to clear up some questions that people have had with regards to an item titled "chargebacks" on the January tax bill. Chargebacks are items that the St. Lawrence County Board of Legislatures is billing back to the Town. These charges include such items as Workmen's Compensation Insurance costs, the cost of mailing tax bills, elections costs, and partial tuition for anyone attending a community college (which we do not have in St. Lawrence County). Please be advised that the Town of Hammond has no input in these items as they appear on the tax bill.



Budget 2013





The 2012 Youth Summer Program was a great success! There were 35 boys and 28 girls participating in both baseball and softball. The Kiwanis Sr. League Girls Softball team won the overall Championship! The Town Board would like to thank Cory Tanner as well as the dedicated players and multiple coaches who participated and volunteered their time to make this year's youth program a success – you are truly appreciated!

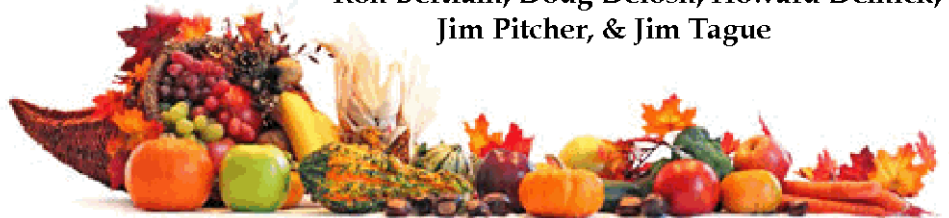
CHANGE IN MEETING DATES & TIMES ~

Your input and involvement is very important to us and the success of our community. In hopes of keeping everyone aware of any changes that have been happening we would like to let everyone know that Town Board meetings have been changed to the 2nd Tuesday of each month. The Village Board meetings remain on the 1st Wednesday of the month and the Planning Board Meeting is held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. The Hammond Town Library has recently changed their hours and the new hours can be found on the Town website at www.townofhammondny.com.

We wish you and your family a very Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas and all the best in the coming New Year!

Many thanks,

**Ron Bertram, Doug Delosh, Howard Demick,
Jim Pitcher, & Jim Tague**



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WWW.TOWNOFHAMMONDNY.COM

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PO Box 219
Hammond, NY 13646

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