

New Baltimore 2022 Newsletter

Volume 2

Dedicated to Councilmember R. Scott Briody

January 1, 2016-December 31, 2019



The Town of New Baltimore deeply mourns the sudden passing of Scott Briody on July 29. Scott was a dedicated member of the Town Board and continued to assist the Town on many occasions after leaving office.

There are so many examples of Scott's kindness to New Baltimore. When Cecil C. Hallock Park was renovated, Scott brought in his own equipment and could be seen digging the post holes for the baseball field fencing. When multiple volunteers gathered to install the Town's accessible playground, Scott's direction and equipment were extremely important in completing the project on time.

During his years on the Town Board and afterward, Scott was the lead resource for all issues regarding computer operations, software, and equipment. He also donated computer equipment he no longer needed for use at Town Hall.

We will all miss the opportunity of having Scott as a resource. The circumstances where we would just call, email, or text him to discuss an issue or the occasion where Scott would call or simply stop in just to see what we were doing were always welcome. He was willing to lend a hand to help or offer a suggestion to solve the problem.

The Town Board held a moment of silence for Councilmember Briody at the Regular Meeting on August 8. Supervisor Ruso praised Scott for his insights and as a colleague and neighbor who was a trusted resource in so many areas. 'He knew construction, he knew engineering, he knew IT, computer issues' and that he still called him after he left the Board.

We send our thoughts and prayers to his wife, Susan; children, Jarrett, Reese, and Darian; parents, Leslie and Bob; and his extended family and friends of which there are so many.

We are so fortunate to have known Scott and serve with him on the Town Board and we will all miss him dearly.

Ted Hilscher's Town Historian Report

Old Roads (Part Two) **And How Do We Know What We Know**

Before we return to the once busy intersection at the far southeast corner of town, let's discuss the first road in New Baltimore built by people of European descent. That will also allow us a brief tangent into the practice of history.

In 1710 work commenced on a road built at the direction of the colonial government west of the river from New Jersey to Albany, usually referred to as the King's Road.

In New Baltimore, according to former co-town historian Frances Dietz, 9W basically followed King's Road, with exceptions being places where the visible remains of the old road run alongside 9W. The first of these, coming from the south, is east of 9W, running from the Antique Center, beneath the Thruway and onto a private drive opposite the stone manse. Just south of Hawley Lane, the old road runs east of 9W, and then crosses to the west in the form of present day Flatbush Road. This road once continued north to present day Route 51, curved to the east behind Albright's Garage, then continued north where the current 9W lies, down Carhart Road, across the Hannacroix Creek, up Manor Road, and then up the hill toward Ravena.

At the point where current Flatbush Road turns to the east, the old road can be discerned continuing north in the form of a sunken road. From Route 51 east of Dean's Mill Road, looking south, the sunken road is also clearly visible. (DO NOT TRESPASS!)

For its length of about 500 yards, the traveled way of this discontinued road was between 16 and 25 feet wide. This width reflects actual use, and not necessarily its legal width. In the Town of Athens, there is hidden in the woods an undisturbed section of the King's Road that is 33 feet (2 rods) wide, as found between parallel stone walls.

In New Baltimore, the last section of the old road not beneath 9W is today's Old State Road, just south of Ravena.

Now, how did Mrs. Dietz know where King's Road went?

There have been maps made of King's Road, but unless you have a survey with details and measurements made of a certain location, the maps are not specific enough to tell us where exactly the roadbed was located on the ground.

When evaluating historical information, we should apply the same skills we use in every day life. How do we know what we know? Any information we receive that is outside of our direct observation is filtered (hopefully) through everything else we believe we know to test its reliability.

One of the ways we evaluate that information is to think carefully about its source.

What do we know about Mrs. Dietz? How reliable a source is she?

Frances Kniffen Dietz was born in 1917 and was raised on what is today Flatbush Road, coincidentally once part of the King's Road. She lived in New Baltimore her entire life. From her own direct observation, and her own memory, she could recall what the road network looked like prior to modernization in the 1930s. What else did she know?

When she was, let's say, 15 years old, she knew people who were, let's say, 80 years old, and who had lived their entire lives in New Baltimore. Any such person knew first hand the road network as it existed at the time of the Civil War. And that person could have related accurately to a curious young Frances Kniffen what he or she learned as a 15 year old from someone who knew first hand the road network of 1800.

A word or two about oral history. Oral history, even when collected from someone with first hand knowledge, is considered by some to be the poor cousin to other primary sources, such as writings or photographs. Memory is a type of record made of the past, but memories are often poor records. Was that really Ruby having a NeHi with Oswald and LBJ the morning of the assassination? But in certain ways, memories, and the collecting of oral history, can be highly reliable. The memory of a farmer who milked cows twice a day every day from age 15 to age 82 is highly reliable about changing technology in milk production during his lifetime.

Most of the practice of local history has to do with the study of place and trying to determine what happened where, the ground level of history. (Asking "why," and interpreting consequences, come at higher levels.) Oral history should be fact-checked, if possible. Look at census records, photographs, deeds. Go out "in the field." Keep an open mind. Is what you find consistent or inconsistent with what you think you know? The location of an early stone house on 9W, just north of Schoolhouse Lane, is consistent with the belief that a very old road ran right along there.

If you have any comments about anything I have written, or if you have questions about the history of New Baltimore that I may be able to help you with, please email me at townhistorian@townofnewbaltimore.org.

From the Desk of Supervisor Jeff Ruso

The Office of the State Comptroller Releases Fiscal Stress Score

The Office of the State Comptroller released the fiscal stress scores for all New York State towns at the end of September. This report is in essence the financial report card that grades the financial security for each town.

The Town of New Baltimore received a perfect score on our report card for 2021. The management of our Town finances, budgeting, expenditures, and all other factors resulted in the Town receiving a '0.0' score. In their grading system, the lower the score, the stronger the financial condition.

Managing all of the Town finances can be very complex and at times difficult. The Town Board works very hard to ensure that tax dollars are safe and well-spent.

2023 Town Budget Update

The Town Board has adopted the annual budget for the 2023 calendar year. This year's budget was very difficult to predict considering all of the inflationary cost changes in many line items.

As all families know from their own monthly expenses, the Town has been enduring major price increases in fuel, electricity, office supplies, postage, repairs, and many other line items.

The national inflation rate for 2022 is 7.7% as of October and I am happy to report that we will have a final tax levy that will represent another decrease in the tax rate for 2023.

The Town Board is very proud to announce that this will be the ninth year in a row that there will be a tax decrease.

Year-to-Year Surplus

The Town of New Baltimore has managed to remain within it's budget for 8 years. We strive to avoid any deficit spending and have been successful in doing so. Each year where there is a surplus, the Town Board has taken much of that surplus and deposited those funds into a "Reserve Account." The Town currently has 4 reserve accounts with the following dollar amounts:

	2020	2022
Sewer Reserve	\$34,834	\$34,907
Highway Reserve	\$95,328	\$245,379*
Building Reserve	\$48,008	\$88,065
Parks Reserve	\$13,008	\$53,025

In just 3 years the total amount we held in our reserve funds went from just over \$190,000 to currently over \$420,00! We will continue to fund these accounts as the annual budget comes to a close and deposit where we can in 2023. It is our goal to avoid bonding or borrowing for major purchases with the help of setting aside excess funding each year. This means further savings as there will be no bond fees, attorney fees, nor interest payments. These reserve accounts will help the town purchase highway equipment, repair town buildings and make improvements to our parks. *planned purchase of new truck in 2023.

Community Choice Aggregation Update

The Town Board recently renewed the Community Choice Aggregation Program for another two years partnering with Good Energy as the Administrator and Constellation as the Supplier. Electric rates will be locked in at \$0.1135 per kilowatt hour during this timeframe. In October, Central Hudson's rate was \$0.17 per kilowatt hour.

Javier Barrios with Good Energy attended the October 24, 2022 Work Meeting and indicated that the average savings per household were about \$200-\$250. Collectively with 715-725 active participants in the program, residents in the Town of New Baltimore saved roughly \$175,000-\$200,000.

Greene County News from County Legislator Pat Linger

The 2022-2023 Regular HEAP Benefit application period opened on November 1, 2022. Residents can apply online through their portal at mybenefits.ny.gov, or in person M-F at the DSS Office at 411 Main St, Catskill. The office phone number is 518-719-3700. The email for general questions is DSS@discovergreene.com. Eligible households may receive in excess of \$900 in direct payments to the heating vendor.

Paving, shoulders, and striping have been completed for this year. In total, we were able to completely resurface over 26 miles of Greene County roads. This included 2.6 miles in the Town of New Baltimore.

We have accepted 3 proposals from local internet service providers to finish building out access to broadband across the County. Using \$2.2 million in ARPA funds, we will soon sign contracts that will deliver high-speed fiber internet to approximately 1,400 addresses and 112 miles of unserved roadways. When completed, virtually all existing Greene County addresses that have electric service will have access to high-speed internet. Greene leads the way with a unique public/private partnership that will occur while NYS is still trying to figure out how to accomplish this.

The Greene County Legislature approved a program that would share a portion of the ARPA funding received by the County with each Town and Village in Greene County. Each Town and Village was allowed to apply for funding up to \$100,000 for an ARPA-approved project.

New Baltimore's truck fleet is aging as some of our trucks have been operating since the 1980s. The Town Board approved the use of that \$100,000 toward the purchase of a 2023 International HX620 which the Greene County Legislature approved.

The cost of that purchase is \$206,479. The \$100,000 of that cost will be paid from that grant and the difference will be paid from the Town of New Baltimore Highway Department Reserve funds.

We are looking to fill the following positions:

- **2023 Summer Recreation Director and Counselors**
- **Part-Time Laborer for Painting, Weeding, Light Maintenance**
- **Full and Part-Time Highway Department Employees**

Do You Need A 911 Sign or EZ-Pass Tag?

Call the Assessor's Office at (518)756-6671, Ext. 8 to place a request for a **911 Sign**.

E-ZPass Tags are available in the Town Clerk's Office for \$25 which is credited to an account when activated.

Sherry Vieta
Dog Control Officer
(518)322-9783

Q&A With Assessor Dawn DeRose

What is the 2022 Trend? Normally the assessed value of all property does not change unless there has been improvement and/or demolition; or the town is in a reassessment project. The assessment values of residential properties **did not** change. New York State issued a 17 percent trend for all residential properties. With the help of Lawrence Farbstein, Utility Valuation Consultant, it was reduced to 15 percent. The State allows a 5 percent tolerance. New Baltimore's equalization rate for 2021 was 66. The preliminary equalization rate for 2022 was going to be between 50–51. The State said the highest rate the town could get for this year (2022) was 55.5, that was using the 5 percent tolerance. The high trend is due to the increase in sales of the residential properties selling higher than their market value.

What is the STAR Credit? If you have purchased a new home and it will be your primary residence, take a few minutes to register for the STAR credit with the New York State Tax Department. All eligible new homeowners will receive their STAR savings in the form of a check directly from New York State. Registering for the School Tax Relief (STAR) Credit can be done 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at www.tax.ny.gov/star. Any property owner without access to a computer can register by phone at (518) 457-2036 weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Before registering have this information available:

- Names and social security numbers for all owners of the property and their spouses
- Name of the school district where your primary residence is located
- The date you purchased the property and the name of the sellers
- The most recent school tax bill, if you received one
- Address of any residential property owned in another state
- The legal name of the trust if the property owned is in trust
- Proof of income: a copy of the previous year's federal or state income tax returns for all owners (if you didn't file a income tax return, you'll be asked to provide financial

How do I Know if I'm Eligible for STAR? If you own your home and it is your primary residence, your income is \$500,000 or less, you're eligible for the Basic STAR credit. In addition, if you're 65 or older with an income of \$92,000 or less, you may be eligible for the Enhanced STAR credit. In the first year of your new home, you may receive the prior owner's STAR exemption. In future years if you're eligible, the State will send you a STAR check. You do not need to register again.

When is Grievance Day? 2023 Grievance Day will be held on May 24th. More information will be forthcoming as this day approaches.

What Are The Office Hours for the Assessor? Assessor Dawn DeRose is in the office every Tuesday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Assessor Clerk, Sandra Trombley, is in the office every Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The Assessor may be reached at (518) 756-6671, Extension 8 or dderose@townofnewbaltimore.org.

Why Are Postmarks So Important?

Any payments received by mail with a United States postmark dated within the penalty-free period is a timely payment even if the actual payment is received after the interest-free period has expired.

For the postmark rule to apply, the payment must be contained in an envelope with a legible dated postmark, properly addressed to the appropriate collecting officer; and deposited in a post office or official depository under the exclusive care and custody of the United State Postal Service. If these conditions are not met, the postmark rule does not apply and the payment is deemed paid when received.

Payments sent via privately metered mail are not postmarks and are considered paid upon receipt.

Postmarks are not always made by the Post Office. If a postmark is needed, please bring to the Postmaster and ask for one to guarantee that payments can be recorded timely and without penalty.

What If I Don't Receive a Tax Bill?

Collecting officers are required to impose a penalty even if the taxpayer does not receive a tax bill. Real Property Tax Law §922(3) states that “the failure to mail any such statement, or the failure of the addressee to receive the same, shall not in any affect the validity of taxes or interest prescribed by law.”

What If I Want My Tax Bill Mailed To Another Address?

If a resident would like their tax bill mailed to another address, even if previous notice was given, please send a statement in writing to the Town Clerk either by email to tax@townofnewbaltimore.org or letter to:

Barbara Finke, Town Clerk
Town of New Baltimore
3809 County Route 51
Hannacroix, NY 12087

We need to update our records to make sure we are sending bills to the correct address. We appreciate your understanding.

Online Payments Will Soon Be Accepted for Property Tax, Sewer and Water Payments

We received many requests this year from residents who wished to pay taxes and fees with the use of a credit/debit card or e-check. The Town Board approved the proposal by Value Payment Systems, a company presently used and highly recommended by neighboring towns. Convenience fees are charged per transaction to the user as follows:

2.5% for Both Debit and Credit Cards
\$1.95 for E-Checks

There is a minimum of \$1.95 for Nontax Payments and \$3.95 for Tax Payments.

Upcoming Committee Events

Councilmember Shelly VanEtten announces the return of the Senior Holiday Party. This event was not held due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year's luncheon will be held at Pegasus Restaurant on Wednesday, December 7 beginning at 12 Noon.

The featured speaker is Ken Brooks, Business Manager for the Greene County Department of Human Services, who will explain services offered by Greene County.

This free event is open to Town residents aged 60 and over and is limited to the first 70 reservations. To get on the list, please call the Town Clerk's Office at (518)756-6671, Ext. 5.

The Veterans luncheon will be held in spring of 2023. If residents are a veteran and would like to be included in this event, please contact the Town Clerk's office at (518)756-6671, Ext. 5. Since this event

Are You A Residents of Sewer District #1

The Town Board has audited the financial condition of Sewer District #1 which serves the residents of the hamlet. Through proper budgeting and cost savings over the past few years, the Sewer District has accumulated in our "Unallocated Fund Balance" just over \$358,000

With that \$358,000 the Town Board decided to pay off an older bond with remaining principle of \$100,000 to further reduce ongoing costs. Additionally, the Board will be depositing into the Reserve Account a sum of \$116,000 that will be earning interest and available in the event of an emergency. When this \$116,000 is combined with the existing \$34,000 already in Reserve, there will be total Reserve Fund amount of \$150,000. This amount is approximately equal to the total cost of one year's operation of the Sewer Department.

After these two expenditures, there will be a remaining balance of \$142,000. The Town Board, for 2023 only, will be reducing the Sewer Use Fee by 50%!

Leaf Pick-Up in the Hamlet

The Highway Department will be picking up leaves on Monday mornings during the month of November. Please have bagged leaves curbside by 7:30 am for pickup. Bagged or loose leaves can be brought to the Highway garage any day during normal business hours — Monday-Thursday 6 AM-3:30 PM and Friday 6 AM-10 AM.

Please call Highway Superintendent Alan VanWormer with questions (518)756-2078.

There will be no parking on any town roads, streets, or shoulders beginning November 15, 2022 and continuing until May 15, 2023 to allow for the safe and efficient removal of snow.

The Highway Superintendent is authorized by law to have any vehicle in violation of this notice removed at the owner's expense.

It is also illegal to plow, blow, or otherwise deposit snow from private driveways onto, into, or across a public road.

Please refrain from doing this.

Please let's work together to keep our roads clear and safe this winter.

Receipts for Property Taxes?

Town and County Tax Bills for 2017-2022 are now Online at:

<https://egov.basgov.com/townofnewbaltimore>

**New Baltimore Town Hall
3809 County Route 51
Hannacroix, NY 12087**

Calendar

Town Board Meetings
2nd and 4th Mondays
7 PM

Planning Board Meetings
2nd Thursday* 7 PM

Zoning Board Meetings
1st Wednesday* 7:30 PM

* If no agenda, no meeting

For agendas and other

Town information, please
call Town Offices or visit
our website.

www.townofnewbaltimore.org

Town Hall Contact Information
Town Hall FAX (518)756-8880

Animal Control Officer Sherry Viera (518)322-9783

Town Clerk

Barb Finke (518)756-6671, Ext. 5
Amanda Eldred

**Zoning/Planning/
Building**

Allan Jourdin, Building Inspector #1
Marjorie Loux, Clerk #2
(518)756-6671, Ext. 6

Town Supervisor

Jeff Russo (518)756-6671, Ext. 7
Dawn DeRose (518)756-6671, Ext. 8

Assessor

Alan VanWormer (518)756-2078

**Highway
Superintendent**

FAX (518)756-3078

Town Court

Justices Huff and Konsul (518)756-2079
Lynne Layman-Wallace/
Asia Irizarry

Greene County Sheriff

(518)756-3300