

# Our Town

SPRING 2025



**Newsletter for the Town of Lansing**

Issue 4

## Town Offices:

### Court

Judge John Howell  
Judge Peter Grossman  
Melody Lombardo, Court Clerk

**Hours: Monday-Thursday, 7:30am to 4:00pm**

### Department of Public Works

Mike Moseley, Dir. of Public Works/Highway Supt.  
Jamar Redmond, Deputy Highway Superintendent  
Kevin May, Working Supervisor  
Emmy Stehnach, Sec'y to Dir. of DPW/Hwy. Supt.

**Hours: Monday-Thursday, 6:00am to 4:00pm**

### Parks & Recreation

Patrick Tyrrell, Director of Parks & Recreation  
Tyler Todd, Parks & Rec. MEO/Coordinator  
Meggie Conley, Parks & Rec. Secretary

**Hours: Monday-Thursday, 7:00am to 3:30pm  
Friday, 7:00am to noon**

### Planning & Code Enforcement

John Zepko, Director of Planning/Code  
Mason Molesso, Town Planner  
Scott Russell, Zoning/Code/Fire Enforcement Officer  
Heather Dries, Code Enforcement Officer  
Kelly Geiger, Code/Planning Information Aide

**Hours: Monday-Thursday, 7:30am to 12:30pm  
Friday, 7:30am to noon  
or by appointment**

### Supervisor's Office

Ruth Groff, Town Supervisor  
Mary Ellen Albrecht, Bookkeeper  
Jennifer Schenck, Accountant

**Hours: Monday-Thursday, 7:30am to 4:00pm  
Friday, 7:30am to noon**

### Town Clerk's Office

Debbie Munson, Town Clerk  
Jessie Hall, Deputy Town Clerk  
Ashley Workman, Town Clerk Aide

**Hours: Monday-Thursday, 7:30am to 4:00pm  
Friday, 7:30am to noon**

[www.lansingtown.com](http://www.lansingtown.com)

## FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERVISOR

The Town of Lansing is a beautiful gem in the Finger Lakes region with a community of research facilities; a rich agrarian heritage; an abundance of scenic views; and plenty of hiking trails to enjoy those views, which include several waterfalls such as Ludlowville Falls, shown above.

The Town boasts of having a park system that is among the best in the county, popular recreational programs that garner praise from the families that participate, and expertly maintained highways. The Town of Lansing and the Village of Lansing together make a vibrant community that the residents are proud of, and a school system of high quality and ranking.

This quarterly newsletter is intended to share with you the news from not only the Town Board but from our staff, committees, and other resources around town, to keep you informed. The goal is to highlight accomplishments, provide updates on issues, announce upcoming topics, inform you of events in the community, and share community interest stories.

Town Supervisor

### Town Board

Ruth Groff, Town Supervisor  
Joseph Wetmore, Board Member/Deputy Town Supervisor  
Judy Drake, Board Member  
Laurie Hemmings, Board Member  
Christine Montague, Board Member

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# ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND UPDATES

## **CARGILL RESOLUTION EXPLANATION**

At the January 15, 2025 Town Board meeting, the Board passed a resolution regarding Cargill's permit application to renew and modify its Mined Land Reclamation Permit for the Cayuga Salt Mine. The Resolved clauses were as follows:

*The Town of Lansing formally requests that the DEC:*

- 1. Rescind the Negative Declaration and require the preparation of a comprehensive, public-accessible Environmental Impact Statement to assess all potential environmental risks associated with the proposed activities, and*
- 2. Conduct a public hearing to allow for community input by residents and stakeholders on the Environmental Impact Statement*

This Resolution was merely to ask that the DEC give further attention to the permit application to ensure that everything is being done to safeguard Cayuga Lake from contamination of any sort due to Cargill's plan to flood the abandoned S3 Zone with wastewater.

Due to certain misinterpretations of this Resolution, we feel it necessary to clarify that neither the Town nor any committee or council within the Town has expressed the desire to close Cargill, nor does the Town, or any entity within the Town, have the authority to make such a request. The Conservation Advisory Council endorsed the wording of the Resolution at their January meeting, but no member of that council suggested that Cargill be closed, nor was there a vote taken for the closure of Cargill.

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## **GRANT AWARDED FOR ZONING UPDATE**

On December 27, 2024, the Town was notified that the grant application for \$100,000 to assist with the Town's zoning updates, was approved. The funding for the grant is provided by the New York State Department of State Smart Growth Community Planning Program. The description of the grant, as identified in the list of grants awarded, is as follows:

- The Town of Lansing will update its zoning code to align with community values and sustainability principles, as outlined in its 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The Town hosts an abundance of natural resources, scenic vistas, and sensitive environmental areas. The update will protect resources while supporting development near existing nodes of activity to ensure the long-term well-being of the community.*

It is expected that the zoning updates will take more than a year, possibly two, to complete. As stated in the description of the grant award, the Town wishes to revise the zoning to better align with the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. It is also the Town's intention to better delineate the zones (perhaps combining some to remove redundancy), to modify the language to make it easier to understand, and to add maps and diagrams to aid in clarity.

## **GRANT AWARDED FOR VACUUM TRUCK**

Along with the notification of the grant for the zoning updates, the Town also received acknowledgement of the award of a grant of \$325,000 for a vacuum truck from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Water Quality Improvement Project:

- *The Town of Lansing will purchase a vacuum truck to remove debris from catch basins in Lansing, the Village of Cayuga Heights, and in Tompkins County. The vacuum truck will ensure that the catch basins will remain clear of debris and protect water quality.*

The town has needed a vacuum truck for years as a means to not only fulfill the mandates of the state in regard to catch basins, but also to assist with breaks in sewer and water mains. The utility of this truck contributes to reducing negative environmental impacts to the land and to Cayuga Lake.

As is mentioned in the grant award, Lansing will be able to assist other municipalities with their catch basin needs as well, further enhancing a shared sense of cooperation amongst the municipalities within the county. When Lansing is helping other municipalities, we do not charge, nor does Lansing get charged when other municipalities are working in Lansing. Currently, the town is party to a 5-year Intermunicipal Shared Services Agreement between the Town of Lansing, Tompkins County, and all participating municipalities. This agreement allows Highway Superintendents to work together by sharing equipment, labor, and materials to accomplish maintenance and improvements to infrastructure within each town.

The cost of the truck is \$517,000 and with this grant the net amount that Lansing will pay will be approximately \$192,000. This expenditure was included in the budget for 2024, so since the cost was already encumbered it did not affect the 2025 budget, nor will it affect the 2026 budget. The truck was ordered in the first quarter of this year and should arrive before the end of the year. The contract for the grant is expected in the next few months.

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## **GRANT FOR HVAC SYSTEM AT TOWN HALL**

The HVAC system in the Town Hall has not worked properly for decades and much of its mechanical workings failing due to age. Each year the Town spends hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars paying for bandaids fixes to the system. It is unknown which thermostat affects which zone in the building, consequently many offices are excessively hot and others excessively cold. The staff and visitors are uncomfortable, prompting open windows in the winter to lower the temperature from 80°, and space heaters in adjoining offices to bring the temperature up from 60°. It is not a healthy environment for our staff, and space heaters are not safe..

In February, 2024, Tompkins County Business Energy Advisors provided to the Town a report itemizing their assessment of the system and the needs for the building. Based on this report, the Town Board voted to move to a geothermal heat source and to include a complete reconfiguration of the controls. Because the choice was for geothermal, the town became eligible for grants from New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), and received an award for a reimbursement grant of \$90,000 toward this project. It is unclear exactly how much this project will cost, but preliminary estimates range anywhere from \$150,000 to \$400,000. The 2025 budget included \$100,000 for this project, so that much has already been encumbered, meaning that the 2026 budget will include only any amount over the \$190,000.

## **COMMUNITY CENTER**

On January 9, it was noted by the Town of Lansing's Code Enforcement Officer that there was rot and structural issues in the east wall of the Community Center. With these findings, it was determined that the building was unfit for occupancy and the building was then closed to the public due to safety concerns. Not knowing the extent of the damage caused some consternation for those of us having to make decisions about the future of the building, but fortunately, when the engineers pulled more of the boards away to see the adjacent areas, the damage was limited, not extending farther than the already exposed area. A collective sigh of relief was had by all when the feared hundreds of thousands of dollars of repairs were determined to be only \$9,000, and the undetermined closure of the building dwindled to only a few weeks.

Thank you to Scott Russell, Code Enforcement Officer, for identifying a public safety issue; to Pat Tyrrell, Director of Parks and Recreation, for promptly notifying all parties who had reserved the building for their events; to David Herrick and Dondi Harner, Engineers from T.G. Miller, P.C., for their timely response to assess the damage; and to D Squared Construction for dropping everything and bringing in their entire crew to complete the repairs in one day.



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## **LOWERING SPEED LIMIT ON WILDMAN ROAD**

On December 18, 2024, the Town Board passed a resolution to lower the speed limit on Wildman Road, which is the Town public highway that runs parallel to State Route 34 and services the elementary, middle, and high schools of the Lansing Central School District. The roadway is primarily used by students who walk on this to attend school and school events. The Highway Superintendent requested that the speed limit be lowered to 15 MPH Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:00 am through 6:00 pm. All other hours the speed limit would remain at 25 MPH.

As of the writing of this article, the town has not heard back from the state regarding this request. It is not unusual for the state to take several months to review such requests and to perform any studies needed to make a determination.

## **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS (DPW) CAMPUS**

Building a new facility for the Department of Public Works has been underway for years and is finally about to become a reality. The Advertisement for Bids was sent to the Ithaca Journal on March 12, and ran from March 15 through March 20. The pre-bid conference was held on March 26, and the bid opening was on April 16.

We are pleased to announce that the total bids came in comfortably within budget. The estimated timeline for breaking ground is sometime in May of this year, which will be celebrated with a public ceremony for that event. Look for an announcement of the date and time for the groundbreaking ceremony!

The Town has been working toward this goal since 2020, when Bergmann (which in 2023 was rebranded as Colliers Engineering and Design) was hired to design the new building and site. In 2024, we hired LeChase Construction as the construction management company. Both organizations came highly recommended and they both have proven to be extremely professional and fair, keeping the Town's best interest at the forefront. Mike Moseley, Director of Public Works/Highway Superintendent; Ruth Groff, Town Supervisor; David Herrick, Town Engineer; and Guy Krogh, Town Attorney have been the primary representatives for the Town in this process, but not without input from department heads within the town. The three teams have worked tirelessly to ensure that the building will accommodate all of the town's needs now and into the future. The goal has always been for this new facility to serve the Town of Lansing for the next fifty years, and through value engineering, the teams were able to keep the costs to a minimum.

Below is a rendering of the new building as provided by Colliers Engineering and Design:



## **SOLAR PROJECTS**

During the month of March, the Town went through a review process and discussions with two different solar projects, Yellow Barn Solar, a utility scale project, and Delaware River Solar, a community solar project.

Matthew Eldred, Senior Associate with Harter Secrest & Emery LP, has been working with the Towns of Lansing and Groton for several years to provide his expertise in reviewing the Yellow Barn Solar project. He has been instrumental in developing strategies to ensure that both towns receive the greatest benefits possible, including our protection for decommissioning should the project cease operations before the end of the life of the project. Matt represented both of the towns at the March discussions which addressed the amount of the Host Community Agreement (“HCA”), as well as all the concessions that both Groton and Lansing are requesting from Yellow Barn Solar.

The difference between a utility scale project and a community project is the size. Any project of 25MW or larger is a utility scale project and oversight is through the New York State Office of Renewable Energy Sitings (“ORES”), with the town having very little say in the matter other than arguing that the project abide by certain town laws. Lansing and Groton have requested concessions from Yellow Barn Solar, a 160MW project, regarding such things as, but not limited to, ensuring that the decommissioning bond is sufficient, protection of the neighbors from glare and noise, that pollinators are planted along the roadside, that unique natural areas are protected, and that the towns are adequately compensated for the wear and tear on town roads.

A community project is anything under 25MW and is subject to the town’s approval of site plans, just as any other proposed development in the Town of Lansing, but ORES is not involved. Both types of projects may provide the town with an HCA.

The Delaware River project sought and received a variance for an 8MW solar project to be located in a residential zone in the town. Since then, they have been working with the Planning Board developing screening from the neighboring residences, protection of wetlands on the site, and locating a town trail across the property. They have reached out to the town to develop a Host Community Agreement with the town.

Both projects hope to begin construction this Fall.

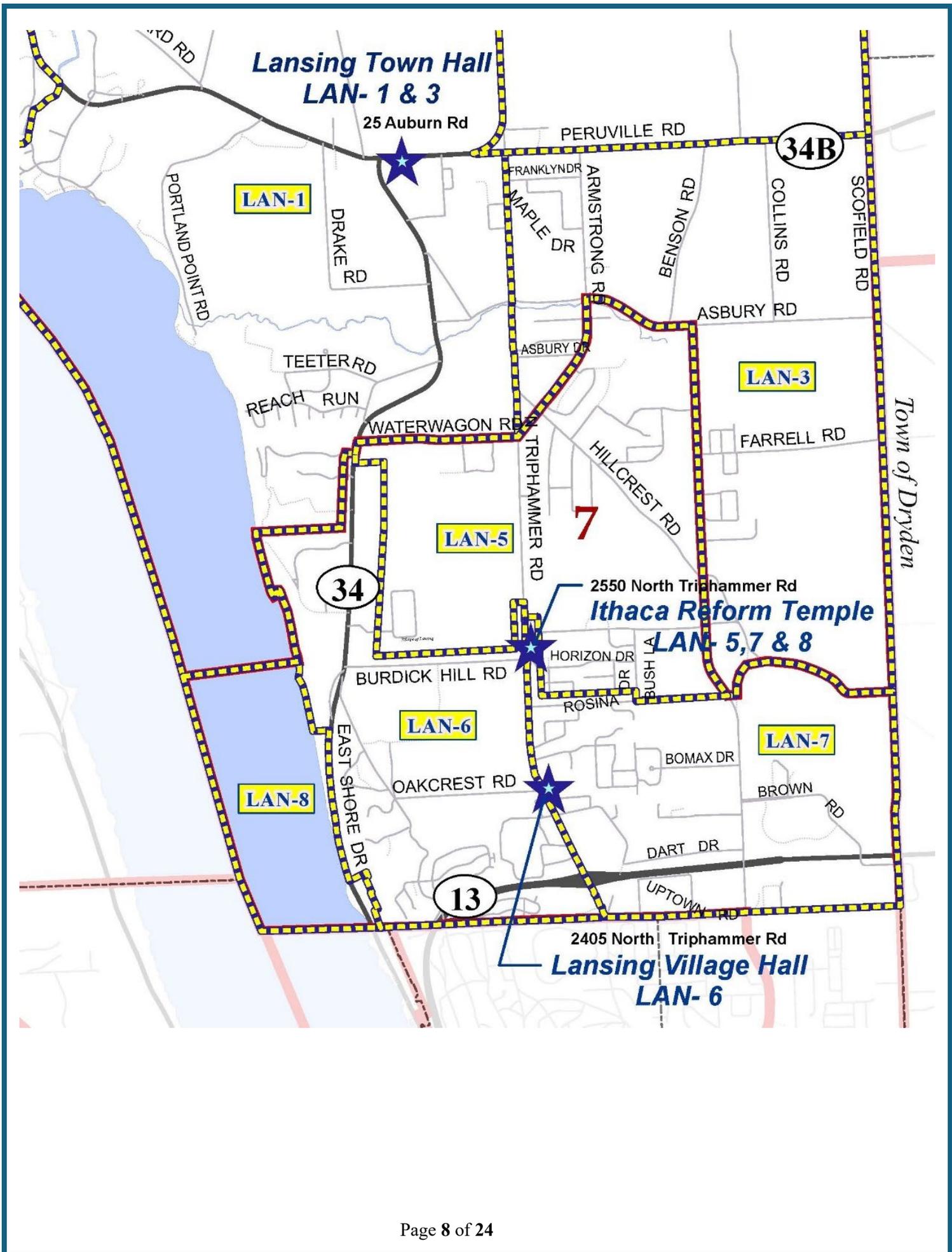
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## **NEW BEGINNINGS**

### **BOARD OF ELECTIONS CHANGES FOR LANSING**

1. The Tompkins County Board of Elections would like to remind you that **voters in Election District 6 that previously voted at the Lansing Village Hall will now vote at the Ithaca Reform Temple in all Primary and General Elections.** The other election district in the Village of Lansing (ED 7) already votes at the Ithaca Reform Temple for those elections. As more voters in the southern part of Lansing either vote early or take advantage of the new Early Vote by Mail option, there have been fewer and fewer voters voting in person on Election Day.
2. The boundaries for the County Legislative Districts 7 and 8 have changed. District 7 now is bound on the north by Waterwagon Road, following Triphammer Terrace to Asbury Road, and down Warren Road to the Village boundary. The dotted line highlighted in red indicates the new boundaries. District 8 is all of Lansing north of that dividing line.

*Continued on page 8*



## **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS (DPW) CREATED FOR LANSING**

On November 20, 2024, the Town Board approved Resolution 24-152, which adopted Local Law #4 of 2024 to add Town Code Chapter 80: Department of Public Works. This Local Law recognized that the “Town of Lansing has planned for and considered creating a Department of Public Works (“DPW”) since 2005 and, with the Highway Department already undertaking stormwater management and repair, sewer and water installations and repair, and general grounds and maintenance repairs, atop its duties and responsibilities as a Highway Department, such department was already functioning as a DPW.” With this new designation, Mike Moseley now has the title of Director of Public Works / Highway Superintendent.

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## **INTRODUCING PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF**

### **JOHN ZEPKO, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND CODES**



I hail from Ballston Spa, NY and am the 4<sup>th</sup> generation on the same road. Ballston Spa was a smallish rural town while I was growing up, and my family had deep roots. Our home was heavily forested, and I spent most of my time in the woods, camping, hunting, fishing, canoeing and generally enjoying the freedom and serenity a life outside can give you. I still enjoy all those things.

I was raised on stories of service. My grandparents and parents served their nation and communities in various ways, from military service, the fire service, helping to construct our local airport, and serving on the school board, to name a few. My grandmother and mother were both registered nurses. It was especially humbling to pass my paternal grandfather’s name (which I share) cast in bronze at our high school, marking him as a school board member when the building was constructed. Looking back now I think it was a daily reminder to me that a life lived in service to something bigger was something to be admired. My parents also fostered in me a great love of the natural world. They were very conscious of local happenings, and we spent a fair amount of time at Town Board and Planning Board meetings, which likely explains a lot about my choice of vocation.

I am a graduate of the State University Center at Albany, where I earned a BA in Geography & Planning in 2001. In 2005 I began my career in Planning with the Town of Malta, Saratoga County, and have been in both the private and public sector Planning/Environmental field ever since. I currently serve in the role of Director of Planning & Code Enforcement with the Town of Lansing, where I also wear the hat of Stormwater Coordinator and Floodplain Administrator.

Following my wife’s career to the Finger Lakes region, we took up residence in Cayuga County and raised our three children. Small town life is great for raising a family. Our children have all thrived and we couldn’t be prouder to see them taking on the greater world and its many challenges. I am a volunteer firefighter in my community and have been privileged to serve as the President of our fire company. I believe service gives us a chance to connect with something larger than ourselves. I continue to work in community planning because I believe that local government, as the lowest unit of government, is where people are most affected and where we have the greatest ability to make an impact.

## **MASON MOLESSO, TOWN PLANNER**

Hello! My name is Mason and I'm the Town Planner. I help manage planning and development projects happening within the Town. I also advise the Planning and Zoning Boards, as well as provide residents with help regarding their planning, design and subdivision projects.



My path to becoming a Town Planner was, ironically enough, a bit unplanned. I grew up in Syracuse in the first ring Eastwood neighborhood and had a pretty “normal” life. My parents were both teachers in the local school district. I was in the Scouts with my dad, I enjoyed skateboarding and hanging out with my friends and even played the trumpet in my high school jazz band.

I was one of those kids that never really had much of a life plan. I just assumed I'd go to trade school following high school and get a job to earn some money. I ended up at Paul Smiths College, enrolled in their Arboriculture program where I learned how to climb trees and be a production arborist. I received an associate's degree from them and then moved to Plattsburgh, NY where I worked on a tree crew for several years. In 2015, I decided to move to Colorado as it had always been a dream of mine to live in a cabin in the mountains. I ended up outside of Nederland, which was an incredibly cool historic mining town nestled into the Indian Peaks Wilderness. I stayed there for several years working as an arborist at a private fly-fishing club. I then moved to Winter Park Colorado to take a job managing a ski company and being a ski bum. I did this for a few more years and then had a quarter life crisis, which prompted the decision to return to school.

I moved back home in 2018 and enrolled at SUNY ESF to complete a degree program in Landscape Architecture. Never in a million years did I think I'd end up back in school, especially during a pandemic. Especially back at home in Syracuse! I pursued this degree for five years while gaining practical experience working for a local landscape architect firm. I graduated from ESF in 2023 and shortly thereafter moved to the Lansing area when my girlfriend landed a job with the Cornell lab of Ornithology.

I accepted this position with the Town in January of 2024, have been here for just over a year now and have enjoyed almost every second of it. Lansing reminds me of Plattsburg, and living out west, in the fact that I enjoy everyone's friendliness, blue collar attitudes and small-town welcoming vibes. I am grateful to be able to share the skills and knowledge I've learned with its residents and members, and to also learn from them.

When I'm not at work I enjoy hiking, camping, fly fishing, and working on my truck. My girlfriend and I recently purchased our first home too, so I also spend a lot time enjoying repairs and remodeling as we make it our own!

# FINANCIAL SNAPSHOTS

## 2024 SALES TAX REVENUE

Each month, Lansing receives a sales tax allocation from Tompkins County, which is calculated according to the chart on the next page. As the county collects the taxes, they distribute them at the end of each month to the municipalities, with the proportions to each municipality based on Census populations. See the list below to understand that Lansing receives nearly 16% of the total municipal allocations.

Enfield	3,401	4.6%
Danby	3,457	4.7%
Caroline	3,300	4.5%
Ulysses	4,940	6.7%
Newfield	5,184	7.0%
Groton	5,746	7.8%
<b>Lansing</b>	<b>11,565</b>	<b>15.7%</b>
Dryden	13,905	18.8%
Ithaca	22,283	30.2%
<b>Total outside of city</b>	<b>73,781</b>	

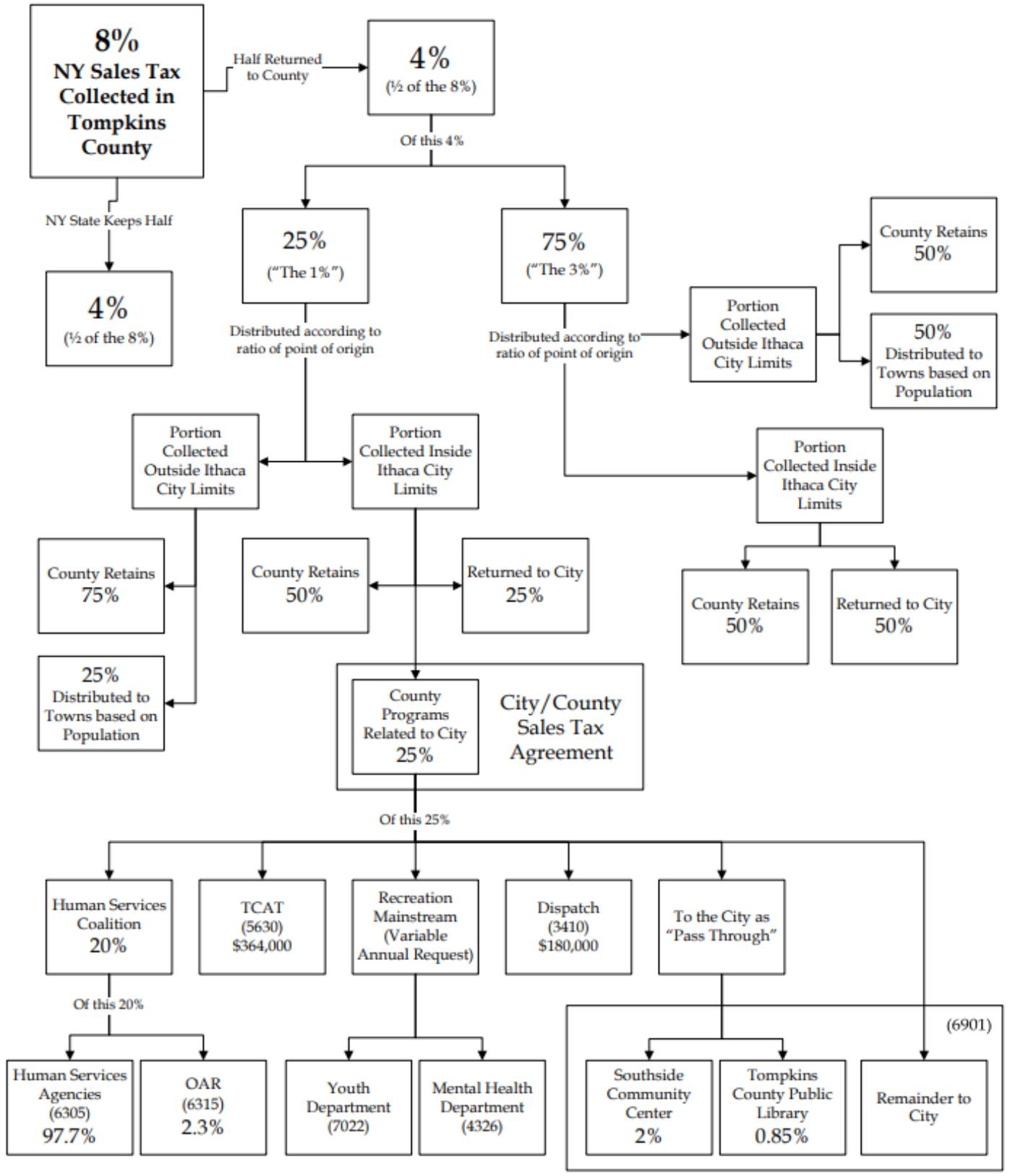
The amount budgeted by the Town of Lansing is calculated by looking at historic trends, and making an educated estimate determined by projections from the county and the state as to whether the purchasing trends will increase or decline. We were advised that sales were expected to decline for 2024, so we budgeted \$1,780,000 for sales tax revenue for 2024. This was an increase from the prior year's budgeted amount, but only by 3%. The budgeted amount is typically 5% more than the prior year.

The good news is that the Town received a total of \$1,983,441 for the year, which is \$203,441 more than was budgeted, but still down 1% from the 2023 amount collected. That overage remains in the Town's fund balances, which had been on the decline over the past few years, so this helps bring the balances back into alignment with the Town's Fund Balance Policy, which is important for maintaining a good credit rating, resulting in lower borrowing costs when we issue bonds.

The chart on the next page is taken from the Tompkins County 2023 Adopted Budget report, Section 2, page 13. It is a complicated flow chart but is helpful in understanding how the sales taxes are distributed in Tompkins County.

*Continued on page 12*

# How Sales Tax is Distributed in Tompkins County



# LANSING TOWN DEPARTMENTS

## **HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT: WEATHER STATIONS WITH CAMERAS**

You may have seen cameras on poles along some of the roads in Lansing and wondered why they are there. Some have posited that they were installed to discourage burglaries, while others remain baffled. But the true story behind them is that they are weather stations installed by the Lansing Highway Department. This new technology allows the Highway Department to monitor the condition of roads year-round, but especially during the winter months. The monitors feed to an app on their laptops or phones with still shots at frequent intervals throughout the day and night, registering not only photos of the road, but road temperatures, as well.

This technology is a time and money saver for the Town by eliminating the need for the responsible on-call staff (Highway Superintendent, Deputy Highway Superintendent, and Working Supervisor), to drive around the town in the middle of the night or during a snowstorm to check the conditions of the roads. To be able to determine if the plows need to be deployed at any given time, without spending hours driving around, is an incredible advantage.

The cameras have saved the Town the cost of wear and tear on the vehicle being used to investigate the conditions, as well as the gasoline for such a mission, and they have reduced the number of unnecessary call ins of the Highway crew. They have also allowed the person on call to strike a work-life balance by not having to drive around the roads every time there is snow in the air. That person can wake up around 1:00 am and check the road conditions from a laptop or smartphone and either go into work and call the rest of the crew in or go back to sleep for an hour and check the cameras and conditions again at 2:00 am.

The five cameras are placed around town at strategic locations that take into account the various segments of the town, as well as road elevations. Originally there were only four cameras, but Mike Moseley, the Highway Superintendent, determined that for safety reasons one more should be placed on a section of road near Ludlowville because at certain times of the year the weather on that road can cause unusual, troubling conditions.

So, now when you see one of those cameras on a pole, you will know its purpose and how it benefits the town.

## **HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT: CHANGE OF BRUSH AND MULCH LOCATION**

Please note that the brush drop-off and mulch pick-up location has changed. It is no longer on Town Barn Road but has been **relocated to 104 Auburn Road, near Scoops**.

This change is the result of the upcoming redesign of the Department of Public Works campus. The new building will be utilizing the space where the current salt barn is situated, and a new salt barn will be built on the site where the brush and mulch piles had been. This adjustment to the plan for the new campus was a cost-saving measure that reduced the necessary site grading, saving the town and the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The Town recognizes that the new location of the brush pile is not aesthetically pleasing, but the new site is temporary.

# Lansing Parks & Recreation

2025 SUMMER PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

## Music in the Park

July 10th-City Limits  
July 17th-Tailor Made  
July 24th-Ampersand  
July 31st-Bad Alibi  
August 7th-Destination

6:30 p.m. at the gazebo  
Come out for music, food and drinks.  
No charge for park admission.  
Donations appreciated.

 Myers Park, Lansing NY

## Park & Marina fees

### Park Admission (per car)

Resident: Free/Non-Resident: \$7

### Launching

Per launch:  
Resident: \$6/ Non-Resident: \$8

### Season Passes:

Resident: Free/ Non-Resident: \$40  
Non-resident senior citizen: \$25

Please visit our website to view the full fee schedule.

## Summer Recreation

### Myers Park:

Myers Park provides a swimming area, volleyball net, basketball court, horseshoe pits, and bocceball court. Kayak, paddleboard & canoe rentals are also available through Paddle-N-More. More information can be found on their website at [paddlenmore.com](http://paddlenmore.com)

### Swimming at Myers:

Beginning July 1st, the swim area will be open from 10am-8pm through the second week of August.  
(Swimming is not permitted without a lifeguard on duty)

### Youth & Adult Programs:

Youth programs include a variety of full & half day camps such as Myers Park Day Camp, art camp, swim lessons, archery lessons, basketball, baseball, soccer and football camps.

Adult programs include fly fishing, Strength training, cardio, and yoga classes.

For more information, or to register for a program or camp, visit [www.lansingrec.com](http://www.lansingrec.com) or call our office at 607-533-7388

REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM NOW:



## COURT: JUDGE MAURA KENNEDY-SMITH AND JUDGE PETER GROSSMAN

Contributed by Lansing Town Court Justice John Howell

Last Fall Lansing Town Justice Maura Kennedy-Smith won the election for and is now a Tompkins County Judge. In January the Lansing Town Board appointed local attorney Peter Grossman to fill her replacement for one year. Maura is a graduate of *Ithaca High School, Cornell University and New York University School of Law*, and as a local defense attorney years ago she primarily represented underserved clients who could not afford to pay an attorney, including criminal defendants and children in Family Court.

For the past 10 years, she was the Principal Court Attorney to Tompkins County Court Judge Joseph R. Cassidy. In addition, for the past 6 years as Lansing Town Justice, she handled lower-level criminal cases including DWIs, domestic violence and drug abuse cases, traffic violations, landlord-tenant matters, and small claims.

Tompkins County has three County Court Judges who each serve a ten-year term. These judges preside over felony criminal cases, Family Court, and Surrogate's Court. Tompkins judges also handle four specialty courts: Family Treatment Court, for parents at risk of or who have had their children removed due to substance use issues; Tompkins County Treatment Court, an alternatives-to-incarceration program; Sex Offender Court, which monitors convicted sex offenders as part of their sentence; and Integrated Domestic Violence Court, in which the same judge presides over both the Family Court case and pending criminal matters when domestic violence is involved.

Throughout her legal career, she has worked to strengthen communities by addressing critical issues like poverty, children's welfare, intimate partner violence, and substance use.

Congratulations Maura and thank you for your service to the Town.



Judge Maura Kennedy-Smith



Judge Howell

Melody Lombardo, Court Clerk

Judge Maura Kennedy-Smith

## COMMITTEES AND COMMUNITY

### LANSING EVENTS COMMITTEE: CAR SHOW AND BBQ

Contributed by Valerie McMillan  
President of the Lansing Events Committee

The Lansing Events Committee would like to thank everyone that came out for the **Holiday Tree Lighting** in December. In spite of the cold, we had a record turn out! Our sponsors are truly dedicated, and they made sure everyone had a great time, AND the tree was the best one yet, thanks to Pat and the team at Parks and Rec., John Hatfield of Wildlife Resolutions, and of course Moore Family Tree Farm. The addition this year of the Salt Point Brewery stage was truly wonderful! It can only get better from here.



Our next venture is the **Lansing 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Car Show, which will be held at Myers Park on Sunday, June 1<sup>st</sup>.** We will be giving Cheerleading Coach, Lisa Munro, a hand as she turns the reigns over to us for next year. The car show is the biggest one in Lansing, and has over 120 cars, trucks, motorcycles, and even semis of all years and classes, and this year will be no exception. Vendors, both food and merchandise, will be there in addition to the usual 50/50 raffle and basket raffles. This year's DJ will be KDawg who also does our carnival entertainment, just for that it's worth the trip to Myers. Judges will be choosing their favorites in over 12 classes such as Best in Show, Unique, and Oldie but Goodie! Please email us at [lansingevents2018@gmail.com](mailto:lansingevents2018@gmail.com) or watch our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/LansingEventsCommitteeInc> for additional information. Entry fee remains \$10 payable at the park gate.

We also have a **Chicken BBQ on June 7<sup>th</sup> at the Baker Pavilion** near the Town Hall. Hatfield Catering will be on hand with their delicious meal, which is our fundraising for the Carnival this year. Please save both dates, June 1, and June 7 for the LEC!!

### SCOOPS

It is understandable that residents are curious about the future of Scoops, especially now that they see the town's temporary brush pile on that property. The Town is currently working with the owner of Scoops to discuss future options for the ice cream shop.

We appreciate that Scoops has been so gracious toward the town's Department of Public Works while it has temporarily relocated the brush and mulch piles to that property, and we appreciate the understanding of the residents of Lansing while the Town experiences growing pains.

## CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AS A WATER SYSTEM OPERATOR

Contributed by Steve Riddle

General Manager, Southern Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Water (“SCLIWC”)

Each day, the Southern Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Water Commission (also known as Bolton Point Water System) supplies Town of Lansing customers with clean and safe water for their daily routines. This work is performed by twenty-three dedicated staff that work in one of our three departments – Administrative/Finance, Distribution, and Production. From water production to main break repairs, billing services to customer concerns, as well as ensuring that all regulatory standards are met, and providing public outreach regarding the water system, the SCLIWC staff does it all.

One of the major challenges facing the water industry is the unprecedented shortage of certified water system operators across New York State and the nation. Most certification levels require at least one year of on-the-job training and a training course to become a certified water system operator. From April 2020 to April 2024, approximately 2,500 (57%) of the certified water system operators did not renew their certification and left the water industry. During the same time, only 450 new system operators were certified in New York State. Over the next 5-10 years, an additional 2,300 water system operators are eligible for retirement. Water system operators provide reliable water services that are critical to public health, economic stability, and environmental protection, making it essential to attract and retain skilled workers in this field.

If you, or anyone you know, are interested in a career as a water system operator, please contact SCLIWC by email at [scliwc@boltonpoint.org](mailto:scliwc@boltonpoint.org) or visit the New York Section of the American Water Works Associations website at [nysawwa.org](http://nysawwa.org) for more information.

## ENERGY RESOURCES FROM CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Contributed by Siobhan Hull

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Tompkins County offers a variety of resources to help residents navigate the process of making energy upgrades to their home. Their Community Energy Advisors are available to answer your questions and help identify which incentives you may qualify for. You can visit [smartenergychoices.org](http://smartenergychoices.org) to learn more, or contact Harrison Hensley at 607-366-0833 x1 or [hrh73@cornell.edu](mailto:hrh73@cornell.edu).

One program designed specifically for Lansing residents is the **Lansing Non-Pipes Alternatives (NPA) program**. Operated by NYSEG, the NPA program was developed to help resolve gas reliability issues and support the energy needs of Lansing residents and businesses. It includes a **residential heat pump initiative**, which offers substantial incentives for residents to switch from natural gas heating to electric heat pumps. The exact incentive amount is unique to each home, but you can visit [earthsensitive.com](http://earthsensitive.com) to receive an estimate and register for a free site visit with a technician.

It is important to note that NPA incentives are currently **set to end in June 2025**, and the time to take advantage of this unique local program may be limited. To learn more about the Lansing NPA program, you can visit [cctompkins.org/npa](http://cctompkins.org/npa) or contact Siobhan Hull via email ([smh372@cornell.edu](mailto:smh372@cornell.edu)) or phone (607-272-2292 x192)

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ATTENTION LANSING  
RESIDENTS!

**ADDITIONAL INCENTIVES  
AVAILABLE TO INSTALL  
HEAT PUMPS**

## Lansing NPA Program

NYSEG's Non-Pipes Alternatives (NPA) program was developed to help resolve gas reliability issues in Lansing. It is a portfolio of five ongoing projects all supporting Lansing residents and businesses in reducing gas use and electrifying buildings. As part of the voluntary program, Lansing residents qualify for additional NPA incentives - on top of the statewide incentives - to convert their heating system to heat pumps.

For more detailed information about the Lansing NPA program, visit [cctompkins.org/npa](http://cctompkins.org/npa)

## What are Heat Pumps?

Air and ground source heat pumps are an efficient heating and cooling system for your home or business. They are a combustion-free technology that use electricity and refrigerants to move heat between the indoors and outdoors.

Learn more at [cctompkins.org/heat-pumps](http://cctompkins.org/heat-pumps)

## What's Happening?



### Lansing Central School District

Reducing gas use through the installation of newer, more efficient gas-fired equipment.



### Cornell Child Care Center

Replacing the natural gas heating system with ground-source (geothermal) heat pumps.



### Cornell Cooperative Extension

Conducting education and outreach for the Lansing NPA program.

## Get Involved!

Homeowners can estimate their incentive and register for the NPA program by visiting [earthsensitive.com](http://earthsensitive.com).

## INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Contact Siobhan Hull at [smh372@cornell.edu](mailto:smh372@cornell.edu) or 607-272-2292 x192  
OR scan the QR code to access additional information!



# YOUR GUIDE TO Energy Savings

## Cold & drafty home?

- FREE home energy assessments
- Low- and no-cost programs to insulate and seal air leaks in the home for income-eligible households (see below)

## Need help with heating?

- Income-eligible households may qualify for free heating system repair and replacement.
- Significant incentives are available for heat pumps, which often cost less to operate than fuel oil, propane or electric resistance heat.

## Savings with solar

- Signing up for community solar can reduce your monthly electric bill by 5 to 20%.

## For renters too!



**Contact a Community Energy Advisor in your area to learn more!**

Energy advising is FREE and can help you understand these options.

smartenergychoices@cornell.edu  
607-366-0833  
smartenergychoices.org

## 2025 Income Qualifications for State Grants

(Tompkins County)

\*Income levels for Empower+ low income are same as income levels for Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).

# of household members	Empower+ low income*	Empower+ moderate income
1	\$39,864	\$61,750
2	\$52,140	\$70,550
3	\$64,404	\$85,872
4	\$76,680	\$102,240
5	\$88,944	\$118,592
6	\$101,208	\$134,944
7	\$103,512	\$138,016
8	\$105,816	\$141,088

## SERVICE TRIBUTES

### LARRY SHARPSTEEN

At the December 18, 2024, Town Board meeting, the Board passed Resolution 24-165, honoring Larry Sharpsteen for forty years of service, citing his leadership, exceptional contributions, and loyalty to the Planning Board. The Town Board expressed appreciation and gratitude for the commitment, dedication and service that Larry Sharpsteen made to our community, and thanked him and his family for the countless hours he spent attending to Planning Board matters and serving the Lansing Community.

Larry's term began on July 18, 1984. He served as Chairperson of the Planning Board from 1993 until 1997 and in other years he served as the Secretary. Larry was the Planning Board representative for the Town's 2015 Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, as well as a 2018 Comprehensive Planning Committee Member. He was part of the Nominating Committee and Lansing Sewer Committee, and he represented Lansing as our Tompkins County Environmental Management Council representative. Larry has been a vital part of Lansing for decades, and we all wish him the best in this new chapter of his life.

The Board presented him with a signed copy of the Resolution, and his name is to be engraved on the plaque titled "The Viola Miller Citizen Volunteer Award," which is located in the Lansing Town Hall.



### FANNIE WELCH

Fannie Welch was born and raised in Lansing and still resides in the same home she was born in, so her involvement with the Lansing Historical Association ("LHA") was a natural fit. For decades, Fannie contributed significantly to the LHA by sharing stories of Lansing's past, and through extensive volunteer work. Fannie has served as the interim Town Historian since 2022, replacing Louise Bement. Unfortunately, Fannie tendered her resignation in January 2025, effective April 1, 2025. The Town wishes to thank Fannie for her service to the LHA and to the Town for her years of service. It is hoped that she will continue her involvement in the LHA for many years to come.

# MEMORIAL TRIBUTES

## GEORGE “GUS” ISAAC

Gus Isaac, a true hero and beloved member of the community, passed away on February 10, 2025. He left behind a legacy that will not be soon forgotten. For a comprehensive account of his life and accomplishments, both personal and for his country, please go to his obituary at:

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/607newsnow/name/george-gus-isaac-obituary?id=57523499>

One of Gus’ granddaughters, Meggie Conley, is a valued employee of the Town of Lansing Parks and Recreation Department, so to provide a more personal tribute to Gus, she and her two sisters had this to say about their grandfather:

“Most of what Lansing remembers about Gus is encompassed in his decorated life events surrounding his acts of courage and heroism during WWII, but not everyone is familiar with the quieter side of his life. Beyond the battlefield, his heart belonged to his family, friends and the everyday moments that often go unnoticed. My sisters and I had the privilege of living with our “Jido” – the Arabic name for grandfather – at different points in our lives. Living in his home with him and experiencing first-hand how he viewed the world, shaped our lives and has had a profound impact on the people we have become.

“For the three of us, he has always been our anchor; the one thing in Myers that never changed. His presence was steadfast. In times of turmoil and uncertainty we found sanctuary in his presence. Just being in his space was calming. He was our safety and security, always there, never saying too much about the circumstances that life had thrown our way, but always making sure we were taken care of, safe and comfortable. He would call us when we were not home on time, a loud “where are ya?!” from the other end taught us quickly that checking in was crucial to living with Jido. He would set our coffee to brew first thing in the morning so it would be ready when we came downstairs to start the day, and he would always make sure our little ones were warm enough in their beds upstairs, even when everyone knew the upstairs of Jido’s house was never less than eighty degrees year-round.

“Our grandfather’s capacity for love and selflessness didn’t end with the war, and unlike his achievements on the battlefield of Anzio that were commemorated with ceremony and medals of honor, his compassion and love for his family and friends was often shown in quiet, unspoken actions that revealed just how much we all meant to him.

“Gus’ funeral will be held on Friday, May 23rd at 1p.m. at the Lansing United Methodist Church, followed by a celebration of life at the Lansing Rod and Gun Club where Gus was a lifelong member.”

He was such an asset to the community that over the years, many commemorative tributes have been paid to Gus, including Tompkins County naming August 10, 2023, George “Gus” Isaac Day, and the Town of Lansing naming a fishing cove for him. To hear a brief radio interview with Gus from that day in August 2023, go to the link below.

<https://1037qcountry.com/wake-up-q/good-stuff-george-gus-isaac-day-in-tompkins-county/>



*Continued on page 22*



The cove that bears his name



In 2019, the Lansing Town Board presented him with the Resolution designating the "Isaac Cove" at Salt Point



## Memorial Tributes - Continued

### **TONI ADAMS**

Lansing lost another remarkable community member on February 17, Toni Adams. After a 38-year-career at Cargill Salt Mine, Toni retired in 2017 and began volunteering at the Lansing Food Pantry. She quickly stepped up and took over operations of the pantry, becoming the Director, and was responsible for leading the pantry into an era of organizational growth. She was dedicated to her family and to the town and always put their needs before her own.

### **DON HARTILL**

Don Hartill, former Mayor of the Village of Lansing, passed away on April 16. Don was an accomplished and highly regarded Physicist, spending his entire career at Cornell, but not without enjoying some very prestigious visiting appointments around the world. He was an Alfred P. Sloan Fellow and Fellow of the American Physical Society and American Association for the Advancement of Science. Don's devotion to his community, the Village of Lansing, was demonstrated by his involvement in local government, serving as a Village Trustee from 1989-1993, Deputy Mayor from 1993-1996, and then became the Village's fifth and longest serving mayor by holding that position from 1996-2021. Don was also a Commissioner at Bolton Point Water System, participating up until a week before his death.

### **HAZEL MAY AVERY**

Hazel Avery, a long-time employee of the Town of Lansing Highway Department, passed away on March 14. Hazel graduated from Lansing High School in 1956, where she participated in sports, cheerleading, and playing trumpet in the band. Over the years, Hazel was a member of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Almeda Fire and Ambulance Service in Ludlowville and was an active volunteer for local events. She was a valued employee of the Town of Lansing as the Secretary to the Highway Superintendent for twenty-three years, from 1971 until her retirement in 1994.

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## **PUBLIC MEETINGS**

**Town Board** – Town Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, 6:30 PM – **May 21 – June 18 – July 16**

**Planning Board** – Town Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> Monday, 6:30 PM – **May 19 – June 23 – July 28**

**Zoning Board of Appeals** – Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, 6:30 PM – **May 14 – June 11 – July 9**

**Conservation Advisory Council** – Town Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday, 6:30 PM – **May 7 – June 4 – July 2**

## HOW DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE ISSUES OF THE LANSING NEWSLETTER?

**If by USPS mail** – please fill out the form below and send it to:

- Attn: Town Supervisor, P.O. Box 186, Lansing, NY 14882
- Or, send your address via email to [rgroff@lansingtown.com](mailto:rgroff@lansingtown.com), with subject line “Newsletter”

**If by Email** – provide your email at <https://www.lansingtown.com/stay-connected> and check the box for “Newsletter Updates”

Otherwise, if you choose neither, you will find the **Lansing Newsletter on the town’s website**, and hard copies at **Town Hall and other local establishments**. Other options will be available for future publications. Tell your friends!

*Fill out this form to receive copies of the newsletter via USPS mail:*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address City State Zip Code

Mail this to P.O. Box 186, Lansing, NY 14882, or email your information to [rgroff@lansingtown.com](mailto:rgroff@lansingtown.com)