

**TOWN OF COVERT, SENECA COUNTY
REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING**

August 10, 2026

The regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Covert was held Monday, August 10th, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town of Covert Municipal Building, 8469 South Main Street, Interlaken, New York.

Roll Call:	Supervisor Michael Reynolds	Present
	Councilwoman Deborah Nottke	Present
	Councilman Todd Wyckoff	Present
	Councilwoman Barbara Soyka	Present
	Councilman Ben Guthrie	Present

Others Present: Town Clerk Leslie Adams-Compton, Town Attorney Patrick Morrell, Town Historian Chelsea Hastings, Deputy Town Clerk Brian Quan and other interested citizens.

Call to order: Supervisor Reynolds called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. All rose for the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Minutes: Nottke moved, seconded by Guthrie, to approve the minutes from July 13th Regular Town Board Meeting. Aye-Soyka, Aye-Guthrie, Aye - Wyckoff and Aye - Nottke.

Presenter: Town Historian Chelsea Hastings had provided a letter to the Town Board and update filed with the NYS OPRHP after a vehicle struck and damaged the historic Covert Town Hall on July 16, 2026. She said the Town Hall was significantly damaged and wished to advocate for its repair and preservation. The old Town Hall was opened for the first meeting on March 12, 1850 and closed in 2003 due to accessibility challenges. Hastings provided information and a way to move forward using a Syracuse-based architecture/planning firm specializing in historic structures. She was open to questions and assistance in any way needed.

Nottke said she reached out to Lisa Petruzzelli, our rep from the National Registry for Historic Places. Lisa is reaching out to an agency for compliance review. Nottke said the building can be moved, but the acreage must be the same as where it was deemed "historical". Nottke is waiting to hear back from Lisa, as well as Sarah Everton, historian/preservationist, for a possible grant.

Guthrie will be meeting with engineer Jason McCormick tomorrow to determine needs and structural integrity. Guthrie had shown the building to Peter Cook for a quote on emergency repairs as two outer wall damage exposed the interior. Cook estimated the emergency repair costs at three to four thousand for replacing 2 x 6's for outer side walls and 2 x 4's for interior wall and plywood/painting outside in order to seal for winter and buy time in order to get grants and proper historic preservation, or a possible move, adding parking and utilities. The current <2 acre parcel also accommodates Highway Department rock piles.

Guthrie said a Syracuse agency says cost will be \$4K-7K for research work and drawings to get ready for historical preservation/restoration grants.

Reynolds said the insurance has \$25,000 liability. Permanent repairs could be \$50,000-100,000.

Marty Schlabach said he and his wife support the efforts for restoration and preservation of the old Town Hall. They hope it can move forward.

Highway: MacCheyne reported on the activities for the month of July. They did extensive ditching on Burdick and Dunn Roads, ditching on Booth Rd, and installed a new crossover pipe in a very wet area, replaced crossover pipe on Savercool Rd per FEMA specs, cleaned up shoulders on S Frontenac Rd after heavy rains and replaced crossover pipe on west end of E Covert Rd. They hauled free stone from Lodi solar fields that have to be replaced every few years and spread on seasonal section of W Covert Rd, they hauled crusher run for shoulders, helped Seneca County with paving on CR 130, and paved with

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the Town of Romulus, they mowed roadsides and did cold patching on all town roads. The F-550 was taken to Tenco for repairs and the 2019 10-wheeler was serviced and regular maintenance was done on all equipment.

MacCheyne spoke in regard to Booth Road repairs. He said that they tried to get the State in to fix water pooling between State Rt 89 and Booth Rd. The Town Highway Dept dug up the Town section and put in a pipe. He said there are 2 or 3 problem areas. They haven't done much because they're not sure of the FEMA reimbursement. There are still a few projects left since the 2018 flooding.

MacCheyne said that they are working on a second pipe on Savercool. He also said that they are trying to move water in a different direction on S Frontenac due to driveway changes.

He said that they, the Village and Brewer's Septic have the drain for the Town Hall opened up now. If that doesn't solve the basement water issue, they have a back-up plan.

Guthrie said that with the foundation drain's working, they may need to seal the paint. MacCheyne said that the driveway at the south end is higher than the ground and there is a three-foot hole where a window is boarded up. There are two downspouts draining into the ground. Guthrie suggests calking between the floor and the side wall.

Town Clerk: Adams-Compton said that 10 Town minutes books, to 1998, had been scanned. Town Clerk will be taking vacation 8/11 – 8/14 with Deputy Quan covering most open hours.

Committees: Nottke introduced Planning Board member and Three Falls LDC member rep Katherine Sender to give an update on the LDC. She said planning is moving ahead with the conceptual plan by Fisher Assoc. Once approved by NY Parks, they can move forward on fundraising. She said that a "donate now" button is to be added to the Three Falls website <https://threefalls.org/>. Sender said that when the LDC was established, dues were set up for equal shares from each of the three municipalities. Covert has not paid its share and thus, Covert still has no voting rights. Sender asked the Town Board to find money in the 2027 Budget for Three Falls LDC membership.

Guthrie said they should look again at the County resolution for the DEC to reject water withdrawal permit for TeraWulf. Since then, the governor has placed a moratorium on data centers, but the County resolution is just expressing their concerns.

Reynolds said that Al Fiorille said that the DEC has 80 questions to answer and no decision will be made for more than a year. Fiorille is on the Town of Dryden Planning Board.

Guthrie said TeraWulf said they'll use town water, but there is no Town water. The concern is their lack of transparency.

The point of the resolution is to express our concern because we share the lake. He said that when Cornell began use of the lake source cooling, the engineer said that if you start adding other loads on the lake, that will be a problem. The CU system was made to improve the water quality, down at Stewart Park. The increased algal bloom is due to the water warming up. He would like to propose that we follow the language of the County to express our concerns and hold them transparent.

Reynolds brought up the Dryden resolution as a model. It was decided to table the resolution.

Lois Kemp, Rocky Dock resident, spoke of her concerns of the impact the data center would have on our Town residents, lowering tax revenue as property value decreases due to water and noise

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pollution, having environmental and economic effects. She said the 1-year moratorium is not enough and loopholes would be found. (Letter on file with Town Clerk)

Richard Glabach said that lake front property taxes are paying half of the tax load. He said a 20% drop in lakefront values would result in an additional \$750/yr tax for avg. \$250k inland home. He said that historically owners of lakefront are looking for a nice quiet area because it's nature and you want to be on the lake, and if you change that through environmental pollution or pollution that's already starting with the power plant, it's going to affect everyone. He said to ask the assessor how this might affect us.

Brenda Schiff spoke about the responsibility that the Board has, in making a decision, knowing the ramifications to the whole town, and being forewarned if they didn't do anything.

Town Supervisor: Reynolds said they interviewed candidates for the new Town Assessor. They decided that Anne Marie Evans was the best candidate. She had met with Al and Seneca County. There was concern about the new State computer program implemented in Covert among others; they are still working through the bugs. Fiorille would like to phase out of the interim position when the new assessor comes on board.

Attorney: Morrell said no public bid is needed for emergency repairs of the old Town Hall, just what is dictated by the Procurement Policy.

Every town needs to have a local law for floodplain enforcement. The town has designated Seneca County Code as the manager and will need a public hearing for the local law.

Petitioners: Kemp expressed extreme concern about waiting another month for a data center resolution and thinks we need to act faster. She asked if a resolution could be collaborated electronically with the Board.

Reynolds said that Fiorille, on the Lansing Planning Board says it will be a minimum of a year before it will go through the Planning Board.

Guthrie suggested she look at the resolution language and modify it how she would like it worded.

Soyka suggested the Cayuga Lake Watershed group for a resource for information and action.

Resolutions:

Nottke moved, seconded by Guthrie, to schedule a Public Hearing for Floodplain Local Law on Sept 14, 2026 at 7 PM. Aye – Nottke, Aye – Soyka, Aye – Wyckoff and Aye – Guthrie.

Nottke moved, seconded by Wyckoff, to hire Engineer Jason McCormick to assess the integrity of the old Town Hall condition, at no more than \$500.00. Aye – Nottke, Aye – Soyka, Aye – Wyckoff and Aye – Guthrie. Aye – Nottke, Aye – Soyka, Aye – Wyckoff and Aye – Guthrie.

Guthrie moved, seconded by Nottke, to allow Town Supervisor to hire as needed for emergency restoration/repairs for the old Town Hall, up to \$5,000. Aye – Nottke, Aye – Soyka, Aye – Wyckoff and Aye – Guthrie.

Nottke moved, seconded by Wyckoff, to appoint Anne Marie Evans as Town Assessor, wages to be determined by amount remaining in the 2026 Budget line A1355. Aye – Nottke, Aye – Soyka, Aye – Wyckoff and Aye – Guthrie.

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Nottke moved, seconded by Guthrie, to re-advertise for Lawn mowing bids for the years 2027, 2028, 2029 in the Seneca Area Shopper; Aye – Nottke, Aye – Soyka, Aye – Wyckoff and Aye – Guthrie.

Nottke moved, seconded by Wyckoff, to approve the Town Supervisor's Income and Expense report for the month of July 2026. Aye-Soyka, Aye-Nottke, Aye - Wyckoff and Aye-Guthrie.

Nottke moved, seconded by Wyckoff, to approve the Highway Superintendent's report for the month of July 2026. Aye – Nottke, Aye – Soyka, Aye – Wyckoff and Aye – Guthrie.

Nottke moved, seconded by Soyka, to approve the Town Clerk report for the month of July 2026. Town Clerk received total of \$2879.00 and \$583.16 was remitted to the Supervisor for the month of July 2026. Aye – Nottke, Aye – Wyckoff, Aye – Soyka, and Aye – Guthrie.

Nottke moved, seconded by Guthrie, to approve the Dog Control Officer Report for July 2026. Aye – Nottke, Aye – Wyckoff, Aye – Soyka, and Aye – Guthrie.

Nottke moved, seconded by Guthrie, that Highway Fund Vouchers #106 - 113 in the amount of \$14,641.79 and General Fund Vouchers # 161-179 in the amount \$9,883.52 be approved for payment. Aye – Nottke, Aye – Wyckoff, Aye – Soyka, and Aye – Guthrie.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Adams-Compton, Town Clerk