

**State of New York
Albany County**

7PM Regular Town Board Meeting

Supervisor Giebelhaus called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll Call attendance was taken -Supervisor Giebelhaus, Councilmember Bunzey, Ducan, laCour, and Miller, and a quorum was established. Deputy Town Supervisor Doolin, Highway Superintendent Allen Stempel, Town Clerk De Oliveira and Deputy Town Clerk Herrera were also present.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

Supervisor Giebelhaus reported on a busy fourteen-day period during which he addressed several Town matters. He reviewed the Town's Health and Safety Plan and prepared the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for professional IT support services. He continued work on the Town's policy handbook and addressed several solid waste-related issues, including matters concerning the City of Albany's waste process, for which the Albany Common Council is acting as lead agency under SEQRA. He also evaluated the Town's encumbrance system, oversaw planning for replacement of the fuel tank at Town Hall, received updates from the Town Engineer, and reviewed professional services agreements.

Supervisor Giebelhaus further reported that he will be establishing a Solid Waste Committee to explore ideas and solutions related to the Town's annual solid waste expense exceeding \$200,000. Councilmembers Duncan and Bunzey, along with the Town Clerk and community members, will participate, with work expected to begin in the spring.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Highway Department- Highway Superintendent Allen Stempel discussed the Town's encumbrance system and noted that the current \$1,000 threshold is limiting. He requested that the Town Board consider increasing the amount. The Town Board and Highway Superintendent discussed transparency and the use of contracts for larger expenditures. No changes were made at this time, and the matter will be revisited at a future meeting. Superintendent Stempel also reported ongoing issues with the Town's aging truck fleet, with vehicles ranging from five to thirty years old, and noted that the Town is still awaiting delivery of a truck ordered in 2022.

Library- Library Director Kathy Stempel reported on upcoming programming, including teen programs for ages 13-17 featuring a movie-making series, an adult craft night with a gnome bottle topper project, and winter open mic nights held on the first Friday of each month. She also noted that the Libby app is now offering free and unlimited access to comics.

Planning Board- Planning Board Chairman Steve Khoury reported that there are no items on the Planning Board agenda for February; however, the Board will still meet to discuss battery storage and new solar regulations in accordance with New York State requirements. He reminded the Town Board that the current moratorium expires in May 2026.

Parks and Recreation Parks and Recreation Chair Mary Claire Ansbro reported that the pavilion is already booking events for the upcoming season and stated that she is looking forward to working with the new Town Board.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution No. 22 of 2026 AUTHORIZING THE TOWN SUPERVISOR TO ENGAGE NEEDHAM RISK MANAGEMENT RESOURCE GROUP, LLC FOR A TOWN-WIDE SAFETY AUDIT AND DEVELOPMENT OF A REQUIRED SAFETY PROGRAM

Supervisor Giebelhaus provided an overview of the proposed engagement with Needham Risk Management Resource Group, LLC to conduct a Town-wide safety audit and assist in identifying and mitigating risk.

Town Board discussion: None.

Public comment: Joel Willsey asked questions regarding highway safety.

A motion was made by Councilmember Bunzey, seconded by Councilmember LaCour, to adopt Resolution No. 22 of 2026.

Roll Call Vote:

- Supervisor Giebelhaus — Aye
- Councilmember Bunzey — Aye
- Councilmember Duncan — Aye
- Councilmember LaCour — Aye
- Councilmember Miller — Aye

The motion carried and Resolution No. 22 of 2026 was adopted.

Resolution No. 23 of 2026 A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF BERNE, NEW YORK ADOPTING RULES OF ORDER AND PROCEDURE FOR TOWN BOARD MEETINGS

The Town Board discussed the proposed Rules of Order and Procedure. Councilmember LaCour addressed public comment parameters and referenced correspondence from Mr. Guarino recommending two public comment periods, one for agenda items and one at the end of the meeting for other matters. Joel Willsey asked whether votes would occur

during executive session, and Supervisor Giebelhaus stated that no votes would be taken in executive session to promote transparency.

A motion was made by Councilmember Bunzey, seconded by Councilmember Duncan, to adopt Resolution No. 23 of 2026.

Roll Call Vote:

- Supervisor Giebelhaus — Aye
- Councilmember Bunzey — Aye
- Councilmember Duncan — Aye
- Councilmember LaCour — Aye
- Councilmember Miller — Aye

The motion carried and Resolution No. 23 of 2026 was adopted.

Resolution No. 24 of 2026 AUTHORIZING ENCUMBRANCES NOS. 68 THROUGH 86 FOR 2026 TOTALING \$71,376.63

Following brief discussion and the correction of a vendor name and budget code, a motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember LaCour, to adopt Resolution No. 24 of 2026 as amended per corrections discussed including a typo and vendor name change.

Roll Call Vote:

- Supervisor Giebelhaus — Aye
- Councilmember Bunzey — Aye
- Councilmember Duncan — Aye
- Councilmember LaCour — Aye
- Councilmember Miller — Aye

The motion carried and Resolution No. 24 of 2026 was adopted.

Resolution No. 25 of 2026 AUTHORIZING ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

Town Board discussion included Councilmember Bunzey requesting that the Sole Appointed Assessor attend an ethics course.

Public comment: Michael Vincent spoke in support of employee training for safety and professional development. Lynn Warner Kerr asked whether the resolution would apply to the Library Director, and it was stated that such expenses would be paid from the Library budget.

A motion was made by Councilmember Bunzey, seconded by Councilmember LaCour, to adopt Resolution No. 25 of 2026.

Roll Call Vote:

- Supervisor Giebelhaus — Aye
- Councilmember Bunzey — Aye
- Councilmember Duncan — Aye
- Councilmember LaCour — Aye
- Councilmember Miller — Aye

The motion carried and Resolution No. 25 of 2026 was adopted.

Resolution No. 26 of 2026 REQUESTING THE NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER TO EXAMINE THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET AND TAX LEVY PROCESS AND PROVIDE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Supervisor Giebelhaus discussed a recent conversation with Albany County Tax and Finance and referenced a recent newspaper article regarding the 2026 tax increase. He reviewed the Town Law budget calendar and stated his concern regarding the budget and tax levy process. He requested Councilmember Miller contact the Office of the State Comptroller to examine the process and determine compliance and to provide findings at the next meeting.

A motion was made by Councilmember Bunzey, seconded by Councilmember Miller, to adopt Resolution No. 26 of 2026.

Roll Call Vote:

- Supervisor Giebelhaus — Aye
- Councilmember Bunzey — Aye
- Councilmember Duncan — Aye
- Councilmember LaCour — Aye
- Councilmember Miller — Aye

The motion carried and Resolution No. 26 of 2026 was adopted.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Councilmember Bunzey, seconded by Councilmember Duncan, at 8:22 PM to enter executive session pursuant to Open Meetings Law §105 to discuss disciplinary matters.

Following executive session, Supervisor Giebelhaus stated that no action was taken.

A motion was made by Supervisor Giebelhaus, seconded by Councilmember Bunzey, to set the next Regular Town Board Meeting for January 28, 2026 at 7:00 PM at Town Hall, 1360 Helderberg Trail, Berne, New York.

January 14, 2026

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Supervisor Giebelhaus, seconded by Councilmember LaCour, to adjourn the meeting. Vote: All members present voted aye. The meeting adjourned at 9:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

**Kristin De Oliveira
Berne Town Clerk**