

Town of Spafford Newsletter

Mary Bean, Supervisor

August, 2015



\$96,000 for Spafford



Over the past 12 months the Town of Spafford has secured approximately \$96,000 in grant money for several projects. A Community Development Grant was obtained to provide a wheelchair lift in Borodino Hall that will make the main floor accessible to all. Borodino Hall is the largest available, public, meeting room in Spafford and will be used more frequently in the future as the Town Hall Community Room shrinks due to more demands for space in the Town Hall.

Senator John DeFrancisco provided an opportunity for a grant in December. The Board negotiated for several months before deciding that renovations to the Town Hall and Garage were the best use of that money. We will be getting a new energy efficient heating and cooling system in the Town Hall. The four rusted out exterior doors will be replaced with new energy efficient fiberglass doors and frames. Installation of a water treatment system will provide both the Town Hall and Garage with potable water. Installation of an "on demand" hot water heater in the Town Hall will be a huge energy saver. The Garage will be made more energy efficient with new wrap/insulation and siding. Sometimes you have to spend money to save money and the long term plan is to save money every way we can.

In mid March a grant opportunity was announced by the Onondaga County legislature. Given only two weeks to submit a project for funding, I needed a "shovel ready" project. With no Highway Superintendent and no unfunded Highway Department projects on the drawing board, the Borodino Hall drainage project that had "shovel ready" plans and projections was the Town's best option. The Town of Spafford received the grant. It will further enhance Borodino Hall's use as a Community Center, available and accessible to all, year round. The plan is for that building to be available for classes, exhibits, performances, meetings and both public and private gatherings.

Grant opportunities are out there but computer literacy and grant writing skills are required to bring home the money. Having long term plans and "shovel ready" projects that can be plucked from the shelf when the opportunity presents are critical to obtaining grant money.

Community Service Opportunity

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is a five member panel that renders decisions on appeals of the Code Enforcement Officers decisions, grants variances to the zoning regulations and recommends to the Town Board changes in Zoning regulations as needed. Currently there is one vacancy on the ZBA and another is anticipated. The ZBA meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 7 PM as needed. The ZBA is also currently working with the Planning Board on recommendations for changes in existing zoning code. Members must attend 75% of ZBA meetings and complete 4 hours of training annually. Members are paid \$25 per meeting. If you would like to serve on the ZBA, please send a letter of interest to the Town Clerk.



HIGHWAY GARAGE DRAINAGE ALTERNATIVES

Highway Committee Report Submitted by Mark Delaney, Kathy Adams and Lee Springstead

Recently, our Town Highway Garage was cited for a floor drainage system that is out of compliance with **DEC** regulations. We were given 60 days to present the **DEC** with a plan of correction. Cherry Randall, newly appointed Highway Superintendent, asked the Highway Committee to research alternatives to bring us into compliance. The current drainage system empties directly into the creek behind the Town facilities on Route 174, a commonplace practice when the building was built, but the environmental impact of this kind of system is no longer acceptable. We were happy to help, and looked at the following for ideas and guidance:

- Closely examined the materials that the DEC provided, and posed follow up questions to the DEC agent.
- Several different potential suppliers of oil separator systems, including conversations with representatives from each of these companies.
- Nearby towns, including Niles, Sempronius, Scott, Montezuma, Marcellus and Cazenovia.

Unfortunately, the choices we have are very limited. We must plug the pipes of the current floor drains or risk fines from the DEC. We recommended doing this in a way that preserves our options to re-open the drains with an approved system, in the event the Town Board and the Highway Superintendent decide to install an approved system in the current Highway Garage.

In order to have a drain in a building, an oil separator system is necessary. An approved system would require drains connected to the oil separator. The water exiting the separator would have to be disposed of in an approved manner, and the oil separator would require regular maintenance.

We have looked at several types of oil separators, but we have found that most towns make this selection during new construction or renovation. Typically, an engineer designs such a system in concert with the overall building design, and that engineer would also specify the size and capability required to handle the quantity and type of our fluids given the characteristics of our soils and terrain. It is possible to retrofit our existing building, but we continue to recommend that the Town Board study the costs for both renovation of the current building and construction of a new building before deciding the best approach for our long term needs.

For those of you interested in the technical details, there are four main approaches that the **DEC** allows in our situation. Please go to the Town of Spafford web site for those technical details.



NEW HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT IN SPAFFORD

For those of you who don't know me, I'm Cherry Randall, Spafford Highway Superintendent. Due to Carl's retirement, I was appointed by the Town Board in May to fill this very important position through this year. Being the co-owner of FF& B Construction and retiring from NY State, as Business Officer, has given me 32+ years of valuable experience for this position (Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Budget/ Finance, Buildings& Grounds Maintenance, Cash Offices, Environmental Services, Human Resources, Inventory/ Property Control, Laundry/ Linen Services, Nutrition/ Food Services, Payroll, Postal Services, Purchasing, Shipping/ Receiving, Stores, Telecommunications, Transportation etc.).

During the short time as your Highway Superintendent I've worked with outside entities and received necessary approvals/ permits, and also obtained approvals from the Town Board, to move forward with long awaited projects. It is our plan to complete the following projects in the near future; therefore, please make plans to take alternate routes:

- **Moon Hill Road** to replace two culverts, retaining walls, and guide rails. This will cause intermittent closure of the road during the work period; and
- **Church Road** culvert (some call a bridge) to replace the wing walls. This will then allow the road to be re-opened.

Due to an anonymous complaint to DEC, we were required to close the drains in the garage. This has and will continue create unforeseen expenses, is a major safety concern for our highway team (winter melt off will create an ice rink), and will create problems with the equipment this winter (if we park the vehicles outside). Recommendations have been provided by the Highway Advisory Committee (HAC) and a decision by the Town Board will be necessary. Based on prior recommendations of the HAC, they recommend we build a new facility. However, to eliminate the safety and equipment issues, during the interim it is necessary we have the drains re-opened, while being compliant.

Thanks to Jody, Mike and Red for their hard work and to community members who support the dedicated work of this team!

The Tax Cap

You will recall that all NY State municipalities are under a state imposed tax cap of 2%. The tax cap isn't really 2% however. It is the lesser of 2% or the rate of inflation that this year is .73%. For Spafford that amounts to a maximum tax increase of 1.0073%, hardly enough to buy a wheel for our badly needed new truck. We have to find more ways to save money. The Board recently changed providers of propane we use for heating so we could get the state contract price, a significant saving. We continue to look for even the smallest way to save money and energy cost have been a recent target.



Spafford Fire District

2500 Nunnery Rd. Skaneateles, NY 13152

Rick Wise, District Chief

Borodino FD

Spafford FD

This being my first installment to the town's newsletter I would like to first introduce myself. My name is Rick Wise, and I am the District Fire Chief for the Town of Spafford Fire District. I have been a member of Spafford Fire Department for 41 years. The Spafford Fire District has two fire department within its boundaries. Spafford FD and Borodino FD which I am in charge of both. Each department has a Chief and Asst. Chief of that station, and they report to me. I report to the Board of Fire Commissioners. Both departments answer calls for fire, rescue, and medical emergencies within the town and they also respond to calls for mutual aid for departments outside of the town. The two departments respond together on about 90% of all the calls. We have about 175 activations a year. A majority of them are combined calls for both departments. We are dispatched by the Onondaga County 911 Center.

In these articles for the newsletter I am going to highlight calls that the fire departments respond to, upcoming fund raising events, and any public service events that are going to be sponsored by the departments. Both departments have web sites that you can go to see what is going on, and get information. Spafford Fire Departments site is spaffordfiredept.com and Borodino Fire Departments site is borodinofiredepartment.org.

The departments have an ongoing recruitment drive for active members. So far this year Spafford has had one new member join, and one return. Borodino has had three new members join. If you have an interest we can use you. Go to the web sites for info on joining or call any member.

Training is one of the most important aspects of the volunteer fire service. Each month both departments engage in different aspects of training in both firefighting and rescue. A large portion of this training is done at the Spafford Fire District Training facility on Becker Rd. In June members from both departments participated in an Emergency Vehicle Operations Class. This class is a combined lecture and practical training class on driving emergency vehicles. In August there will be a Basic Firefighting course at Spafford FD. Our rescue crews have EMT's in both stations and they are constantly going through techniques and skills to provide you with better and more efficient service.

In the next newsletter I will highlight our calls to that date and any other issues that I need to convey to our residents. If you have any questions at all please feel free to email me at rwise0038@yahoo.com, and I will get back to you immediately.

Happiness is a Borodino Pancake August 29th

WHAT DOES LOCAL GOVERNMENT DO? PLAN

By Mary Bean

“Local governments set the overall direction for their municipalities through long term planning.”*
Examples include establishing a vision and assuring that zoning code supports the vision and financial planning to ensure the long term credibility of the Town. Spafford has never had a written long term financial plan. We have stumbled from one broken down truck or road repair project to the next imminent need hoping we could squeeze enough money out of the budget to cover whatever need emerged. Spafford only recently established an equipment replacement reserve but otherwise has no savings or money in reserve. We also have no debt but will have to finance much of the cost of a new truck due to be delivered late this fall as the equipment reserve is only \$150,000 and a new truck is \$300,000. With the tax cap we can no longer just raise taxes to cover current needs. We need to project our needs over time, usually 10 years, and spread those projected costs over the length of the plan so we can budget accordingly. The Town is a business and needs to operate like a business in order to survive financially.

Most of our significant costs are for highway equipment and road maintenance. Recent problems with the Town Highway Garage however have elevated the need for replacement or renovation of that building. Two of our trucks are 9 years old and our loader, a critical piece of equipment, is reaching the end of its reliable life span. We still have miles of unpaved roads. The DEC is concerned that we are not covering our winter salt. How will we pay for new trucks, a loader, repairs or replacement of the garage, a salt shed and still maintain our roads? We need a long term plan. Kathy Adams did develop a spread sheet for The Highway Advisory Committee several months ago that projected our needs and ability to meet those needs without raising taxes over the next 5 years. That plan was dependent on the Highway Committees recommendations for saving money on Highway Department operations that have yet to be adopted. The Board did not adopt that projection as a plan. As we prepare the 2016 Town budget, we need to be able to project costs over the next ten years so we know how much debt we can handle. We will have to borrow as we will have little remaining in the equipment reserve fund and the 2016 tax cap will be 1%. That 1% won't even cover increased insurance and personnel costs.

“Not having a plan is a plan for failure”. A concerned citizen reminded me of that old bit of philosophy recently and no one wants the Town of Spafford to fail. Spafford is my home and I'm committed to assuring financial credibility, environmental regulatory compliance and eliminating threats to property values. The Board needs to have a plan before we can submit a budget in October. The Board has the option of asking the Highway Advisory Committee to refine their spread sheet and adopt that as a plan or develop a new plan of their own. I hope that happens so we have a plan to succeed vs a plan to fail.

*<http://www.goodgovernance.org.au/about-good-governance/role-of-local-government/>



Recreation Committee

Again this year, Lourdes Day Camp on 10 mile point, offered children ages 7-11 a week at camp for a minimum charge. 12 children attended and reported having a great time. It was a first camp experience for several of the children. I want to thank Ann Furze and Mike Preston for providing this opportunity for our children. I also want to thank the many citizens who offered to pay the fee for any child in need. The Recreation Committee continues to explore other recreational opportunities for Spafford children and families. Look for announcement of program opportunities over school vacation times in next newsletter.

The only lake shore public access for citizens in Spafford is Borodino Landing. On hot summer days families with children value that spot as a place to swim. Unfortunately, several contractors also value the landing for on and off loading lumber, equipment and supplies for projects they are engaged in on the lake. Last summer the competition for access to the shore caused clashes. I wrote letters to the contractors who most frequently use the landing asking them to respect our citizen's rights to first use of the landing. The contractors responded quite well. I am aware of only two conflicts this summer and apologies have been accepted.

Rick Estlinbaum, a contractor who occasionally uses the landing, has offered to remove many large rocks and the old cement pilings from the water off the landing as a "thank you" for use of the landing. This will give us a safer swimming area, improve boat launching capability, and improve appearance of our "beach".

A COMMUNITY CENTER FOR SPAFFORD

Shortly after August 22nd, you will see backhoes digging around Borodino Hall. The Spafford Area Historical Society, care takers of Borodino Hall, circa 1833, will be installing a drainage system to correct repeated flooding of the basement. Once the drainage work is done, they have a plan, donated by Sal Strods, Sr., for sidewalks and landscaping. The wheelchair lift should be ready for use in September. That will make the building fully handicapped accessible and eligible to host municipal meetings. The next project is repair/modification of the heating system to make it affordable to operate 365 days a year. The existing rotted wooden basement floor will be replaced with a cement floor and other repairs to the building are planned. All of this is possible with grants from Community Development, Onondaga County and the generosity of all who have contributed to the Capital Campaign. Our goal is to have a Community Center available for public and private events, classes, clubs, meetings, performances and exhibitions. A small kitchen is on our wish list.

Mark Your Calendar

September 3rd – Next Town Board Meeting

September 10th – Primary election

September 24th – First Town Budget Meeting