

Town Talk



Issue 95

TOWN OF BINGHAMTON TOWN HALL
279 Park Avenue, Binghamton, NY 13903

January 2020



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Elizabeth Rounds, Town Supervisor

Email: supervisor@townofbinghamton.com



Happy New Year, everyone! I can't believe how quickly this past year has flown by. I feel as if I've settled into my new role as your Town Supervisor quite nicely and am enjoying it immensely.

I'd like to begin by welcoming two **new faces to our Town Hall staff**. Joe Cook was appointed to serve as our new Assessor and replaces John McDonald who recently retired. Joe brings many years of experience with him including currently serving as Assessor for the Towns of Union and Conklin. I'd also like to welcome Lawrence Brinker as the newly elected Town Justice. Lawrence is a retired veteran, having served 25 years in the U.S. Air Force in many roles, including Lt. Colonel. I know that he looks forward to serving you in his new capacity as Town Justice. Please extend a warm welcome to both Joe and Lawrence.

I'd like to mention that there are still funds available to low income residents for home improvement projects. The **CDBG** (Community Development Block Grant) has already assisted several families in the Town of Binghamton, and money is still available. For more information, check out our website for details or call Thoma Development Consultants at (607) 753-1433.

Speaking of the **Town's website**, I would like to encourage all of you to check out the website on a regular basis. It's our main form of communication and is updated often to keep you informed. I'd like to also suggest that you sign up for e-mails through the website (scroll to the bottom of any page, and "Subscribe to News"). You'll receive copies of the latest minutes as they are posted, and you'll be notified of other "urgent" situations should they arise, such as water breaks, road closures, etc.

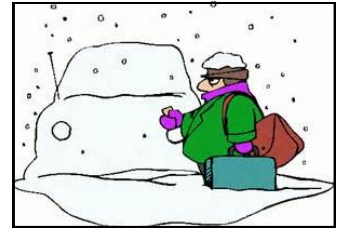
Finally, I wish you all a safe, happy, and healthy New Year. We'll chat again in the spring.

Elizabeth Rounds



Mike Donahue - Highway Dept. / Water & Sewer Dept.**Phone: (607) 669-4323****Hours: 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.****E-mail: highway@townofbinghamton.com**

Winter is here so I'd like to take this opportunity to share some tips for the winter season:



- Always carry a flashlight, blanket, snow scraper, jumper cables, and even some snacks in your vehicle in case you get caught in a storm.
- Always slow down and allow extra travel time! The news media will announce approaching storms and will keep you updated on closings, cancellations, and re-routings, so please pay attention. It is important to remember that snow accumulations and road conditions can vary in areas of higher elevation. You can be confident that we are always doing our absolute best to keep the roads clear for travel.
- Try not to go out during or immediately after a storm. The less traffic on the roads means we can clear the roads more quickly and completely. Our crews have designated routes, so you can be assured that someone will be around to clear your area. Please be patient!
- Please remember that we cannot pick up our plows when we come to your driveway. We receive many calls each year asking us to do so, and we will not. Please hire someone to remove the snow from your driveway if you are unable to, and if you are able to, shovel the snow to the right. This way, when our plow hits your snow pile, it will carry it further away from your driveway and not back into it.
- There are times when your mailbox may be knocked over by the plows. If by chance this does happen, please call Nadine at our office, and we'll fix it as soon as possible. As always, it's never our intention to hit your box, but in hazardous conditions, it can happen!

VERY IMPORTANT REMINDER!!!! Pushing snow into the road can create a hazardous condition. Please don't do it. Snow removal is an arduous and time-consuming task for everyone. Your understanding, cooperation, and patience contribute to our snow removal plan. We sincerely appreciate your help as we're out there doing our best to keep the roads clean. **STAY SAFE!**

The Town is NOT Responsible For Repairing Frozen Meters and Pipes



This is a friendly reminder that the Town is NOT responsible for fixing your frozen water meter or broken pipes. It is the **homeowner's responsibility** to maintain heat in and around the water meter and pipes to keep them from freezing. It's imperative that you make it a priority to keep your meter and pipes warm. A water break inside your home can cause considerable damage to your home and its contents, PLUS it will cost you \$450 to replace one of our water meters. Please call us at 669-4323 if you have any questions.

Water/Sewer Billing Schedule for 2020 (Bills will be mailed close to these dates.)

November 1st (1st billing in an annual cycle); due in early December

February 1st, 2020 (2nd billing); due in early March

May 1st, 2020 (3rd billing); due in early June

August 1st, 2020 (4th billing); due in early September





A FRIENDLY REMINDER FROM THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE
Joseph Cook & Amy Ricci - Phone: (607) 772-0357, ext. 13



We hope your new year is off to a positive start. We have information at present that we hope you will find helpful. We are currently in the exemption application period for the 2020 tax year. All exemption applications **MUST** be received each year between January 2nd and March 1st. If you plan to file for an exemption (Enhanced Star, Low-Income Senior, Veteran, Disability, etc.), now is the time. If you're renewing an existing exemption, you should have received a renewal application from us by now. Don't forget to get it back to us no later than March 1st with income verification.

Enhanced "STAR" for Seniors: If your household income ("adjusted gross income" minus "taxable amount" of total IRA Distributions) falls between \$31,501 and **\$88,050**, this is the school tax exemption for which you qualify.

Low Income Seniors: If your gross income for 2019 is **\$31,500 or below**, including Social Security, then you not only qualify for the Enhanced "STAR", but you are eligible for an additional exemption that may apply to the county, town, or school district, depending on your income level. This exemption is based upon a sliding scale.

Income Verification Program: If you're applying for the **Enhanced STAR exemption**, you **must** enroll in the Income Verification Program (IVP). You need only to enroll once, and you'll receive the exemption each year, as long as you're eligible. In the first year, your assessor will verify your eligibility based on the income information you provide. In the following years, NYS will verify your income eligibility. You will not need to reapply for the exemption or provide copies of your tax returns to your local assessor.

Already in the Income Verification Program? You don't need to take any action to continue receiving the Enhanced STAR exemption. The Tax Department will contact you if it needs additional information. If you are also receiving the low-income senior exemption, you will still need to annually reapply for that benefit with your assessor.

This information does not apply to new homeowners and first time STAR applicants. If you're a new homeowner or have never filed for the STAR exemption, you may now qualify for the **"STAR CREDIT"**. You may register online at www.tax.ny.gov/star or by phone (weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) with New York State by calling (518) 457-2036. Local Assessors are no longer allowed to accept new STAR exemptions.



TOWN HISTORIAN SEEKS ANTIQUE KITCHEN ITEMS TO DISPLAY IN CASE



Do you have any unusual antique kitchen items that you would be willing to share for a few months? The items will be placed in the glass case in the Board Room at the Town Hall. If you're interested, please contact Town Historian Vickie Conklin by sending an email to: historiantob@gmail.com Thanks, everyone!

LAWRENCE PETERS' VFW POST 1611 NEWS

David Snitchler, Post Commander - (607) 723-3214

John Zurenda, Quartermaster - (607) 669-4243



VFW IS URGENTLY ASKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH PANCAKE BREAKFASTS
It has been mentioned in previous articles that the VFW needs new members and/or volunteers to help with the pancake breakfasts. The current members are getting older and some are now dealing with health issues and finding it extremely difficult to do the work themselves. If you'd like to volunteer to help these veterans, please call Dave Snitchler or John Zurenda at the phone numbers listed above. Unfortunately, if volunteers don't step up to help, the March 2020 pancake breakfast will be the last one. Won't you please consider helping? The breakfasts are scheduled for the following Sundays:



Sun., January 26 / Sun., February 23 / Sun., March 22

These are held from 8 a.m. until 11 a.m. at the Town of Binghamton Community Center, located at 1905 Coleman Road. Tickets can be purchased at the door.

Cost: \$7 for adults / \$4 for children ages 5 to 12
Children under 5 eat for free.

Broome County Landfill's Winter & Spring Hazardous Waste Collection Dates

The Broome County Landfill continues to accept hazardous waste (including household and auto batteries, propane tanks, fluorescent bulbs, driveway sealers, paints, solvents, stains, cleaners, pesticides, and pool and photography chemicals) AND old electronics (such as computers, printers, stereos, TVs, copiers, fax machines, mobile phones, etc.) You can drop these off at the landfill on the following days **FREE OF CHARGE** from 7:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.:



Sat., Jan. 18 / Wed., Feb. 5 / Sat., Feb. 15
 Wed., March 4 / Sat., March 14 / Sat., March 28
 Wed., Apr. 1 / Sat., April 4 / Sat., April 18

*The Broome County Landfill
 is located at 286 Knapp Rd.
 (near the airport).
 Phone: (607) 763-4450*

TOWN OF BINGHAMTON NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH UPDATE

Several members of the Neighborhood Watch met on Thurs., Dec. 12, 2019, to review the 2019 program and to plan for 2020. We settled on several possibilities:

- A basic first aid course to prepare for emergencies
- How to be prepared for an EMT call
- Computer Safety

The next Neighborhood Watch Meeting will be held in March. Watch the town's website at www.townofbinghamton.com for program details as they come together.

There are many types of scams out there. Remember to be extremely wary of giving out personal information on the phone or over the internet. With 2020 being a census taking year, there could be an upsurge in scams related to the census. Be on guard. Report any suspicious activity to the Broome County Sheriff's Department at 778-1911 or to the New York State Police at 775-1241.

Thank you to those who supported the Neighborhood Watch programs in 2019. Hopefully, there will be even more involvement in 2020. **STAY ALERT! REPORT! COMMUNICATE!**

THE CENSUS IS COMING! THE CENSUS IS COMING! MARCH 2020

Why is the 2020 Census Important?



Everyone Counts. The Census counts every person living in the U.S. once every ten years



Political Representation. The Census results are used to determine how many representatives each state has in Congress and are used to inform the redrawing of congressional district boundaries



It's Your Civic Duty. It is in the Constitution that everyone must be counted



Federal Funding. Census data is used to distribute \$675 billion in federal funds annually to states, counties, and local communities



Confidentiality. Federal law protects your Census responses. Your answers can only be used to produce statistics and cannot be shared or used to identify you or your household.



Answering the Census is the law, and it is important to our community. Please complete it accurately.

How is Census Data Used?



To determine funding for public services in our community



To determine where to build new infrastructure and community facilities



To determine where to open new companies, businesses, and stores



To write grant applications for community projects



To plan for emergency services

How & When do I Respond to the Census?

In March 2020, every household will receive an invitation to complete the Census, you can complete the questionnaire:



Online



By phone



By mail

Postcard reminders and a hard-copy questionnaire will be mailed throughout March and April. A Census taker will follow-up with non-responsive households.

TOWN OF BINGHAMTON VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

Jerry Emmons, Fire Chief

Email: tob.fire.chief@gmail.com / Phone: (607) 761-1218

With winter now upon us, there are some very basic preventative measures you can take to keep your home safe this winter season. I thought it would be a good opportunity to share some of them here.

- If you have a fireplace, wood, or pellet-burning appliance, make sure you have your chimney cleaned by a professional. It's imperative to make sure the flue is open and unrestricted. Inside your home, make sure there is nothing within a three-foot radius of the heating device. This includes curtains, furniture, and even pets. If you're using a space heater, make sure it's a newer model and is in excellent condition.
- Make sure you have working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on every floor of your home.
- Never leave your kitchen unattended while cooking.
- People who smoke often have a tendency to smoke indoors when the weather gets cold. If you're a smoker, make sure your cigarette is extinguished, and never leave lighters or matches in places where children can get to them.
- Have a planned escape route from your house in case of an emergency and make sure everyone in your family knows the plan and practices it.



WE WISH YOU A SAFE & HAPPY NEW YEAR!

A MESSAGE FROM NICK PAPPAS, Code Enforcement Officer / Phone: (607) 772-0357, x 12

ANNUAL FIRE INSPECTIONS for all commercial and multiple family dwellings will begin this month. Here is a list of code requirements and associated fees:



- No obstruction of exits
- Exit sign illumination
- Evacuation and Fire Safety Plans
- Building address numbers displayed
- No extension cords used for permanent wiring
- No open or exposed electrical wiring
- Fire extinguishers maintained
- Fire alarms and Life Safety Systems maintained
- Sprinkler systems maintained

FIRE INSPECTION FEES for 2020:

Initial Fire Inspection - FREE

Initial Follow-up - FREE

Second Follow-up - \$25

All Other Visits - \$50

**WINTER PARKING ORDINANCE IS NOW IN EFFECT**

The Town of Binghamton has a Winter Parking Ordinance that states "No person shall park a vehicle on either side of any town or county highway within the Town of Binghamton between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. on each day from December 1 to the following April 1, inclusive.



No owner or operator of a motor vehicle shall park the same unattended on any town street or highway within the Town of Binghamton following any snowfall of two inches or more until said street or highway shall have been plowed by or at the direction of the Highway Department of the Town of Binghamton. Any two-inch snowfall shall, for the purposes of this section, constitute a snow emergency.

Failure by the operator of a motor vehicle to obey any of the signs erected pursuant to these provisions shall be construed as a violation and punishable upon conviction by a fine."

Please abide by this ordinance. It is very difficult for the large snowplows to navigate down narrow streets when cars are parked along the roadways.

SPECIAL NOTICE TO PARK TERRACE RESIDENTS:

THERE IS NO PARKING ANYTIME ON STREETS LOCATED IN BOTH UPPER AND LOWER PARK TERRACE AREAS. TICKETS WILL BE ISSUED TO VIOLATORS.

A MESSAGE FROM RICK MURRAY, DOG CONTROL OFFICER

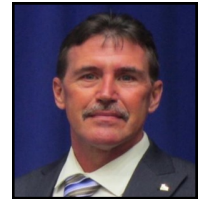
(607) 772-0357, ext. 22 E-mail: DCO@TownofBinghamton.com

With winter now upon us, I'd like to remind everyone of the "New York State Dog Shelter Law." Section 353-b of the New York Agriculture and Markets Law states that you are required to provide shelter for your dog at all times. The Broome County Sheriff's Dept. and New York State Police, as well as local police agencies, can enforce this law. If your dog spends anytime outdoors, you must provide shelter to protect the dog from direct sunlight, rain, snow, wind, cold weather, hot weather, and other inclement conditions. The shelter must be waterproof, insulated, and allow the dog to move around freely. The dog must be able to stand up, turn around, and lie down.

Violators will receive a Court citation and be required to pay a fine ranging from \$50 to \$250, as well as to show proof of shelter for the dog. If you suspect that someone is not providing their dog with adequate food and/or shelter, don't hesitate to call the Sheriff's Dept. at 778-1911 or the New York State Police at 775-1241.



News from County Legislator, Kelly Wildoner



As we ring in the New Year, I wanted to take a moment to update the residents of the Town of Binghamton on some exciting things the County Legislature has been doing.

First and foremost, the Legislature continues to look out for taxpayers. The Legislature unanimously approved the 2020 County Budget with a 1% tax cut for County residents. Over the course of 10 Budget Review meetings with 47 different County Departments, Divisions, and Contract Agencies, we were able to identify several opportunities and double the tax cut while improving vital services that taxpayers rely on. This will be the second tax cut in a row, and we're very proud to be able to continue providing results with common sense budgeting, keen financial oversight, and advocating for lower taxes.

The Legislature continues fighting to keep our families and community safe. We very recently approved a School Bus Stop Arm Safety Program that will allow the County to partner with local school districts to equip nearly 500 buses in Broome County with traffic cameras at zero cost to taxpayers. These cameras will monitor the roads around school buses while they're out bringing our children to and from school and help discourage reckless drivers from passing stopped school buses. Nothing is more important than the welfare of our community's families and the Legislature will continue to prioritize Public Safety, especially for our youngsters.

More good news for County Residents. My colleagues on the Legislature and I have always worked hard to reduce the County's short-term borrowing. Back in 2011, the County was borrowing \$20 million on a short-term basis every year to cover its costs, thanks to poor budgeting practices and lapses in fiscal oversight. I'm very happy to announce that we've been able to reduce short-term borrowing by 65% to \$7 million in only eight years. We'll be looking to continue moving the County in the right direction in 2020.

I was very pleased to work with Legislature Chairman Dan Reynolds to arrange a meeting at the Town of Binghamton Community Center where the County Administration provided residents with some additional information on the upcoming Veterans Resource Center project to be constructed on an 80-acre site at the old Vestal Hills Country Club on Webb Road. As your Legislator, I've worked hard to listen to the residents of District 3 and will continue doing just that. We're now partnering with Town of Binghamton Code Enforcement and will continue monitoring the project to ensure an informative and transparent process as it moves forward. We've always tried to support our local Veterans, and once the new Veterans Resource Center is completed, it will be an important asset for our local Veterans organizations and community.



I'd like to take a moment to wish Frances Sandwich a very Happy 100th Birthday.

Frances reached 100 years of age this past Christmas, and I was very happy to present her with a Certificate of Recognition on behalf of the County Legislature, the Administration, and State and Federal representatives. We were even able to obtain a Presidential Birthday card for Frances. If you know her, be sure to join us in congratulating her on this remarkable achievement.

Finally, I'd like to say, **"Happy New Year!" from the Broome County Legislature to the residents of the Town of Binghamton.** I wish you happiness throughout the coming year. We'll be doing another update in the spring, but in the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me at (607) 778-2129, kelly.wildoner@broomecounty.us or on Facebook by searching "Broome County Legislator Kelly Wildoner." Thanks, everyone.

Kelly Wildoner is a County Legislator representing District 3, which includes the Towns of Binghamton and Conklin along with part of Vestal.

Town of Binghamton

**279 Park Avenue
Binghamton, NY 13903**

CHRISTMAS TREE CURBSIDE PICK UP IS UNDER- WAY!

The Town of Binghamton Highway Department is now picking up Christmas trees. Please put your tree out to the curb **on your garbage day ONLY**.

Please be sure to remove **ALL** decorations, lights, tinsel, and any tree bags you may have used.

This service will end on Thurs., Jan. 16. If you have any questions, please call the Town of Binghamton Highway Dept. at 669-4323.



The Town of Binghamton is an equal opportunity employer and provider. To file a complaint of discrimination, write:

**USDA — Director
Office of Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue-SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410**



TOWN HALL MAIN PHONE

(607) 772-0357

Telecommunication Device for the Deaf:

1-800-662-1220 or 711

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Assessor, Joseph Cook | Ext. 15 |
| Assessor's Clerk, Amy Ricci | Ext. 13 |
| Attorney for the Town, Alan Pope | Ext. 52 |
| Bookkeeper, Sandra Reifler | Ext. 21 |
| Building Inspector / Codes, Nick Pappas | Ext. 12 |
| Community Center, Missy Chapman | Ext. 14 |
| Councilperson, Mike Bensley | Ext. 56 |
| Councilperson, Mark Leighton | Ext. 55 |
| Councilperson, Dean Nye | Ext. 54 |
| Councilperson/Dep. Super., Vicky Xlander | Ext. 57 |
| Court Clerk, Martha Nuzzela | Ext. 19 |
| Dog Control Officer, Rick Murray | Ext. 22 |
| Emergencies at Night: Dogs/Water | 778-1911 |
| Highway Supt., Mike Donahue | 669-4323 |
| Information Desk, Becky Smith | Ext. 10 |
| Plan. Bd. Chair., Christopher Streno | Ext. 50 |
| Supervisor, Elizabeth Rounds | Ext. 11 |
| Tax Collector (call Broome County) | 778-2169 |
| Town Clerk, Vickie Conklin | Ext. 26 |
| Town Clerk's Deputy, Paula Edwards | Ext. 23 |
| Town Engineer, John Martin | Ext. 51 |
| Town Justice, Hon. Lawrence Brinker | Ext. 19 |
| Water/Sewer Maint., Lee Cooper | 669-4323 |
| Water/Sewer Billing, Nadine Pappas | 669-4323 |
| Youth Activities, Christopher Streno | Ext. 48 |
| Zoning Bd. Chairman, Gerardo Tagliaferri | Ext. 49 |

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Now thru January 16

Sat., January 18

Sat., January 18

Mon., January 20

Tues., January 21

Tues., January 21

Sun., January 26

Tues., February 4

Wed., February 5

Sat., February 15

Mon., February 17

Tues., February 18

Tues., February 18

Sun., February 23

Tues., March 3

Wed., March 4

Wed., March 13

Sat., March 14

Tues., March 17

Tues., March 17

Sun., March 22

Sat., March 28

Tues., April 7

Christmas Tree Curbside Pick Up. Put trees out on garbage day. See note above for details.

Pancake Breakfast @ Conklin Forks UMC - 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. Cost: \$6 adults / \$4 kids 5-12

Hazardous Waste Collection @ Broome County Landfill - 7:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day - All Town offices will be closed

Town Board Meeting @ Town Hall at 7 p.m.

VFW Post 1611 monthly meeting at TOBCC* at 7 p.m.

VFW Post 1611 Pancake Breakfast @ TOBCC* - 8 a.m.-11 a.m. Cost: \$7 adults/\$3 kids 3-12

Town of Binghamton Work Session @ Town Hall at 5:30 p.m.

Hazardous Waste Collection @ Broome County Landfill - 7:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

Hazardous Waste Collection @ Broome County Landfill - 7:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

Presidents' Day - All Town offices will be closed.

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VFW Post 1611 Pancake Breakfast @ TOBCC* - 8 a.m.-11 a.m. Cost: \$7 adults/\$3 kids 3-12

Town of Binghamton Work Session @ Town Hall at 5:30 p.m.

Hazardous Waste Collection @ Broome County Landfill - 7:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

Dinner @ Hawleyton Church from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Cost: \$10 for adults / \$5 for kids 12 & under

Hazardous Waste Collection @ Broome County Landfill - 7:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

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***TOBCC refers to the Town of Binghamton Community Center,
located at 1905 Coleman Road.**

