

Town of Russell Public Hearing 11/18/2025 for Vol. Firefighter & Vol. Ambulance Workers Real Property Tax Exemption

@ The Russell Town Hall @ 5:30PM

11/18/2025

BOARD:

Supervisor Matthews - Present
Councilor Burnham - Present
Councilor Kerr - Absent
Councilor Beachard – Present
Councilor Rowe – Present
Highway Superintendent Meilleur - Present
Town Clerk Darcie Cross – Present

GUESTS:

Trudy Hendrickson
Larry Denesha
Robert Knox
Tess Eells
Connie Bessette
Morris Jeffries
Anthony Cross

PUBLIC HEARING: Local Law #2 of 2025 pertaining to Volunteer Firefighter & Volunteer Ambulance Workers Real Property Tax Exemption was called to order at 5:30pm by Supervisor Matthews.

- Supervisor Matthews read the Local Law a loud for the galley.
- There were no questions or comments from the public.

Section 1. Legislative Intent.

It is the intent of the Town Board of the Town of Russell, County of St. Lawrence, to provide a real property tax exemption to qualifying volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers as set forth in New York Real Property Tax Law §466-a.

Section 2. Authority.

Real Property Tax Law §466-a authorizes the Town Board to adopt a local law providing a real property tax exemption of up to ten percent (10%) of the assessed value of real property owned by qualifying volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers.

Section 3. Grant of Real Property Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Workers.

The Town Board of the Town of Russell, County of St. Lawrence, hereby provides a real property tax exemption of ten percent (10%) of the assessed value of real property for individuals that meet the following qualifications:

- The individual is an enrolled and certified member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, or volunteer ambulance service that serves the Town of Russell, has a minimum of five (5) years of service and is an

active member, having a 60% active role in calls received by the volunteer fire company, fire department, or volunteer ambulance service; and

- The individual resides in the Town of Russell and the property receiving the benefit is the primary residence of the individual and is used exclusively for residential purposes, and any portion of the property not used for residential purposes shall be subject to taxation.

Section 4. Grant of Lifetime Real Property Tax Exemption for Certain Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Workers.

The Town Board of the Town of Russell, County of St. Lawrence, hereby provides a lifetime real property tax exemption of ten percent (10%) of the assessed value of real property for any individuals that have been certified by the authority having jurisdiction over an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated volunteer ambulance service as having accrued twenty-five (25) or more years of active service, so long as their primary residence remains within the Town of Russell.

The un-remarried surviving spouse of an eligible volunteer shall be entitled to retain the exemption.

Section 5. Qualification

The Fire Chief shall provide to the Town Clerk a list of individuals qualified to receive the exemption set forth above on or before December 1st of each year.

Section 6. Severability

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this local law or the application thereof to any person, firm or corporation, or circumstance, shall be adjusted by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unconstitutional, such order or judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this local law or in its application to the person, individual, firm or corporation, or circumstance, directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment or order shall be rendered.

Section 7. Effective Date

This Local Law shall be effective upon the date of filing with the Secretary of State pursuant to Section 27 of the Municipal Home Rule Law.

Resolution: #74 **Adopting Local Law #2 of 2025 Vol. Firefighter & Vol. Ambulance Workers Real Property Tax Exemption**

A motion was made by Councilor Burnham and seconded by Councilor Rowe to **Therefore**, Adopt Local Law #2 of 2025 Volunteer Firefighter & Volunteer Ambulance Workers Real Property Tax Exemption.

Ayes - 3 Rowe, Matthews, Beachard
Nays - 0
Motion carried.

A motion was made by Councilor Beachard and seconded by Councilor Rowe to adjourn the meeting @ 6:00 pm

All were in favor.
Motion carried.

Councilor Burnham did not cast a vote as she is part of the Russell Volunteer Fire Department.

Regular Board Meeting
@ The Russell Town Hall @ 6:00pm
11/18/2025

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Supervisor Matthews.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION:

- Trudy Hendricks wanted to thank the Board & the committee for the Veteran’s Wall.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

A motion was made by Councilor Rowe Seconded by Councilor Beachard to accept the minutes from 10/21/25 as presented by the Town Clerk.

Ayes - 4 Matthews, Burnham, Beachard, Rowe
Nays - 0
Motion carried.

TOWN CLERK REPORT: 11-18-2025

October 2025 Report:	
Hunting license commission	155.56
1 Marriage License Comm	7.50
7 Certified copies	70.00
0 One Day Marriage Officiant	.00
3 dog licenses	12.00
1 Building Permits	25.00
0 Community room fee	.00
Fax and copy money	<u>.00</u>

Total Revenue to Supervisor **\$270.06**

Disbursed amounts:

DECALS (Sweep)	2,666.44
NYS Department of Health	22.50
Ag & Market (spay, neuter program)	<u>3.00</u>
Total To State	\$2,691.94

Total Disbursed **\$2,962.00**

A motion was made by Councilor Burnham and seconded by Councilor Rowe to accept the Clerk Report as presented.

Ayes - 4 Matthews, Burnham, Beachard, Rowe
 Nays - 0
 Motion carried.

BALL FIELD COMMITTEE: None

SUPERVISORS REPORT:

**Supervisor's Report
 November 18, 2025**

1- Financial Report

-Details of all income and expense transactions have been filed with the town clerk.

-Account balances as of November 18, 2025, for the general fund, highway fund, capital improvement fund, and streetlight fund have been filed with the town clerk.

On November 12, 2025 Highway Superintendent, Rich, contacted me on a discrepancy in highway appropriations. We went back over the numbers and realized I had, inadvertently subtracted from payroll instead of parts account, once in July, \$13,360.96, and once in October, \$7,379.59. This was the DA5110.1 and DA5110.4 account, corrections were made, and accounts are currently correct, I'd like to thank Rich for working with me on this error.

Dereck C Matthews
 Town Supervisor

A motion was made by Councilor Burnham and seconded by Councilor Rowe accepting the supervisor's report.

Ayes - 4 Matthews, Burnham, Beachard, Rowe

Nays - 0
Motion carried.

LEGISLATURE REPORT: Larry Denesha

- Discussed the 2026 Budget, they will be reviewing this month, one more committee meeting next Monday and the Public Hearing for the budget December 1, 2025.
- Discussed SNAP benefits. As of October 1st, for St. Lawrence County there is total of 7,395 households receiving SNAP benefits, total SNAP persons 12,381 and total SNAP benefits \$2,279,515.00. There are also a lot of people that rely on HEAP to stay warm.
- Discussed childcare, over budget by \$1.3 million over budget as of last night. State has increased eligibility but has not given any more money.
- Passed a Resolution Community College proportionate for 2026. The Town of Russell has \$18,848.98. He suggests I check to make sure what we are being charged for are actual residents of the Town of Russell to make sure we are not getting charged for people who are not residents. (The Town Clerk checked and the chargebacks for community colleges were all Russell residents.)
- Passed a Resolution to support Congressman Nick Langley’s Energy Choice Act. Due to New York State banning of natural gas and other fossil fuels for new construction of new residential buildings in 2026. This legislation will give municipalities Home Rule, so they would have the ability to opt out of the ban.
- Larry wanted to thank the Town of Russell & Veteran’s community for allowing him to participate in the dedication of the Veteran’s Wall.

A motion was made by Councilor Beachard and seconded by Councilor Rowe to accept the Legislature Report as presented.

Ayes - 4 Matthews, Burnham, Beachard, Rowe
Nays - 0
Motion carried.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Russell: Robert Knox

- Three new doors were installed at the Fire Station.
- December 6th Santa will be at the Fire Station 4pm-6pm, they will be selling Christmas Trees, hamburgers, hot dog and fries.

A motion was made by Councilor Rowe and seconded by Councilor Beachard to accept the Fire Department Report as presented.

Ayes - 4 Matthews, Burnham, Beachard, Rowe
Nays - 0

Motion carried.

DeGrasse: NONE

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT REPORT: Richard Meilleur

Highway Report

11/18/2025

We have been busy cutting brush on Donnerville Road and dead roadside trees. We have had a couple breakdowns with our plow trucks. The Peterbilt is at 5th Wheel Deisel in Malone with pto clutch and wiring issues. The 2009 Pay Star has a bad transmission. We have one here and are going to put in the new transmission next week.

I have submitted the CHIPS reimbursement forms to the State and we should receive a check for \$266,972.63 on or about December 16th.

I have reached out to the plow manufacturers for a timeline on getting a new truck upfitted and they all tell me they are about 2 years out. Also, new trucks are 8-12 months out. This means 2½ to 3 years before we would see a new plow truck if we ordered one now. I have talked to the salesman for International Trucks and they are up about 40%-50% in the last 2 years. Plow Bodies are up 20%-25% over the last 2 years.

The last truck we purchased in 2024 was \$230,000.00, a new truck if ordered right now is going to be \$300,000.00 or more. I will be getting quotes for the next board meeting.

Tariffs, inflation, etc. are all up so we need to figure out options for equipment and trucks. Our fleet is aging, and parts costs are up as well.

I would like to thank the men for another safe and productive month.

Richard Meilleur
Highway Superintendent

- Darcie & I have submitted paperwork for another FEMA project. We have also filed an extension for the Plumb Brook project due to bidding, DEC permits and precast concrete structures.
- Discussed getting quotes, purchasing new equipment, trucks and parts.

A motion was made by Councilor Burnham and seconded by Councilor Beachard to accept the Highway Superintendent Report as presented.

Ayes - 4 Matthews, Burnham, Beachard, Rowe
Nays - 0

Motion carried.

HIGHWAY COMMITTEE REPORT: NONE

AUDIT REPORT:

Town of Russell
P.O. Box 628 * Russell N.Y. 13684
Phone# (315) 347-2358 * Fax # (315) 347-4244



Audit Committee Report
November 18, 2025
Audit

Dereck C Matthews
Sandra Burnham

	Vouchers	Total
General	263-287	\$12,667.63
Highway	165-184	\$58,862.98
Street Lights	11	\$1,195.43
Capital Improvement	13,14	\$13,591.06

RESOLUTION: # 75 **Audit Report- Dereck Matthews & Sandra Burnham**

A motion was made by Councilor Rowe and seconded by Councilor Beachard to authorize paying the bills.

Ayes - 4 Matthews, Burnham, Beachard, Rowe
Nays - 0
Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Discussed the grant that was applied for the ball field. Supervisor Matthews said we had apparently, we did not get it.
- Discussed budgeted money for the ball field. There wasn't any extra budget for it.
- Connie offered to fundraise for the ball field. Supervisor Matthews said we would have to figure out what it all would cost.
- Discussed the audits and to try and find an auditor for future audits. The auditor we have now is supposed to start this month.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Discussed one of Highway Men's paperwork still not corrected for over a year. Supervisor Matthews will call himself to see what needs to be done.
- Discussed the list of seasonal roads.

RESOLUTION: # 76 **Accept the New Teamsters Contract**

A motion was made by Councilor Burnham and seconded by Councilor Rowe to authorize Supervisor Matthews to accept and sign the new Teamsters Contract for:

- 1.) Article 26: Duration: 3 years
- 2.) Article 24: Wages & Hours
 - An increase in wages 3% each year \$24.55/hr effective 1/1/2026, \$25.28/hr effective 1/1/2027, \$26.03/hr effective 1/1/2028.
 - Boot allowance each January of \$300.00.
 - Compensatory Time to start November 1st through October 31st. Total accumulative increase to 100 hours per year. Will need to be used by December 1st still.
- 3.) Article 13: Holidays: Juneteenth added.
- 4.) Article 17: Funeral Leave has added Step Brothers/Sisters, Aunts/Uncles for one day only.
- 5.) Health insurance rates changed to Composite Plan.

Ayes - 4 Matthews, Burnham, Beachard, Rowe
Nays - 0
Motion carried.

A motion was made by Councilor Burnham and seconded by Councilor Beachard to adjourn the meeting @6:49pm

All were in favor.
Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by

Darcie Cross - Russell Town Clerk