

**Town of Nichols
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
October 28, 2025**

A. Call to Order, Pledge, and Roll Call

- Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM by Supervisor E. Woods.
- Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call:

- **Present:** Supervisor E. Woods, Councilpersons R. Cole, J. Ladd Yost, B. Fay-Pelotte, L. Tinney
- **Absent:** None
- **Others Present:** Matt Freeze, Jeff Blow, Ray Thetga Jr., Bryan Cole, Mark Hanford, Karen Herrala, Barb Cushman, Lexi Blow, Will Blow, and Marcy Hill, Town Clerk

Tax Limit Public Hearing – Opened at 6:05 PM

- Formality: The Town is **not** going over the 2% tax cap limit.
- Explanation provided on PILOT program impacts on the tax cap calculation.
- 2025 tax increase will be **0.10%**.

Public Comment:

- Ms. Herrela requested information regarding PILOTs.

A motion to approve Local Law #4 by Supervisor E. Woods, seconded by Councilperson R. Cole.
Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

Not further discussion

A motion to close tax limit public hearing by councilperson L. Tinney, seconded by councilperson J. Ladd Yost.

Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

Public hearing closed at 6:08 PM.

Budget Public Hearing – Opened at 6:08 PM

Karen Herrala:

- Asked about 2025 budget posting online.
- Asked questions regarding Town Clerk salary history:
 - 2021: \$35,530
 - 2022: \$32,000

- 2023: \$32,000
- 2024: \$27,300
- Concern raised about what she calculated as a 65% increase.
- Board clarified:
 - Town Clerk previously worked part-time.
 - Clerk assumed additional duties after bookkeeper position was not replaced.
 - Deputy Clerk hours decreased, offsetting some changes.

A motion to accept the preliminary budget for 2026 by Supervisor E. Woods, seconded by Councilperson B. Fay-Pelotte.

A budget meeting will be held next week. If changes occur, another public hearing will be required; if no changes, the budget will be finalized at the next regular meeting.

Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

A motion to close budget public hearing by councilperson R. Cole Tinney, seconded by councilperson J. Ladd Yost.

Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

Public hearing closed at 6:12 PM.

Solar Law Discussion

- Updated draft law presented to limit number and placement of solar farms.
- Attorney recommendation: Strengthen law to reduce liability and prevent lawsuits.
- Board reaffirmed intent to preserve rural character.

Public Comment:

- **Mr. Hanford:** Strongly supports limiting solar farms; requested required engineering studies on future proposals.
- Councilperson Fay-Pelotte reviewed strengthened sections of the revised law.

A motion to accept the application and SEQR, and refer to Tioga County for 239 Review by Supervisor E. Woods, seconded by J. Ladd Yost.

Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

A motion to close hearing at 6:20 PM and move to regular meeting by Supervisor E. Woods, seconded by Councilperson R. Cole

Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

B. Approval Items

1. Minutes: September 23, 2025

A motion by Supervisor E. Woods, seconded by Councilperson B. Fay-Pelotte to approve the September 23, 2025 minutes as presented.

Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

2. **Minutes: October 2, 2025**
A motion by Supervisor E. Woods, seconded by Councilperson B. Fay-Pelotte to approve the October 2nd, 2025 minutes as presented.
Vote: 4 Ayes, 0 No, 1- Abstain, 0 Absent

3. **Financials: September 2025**
A motion to accept the September 2025 financial reports by motion Councilperson R. Cole, seconded by Supervisor, E. Woods
Vote: 4 Ayes, 0 No, 1 Abstain, 0 Absent

C. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

D. New Business

1. **Budget Transfer**
A motion by Supervisor E. Woods, seconded by Councilperson L. Tinney to approve the transfer of funds from BB to DB 5031.000 \$300,103
Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

2. **Wastewater Training – R. Nugent**
A motion by Councilperson J. Ladd Yost, seconded by Councilperson R. Cole to approve payment for R. Nugent to attend local (Binghamton, NY) wastewater training.
Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

3. **Disability Insurance – Full & Part-Time Employees**

- Municipalities not required to provide disability insurance, but the Town is considering adding it.
- J. Ladd Yost recommended **2x DBL plan**, covering **all employees (FT/PT)**.
- Due to previous discussions, it was included in the budget for 2026.

A motion by Supervisor E. Woods, seconded by Councilperson J. Ladd Yost to approve the purchase of disability insurance for all employees (Effective 1/1/2026; includes hospital benefit)
Board thanked Councilperson Ladd Yost for research.

4. **Resolution #20-2025 – JCAP Court Grant**
A motion by Supervisor E. Woods, seconded by Councilperson B. Fay-Pelotte for approval of Resolution 20-2025 JCAP Court Grant. The court will provide all information needed for the grant process.
Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

5. **Hunt Creek Remediation**

- Significant work completed.
- Tioga County Soil & Water (Mike Jura) recently examined the site.
- Permit valid through end of 2025.

- Reimbursement request advanced to next level.
- 6. **Plow Purchase for Highway Truck**
 - The new truck may arrive before year-end.

Plow cost estimated: **\$7,500.**

A motion by Supervisor E. Woods, seconded by Councilperson R. Cole for approval to purchase plow NTE: \$7400.00.

Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

E. Old Business

- **Grant Updates:**
Carriage House/Library and Comprehensive Plan submitted; results in December.
- **FEMA Properties:**
Both structures removed; excellent work by Austin's. Homeowners paid. Closeout expected February 2026.
- **Town Hall Room 2 Renovation:** December start anticipated.
- **Design Connect:**
Students presented a PowerPoint; met with Tourism Office; resident questionnaire distributed. Final presentation in December.
- **Traffic Safety Board:** Sheriff's Office to be contacted.
- **Fall Clean-Up:** Successful; some tires not removed at time of pickup – will be held.
- **Farm Planning Board Position:** Outreach ongoing.
- **Job Descriptions:** Councilperson Cole has contacted Linda Parks again; no response yet.

F. Department Reports

(Full reports on file in Town Clerk's Office)

- **Highway (J. Blow):** Hunt's Creek repair completed; ditching; 200 tons of salt ordered; brush cutting; dangerous trees on Lower Briggs; waiting on Tri-County.
- **Buildings & Grounds (R. Thetga Jr.):** Heavy burial activity; leaf cleanup; continued mowing; flagpole at Highway Garage estimated at \$15,000.
- **Sewer & Water (B. Nugent):** Not present; written report submitted.
- **Code Enforcement:** Not present; ongoing property maintenance concerns.
- **Library (E. Deretz):** Historical records returned from Kofile; painting complete; community events ongoing.
- **Nichols Fire Commissioners:** Budget approved (2% increase); EMS service continuation; audit ongoing; brush truck delivered.
- **Fall Clean-Up Day:** October 10; successful event; tire limits enforced; electronics program countywide.

G. Committee Reports

- **REAP:** Report provided.
- **LPAC:** Next meeting Wednesday.
- **Website:** Updates completed—planning, zoning, maps, and local laws cleaned and clarified.

H. Abstracts

Motion: To approve vouchers by Supervisor E. Woods, seconded by Councilperson B. Fay-Pelotte

General Fund \$136,447.45
Highway: \$257,310.88
Library: \$100.00
S&W: \$44,817.83

Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

I. Executive Session

Motion: To enter executive session for personnel matters.

Motion by: Supervisor E. Woods /Councilperson B. Fay-Pelotte — **Carried**

Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

Adjournment

Motion: To motion to adjourn by Supervisor E. Woods, seconded by Councilperson J. Ladd Y

Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

Submitted by:

Marcy Hill, Town Clerk

Date: October 28, 2025