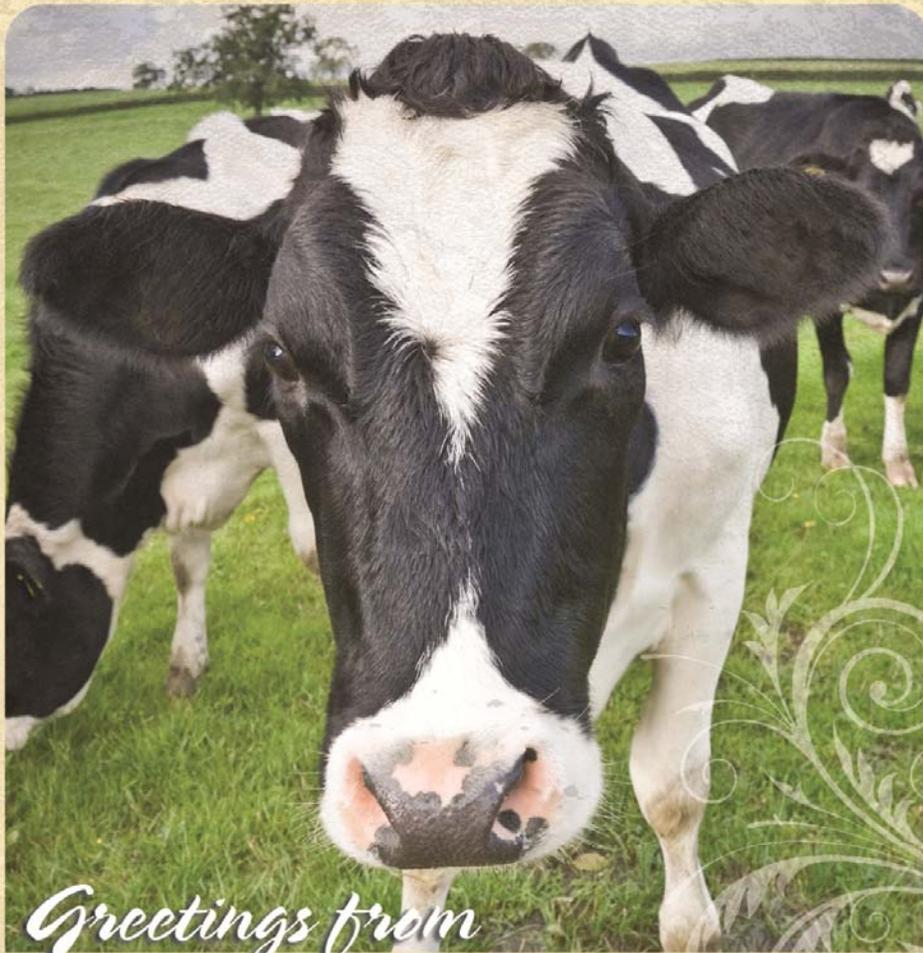


HILLSDALE, NEW YORK 2011 ANNUAL REPORT



Greetings from

HILLSDALE

www.hillsdaleny.com

New York



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SUPERVISOR'S SUMMARY

2011 was another exceptional year of events and accomplishments in the Town.

- Town tax increases were again maintained at less than 4 percent despite major increases in NY State unfunded mandates and health insurance premiums.
- The old library building was historically renovated and opened as the “new” Town Hall on October 15 without raising any additional taxes.
- The Columbia County Sheriff leased the old Town Hall and opened a sub-station, thereby improving the Town’s police coverage and response time.
- The Town’s Summer Youth Program was successfully expanded from 50 to 65 participants.
- The Town Board moved to accept a petition from the Highway Department employees to be represented by the Teamsters Union.
- Almost \$20,000 was raised by private donations to support a wide range of community projects.
- Two new businesses opened up in the Hamlet: The General Store and the Crossroads Café.
- The Town website newsletter circulation increased by over 40%. The Town website averaged 1900 unique visitors per month, a 27% increase over 2010.
- The Hamlet Park parking lot was significantly expanded to facilitate scheduling more events.

TOWN BOARD

The Town of Hillsdale is governed by an elected Town Board consisting of four Councilpersons and one Supervisor. Terms are four years. The board represents the legislative and executive branch of the government management of the town. The role of the Supervisor includes presiding over the meetings and acting as town treasurer. In Columbia County, the Supervisor also sits on the County Board of Supervisors, which governs the entire county with population weighted voting.

Town business, budget maintenance and legislative decisions are central to Town Board activity. The Board also oversees the mission and activities of additional town boards and committees.

Organization 2011

Supervisor:

Art Baer (Reelected; Term Ends December 31, 2015)

Council Members:

Carmen Barbato, Chair, Highway (Term ended December 31, 2011)

Peter Cipkowski, Chair, Communications (Term ends December 31, 2013)

August Sena, Chair, Sewer (Term ends December 31, 2015)

Jill Sims-Elster, Chair, Parks and Recreation (Term ends December 31, 2013)

The Town Board meets the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm.

If any Town resident has a matter that they would like discussed, contact the Town Supervisor or Town Clerk and it will be added to the agenda. The public is encouraged to attend Town Board meetings.



ASSESSOR

Organization

Assessor: Pamela Cook

Operations

Office hours: Friday, 8:15 am - 12:15 pm

Telephone: (518) 325-3636 or 325-5073

Email: hillsdaleassessor@fairpoint.net

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the Assessor?

The assessor is a local government official who estimates the value of real property within a city, town, or village's boundaries. This value is converted into an assessment, which is just one component in the computation of real property tax bills.

What Does an Assessor Do?

The assessor is obligated by New York State law to maintain assessments at a uniform percentage of market value each year. The assessor signs an oath to this effect when certifying the assessment roll -- the document containing each property assessment. The physical description (or inventory) and value estimate of every parcel is required to be kept current. In order to maintain a uniform roll, each year your assessor will need to analyze all of the properties in the municipality to determine which assessments, if any, need to be changed.

Where assessments need to be changed, in some cases, your assessor will be able to increase or decrease the assessments of a neighborhood or group of properties by applying real estate market trends from the town's property sales to those properties. This is possible only when the assessments to be changed are at a uniform level other than the municipality's stated level of assessment. In other cases, the assessor will need to conduct physical re-inspections for reappraisals of properties.

The assessment roll shows all of the town's assessments and exemptions and is available for public inspection any time at the Town Hall during normal business hours.

What Kind of Property is Assessed?

All real property, commonly known as real estate, is assessed. Real property is defined as land and any permanent structures attached to it. Some examples of real property are houses, gas stations, office buildings, vacant land, motels, shopping centers, farms, apartment buildings, restaurants, and mobile homes.

How is Real Property Assessed?

Before assessing any parcel of property, the assessor estimates its market value. Market value is how much a property would sell for, in an open market, under normal conditions. To estimate market values, the assessor must be familiar with all aspects of the **local** real estate market.

A property's value can be estimated in three different ways. First, property is compared to others similar to it that have sold recently, using only sales where the buyer and seller both acted without undue pressure. This is the most common method used. It is called the **market approach** and is normally used to value residential, vacant, and farm properties.

The second way is to calculate the cost, using today's labor and material prices, to replace the structure with a similar one. If the structure is not new, the assessor determines the depreciation since it was built. The resulting value is added to an estimate of the market value of the land. This method, called the **cost approach**, is used to value special purpose and utility properties.

The third way is to analyze how much income a property (like an apartment building, store, or factory) will produce if rented. Operating expenses, insurance, maintenance costs, financing terms, and how much money expected to be earned are considered. This method is called the **income approach**.

Once the assessor estimates the market value of a property, its assessment is calculated. New York State law provides that all property within a municipality be assessed at a uniform percent of market value. The level of assessment can be five percent, 20 percent, 50 percent, or any other fraction, up to 100 percent. Everyone pays his or her fair share of taxes as long as every property in a locality is assessed at the same percent of value. For example, a house with a market value of \$100,000 located in a town that assesses at 15 percent of value would have an assessment of \$15,000. The assessment is multiplied by the tax rate for each taxing jurisdiction - city, town, village, school district, etc. - to determine the tax bills. Tax rates are determined by each school district, county and town through the budget process.

What Else Does an Assessor Do?

The assessor performs many other administrative functions, such as inspecting new construction and major improvements to existing structures. The recording of deeds and property transfers into trusts, life estates and other legal instruments are also part of the function of the assessor's office. This ensures that the record of each property's physical inventory as well as owner is current and that the appropriate improvements are assessed.

Where Can I Go With Questions?

The assessor is continually communicating with the public, answering questions, and dealing with concerns raised by taxpayers. Informal meetings with your assessor to help answer your assessment questions can take place at any time throughout the year. It is up to individual property owners to monitor their own assessments.

Assessors are interested only in fairly assessing property in their assessing unit. If your assessment is correct and your tax bill still seems too high, the assessor cannot change that. Complaints to the assessor must be about how property is assessed and not the amount of taxes. Taxpayers unhappy with growing property tax bills should also examine the scope of budgets and expenditures of the taxing jurisdictions (counties, cities, towns, villages, school districts, etc.) and address those issues in the appropriate and available public forums.

Assessment Calendar

Taxable Status Date	March 1
Exemption Filing Deadline*	March 1 (all exemptions due)
Assessment Change Notices Mailed	by May 1
Tentative Assessment Roll Filed	May 1
Grievance Day	4th Thursday in May (may vary)
Valuation Date	July 1 (<u>of previous year</u>)
Final Assessment Roll Filed	July 1

*Forms are available at Town Hall during normal business hours or the ORPS website at www.orps.state.ny.us.



BUILDING CODE AND ZONING ENFORCEMENT

Organization

Glenn T. Smith, Building Inspector / Zoning Enforcement

Ruth Dodds, Administrative Assistant

Both are appointed positions.

Operations

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 12:00-3:00 pm

Field Inspections: by appointment

Telephone: (518) 325-1702

Fax: (518) 325-6917

Email: bihdale@fairpoint.net

Mission

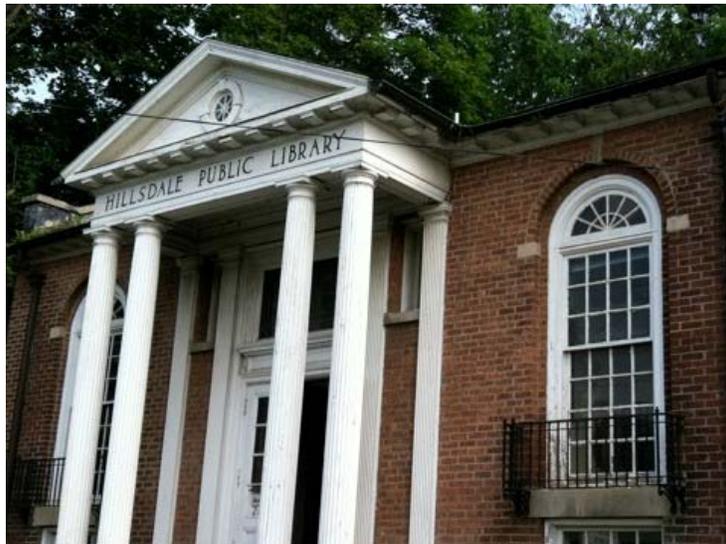
The Building Department is charged with enforcement of the New York State Building Codes and the local law which includes the recently adopted article 1203 from title 19 (NYCRR). The primary focus is the protection of the Town residents from inferior construction practices and the assurance that all new buildings are complicit with the local and state codes. The building Inspector also enforces various property maintenance laws to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all residents of the Town of Hillsdale.

1. Accessory Addition	2	\$164,000	\$806.00
2. Barn Shed	7	\$815,849	\$3,473.00
3. C/O Search	34	-----	\$1,185.00
4. Commercial Alterations (1 project exempt)	2	\$127,988	\$50.00
5. Commercial Additions	2	\$30,000	\$145.00
6. Communications Antenna	1	\$36,250	\$145.00
7. Deck Porch	5	\$72,200	\$588.00
8. Fireplace	1	\$7,500	\$55.00
9. Demolition	5	-----	\$240.00
10. Garage Detached	3	\$876,500	\$120.00
11. Garage/Carport Attached	2	\$10,500	\$120.00
12. In ground pool and Fence	2	\$123,200	\$521.00
13. Logging Permit	2	-----	\$200.00
14. Misc Construction	2	\$30,000	\$160.00
15. New Residence	2	240,000	\$1,010.00
16. Pool House	1	\$100,000	\$400.00
17. PVA Solar Panels	2	\$75,130	\$354.52
18. Repairs	2	\$24,000	\$147.00
19. Res. Add/Alter	2	\$30,100	\$100.00
20. Residential Additions	3	\$755.000	\$3,095.00
21. Residential Alterations	5	\$189,732	\$890.00
22. Roofing	10	\$80,055	\$594.00
23. Siding	2	\$105,000	\$475.00

24. Sign	1	\$4,500	\$55.00
25. Other permits / renewals	26	-----	\$10,670.00
Totals	126	\$3,900,404	\$26,179.00

2011 Statistics

Total miles driven 4,895
 Zoning Complaints 12
 Building Inspections 365
 Zoning Inspections 35
 Violations Building 8
 Violations Zoning 10



CLERK

Organization

Julie Kane was an elected town official who took office as Town Clerk on January 1, 2008. Her term ended on January 3, 2012. She also served as Registrar of Vital Statistics, Records Management Officer, and Information Access Officer.

Ruth Dodds was elected Town Clerk to a 4-year term in November 2011 that ends on December 31, 2015.

Office hours

Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 8:30 to noon and 1:00 to 3:00pm

Tuesday and Friday 11:30 to 3:00 pm

To arrange an appointment at other times, please call (518) 325-5073

Address:

Main Street

P.O. Box 305

Hillsdale, NY 12529

Telephone: (518) 325-5073

Fax: (518) 325-6917

Email: townclerkhdale@fairpoint.net

Mission

The Town Clerk serves the people of Hillsdale by acting as a bridge between each citizen and the Town government. Because access to information is essential in a democracy, the Town Clerk maintains and makes available the records of the Town. Because certain licenses and permits are required by State and local agencies, the Town Clerk assists in filing applications and issuing licenses. In every interaction, the Town Clerk strives to provide clear communication, open access, and respectful service.

Overview

In many ways, the Town Clerk is the “face” of the Town of Hillsdale. As recording secretary of the Town Board, she authors the official record of Town governmental activities: laws, resolutions, and minutes. As Records Management officer, she keeps legal records and the archives of the Town safe, complete, and organized. As Town Information Access Officer, the clerk makes the Town’s public records available to citizens upon request under the Freedom of Information Act. As Registrar of Vital Statistics, the clerk records births and deaths that take place in the Town and issues marriage licenses. The clerk also provides handicapped parking permits, hunting and fishing licenses, and licenses dogs.

In addition, the Town Clerk is the coordinator for Primary and General Elections, advising the State of vacancies for elections, overseeing polling places, and filing the

boundaries of election districts. The clerk also notifies the public of registration day and polling places. Any special elections are also coordinated through the Town Clerk's office. Absentee ballot applications and voter registration forms are available at the Town Hall.



COMMUNICATIONS

Organization

Peter Cipkowski, Chair

Christopher Ross, Webmaster, eNewsletter and Twitter Editor

Mission

The primary mission of the committee is to keep the public informed of the activities of town government. We want the people to be able to readily gain access to the decisions of the Town Board. A secondary mission is the promotion of the town and its businesses. We would like more people to become aware of the beauty of Hillsdale and the variety of its businesses so as to encourage visitors.

- The new Hillsdale Website has been live for the past two years and is actively maintained and refreshed.
- The Hillsdale Newsletter was improved substantially and serves as a companion to the Hillsdale Website. It has 410 active contacts, growing 40% in 2011. 12 newsletters were released in 2011.
- A “Greetings from Hillsdale” postcard was produced and circulated at the Memorial Day Flea Market and summer events to promote the town website and monthly newsletter, resulting in a boost in new subscribers.
- During late spring 2011, we reached out to Taconic Hills to identify an intern who could partner with us during the busy summer months. Meagan Hansleman participated in the development of two summer issues.
- In 2011, the town website averaged 1900 unique visitors per month, a 27% increase over the prior year. Number of visits rose from 27,000 in 2010 to 41,000 in 2011, resulting in approximately one-quarter million pages viewed for the year. By far, readers are interested in the workings of town government, followed by local events.
- A Twitter feed was managed and monitored.
- The writing, editing, and compilation of this eighth annual report.
- Costs have been kept to a minimum. They included printing the annual report, Constant Contact subscription fees, Square Candy’s expenses for hosting fees.

Goals for 2012

- Work with Square Candy Design to refresh some features including making it easier to sign-up for the newsletter and offering more programming control to the committee.
- Significantly increase the number of subscribers and visitors.
- Update and maintain the content on the website – keeping it fresh, readable, sticky and appealing.
- Train town departments and committees to leverage the website and newsletter for communicating updates, RFPs, meeting notes, and so on.

- Develop and publish the 2011 annual report.
- Post relevant information and downloadable resources for new residents and visitors.
- Budget for website enhancements for FY13.



SOLDIERS AND SAILORS MONUMENT, Hilldale, N. Y.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

Chairs of the Committees

Tom Carty – Comprehensive Plan Review Committee

Janis Smythe – Green Solutions

Howard Van Lenten – Hamlet

Robina Ward – Historic Preservation

Ellen Levy – Housing

Gretchen Stevens – Natural Resources

Not Active - Agriculture, Scenic

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC) is to:

- a) Help identify the goals set forth in the Town of Hillsdale’s Comprehensive Plan that have not yet been implemented.
- b) Prioritize these goals based on the Town’s immediate needs and financing availability and review with the Planning Board and Town Board.
- c) Develop, with assistance from the CPRC subcommittees, sound strategies to implement these goals.
- d) Coordinate the efforts of, and foster cooperation and idea sharing among, all CPRC subcommittees.

Our thanks go out to the many, many volunteers who have worked for the committees. We hope that more town residents will join us as we continue to implement key provisions of the Comprehensive Plan.

All committees welcome participation, comments and suggestions from Town residents. Please join us!!

GREEN SOLUTIONS

The Green Solutions Committee continues its commitment to making Hillsdale more efficient in its energy use as well as championing sustainable growth practices and other “green” technologies.

The “Chef’s Corner” cooking demonstrations that the committee conducted at the Hillsdale Farmers’ Market were very successful: Chefs Mara Simons Jones and Michael Chesloff cooked delicious, easy-to-prepare dishes using the produce available from the vendors at the Market. Tastings and recipes were made available to all Market visitors.

The events were so successful the committee intends to bring in more chefs and provide demonstrations at every Farmers' Market in 2012.

In addition, the Committee sponsored two speakers during the year. Ned Depew, the home inspector and frequent guest on WAMC, returned to speak and give to the audience tips on how to winterize their homes. Conrad Vispo from Hawthorne Valley farm also gave a talk. His topic was the importance of farms and how they not only produce our food but also help the environment.

HAMLET

The Hamlet Committee had a very busy and productive year. Their goal is to help implement the Hamlet plan created by residents and PPS planners and to develop beautiful, accessible places where residents can gather to socialize and enjoy recreational activities with friends and family.

Efforts to raise funds were carried out by the Beautification Subcommittee, the Hamlet Park Subcommittee, the new Town Hall Park subcommittee and virtually the entire Hamlet Committee. The results of all of this fundraising as well as many committee and subcommittee meetings have been admirable.

The Beautification subcommittee did a great job maintaining the plantings at two of the Town's entry signs, one on Route 22 and one on Route 23. In addition, the subcommittee installed new plants at the new Veterans' Memorial, creating a garden that reflects the beauty of the new Memorial.

The Hamlet Park subcommittee, with the help of the entire Hamlet Committee, once again conducted the Memorial Day Flea Market to raise funds for new playground equipment. In addition, many members of the Hamlet committee lent support to the Roe Jan Park's annual brunch and for that effort received additional funds for the playground.



By the end of the year, the Hamlet Park subcommittee had raised enough money to purchase a large, attractive set of “green” playground equipment that will be installed in the spring of 2012. This equipment is designed for toddlers ages 2 to 5. Fundraising and selection of equipment for older kids will be the subcommittee’s work in 2012.

The new Town Hall Park subcommittee has designed and begun the installation of two beautiful areas near our new town hall. They have planned and begun work on a formal seating area adjacent to the Town Hall and on a less formal picnic area in the rear of the Hall.

HOUSING COMMITTEE

During 2010, the Housing Committee continued working with the Action Plan that was developed in conjunction with the Housing Action Council, the consultants who conducted the study of the housing needs of the Town.

The Housing Committee’s first task was to create a definition of “affordable housing” that clearly reflects the economic conditions of Hillsdale. Second, the committee realizes that under the current economic and budgetary conditions, the most practical way of creating affordable housing units in the town would be through the creation of additional accessory apartments.

After careful study of the current zoning ordinances, the Committee drafted revisions to current ordinances that will make it easier for both residential and commercial building owners to create accessory apartments, with particular emphasis on the greater residential density made possible by the new sewer system in the Hillsdale hamlet.

These draft revisions are complete and in 2012 they will first be presented to the Town’s Planning Board for approval and then to the public and the Town Board for approval. It is hoped that the revisions that the Committee suggests will be positively received by the Planning and Town Boards as well as the public and be incorporated in the Town’s Zoning Ordinance in the first half of 2012.

NATURAL RESOURCES

In summer 2011 the Planning Board asked the Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) to undertake a survey of farmland in Hillsdale to better assess the status of agricultural activity, and to inform town efforts in support of active farms and protection of farmland resources.

The Comprehensive Plan Review Committee provided funds for the CAC to obtain printed large-format maps of agricultural districts, of farmland soils, and of aerial photo images to use as base maps for the farmland survey. Since late fall 2011, the CAC has been conducting field work to identify active and recently-active farmland, kinds of farmland uses (pasture, hay, feed crops, vegetables, fruit, etc.), and the farmers working each site. A preliminary (hand-drawn) farmland map is 90% completed, and the CAC has

begun digitizing the data to create a detailed map of farming activity throughout the town. The farmland map data can then be overlaid on a map of Prime Farmland Soils and Farmland Soils of Statewide Importance (identified by the US Department of Agriculture), to give a fairly comprehensive picture of the recent, active, and best potential farmland in the town. The CAC expects to present the final map to the Planning Board in late spring 2012.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Mount Washington House was the venue for the June, 2011, workshop of the Hamlet Historic Property owners where information on State and Federal Tax credits was presented and discussed. Erin Tobin, Regional Director of the Preservation League of New York, hosted the meeting. These credits are available to owners of property listed on the State and National Register. As a result of this and prior workshops, more home and business property owners are researching the possibilities of these credits.

Hillsdale Partners, Inc. the owners of the new Hillsdale General Store building were able to take advantage of this program and, because they are a commercial enterprise, they will receive both Federal and State tax credits for the renovation of their historic property. Another home owner has also successfully completed work on his historic home and received the State tax credits.

Thanks to the Historic Tour subcommittee, the third annual House Tour was held in August and the venue was Craryville Road. In 1870 Peter Crary, a steamboat captain from New York, purchased several hundred acres of land and renamed the area Craryville. The 5 houses and cemetery on the tour predate 1870.

The proceeds from the very successful tour have paid new “style and period appropriate” lighting for the interior of the Town Hall building and for the new signage that defines the Hamlet Historic District. The signs were designed by Matthew White and Robina Ward and will be placed at the entrances to the Historic Hamlet District in the spring of 2012.



COURT

Organization

Juliette M. Crill, Justice (Term ended December 31, 2011)

Russ Immarigeon, Justice (Reelected; Term ends December 31, 2015)

Jan Keefner, Court Clerk

Email: hcourt@fairpoint.com

Court is in session every Wednesday evening at 6:00 pm in the Hillsdale Town Hall. Cases involving the Columbia County District Attorney are scheduled for the third Wednesday of each month and convenes at 5:00 pm.

Mark Cawley was elected Justice in November 2011 to a 4-year term that ends on December 31, 2015.

P.O. Box 305

Hillsdale, NY 12529

Telephone: (518) 325-5073

Fax: (518) 325-6917

Mission

The Hillsdale Town Court is the first level trial court in the New York State Court System. The Court has jurisdiction over vehicle and traffic matters, small claims (up to \$3000), tenancy, civil and criminal matters. It has the authority to arraign persons on all charges, but is generally limited to violations and misdemeanors. The Town justices are also empowered to officiate at weddings of all who possess a valid marriage license, in the State of New York.

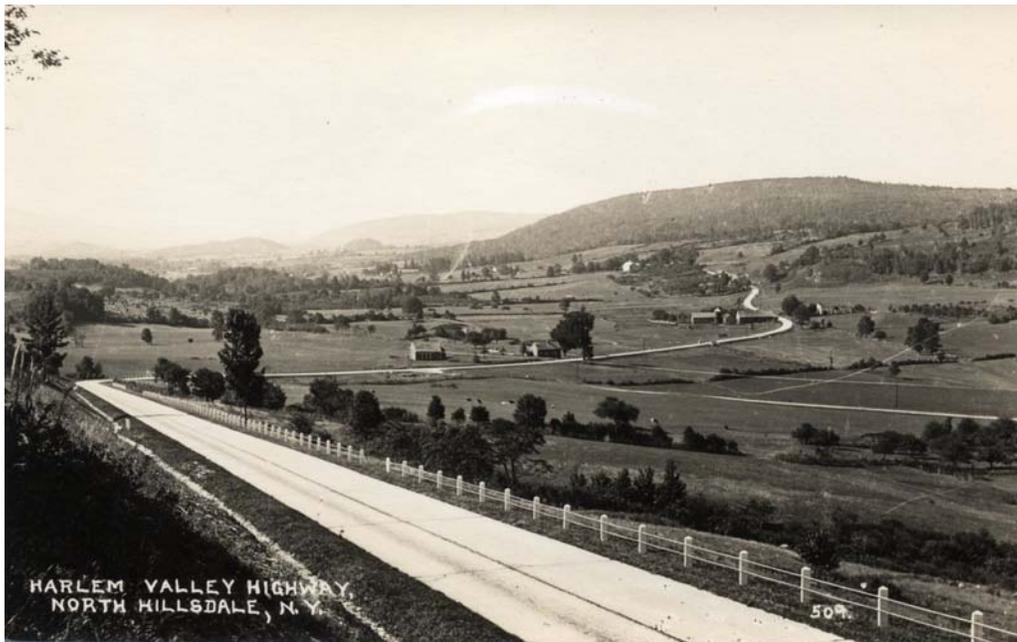
Operations

The Town of Hillsdale funds the Court and receives a flat fee of \$15 for each fine levied for the vehicle and traffic convictions. The Town's share of penal and local law violations varies, according to the infraction. Each justice must complete a mandatory certification program and attend bi-annual advanced training courses. Both justices were fully certified during the 2011 calendar year. The voters of Hillsdale elect the Town Justices to four year terms.

2011 Highlights

- The Court handled 653 cases in the calendar year of 2011. The cases consisted of 592 vehicle and traffic cases, 38 criminal cases, 19 civil cases and 4 miscellaneous cases.

- Total fines, surcharges and civil fees collected in 2011 totaled \$51,662.94.
- The Court continues to use the electronic traffic ticket software program or e-tickets.
- The New York State Police and Columbia County Sheriff's Department scan data from the driver's licenses and registrations directly into an in-vehicle computer, which electronically transmits the citation to the Court. It provides more timely data than the old paper ticket system.
- The Court continues to send the judge's monthly reports to the State Comptroller electronically which allows the town to receive the Court's money on a much more timely basis.
- The Court continues to digitally record all proceedings.
- The Court began taking payments by credit card in December 2009—a significant convenience for all.



FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mission

The Hillsdale Volunteer Fire Company protects and serves its community of 5,000 residents in a 43-square mile area. The Company is dispatched by the County 911 System and is connected to the police radio network. It responds on-demand to emergencies 24/7 and assists as requested with neighboring Fire Departments

Executive Officers

President, Joe Hanselman, Jr.
Vice President, Josh Stalker
Secretary, Deb Grau
Treasurer, Jim Brennan

Trustees

James Knickerbocker
Fred Miller

Line Officers

Chief, Richard Briggs
1st Asst. Chief, Fred Miller
2nd Asst. Chief, Robert Burns
1st Captain, Clif Conklin
2nd Captain, Joe Ham
1st Lieutenant, Robert Briggs, Jr.
2nd Lieutenant, Teddy Baird

Fire Police

Captain, Robert Briggs, Sr.
Lieutenant, Robert Briggs, Jr.

District Commissioners

Chairman, Fred Canetto
Secretary, James Brennan
Treasurer, Joanne Pilkington
George Atwood
George Beneke
Thomas Kane

LOSAP Data Entry, Joe Hanselman, Jr.

Ladies Auxiliary Officers October-Present

President, Colleen Miller
Vice President, Cara Kernan

Secretary, Emily Stalker
Treasurer, Deb Grau

Volunteer Categories	Hours
Drills	340
Fires	1693
Training	488
Other (Fund raisers, etc.)	1806
Total Hours	4327

Active Members	39
Support Members	57
Total Members	96
100% Volunteer	

Operations

- The Department is dispatched by the County 911 System. The Department is also hooked into the police radio network and can respond to emergencies in their area.
- There is "OSHA" Training and other life-safety drills throughout the year. The training is extensive and certification is awarded to those that meet all requirements.
- The Firehouse is solely owned by the Fire Company.
- The Fire Company's major fundraising events include the Palm Sunday Brunch, the Annual Ball, and the Boot Drive.
- Fire equipment and apparatus is owned by the Fire District.
- In 2011 the Hillsdale Fire Co. donated all proceeds from the October Boot Drive to the Prattsville Hose Co. who had lost just about everything in the flood following Hurricane Irene.
- Herrington Hall and our outside Pavilion are available for rent. Contact the Fire House for more information.

HIGHWAY

Organization

Richard Briggs, Highway Superintendent

Dave Hall, Road Foreman

Joe Regina, Shop Steward

Robert Briggs Jr.

Clif Conklin

Joe Ham

Daryl Waite

William Baker (part-time)

Email: hillsdalehighway@fairpoint.net

Phone: (518) 325-4744

Town Roads

The highway department maintains 76 miles of roadway, less than half of that has a blacktop surface and over 41 miles are unpaved. Our goal is always safety but we work hard to maintain the rural, agricultural character of our community.

2011 Summary

The 2011 operating budget money is appropriated primarily for snow removal, general highway maintenance, repairs and maintenance of vehicles, salaries, and employee benefits.

2011 was a busier year than usual for the Highway Department. It started off with a very busy winter, almost depleting the winter maintenance budget with what seemed like a snowstorm every other day. On March 3rd, heavy rain started and the crew was out most of the day trying to keep the water in the ditches and culvert pipes open. Overnight the temperatures dropped and the ice started to build up on the tree branches.



The center part of town, an area that includes Whippoorwill Road, Wolf Hill Road, Rodman Road, Pumpkin Hill Road, Sebeff Road, Doe Hill Road, Caso Lane, Henich Lane and Rockledge Road were totally devastated by the damage caused by the ice. The roads were impassable with trees and wires down. Other parts of the town suffered moderate ice damage with downed trees and wires. The town suffered moderate flood damage, most of the roads were passable but there was some form of washout on most of them. Many areas of the town were without power.

The highway crew of six full time employees, one part time employee and the Highway Superintendent began what would turn out to be a very long week. By the end of the day on Monday all of our roads were open to at least one lane of traffic. By the end of the week all the roads were cleared and the washouts fixed. Summer brought several nasty thunderstorms that had the crew working through the night on several occasions. The end of the summer brought us more devastation, tropical storms Irene and Lee.



Again with these storms we had many roads throughout the town that were washed out or had deep washouts on the shoulders. Again the crew worked tirelessly to get the roads back in proper condition for safe traveling.

We were so very lucky to have a mild fall and start to the winter. We have been able to catch up on both road repairs, maintenance and equipment repairs.

Even with the major storms in 2011 the highway department stayed within our budget, but we were left with a lot of the scheduled work that was not completed. This work has now been rescheduled and added to the work load for 2012.

Road Work

In addition to snow removal, mowing, general road maintenance, and storm clean-up the highway department completed the following projects:

- Excavated, drained, and re blacktopped sections of Whippoorwill Road and Rockledge Road.
- Sealed sections of Whippoorwill and Rockledge Roads.
- Blacktop shimmed West End road, Rodman Road, Maple Street, Old Town Road, Whippoorwill Road.
- Gravel buildup of at least four inches on sections of Wolf Hill Road, Pheasant Lane and Phudd Hill.

Goals for 2012

- Continue clean-up from March 2011 ice storm.
- Finish the many road repairs from tropical storms Irene and Lee.
- Seal West End Road and Rodman Road.
- Blacktop shim Overlook Road and Dawson Road.
- Drainage and gravel build up of Rodman Road, Lockwood Road, Harlemlville Road, and Texas Hill Road.

There are two full time mechanics on staff at the Highway Department along with other employees that have great knowledge of the equipment and repairs needed. Being able to have these people on staff saves the town a tremendous amount of money. Instead of sending the equipment to dealers' workshops, where the rates are upwards of one hundred dollars an hour, we are able to do the repairs "in house".

Some of these major repairs include rebuilding sanders that have rusted through, taking out transmissions or rear ends to rebuild and replacing springs on the trucks. We also rebuilt the transmission in our 1993 Case International tractor that is used for roadside mowing and yolk raking. On staff we have a small engine mechanic who keeps our chainsaws and small engine equipment up and running.

Within our crew we have experienced and committed men who work hard to complete the tasks that the job requires. In 2011 on top of our regular schedule of work we assisted with the work at the new town hall building which included all phases of the excavation for the exterior stairwell. The crew did the big Town Hall move, from furniture to file cabinets to boxes.

The highway crew also assisted other town entities including work for the Hamlet Park, Roe Jan Park, Sewer District, Fire District, Hamlet Committee, and the Farmers Market.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Mission

The Hillsdale Town Board oversees the development and maintenance of Hillsdale's two wonderful parks – the Hamlet Park behind old Town Hall and the Roeliff Jansen Park, just south of the Hamlet. Working with the Town Board, the committee ensures their important role in our community as safe places of fun, open space, learning, recreation, agriculture, and scenic beauty.

Jill Sims-Elster, Chair, Parks and Recreation

ROELIFF JANSEN PARK

RJP Steering Committee

Caroline Stewart, Chair

Lee Armstrong

Art Baer

Sue Delamater

Ira Halfond

Ed Herrington

Maj Kalfus

Joyce Lapenn

Todd Mitchell

Patricia Rohrlich

Donna Sena

Jill Sims-Elster

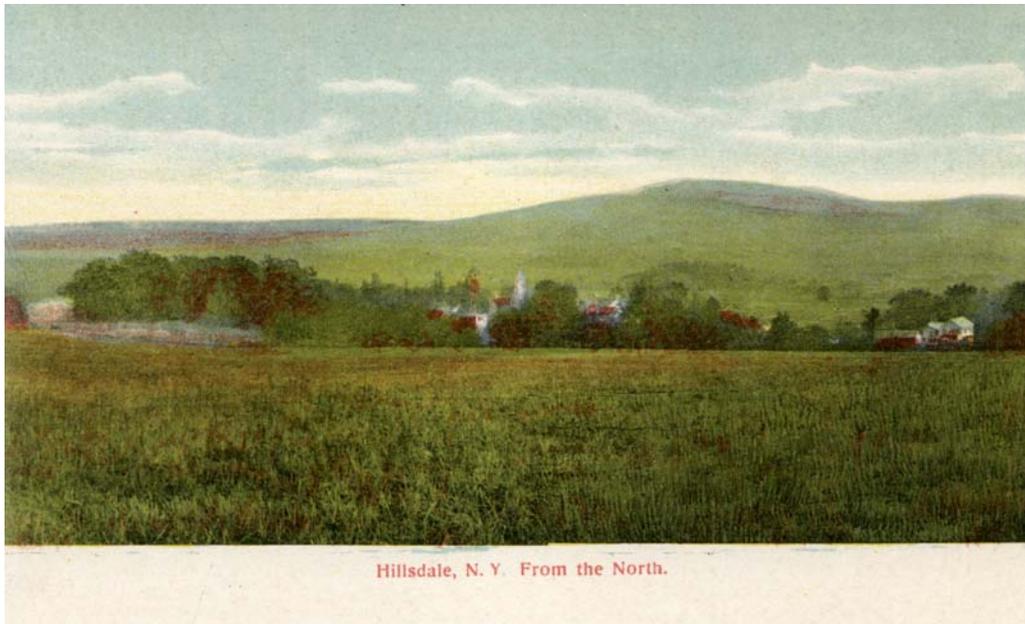
Meg Wormley

email: roejanpark@gmail.com

website: www.roejanpark.org

RJP 2011 Highlights

2011 represented the 5th year of Town of Hillsdale's management of the 300 acres of state land now known as the Roeliff Jansen Park. Half the land continues to be rented out to local farmers while the other half is made up of woods, wetland, open space, beautiful walking trails and recreational areas. The recreational areas now include a playground, sand volleyball court (also known by kids in the summer rec. program as the best sand box on the planet), dog run, and community garden. Income from the agricultural leases and farmhouse rentals continue to provide the revenue for park maintenance and improvements. In addition, the community's generous support of this wonderful park continues to provide additional funding for the ongoing physical and programmatic development of the park. More and more visitors each year appreciate the value of this community asset.



State funding was initially promised for the long-range park planning but predictably, did not become a reality.

With this in mind, the Park Steering Committee undertook a survey in late 2010 and then held a number of master planning sessions with representatives from town and community groups in 2011.

Planning recommendations were then made to the Hillsdale town board based on the combination of survey results, community input, and an assessment of funding opportunities. Among the recommendations were expansion of programming, installation of outdoor fitness equipment and a permanent bathroom and a continuation of park improvements in order to attract concerts, events and weddings.

Building improvements in 2011 involved a new roof for the harvest barn, substantial roof repairs to the salt box barn and a fresh coat of paint on two of the farm buildings. Rain will no longer be a worrying issue for the community organizations that have held events in the Harvest Barn. With a freshening up of the Hilltop barn (formerly known as the "Rec" barn), this barn is now ready to become a wedding destination. This will not only provide an income source for the park but will also hopefully generate an increase in activity to our town's Band B's, shops, restaurants and other local businesses.

Programming was expanded in 2011 to reach out to different age groups and interests. Two after dark activities included a full moon walk and a firefly hunt, both of which will be repeated in 2012. Geocaching, photographing nature, investigations into spring wildflowers, ant behavior, insects, and white tail deer, coyote howling and a sand building contest were also held. In addition, multiple fun events were held at the dog run ranging from a Halloween party with canine costumes to obedience training with

Jeanine Dunn. The Park's Annual Park Harvest Festival was held in the fall on the same day as the Roe Jan Community Library's Elenore's Walkathon and BBQ with the idea of creating a large community celebration. Unfortunately, the weather was not incredibly cooperative.

2012 Plans

Install outdoor fitness equipment area, launch a new website, develop existing park buildings for use as a revenue-generating wedding/special events venue, host a concert, and begin to make plans for modest permanent bathroom facility.

HILLSDALE YOUTH PROGRAM / Hillsdale Outdoor Park Explorers (HOPE)

Youth Program 2011 Highlights

With its mission of providing a safe, educational, purposeful and fun filled summer program for local youth, 2011 was a banner year. This was our third year in the Roeliff Jansen Park location and the program was once again six-weeks.

The location in the park has allowed for this program to develop as a true outdoor educational camp which has made it a unique municipal park program. Campers ranging in ages 5 to 11 take daily hikes both on trails and in the stream and investigate the natural world with binoculars, field guides and outdoor educators from Columbia Land Conservancy, Columbia County Soil and Water, Cooperative extension. Fran Martino leads the weekly stream ecology program.

- During the summer of 2011, the program had 57 children and was staffed by 3 adult teacher/leaders and a college-age counselor, 2 Counselors from Taconic Hills and 3 Counselors in Training.
- The program ran for six weeks from early July through mid- August and took place on Monday through Friday from 9:00 am until 3:00 pm.
- Campers worked in the community garden twice a week, snacked healthily on produce planted earlier in the growing season and then planted and tended their own vegetables.
- Community volunteers provided a wide variety of interesting programming for campers from pottery, making nature-based crafts, learning survival skills, and learning about bee-keeping.
- Swimming lessons were also available to the children one afternoon a week at the Ancram Pool.

Goals for 2012

- Hire the program director for the summer.
- Recruit counselors and staff.
- Continue to enhance and strengthen the summer program with meaningful educational and recreational activities.
- Take full advantage of the park's agricultural setting.
- Continue to recruit and involve volunteer participants to partner with us.
- Recruit 60 local children to participate in the 2012 program.
- Develop a community PR brochure that explains state-mandated camp rules and regulations monitored by the Columbia County Department of Health. This is important as the playground and sand areas where campers frequently play are legally required to be "off limits" to the public for the protection and safety of campers. This has however created some awkward situations when individuals bring children to use playground during the hours of 9 to 3 for these six weeks during the summer months. Although the RJP is for all to enjoy, during this period of time the town and park steering committee must enforce state regulations while promoting an understanding of them out in the public.
- Applications for the 2012 summer program will be available in mid-April at Town Hall and on the park and town websites.



HILLSDALE HAMLET PARK

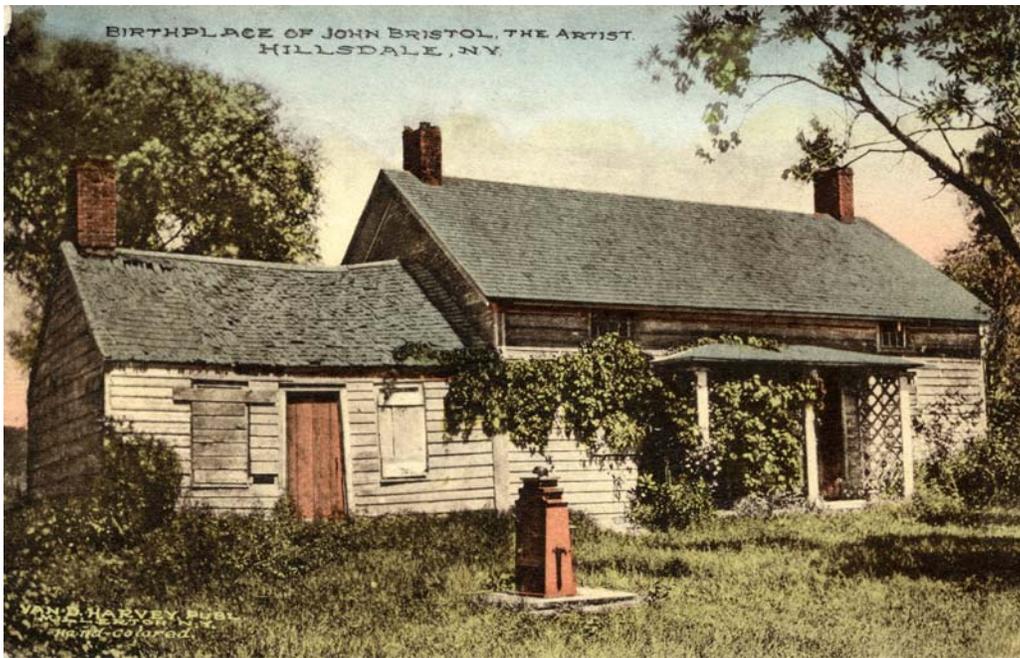
Over the years, the park behind old Hillsdale Town Hall has been home to town celebrations, summer youth programs, softball games, Easter Egg Hunts, movie nights, flea markets and Farmers Markets. A team of residents from various hamlet and park committees are working together to create and execute a plan Hamlet Park development – playground area, playing fields, landscaping, etc.

Farmers Markets

Mission

To bring together local farmers and residents in a way that builds community and supports agriculture.

- We celebrated our 5th year in 2011.
- We grew from 5 vendors to our 16.
- The market and special events were actively promoted in town newsletters.
- Local musicians performed at each market.
- Local chefs gave cooking demos using with local produce.
- We had our first cook-off.
- Special events also included a wide range of activities hosting local authors, presentations from solar company, sauerkraut-making and children's events



PLANNING BOARD

Organization

Howard (Hank) Henward, Chairman
Mark Barbato
Deborah Bowen
Richard Freiman
Charles (Bud) Gardner, III
Ellen Levy
Patti Rohrllich
Vivian deGeorges - Secretary

All members of the Planning Board are volunteers.

The Planning Board meets on the second Monday of each month at 7:30 PM in the Hillsdale Town Hall. For an appointment, call Planning Board Secretary at (518) 325-7059 or e-mail at fredviv@taconic.net.

Mission

The charter of the Board is to review and guide proposed development projects so that they are in compliance with the concepts, philosophy and regulations set forth in the Hillsdale Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance, 5/1/95 (revised 6/20/00 and further revised 6/18/2007). The principal goals of the Comprehensive Plan are to maintain the rural character of Hillsdale and protect our environment.

The Planning Board is therefore committed to maintaining the rural character of Hillsdale and protecting its environment.

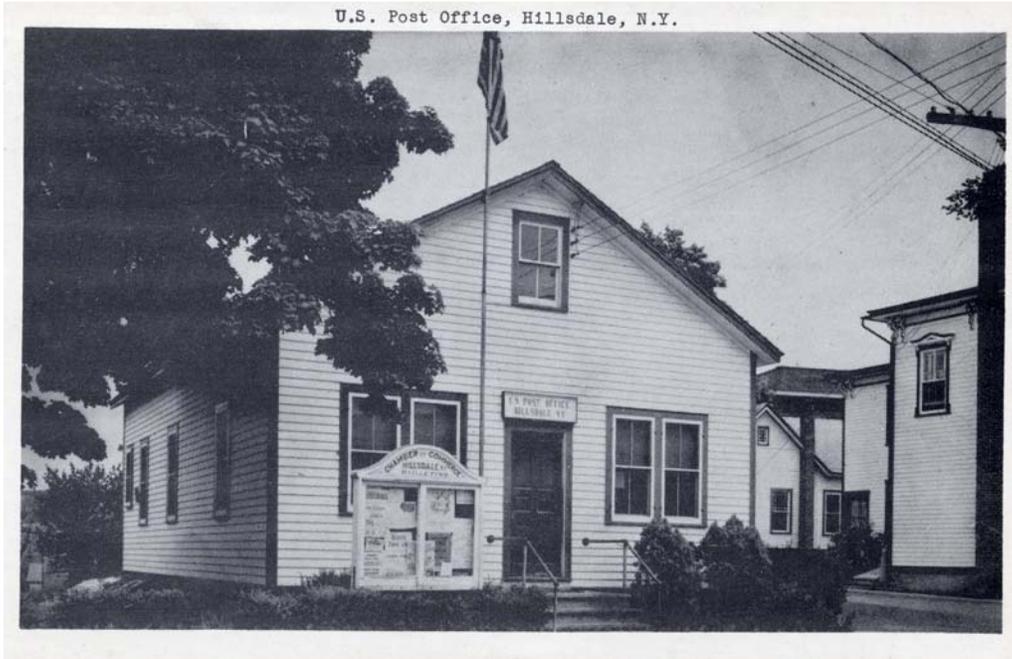
Operations

The usual business of the Board meetings includes informational sessions regarding lot line adjustments, minor subdivisions (four or less parcels), major subdivisions, which have five or more parcels and formal reviews of site plans of properties within the Ridgeline Overlay District (ROD). The Board endeavors to work with applicants during the planning process to mitigate the impact of proposed developments in keeping with the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. When the review process has been completed and all criteria have been satisfied, a public hearing is held. The Board makes a concerted effort to bring interested neighbors into the planning process so that the issues of the proposed development are addressed during the early stages of the review process.

The Board also reviews proposals by consultants to the Town and standing committees associated with The Comprehensive Plan Review to amend the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Code. This year major elements reviewed include the new Design and

Development Plan for the Hamlet of Hillsdale, Affordable Housing, the designation of an Historic District within the Hamlet and an Aquifer Study of the Town.

In 2011, 14 applicants came before the Board, only 3 new lots were created, \$3,692 in Planning Fees were collected.



SEWER DISTRICT

Organization

The District Board is the Hillsdale Town Board and its mission is to set policy and oversee operations for the Sewer District.

Sewer Committee

The original mission of the committee was to create an affordable innovative sewer system. Its current mission is to evaluate and plan expansion and /or improvements.

Committee members are

August Sena, Chairman

Bud Atwood

Joe Hanselman Jr.

Bob Hopkins

Sewer plant operator, Pat Nolan

Office Manager, Jan Keefner

Consultant, Victor Amendola (effective 2/12)

History

The sewer system has been operational since December 2008. It is the innovative solution to a problem first officially identified in 1968. In 2004 the committee began working on the problem concentrating on various designs, cost estimates and potential funding sources. The committee emphasis was to find the least intrusive, environmentally-friendly cost effective and simple to operate system possible. Construction began in 2007 and the system was fully operational by December of 2008 and restoration of properties was completed by mid summer of 2009. The committee and Town Board set \$45.00 as the target charge per EDU (EDU=single family residence) in 2006 and this is the actual charge to users.

In October 2010 a onsite tour and presentation organized by Recap Solutions occurred which highlighted our system as a cost effective, innovative and low impact solution for waste water treatment. Attendees were elected officials and system operators from various municipalities and other counties.

2011 Highlights

Addition of two new commercial users to the system:

1. Hillsdale General Store
2. Crossroads Restaurant

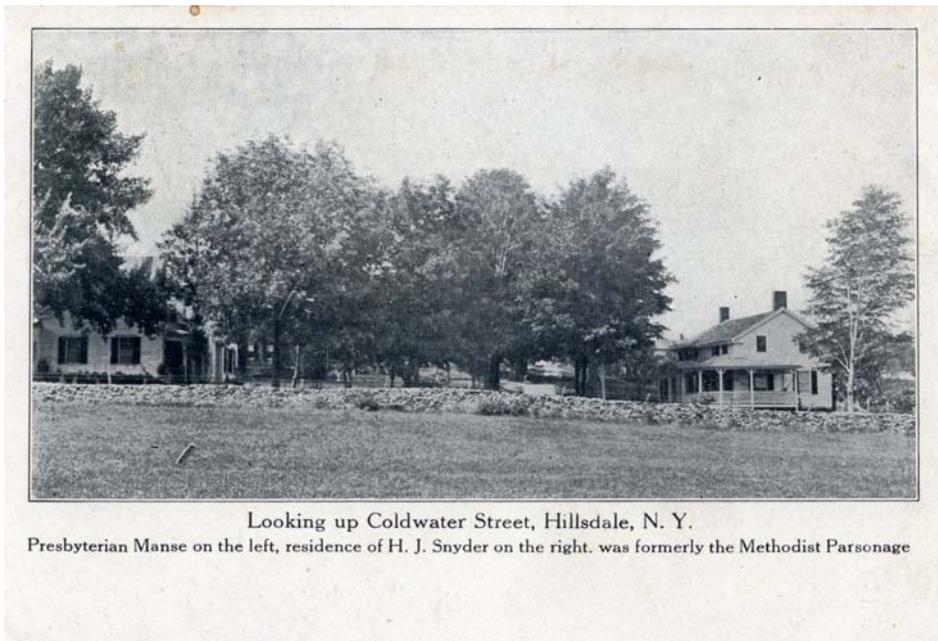
We have streamlined the application process to the Board of Health and DEC.

Goals for 2012

There is additional capacity for retail, office and residential space within the hamlet made possible by the sewer. We hope to utilize this capacity to make the hamlet a more

vibrant and attractive place for both residents and business.

- Encourage the filling of the additional capacity for growth within the district
- Continue routine and preventive maintenance of the system
- Continue training of operator and back-up staff
- Seek funds to cover cost for expansion of the district.
- Confirm expenses and EDU cost with residents/business that requested to be included in a expanded district.
- Complete the steps necessary to expand the district.
- Add 3 to 8 new connections.



TAX COLLECTOR

Organization

Tax Collector: Joe Hanselman Jr.
Deputy Tax Collector: Carol Hanselman
Phone: (518) 325-5537
Fax with advance notice at same phone number
Mailing Address: PO Box 232, Hillsdale, NY 12529

Mission

Mission Statement: Mail out tax bills when received, process payments, and issue receipts (when needed) in a timely manner. Assist residents, realtors, lending institutions, title companies, and other entities that may require tax information, duplicate bills or receipts by mail, fax or email, and now available on the web 24/7/365 at <http://egov.basny.com/hillsdale>

Operations

There are approximately 1,600 taxable parcels in Hillsdale. The total amount to be collected for 2011 is \$3,993,821.90 includes County, Town, and Fire Districts, (Light, School Re-levies, and Sewer Re-levies if applicable). All powers and duties of this office, as well as collection procedures, are statutory and defined in the New York State Real Property Tax Law.

We welcome any inquires pertaining to collection policies as well as general tax information. We offer our assistance to residents, realtors, lending institutions, title companies, and other entities that may require tax information. The tax roll is available for public inspections upon request.

The hours of the Tax Office during January only, are Tuesday, Thursday, & Saturday, 9:00 am-12:00 noon located at the Town Hall, phone (518) 325-5073. Other days or hours are available by appointment by calling our home office at (518) 325-5537.

Tax bill information is now available on the web. Information is updated daily and payments received are available as processed the following day. New owners and subdivisions will also be available the following day after processing. To access the tax bill, log into <http://egov.basny.com/hillsdale>. Once you reach the website, access the tax bill by entering owner name, sbl#, tax bill number or property address.

Our goal for 2012 is to allow residents the ability to pay their tax bill by credit card. I have had only a few residents request this, but more people are comfortable online. Please keep in mind that there will be a 2.5% surcharge on top of the tax bill for processing by credit card users and this amount goes directly to the credit card processing company and not the Town of Hillsdale.

Duties of the Office of Tax Collector

The Town of Hillsdale Tax Collector is a four-year elected position. Before entering upon the duties of the office, it is required that all tax collecting officers take and subscribe the Constitutional oath of office. Once the Collector has taken the oath, he/she becomes the insurer and guarantor of all moneys, securities, papers and records that the law provides shall be in their custody.

The Tax Collector collects the General Property Taxes in January. The bills are mailed in early January. The tax bill covers the period of January 1st. - December

31st. Payments can be made upon receipt of bill through January 31st, without penalty. If they are paid on/after February 1st, there is a penalty, see the chart below.

After May 31st, all unpaid parcels are turned over to Columbia County.

February	1%
March	2%
April	3% = \$1 Second Notice Fee
May	4% = \$1 Second Notice Fee

Payments may be made in person by check or cash and are accepted during the previous hours listed. Payments can also be made by mail to: Hillsdale Tax Collector, PO Box 232, Hillsdale, NY 12529. *Please do not send cash through the mail.*

The Property Tax bill contains levies for the Town, County, Fire District, and any special districts. In addition, if school or sewer bills are unpaid, they will be re-levied on the Property Tax Bill. If a previous owner was receiving an exemption, a payback amount may also appear in the bill which covers the time period that the new property owner enjoyed a previous owner's exemption to which they were not entitled.

The Hillsdale Tax Office does not collect School Taxes for the Taconic Hills School District. School Tax Bills are mailed in early September. The due date is specified on the bill. Please contact their tax office at (518) 325-0320 with any questions you may have regarding School Taxes. As of November 15th all unpaid School Tax bills are turned over to Columbia County, and are re-levied on the following years Property Tax Bill with an additional penalty.

Third Party Request

To assist our elderly and disabled residents, third party notification of tax bills is offered. Property owners who are disabled or 65 years of age or older, and own a one, two, or three family home, may designate an adult consenting third party to receive duplicate copies of tax bills and notices of unpaid taxes. In order to receive this service, one must fill out a third party notification form RP-923, which is available in the Tax Office.

Many residents have their taxes escrowed with lending institutions. It is the lending institution's responsibility to notify the town for which they are responsible for paying. Many banks contract with Tax Service Organizations (TSOs), which are agencies that service escrow accounts for the banks. These organizations provide us with a listing of their customers and their identifying account numbers. The larger organizations do this primarily by computer disc. In the event that a resident received a bill that should have gone to the bank, it is still the responsibility of the bank to call for that bill. If the bill should have gone to the homeowner, but went to the bank, it is the homeowner's responsibility to know that taxes are due. Please call our office immediately and we will issue you a duplicate bill. The failure to mail a statement or the failure of a property owner to receive a statement will not affect the validity of the taxes or interest prescribed by law, (New York State Real Property Tax Law §922). If you should have received a bill, but have not during the first week of January, please contact this office for a duplicate bill.

Frequently Asked Questions

I never received my bill, or received it late; do I still have to pay the penalty?

Yes, the failure to mail a statement or the failure of a property owner to receive a statement will not affect the validity of the taxes or interest prescribed by law (New York State Real Property Tax Law §922). In addition, neither the Tax Collector nor any other official has legal authority to waive statutory penalty charges. These are fixed by the Real Property Tax Law. If they are waived, the collecting officer will be personally responsible. As all records are audited by State examiners, there is absolutely no discretion in this matter. The Constitution and the law of the State mandates the procedure.

If I mail my payment on the due date do I have to pay a penalty?

No. New York State Real Property Tax Law §925, provides as follows: "Payment of taxes by mail, when enclosed in a postpaid wrapper (envelope) properly addressed to the appropriate collecting officer and is deposited in a post office or official depository under the exclusive care and custody of the United States Post Office shall, upon delivery, be deemed to have been made to such officer on the date of the United States Postmark on such wrapper. The provisions of this section shall not apply in the case of postmarks not made by the United States Post Office. A postage meter postmark is not a postmark made by the United States Post Office and, therefore, is not within in the provisions of Real Property Tax Law §925. Payments can not be deemed timely because of a postage meter postmark date on an envelope containing a tax payment (Op. New York State Comp. 69-170).

If taxes are not received until after the due date, they are not paid until after the due date unless they fall squarely within the provisions of section 925 of the Real Property Tax Law, and the penalty must be added and collected. No Town Official or employee can waive the penalty (Op. New York State Comp. 68-626).

Do you accept payment with credit cards?

No. The Town has not entered into an agreement with a credit card processing center to enable tax payers to use any major credit card to pay their property taxes. If you would choose to use this method to pay your taxes, there is a convenience fee of approximately 2% of the tax bill added to the transaction. This money goes to the credit card processing center, not to the Town of Hillsdale. There is a cost to the Town for providing this service. To keep the tax rates down, the town chose not to adopt this service, since most property owners are already complaining of high tax bills. If you are willing to pay the additional fee, please call and let us know so we can keep track of the responses for possible changes in the future.

Can I pay my taxes in installments?

The Town of Hillsdale does accept partial payments. The recommended installment is payments in thirds, the first in January, the second in March, and the final payment in May. Please be aware the penalties are still in effect and does not exempt you from paying them. Please contact this office for the amount due if you are interested in this option, especially the final payment due.

Can I pre-pay my taxes?No, the warrant constitutes the mantle of authority for the collecting officer to receive the taxes. Therefore, the warrant must be regarded as the instrument which empowers the collecting officer to begin the collection. Collection authority can not begin prior to the date of the warrant.

What if my mailing address changes?

Address changes must be made in writing. Notify either the Tax Office or the Assessor's Office by mail or fax if you wish to change your mailing address.

What if my mortgage is paid up?

In order to make sure you will receive the tax bills prior to the penalty period (February for Town/County Taxes), you must notify the Tax Office in your Town. Send or fax a copy of the "Satisfaction of Mortgage" letter from your lender.

How do I apply for exemptions?

All exemptions are handled by the Assessor's Office. Any questions, please call Pam Cook, Assessor at (518) 325-3636, Fridays between 8:30 am and 12:00 noon or email hillsdaleassessor@fairpoint.net

Why don't I see the STAR exemption?

The basic STAR exemption only affects your School Tax portion of your primary residence.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Organization

Craig Norton, Chairman
Ruth Dodds, Secretary
Casey Kuhn,
William Sullivan
Jeffrey Sills
Howard VanLenten

All members of the committee are volunteers who find this work interesting, challenging, and richly rewarding.

The Zoning Board meets the first Tuesday of the month in the Town Hall. However, if there is nothing on the agenda, there is no meeting.

Mission

To review and adjudicate land use projects which require exceptions to the standards of the Zoning Enforcement laws.

Operations

Hillsdale's innovative zoning law, which has been called "state of the art" and has become a model for other communities wishing to update outdated zoning, places an unusual amount of responsibility on the zoning board of appeals, a responsibility we take seriously. The law is deliberately worded in such a way that we frequently need to refer to the "introduction" and "title and scope" chapters to ensure that we are interpreting the law as was intended. In Hillsdale Zoning Law there are very few activities which are actually prohibited and also very few activities which are permitted without first going through the special permit process. Accordingly, property owners are afforded the greatest possible freedom in how they use their land, while at the same time providing the greatest possible protection against incompatible uses to neighbors and to the town as a whole.

2011 Activity

The Hillsdale Zoning Board of Appeals met 4 times in 2011 to consider the following:

- A public hearing for a variance to build addition to house
- 1 special use permit renewal for a music festival
- Information on a home occupation, building a pond, and a variance to remove property line when both parcels have same owner.