

2006 ANNUAL REPORT Town of Hillsdale, NY

www.hillsdaleny.com



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
TOWN CLERK.....	5
TOWN COURT.....	6
HIGHWAY COMMITTEE.....	8
HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT.....	8
SEWER COMMITTEE.....	10
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE.....	12
COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE.....	14
PLANNING BOARD.....	17
COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE.....	19
CODE AND ZONING ENFORCEMENT OFFICE.....	20
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS.....	21
ASSESSOR'S OFFICE.....	22
TAX COLLECTOR.....	25
FIRE DEPARTMENT.....	26
RESCUE SQUAD.....	28
GENERAL FUND FINANCIAL STATEMENT.....	31



INTRODUCTION



Hillsdale Town Board: L to R, Augie Sena, Peter Cipkowski, Ruth Dodds, Art Baer, Ann Baldwin, Carmen Barbato

This is the Town of Hillsdale's third annual report. We hope you find it interesting and informative. We welcome comments on your local government at work.

ORGANIZATION OF TOWN BOARD:

As of January 1, 2006, the Town Board consists of the following individuals:

Town Supervisor:

Arthur H. Baer

Councilmen:

Ann Baldwin

Carmen Barbato

Peter Cipkowski

August Sena

2006 ACTIVITY:

This year is best characterized as one of progress and preparation. A number of initiatives begun in 2005 have progressed to near completion and planned implementation in 2007.

- Passed a 2007 Budget of \$1.46 million, which represents a 1.2% increase in the General Fund and a 12 % increase in the Highway Fund. 70% of the Highway increase is due to the acquisition of a new dump truck.

- Added over \$100,000 to the 2006 year-end-fund balance.
- The Comprehensive Review Committee submitted its recommendations, and the Town Board acted on protecting ridgelines and unregulated clear cutting of woodlands.
- Received several grants and loans for the proposed sewer system: a \$500,000 grant from the USDA Rural Development Agency; an \$875,000 - 0% interest loan from the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation; a \$25,000 grant from the New York State Senate to construct a handicap accessible restroom at the Town Hall.
- Built a one-half mile easement road from Route 23 to the future wastewater treatment area.
- Established a Conservation Advisory Council to assist the Town's planning and Zoning Boards.
- Published Town's second annual report.
- Developed Town's first Emergency Management Plan.
- Supported the first monthly "Farmer's Market" at the ball field.
- Established a longevity pay program for full time Town employees.

LOOKING AHEAD:

As listed above, the Town government has taken a number of actions, which will benefit our residents in the years to come. We expect 2007 to result in even more accomplishments; however, we also expect it to be a year of significant challenges. With new construction averaging over \$10 million last year and with no end in sight, the Town Board will be under a lot of pressure to ensure this development is done in a way which balances individual property rights with the vision and guidelines of our Comprehensive Plan. Real property assessments are continuing to rise with this development; however, by keeping a watchful eye on municipal spending, we believe we can minimize its effect on the Town's portion of the tax levy.

The completion of the sewer system next year will also challenge us both in its construction and subsequent business development impact on the hamlet.

Furthermore, as our full time population exceeds 2000 for the first time in 50 years and our socio-economic base continues to shift from agriculture to home-based businesses and retirees, we need to address these changes while bearing in mind the history and character of the Town, which has made it so enjoyable to live in.

With your support, the Town government will continue to meet these challenges during the next year.

* * *

A number of additional activities were undertaken and accomplished by the various Board Committees and departments. These will be discussed in more detail later in the report.

TOWN CLERK



Town Clerk: Ruth Dodds

ORGANIZATION:

Ruth Dodds is an elected official.

Office hours are Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday 9 a.m. to noon and by appointment.

MISSION:

The mission of the Town Clerk is to accurately keep and orchestrate the legal and archival records of the town. This enables the town to move forward with a clear view of the future in relation to both the past and the present.

OPERATIONS:

The Town Clerk is the Recording Secretary for the Town Board. She authors minute books, the only official record of the activities of Town government. The resulting volumes are retained permanently for legal and historic purposes. As Records Management Officer for the Town, she is the custodian of all Town records, responsible for active files, storage and disposition and inactive records and the careful maintenance of archival material. These records include all Town Ordinances & local laws, Town Oaths of Office, resignations, annual budgets, assessment rolls, fiscal reports, zoning ordinances and maps. As Registrar of Vital Statistics, the Clerk is the keeper of all birth, death, and marriage records within our town, issuing birth, death, and marriage certificates, burial permits, as well as conducting genealogical searches.

In conjunction with these duties, the Town Clerk handles licensing and permits including marriages, dogs, conservation (hunting and fishing), handicapped parking, and other town-related activities.

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

2006 ACTIVITY:

In line with the aforesaid duties, the following fees were collected in 2006:

82 dog licenses, 72 Conservation (hunting and fishing), 12 Marriage licenses, 75 certified copies of vital records, 30 Comprehensive Plans, and 20 Freedom of Information Requests resulting in the collection of \$19,848.35 in fees. \$17,573.27 went to the State and County, \$2,275.08 stayed in our town.

TOWN COURT



Town Court: Jan Keefner, Christian Kersten, Russ Immarigeon

ORGANIZATION:

Justice Christian G. Kersten (2008)

Justice Russ Immarigeon (2007)

Jan Keefner, Clerk of the Court

Court Security, Columbia County Sheriff's Department

Court is in session every Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. in the Hillsdale Town Hall. Cases involving the Columbia County District Attorney are scheduled for the third Wednesday of each month unless otherwise announced.

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 \$3,000), tenancy, civil and criminal matters. It has the authority to arraign persons on all charges, but is generally limited to violations and misdemeanor cases. The Town Justices are also empowered to officiate at weddings within the State of New York for all who possess a valid marriage license.

OPERATIONS:

The Town of Hillsdale funds the Court and receives a flat fee of \$15 for each fine levied for 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 calendar year 2006. In November 2006, Chief Justice Kaye and Chief Administrative Judge Lippman issued an Action Plan to Town and Village Justice Courts that proposed more intensive training, as well as additional resources to support and help meet the heavy responsibilities of these courts. The Hillsdale Town Court heartily welcomes and looks forward to these enhancements.

The voters of Hillsdale elect the Town Justices to four-year terms.

2006 ACTIVITY:

Cases handled in calendar year 2006 totaled 389, consisting of 339 vehicle/traffic cases, 22 criminal cases, 24 civil cases, 1 environmental conservation (ENCON), 2 DOT and 1 Transportation case. Total fines, surcharges and civil fees were \$28,097.50, compared with \$39,036.68 in the preceding year. It should be noted that the Court is prepared to respond to the full range of cases in any given year, whether large or small. It has no control over the volume of activity that is largely determined by the New York State Police and the Columbia County Sheriff's Department. The fact that the Court handled fewer complaints in 2006 may happily be attributable to a decrease in the number of infractions within the Town of Hillsdale, and/or lower than usual levels of activity among law enforcement officers.

HIGHWAY COMMITTEE

ORGANIZATION:

Carmen Barbato (Chairman)
Bud Atwood
Ann Baldwin
Richard Briggs (Highway Superintendent)

MISSION:

The purpose of the Committee is to be a liaison between the Highway Department and the Town Board, and to oversee the expenditure of Town funds by the Department.

2006 ACTIVITY:

Participated in reporting the highway department activities to the town board.
Conducted a budget workshop to discuss needs for 2007.
Developed a ten-year schedule for the purchase of large vehicles and equipment.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT



Highway Department: L to R, Richard Briggs, Ed Brabender, Dave Hall, Robert Burns, Darryl Waite, Bill Stottlar

ORGANIZATION:

Richard Briggs	Highway Superintendent
Ed Brabender	Deputy

Dave Hall Foreman
Robert Burns
Daryl Waite
Bill Stottlar
Fred Dennis

OPERATIONS:

The Highway Department maintains 76 miles of road, more than any other town in the county, of which 35 miles are paved with blacktop, and 41 miles are dirt roads. We have added two more trucks to the fleet, a 1995 one-ton dump truck and a 2005 4x4 dump truck. We have also added a leaf vacuum to the fleet.

The 2006 Highway budget was \$8000,133.00 all of which was actually spent. This money was appropriated primarily for snow removal, general maintenance, salaries, and employee benefits.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

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

- Completed the paving of Whippoorwill Road
- Rebuilt 1800 feet of Harlemville Road
- Sealed part of Rockledge and Rodman Roads
- Installed drainage on Oxbow Road, Wolf Hill Road, Harlemville Road, and Texas Hill Road
- Installed large culvert pipes on School House Road.
- Purchased a 2006 International tandem plow truck.

GOALS FOR 2007:

providing budget constraints allow them:

- Proper maintenance of all town roads
- Drainage projects on Oxbow, Harlemville Road, Lockwood, and Pheasant Lane

Seal five miles of road.

SEWER COMMITTEE



Sewer Committee: L to R, Bud Atwood, Cheryl Jones (seated), Joe Hanselman, Bob Hopkins, Augie Sena (seated)

ORGANIZATION:

August Sena Chairman

Bud Atwood, Joe Hanselman, Bob Hopkins, Committee members

August Sena is an elected Town Councilman. All other committee members are volunteers. Other individuals who have assisted the committee in 2006 are Carman Barbato, Art Baer, Mark Barbato and Candace Balmer of RCAP solutions.

MISSION 2006:

- Obtain additional monies from USDA Rural Development and other sources
- Complete approval process with the DEC for the access roadway and the final design of the system
- Prepare bid documents and go to bid
- Negotiate with the landowner to move existing road ROW
- Complete system by winter 2006

The year 2006 has seen continued progress in making the sewer for the Hamlet of Hillsdale a reality but the process of moving the project through legal requirements and the regulatory agencies has taken longer than we expected.

In the continued search for funding we followed up on our grant applications. In 2005 we were successful with three of our applications being approved for a \$400,000 Community Development Block Grant administered by the Governor's Office for Small Cities and \$72,500 (total) from the Rhinstrom Foundation and the Hudson River Bank Foundation. In 2006 our request for funding made to U. S .Department of Agriculture Rural Development was approved and we received a grant for \$499,875 and a low interest loan for \$953,000.. Our re-application to NYSERDA for 2006 funding was not successful.

The Towns pursuit of an agreeable settlement for acquiring the needed land for the sewer facility did not have a satisfactory conclusion and the Town had to pursue eminent domain; on December 5th , 2005 Justice John G. Connor of the state Supreme Court issued an Order granting the Towns petition for the needed 4.37 acres. The dollar amount for the purchase of the land has been contested and both parties have had a preliminary Court hearing in 2006 to present their appraisals.

The Town and the landowner did reach a mutually satisfactory agreement on moving the existing road ROW. The Town did receive approval from DEC to cross the town parcel with a access road. The access road was built from Route 23 to the proposed sewer site by the town and county Highway Departments.

The town expects to meet the DEC Consent Order deadline to corrected the sewerage problems and avoid the potential fines which could be substantial. DEC did fine the Town \$3,000 for its failure to address the exsisting problem and they could fine us that amount (or more) per day if we fail to meet their deadline.

Our goals for 2007

1. obtain additional grant money through government and other sources of funding. We believe meeting our stated goal of a monthly cost of \$45 per unit is not enough and we are committed to significantly reducing the monthly user fee.
2. obtain final approval to build the system from the DEC.
3. Obtain final approval of the bidding documents
4. Go to bid in the spring of 2007 and begin construction in the summer and have the system completed and operational by late fall or early winter.

PARKS, RECREATION, and HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMITTEE



ORGANIZATION:

Committee Chairman: Peter Cipkowski

Committee Members: Melanie Arre, Cori Barbato, Lynda Brenner, Heather Canetto, Peter Cipkowski, Heidi Cottini, Tara Decker, Bette Gallup, Sally Hopkins, Jan Keefner, Mary Pollack, Mary Ann Schafer, Jill Sims-Elster, Ann Stosiek, Wonell Van Tassel, Dave Wheeler

Historic Preservation

Committee Members: Lex Lalli (chair), Timi Bates, Julia Brandi, Geoff Brookman, Liz Pike Brookman, Peter Cipkowski, Carol Hanselman, David Ruede, Amelia Sydlosky, Joan Wallstein;
Advisors: Patti Rohrlich, Iona Lutey, Herb Parmet

MISSION:

To develop and enhance the beauty of Hillsdale and coordinate its recreational opportunities.

OPERATIONS:

Most activities are fully organized and run by the volunteers on the Committee. Some activities are coordinated with other organizations including the Highway Department and the team that organized Hillsdale Community Day.

2006 ACTIVITY:

The Committee coordinates a variety of annual events, including
Easter Egg Hunt
Town Wide Clean-up Day

Hillsdale Beautification Project

Hillsdale Farm Market

Hillsdale Community Day

Holiday Tree Lighting

The committee raised \$1,200 for town whiskey barrels, flowers, and soil.

The committee raised \$2,500 for Hillsdale Community Day.

2007 OUTLOOK:

- Create a master plan for the existing Hillsdale Town Park that includes all or some of the following features: Town Pavilion, amphitheatre, native trees and shrubs, parking area, and other elements as expressed by the town.
- Develop a plan to raise money for the construction of a Town Pavilion – used for the children’s summer programs, civic and private events, and provide additional activities rain or shine.
- Search for land that will be suitable for the development of a larger town park; partner with Town Board to raise funds.
- Improve the coordination of Park activities including the Hillsdale Youth Program with coordinated activities and qualified leadership.

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION MISSION:

To promote the preservation of the unique heritage of the town of Hillsdale, including public buildings, homes, cemeteries, historic sites and trails, landscapes and other features of the town in order to protect and preserve that which gives Hillsdale its character and enhances our quality of life.

The work of the committee when it was part of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee is outlined in the attached Final Report, which identifies the goals and objectives carried forward.

2006 ACTIVITY:

Since the committee transferred to the town board, the following has happened:

- Three members of the Committee attended the Preservation Under Pressure conference offered by the Preservation League of NY State at Hyde Park on October 28. The conference was extremely useful in learning about technical services, techniques, what is happening in other states, in NY State.
- Bill Krattinger Talk – November 5, 2006. State Historic Preservation Officer Bill Krattinger took a tour of the town. He visited the Library, Aubergine and many other buildings that he felt were significant including the Church, the Mt. Washington Inn, and the Doerr House on Rte. 23. He then spoke at the Church in Hillsdale to a crowd of

100 people on the importance of preservation of historic resources. He explained the process of designating buildings as landmarks on the State and National Register of Historic Places. He indicated that designation does not limit what an owner can do with his or her property, but is more of a symbolic gesture, unless there are ordinances passed by the town to protect historic properties. He suggested that the Committee apply for a grant to the Preserve New York program of the Preservation League of NY State/NY State Council on the Arts, to hire a professional preservationist to do a survey of the historic resources of Hillsdale. He also explained that commercial buildings that were designated are eligible for state and federal funds and tax breaks, but private residences are not.

- Alexia Lalli attended the Library progress report on November 19. Library indicated it was interested in seeking designation as a landmark.

2007 OUTLOOK:

- Articles for the Independent on architecture and preservation are being sought and the Independent has indicated an interest in having a regular feature on the topic. Bill Krattinger has offered to write an article/op ed piece.
- The Committee is completing an application for funding of a survey which is due to be submitted on May 1 to the PLNYS.. The application will be completed and submitted to the Town Board for review for the March meeting.
- The owner of the Doerr House, Lisa Berman, has submitted an application for landmark designation.
- The committee members are looking into the possible renovation of historic cemeteries of Hillsdale, the Toll House on Rte. 23, and doing research on what other towns in the county are doing in this regard.
- The committee is determined to revisit many of the recommendations provided by the Hamlet Committee that might be overseen by the Town Board and ensure that they do not fade from view.

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE



Communication Committee: L to R, Steele Andrews, Bob Kessler, Ann Baldwin, Peter Cipkowski

ORGANIZATION:

Chairperson: Ann Baldwin

Members: Steele Andrews, Peter Cipkowski, Bob Kessler

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.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- The website has had over 250,000 hits this year, which is almost 100,000 more than last year.
- The Welcome Brochure was mailed to 40 new residents, additional brochures can be found in the Town Hall.
- The writing, editing, and compilation of this third annual report.
- The committee published a newsletter, entitled *The Hillsdaler*, in the Spring of 2006. Peter Cipkowski was its editor.

The costs have been minimal. They included copying, postage for mailing the brochure, and 300.00 for the Webmaster. We have a budget of \$1,000.00 for 2007.

GOALS FOR 2007:

Improvement of the website:

1. Develop communication between the townspeople and the Town Board.
 - A. Include approved minutes of Town Board meetings on the website.
 - B. Place a Suggestions and Comments section on the website.
 - C. Provide a link to the Independent's Calendar on the website.
 - D. The supervisor's newsletter should include a feedback section at the end of it, asking the reader to e-mail him or write in the comment section of the website.
 - E. Include e-mail addresses of government officials on the website.

PLANNING BOARD



Ellen Levy, Richard Freiman, Patti Rohrich, Hank Henward, Ron Morales,
Scott Cooper, Bud Gardner

ORGANIZATION:

Chairman: Howard (Hank) Henward

Vice Chairman: Scott Cooper

Committee Members:

Richard Freiman

Charles (Bud) Gardner, III

Patti Rohrich

Ron Morales

Ellen Levy

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 Robina Ward, at 518 929-2580 or e-mail her at PlanningBoard@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). The principal goals of the Comprehensive Plan are to maintain the rural character of Hillsdale and protect our environment.

The 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), and major subdivisions, which have five or more parcels. 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.

2006 ACTIVITY:

PROJECT UNDER CONSIDERATION:

- Joseph Haley - School House Road - minor subdivision
- Alfred Matikow - Old Highway/Texas Hill Road - minor/major subdivision
- Frank Mac Gruer - Green River - major/minor subdivision

PROJECTS REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

- Kathleen Williams - a Community Land Trust creating four cluster houses on a 12.6 acre parcel.
- Peter Greer - Dawson Road - major subdivision
- Gregory Olsen - Mitchell Street - major subdivision
- Neil Costa - Ridge Lane - minor subdivision
- Brendan Maloof/Les Partners - Mitchell Street - major Subdivision
- Chris Bloch - Dugway Road - minor subdivision
- Broadway, Inc. - East End Hill - industrial building site plan review
- Tom Mansfield - Overlook Drive - minor subdivision

OTHER BUSINESS:

Resignation of Board Member Mary Lou Kersten and term expiration of Ellen Levy
Received \$2360.00 in application fees and \$5400.00 in recreation fees.

Members of the Planning Board were active participants in most of the Comprehensive Plan Review Subcommittees

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

ORGANIZATION:

Chairman: Patti Rohrlich

Steering Committee:

Julia Brandi

Alexia Lalli

Ellen Levy

Caroline Stewart

Sabina Curti

Iona Lutey

Gretchen Stevens

Robina Ward

The committee is made up of residents of Hillsdale, all volunteers.

BACKGROUND:

The CPRC was formed ON August 30th 2005 at the suggestion of Supervisor Art Baer. Patti Rohrlich was appointed Chairman. A meeting on August 30, open to all members of the community, was held to start the organizational procedure for this effort. Some fifty residents attended the meeting and a majority of those in attendance volunteered to work on one of the six subcommittees formed at that time - Hamlet, Natural Resources, Affordable Housing, Enforcement, Agriculture, and Scenic Overlay. Subsequently a new committee was added, the Heritage Committee.

Each of these subcommittees submitted written recommendations to the Town Board during the summer of 2006. Some groups thought there was more work to be done, others believed their work was complete. Some of these recommendations were general and open-ended, others were very specific.

The Town Board reviewed all the recommendations and conducted many information meetings with members of the public, including members of the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals. In the Fall the Board decided to consider the recommendations of the Scenic Overlay Committee, and asked Attorney Dick Alford to draft a local law, which would amend and supplement the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Regulations of 1995. This new law will specifically address preserving the ridgelines and steep slopes in the town, as well as regulating clear-cutting.

Workshops and a public hearing on the final proposal will be held in 2007.

CODE AND ZONING ENFORCEMENT OFFICE



Code and Zoning Enforcement Officers: Ed Ferratto, John Florio

ORGANIZATION:

John Florio, Code Enforcement Officer/Zoning Enforcement Officer
Ed Ferratto, Deputy Code Enforcement Officer

The Town Board appoints both positions.

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 9-11 AM. Inspections are performed Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

Mission:

- The zoning officer investigates complaints about possible zoning violations and determines if building plans are in compliance with the Town's Comprehensive Plan.
- The Code Enforcement Officer reviews the plans and issues building permits. He then inspects the buildings to determine if they are in compliance with NYS Building Codes and the permit. If they are, a Certificate of Occupancy is issued.

Ed Ferratto has been the Zoning Officer for the Town of Hillsdale since January 2005. The responsibilities are to determine building setbacks, issue building permits, area variances, and special use permits. In addition the zoning officer responds to resident complaints about properties.

The complaints are in the form of letters, phone calls or office visits. Complaints for property violations are usually for debris, unregistered automobiles, or building done without a building permit. These complaints often require several visits from the zoning officer before the individuals come into compliance with either the Town's Comprehensive Plan, or the New York State Building Codes, or the New York State Property and Maintenance Codes.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS



Zoning Board of Appeals: L to R Rocco Defronzo, Craig Norton, Jeffrey Sills, Robert Kress, Casey Kuhn is missing

ORGANIZATION:

Craig Norton, Chairman
Robert Kress, Secretary
Rocco Defronzo
Casey Kuhn
Jeffrey Sills

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

The Zoning Committee meets the first Tuesday of the month in the Town Hall. Issues

MISSION:

The Zoning Board of Appeals issues permits and variances to applicants who need special permission due to the interpretation of the Comprehensive Plan by the Zoning Officer or Planning Board.

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.

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE**ORGANIZATION:**

Peter H. Ostrander, IAO

Email: assessor@taconic.net; post@valstar.net

Office Hours: Thursday & Saturday 9 - noon and by appointment.

MISSION:

To determine the value of real property within the town and to convert this value into an assessment. As the major component in the computation of real property tax bills, the accuracy of this assessment is essential to the equitable distribution of tax liabilities.

OPERATIONS:

The primary duty of the assessor is to prepare and maintain the annual assessment roll. An appointed assessor must be a New York State Certified Assessor, maintain ongoing education standards as set forth by the State; have a minimum of three years full time experience; and be proficient in the use of the TSL System program.

In the course of preparing this roll, the assessor is expected to perform many administrative functions. These include:

- Maintenance of an up-to-date physical description, or inventory, and value estimate of every parcel of real property in the town.
- Inspection of new construction and major improvements to existing structures in order that the record of each properties physical inventory is current, and the appropriate improvements are assessed.
- Maintaining assessment records in the computer assessment system.

- Keeping assessments at a uniform percentage of value and within the parameters necessary to receive maintenance aid.
- Receiving, approving, and tracking property tax exemptions, including senior citizen, veterans, agricultural, STAR and, business exemptions.
- Reviewing transfers of real property in the town for accuracy.
- Preparing legal notices as required by law.
- Meeting with property owners to address their questions and concerns regarding their assessments and the assessment process.
- Being present at public hearings of the Board of Assessment Review (BAR).
- Filing the Annual Assessor's Report with the State

Certification and Educational Requirements: An appointed assessor must be a New York State Certified Assessor, or be approved by the Office of Real Property Services prior to appointment, and maintain the continuing education standards set forth by the State. Additionally, the assessor should have prior full time assessment experience, and, be computer literate and proficient in the use of the Assessing System program.

Assessment History 2001-2005: The Town began an Annual Assessment Plan in 2001 and maintained a 100% Equalization Rate for two years. In order to maintain this level, assessments were raised a minimum in each of those two years. In 2003, faced with a third year raise of at least 10% the Equalization Rate was allowed to drop to 90% even with a 6% raise in assessments. In 2004 market pressures would have required a raise of at least another 15% for a total of over 40% in four years. Thus, the change was limited to three percent and the rate dropped to 83%. In 2005 all residential, farm, and vacant properties were reassessed, adding \$100,000,000 of assessed value to the tax base. This increase in value resulted in a 100% equalization rate for 2005. Additionally, the NYS Office of Real Property Services recognized the Town of Hillside for Excellence in Equity for the 2005 Roll.

Assessment Plans 2006-2007: The Town converted from the TSL computer assessment system to the RPS V4 system late in 2005. Thus, the Town has acquired a much improved analysis and assessment tool. In 2006 the new system will be fine tuned with the adjustment of cost and income analysis parameters. Exemptions will be verified and new construction added to the roll, together with updated property photographs. Additionally, neighborhoods are being redefined, their market trends updated, and, land tables are being reconstructed in preparation for a full reassessment in 2007. The 2006 Tentative Roll will go to the printer on April 17th. Plans for 2006 and 2007 are to achieve 85% and 100% Levels of Assessment respectively.

The current Office of Real Property CAMA [Computer Aided Mass Appraisal] and Sales Models indicate that an increase of 15% to 25% would be required to reach an Equalization Rate of 100% in 2006. However, while this is consistent with the recent sales analysis, and, because there are early indications of a slowdown in the number of sales, it is believed that a 2007 revaluation will require only minimal increases beyond those which would have been required this year (2006). And, should the real estate market suffer a setback, it may be possible to escape 2007 with only minor value adjustments to maintain equity.

2006-07 Assessor Report: Town of Hillsdale

During the 2006 valuation period, 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 real property values continued to rise. However Early in 2006 there was evidence of a reduction in real estate activity and a weakening market. This trend has been further substantiated by the continued drop in activity in recent months.

Because the valuation market trails the actual market by one year we were faced with the unenviable prospect of having to raise assessments by 40% during an apparent market slowdown. Thus, assessment changes during 2006 were limited to new construction and additions/alterations. This resulted in a drop in the equalization rate to 78%.

Preliminary studies indicate that holding the 2006 assessment level into 2007 should not result in more than a six to eight point equalization drop for 2007. Significantly less than the increase need to stop the decline. Additionally, If the trend continues, a revaluation for 2008 should be less traumatic than some previous reassessments.

On 1 September 2006, we, together with the Town of Austerlitz, applied for a Real Property Tax Administration Technology Improvement Grant. This would have permitted us to place assessment and sales information online. Unfortunately, our application was not approved. However, we have determined the reason for the rejection and will be applying again for the 2008 Grant Program.

On 1 February 2007 Hillsdale and Austerlitz filed an application to become a Combined Assessment Unit. This application has been approved for 1 July 2008. A combined assessment municipality uses the same assessor and follows the same assessment calendar. In order to acquire uniformity and better assessment equity the towns will be conducting a revaluation for 2008. As mentioned, above a reassessment for 2008 should be less traumatic than some previous reassessments.

Because I am leaving 30 April 2007, we have been training a replacement that shares my assessment philosophy. I will be available to assist this replacement with the filing of the 2007 roll, through the 2008 Real Property Tax Administration Technology Improvement Grant Program, the 2008 reassessment, and the filing of the 2008 roll.

As we approach the end of our assessment year (30 June 2007) we are reviewing the Town's assessments for assessment equity, updating building permit and inventory records, and, reviewing exemption information for accuracy. Additionally, we will be finalizing the Combined Assessment Program with the Town of Austerlitz.

TAX COLLECTOR



Joe Hanselman Jr. is the tax collector for the town of Hillsdale. It is an elected position.

The tax collector prints the tax bills and mails them to the property owners. He collects the tax money due and keeps complete records.

Copies are readily available from him at his place of work or by way of a fax machine.

There are 1565 tax parcels in Hillsdale.

Joe Hanselman Jr.
Taconic Valley Lawn and Garden 325-4611 ext. 11
Home 325-5537
Mailing Address PO Box 232

HILLSDALE FIRE DEPARTMENT



Fire Department: L to R, top: Fred Miller, Mark Edelman, Richard Briggs, Robert Burns; bottom: Clif Conklin, Teddy Baird, Bill Stottlar

ORGANIZATION:

Executive Officers

President: George W. Stottlar

Vice President: Brian C. Edelman

Secretary: Chad Malarchuk

Treasurer: Leland W. Edelman, Jr.

Company Trustees:

Robert Hopkins

James Knickerbocker

Richard Miller

Line Officers

Chief: Frederick R. Miller

1st Asst. Chief: Mark C. Edelman

2nd Asst. Chief: Richard H. Briggs

1st Capt.: Robert W. Burns

2nd Capt.: Clifton Conklin

1st Lieut.: Teddy M. Baird

2nd Lieut.: George W. Stottlar

Fire Police

Captain: Herbert Schmeichel

Lieut.: Robert Briggs, Sr.

Fire District Commissioners

Chairman: Robert Arnholter

Secretary: Herbert Schmeichel

Treasurer: Betsy Edelman

George Atwood

Fred Canetto

Thomas Kane

Ladies Auxiliary Officers

President: Wina Briggs

Vice President: Betsy Edelman

Secretary: Heather Conklin

Treasurer: Sandra Arnholter

Total Members: 45 - 100% volunteer

MISSION:

To be on call 24/7 to respond to all town emergencies and to assist as requested with neighboring Fire Departments.

OPERATIONS:

- Hillsdale provides major funding to the Department. 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.
- Five new firefighters completed a 26 week Fire Firefighting 1 course. This course is mandatory training for all new members and is taught by State Instructors.
- "smoke out" - a training exercise where a "smoke machine" is utilized in the Fire House to create a situation where the Fireman cannot see. "Air packs" are then used and the Fireman practice moving through an area without any sight. This helps the fireman to search in the thick of a fire.
- Further, there is "OSHA" training and other life-safety drills. The training is extensive and certification is awarded to those that meet all requirements.
- The Firehouse is solely owned by the Fire Company.
- Funding comes from public donations.
- Fire equipment and apparatus is owned by the Fire District.
- The Fire Company's major fund raising events include the Palm Sunday Brunch and the Annual Ball.

2006 ACTIVITY:

Total calls	86
Fire Alarms	14
False Alarms	22
Good intent	6
Hazardous conditions	20
Rescue/ems	11
Service	13
Volunteer hours	
Drills	405
Fires	1264
Training	1685
Other (fund raisers, etc)	1863
Total	5217

COMMUNITY RESCUE SQUAD



Rescue Squad: Harold Jensen, Hank Lambert, Betsy Edelman, Jeanie Scottie, Patti Proper, Dee Dee Shadic, Diane Hamm

283 Mountain View Road
P.O. Box 327
Copake, New York 12516
(518)329-2200 Fax (518) 329-2159

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Betsy Edelman, Executive Director
Harold Jensen, Director
Diane Ham, Director
Danielle Shadic, Director

ADMINISTRATION

Jeanie Scotti, Administrator
P. Henry Lambert, Assistant Administrator, ALS Coordinator
Patti Proper, Treasurer

PROGRAMS

CLASSES:

CPR Classes and Health Care Provider Education, many of our members are trained and NYS certified to instruct these classes.

BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS:

At anytime you can come into our station and have one of the on duty personnel check your blood pressure for free.

WHEEL CHAIR or OTHER MEDICAL EQUIPMENT:

If you need to borrow a wheelchair, walker, crutches or may be a cane. We have a supply of donated equipment you may borrow simply by filling out an equipment loan form. Then return it when you or your loved one is back on their feet.

RESTAURANT CPR EQUIPMENT:

This program helps the local eating establishment comply with the Health Law that requires them to provide CPR equipment in their restaurant. This equipment is available to anyone with Experience in CPR incase a patron suffers a cardiac arrest or respiratory arrest and is used until EMS arrives.

PATHWAY TO REMEBERANCE:

This is a brick walkway at our building that by purchasing a brick you may remember a loved one or a special person or pet in your life. This pathway has grown beautifully over the years.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

The staff regularly attends community days and community events. As well as school events and special programs to promote the better health of our community members.

We are Proud of our Volunteer Board Members and our Staff Employees for there continued efforts through out the year.

PERSONNEL

NYS PARAMEDICS: 23
NYS ADVANCED EMTS: 2
NYS CERTIFIED FIRST RESPONDERS:1

NYS EMTS: 23
VOLUNTEERS:8

EQUIPMENT

2003 Ford Van Type III Ambulance
2004 Ford Van Type III Ambulance Four Wheel Drive
2, State of the art Heart Monitors
Total miles traveled 58,072 by both or units

CALL VOLUME

Total 911 Calls: 823

BREAK DOWN OF CALLS

Patient was transported to a Hospital 512 times
Patient condition required Advanced Life Support 327 times
Patient condition required Basic Life Support 185 times
The patient refused care or refused to go to the Hospital 130 times
We stood by at a fire scene 130 times
We stood by at a community event 38 times
Requested mutual aid from area agencies 40 times
Gave mutual aid to other areas on there request 53 times
Helicopter transport for critically injured patients 16 times

The Community Rescue Squad is dedicated to providing the best and most cost effective Advanced Life Support to our community members. We provide this pre-hospital care 24 hours a day 365 days a year. Our staff trains many hours each year to insure they have the most up to date information and techniques to care for our patients. This dedication is something we applaud our employees and volunteer's for.

**Town of Hillsdale
General Fund
Comparative Summary of Fund Balance, Revenue and Appropriations
for the years ended December 31, 2005 and December 31, 2006**

	12/31/2005 Actual	2006 Adjusted Budget	12/31/2006 Actual	2006 Variance
Fund Balance 1/1	<u>\$ 381,211.00</u>		<u>\$ 420,908.00</u>	
Revenues				
Property Taxes	\$ 148,435.00	\$ 140,752.00	\$ 140,752.00	\$ -
Paid in Lieu of Taxes			1,227.00	\$ (1,227.00)
Penalties on Taxes	8,730.00	6,000.00	6,513.00	(513.00)
Sales Tax & Franchise Fees	140,795.00	110,000.00	151,194.00	(41,194.00)
Department Income	78,627.00	3,580.00	78,442.00	(74,862.00)
Intergovernmental Charges	15,956.00	15,100.00	15,991.00	(891.00)
Interest Earnings	10,964.00	17,300.00	27,244.00	(9,944.00)
Licenses & Permits	409.00	35,500.00	1,503.00	33,997.00
Fine & Forfeitures	17,016.00	16,300.00	17,079.00	(779.00)
Sales	8,650.00		4,336.00	(4,336.00)
Insurance Recovery & Misc	914.00		7,404.00	(7,404.00)
State Aid	152,588.00	94,278.00	145,920.00	(51,642.00)
Federal Aid	3,452.00			-
Appropriated Fund Balance		121,350.00		
Total Revenue	<u>\$ 586,536.00</u>	<u>\$ 560,160.00</u>	<u>\$ 597,605.00</u>	<u>\$ (158,795.00)</u>
Total Revenue & Fund Balance	<u>\$ 967,747.00</u>		<u>1,018,513.00</u>	
Appropriations				
General Government Support	\$ 186,276.00	\$ 219,701.00	\$ 196,434.00	\$ 23,267.00
Public Safety	31,709.00	34,737.00	25,523.00	9,214.00
Health	260.00	260.00	270.00	(10.00)
Transportation	60,901.00	64,690.00	69,169.00	(4,479.00)
Economic Assistance	1,389.00	2,754.00	1,548.00	1,206.00
Culture & Recreation	51,391.00	52,071.00	47,452.00	4,619.00
Home & Community Service	84,781.00	87,513.00	35,481.00	52,032.00
Employee Benefits	80,132.00	91,351.00	86,896.00	4,455.00
Interfund Transfers	50,000.00	50,000.00		50,000.00
Total Appropriations	<u>\$ 546,839.00</u>	<u>\$ 603,077.00</u>	<u>\$ 462,773.00</u>	<u>\$ 140,304.00</u>
Fund Balance 12/31	<u>\$ 420,908.00</u>		<u>\$ 555,740.00</u>	