

Village of Fort Edward
Board of Trustees – Special year end meeting
Monday, May 27, at 4:00 p.m.

Deputy Mayor Williams called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

Roll Call: Trustee Carpenter, Trustee Cutler, Trustee Boucher
Mayor Traver arrived and continued the meeting at 4:15 pm

Fiscal Year End meeting

Board business centered on routine finance approvals, capital equipment decisions, and several infrastructure and staffing issues. Members approved bill payments and a year-end budget transfer resolution, then discussed builder's risk coverage for the water tower project, financing and approving a replacement truck, and setting up XpressPay for online payments. They also addressed bathhouse cleaning help, tractor repairs, park trespassing and railroad safety, Underwood Park monument work, summer DPW/water staffing, leaf pickup enforcement, water line and road projects, a leak billing dispute, and deputy clerk coverage and recruiting.

Outline

Bill payments and fund balance

The clerk reported that the village had about \$200,000 in fund balance, which was considered typical for this point in the year. The board approved the bills and noted that June bills would likely be smaller because the month is usually light for a 12A abstract.

Bills for Abstract 12A

General PBA - \$11,046.50 General Abstract - \$2,364.91
Water PBA - \$2,912.41 Water Abstract - \$7,565.47

A motion to pay the bills was made by Trustee **Carpenter**, seconded by Trustee **Cutler**. All ayes. Motion carried.

Year-end budget transfer resolution

The clerk introduced Resolution 43 to authorize transfers from surplus accounts to deficiency accounts for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Total expenditure did not exceed the budgeted amount of \$1,949,345, and surplus funds exceeded deficit amounts. Because the surplus exceeded the deficit, the board did not need to list every individual account transfer in the resolution. Trustees noted that the police budget was over by more than \$65,000, which had already been anticipated, and then approved the resolution to complete year-end account cleanup.

Resolution #43

Authorize the Clerk-Treasurer to transfer money from surplus accounts to deficiency accounts for the 25-26 fiscal year budget

Motion by Trustee **Boucher**
Seconded by Trustee **Cutler**
Date May 27, 2026

WHEREAS, the 2025-2026 total expenditures did not exceed the budgeted amount of \$1,949,345.00 and;

WHEREAS, the Fort Edward Village Board of Trustees does hereby authorize the clerk-treasurer to transfer money from the surplus accounts to the deficiency accounts for the 2025-2026 fiscal year and;

WHEREAS, the village clerk-treasure will include a list of deficient and surplus accounts with this resolution, and;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, this resolution shall take effect immediately.

All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Builder's risk insurance for the water tower project

The board reviewed a builder's risk insurance quote related to the water tower project, with a premium of about \$13,000. The quote showed a project value of about \$4.3 million and a coverage period from May 30, 2026, to November 27, 2026. Trustees questioned whether the village was actually responsible for obtaining this insurance, since the project appeared to be covered under the contractor or project financing structure. The renewal deadline was June 1, so the issue needed to be clarified quickly. The board decided to wait and have Matt Fuller explain whether the insurance cost was already included in the project budget or should be handled separately.

New truck financing and replacement plan

The board discussed financing options for a new village truck for the water department with a total cost of about \$56,000. Greenwich Ford would not finance the purchase for a municipality, so the village would need another financing method. Members discussed a five-year payment approach, with annual payments estimated at a little over \$10,000 rather than monthly payments. Trustees noted that the purchase would likely be included in a future budget cycle and did not need to be funded immediately. The existing truck was described as mechanically usable but with a badly rotted box, and the group discussed whether the body might be replaced or reused.

Approving the replacement truck

The group agreed that the truck under discussion was a clear upgrade over the older red truck and would serve as a better temporary or replacement vehicle. The old red truck should be retired and possibly sold at auction, with the proceeds used toward the new truck purchase or related costs. A motion to purchase the truck was made by Trustee **Williams** and seconded by Trustee **Boucher**. If the truck needs additional work, Trius could inspect it or weld it so it can last another year or two. All ayes. Motion carried.

Setting up Xpress Pay for online bill payments

The board discussed using Xpress Pay so residents can pay taxes, water rents, and water bills by credit card. Speaker comments noted that the county has used the same service for about 10 years and that it works well. The system could help collect more payments, especially from residents who currently ask why bills cannot be paid online. The convenience fee would be paid by the customer, not the town, so town revenue would not be reduced. The setup could be completed quickly, possibly by the next day, and the new payment option would be included on the next water bills and on social media notices. A motion was made to sign up for Xpress Pay by Trustee **Carpenter** and seconded by Trustee **Cutler**. All ayes. Motion carried.

Hiring help for the bathhouse cleaning

A board member said he wanted someone to clean the bathhouse but did not want to make the decision alone. A candidate from 41 East Street was discussed, and Brandon the postal carrier vouched for him as a good person who recently moved into the area and owns a small landscaping business. Another possible backup candidate at 113 Broadway apartments, was mentioned in case the first person did not work out. The job was expected to be a small stipend role, around \$350 per month, with responsibility for showing up about three times a week for an hour or two. The cleaner would also be asked to hose down the sidewalk and help remove geese mess where needed. The clerk will call the candidate and report back.

Repairing the backup tractor

The tractor that had been sitting unused for two years needed inspection, and Tom Wolfe would analyze it and estimate repairs. Tom reportedly told Janelle that the parts would probably cost no more than \$800, which was already considered a high estimate. The town's old mower tractor was described as finally wearing out after about 30 years of reliable use. Two 5-gallon buckets of hydraulic fluid had already been purchased from John Deere in Greenwich so work could continue. The group agreed that if the repair estimate stays reasonable, the tractor should be fixed so Rogers Island has a reliable backup.

Enforcing no-trespassing rules at the park

A recent incident was described in which a driver cut across the field near the Idle Hour despite signs warning against entry. When confronted, the driver became hostile, and the sheriff was called and arrived in about 17 minutes. Another member was pleased that surveillance cameras and warning signs are now in place. The group confirmed that repeated violations are still happening even though the signs clearly prohibit entrance onto park land. Enforcement and visible signage were emphasized as important because some people continue to ignore the rules.

Reporting repeated train-crossing near misses

A resident in Argyle called after nearly hitting a train again on Route 4 and was very upset. Canadian Pacific reportedly said the local municipality must submit a formal complaint to the FRA before action can be taken. The group noted that there was already an accident report from a previous collision and that visibility at the crossing is poor. It was noted that some crossings are privately owned, and Irving was suggested as another party to contact because multiple incidents have occurred. One member recalled that after an earlier accident, police used to be stationed there with advance warning, but that practice no longer seems to happen. A board member said he would call Irving to raise concerns about the repeated incidents and ask what their personnel are doing about safety.

Railroad crossing lights and infrastructure responsibility

The group discussed whether the lights near Route 4 Railroad crossing and up the hill were ever properly powered, and it appeared that the wire and conduit were never connected to them. It was suggested that the existing infrastructure likely falls under Irving's responsibility because the repair and concrete work were theirs. Another member noted that if the installation involves a light, the New York State DOT may need to weigh in, and suggested contacting DOT about requirements. The only visible railroad signage at the crossing was Route 4 railroad crossing marking in the road, and no additional required equipment was identified. One member planned to email the photo or related information so it could be used in further correspondence.

Irving donation proposal and reporting concerns

Irving expressed interest in Mill Street and Eddy Street and offered to donate \$50,000 to the Marketplace for the bathhouse or bandstand instead of taking those streets. The village could not accept more than \$50,000 without triggering additional IRS reporting requirements on the annual filing. Crossing the \$50,000 threshold would increase administrative burden, and the current budget and reporting cap were discussed. The group raised the possibility of using another entity or consulting Matt Fuller and an accountant to find a workable structure. Alternatives discussed included Irving providing in-kind services, hiring a contractor directly, or contributing through a different arrangement to avoid prevailing wage and reporting complications. It was also noted that the organization files a 990 annually and therefore has a higher accountability level, which explains why the reporting threshold matters.

Underwood Park monument work with DPW support

Paul McCarty called about the monuments at Underwood Park and wanted Mr. Loisel Monuments involved, but Mr. Loisel has a bad back and cannot do the lifting himself. The clerk contacted Jeff, who agreed that DPW could work with Paul and assist with the project. The village may need to provide the raw materials, and the clerk asked how the memorial stones will be lifted and handled safely. It was noted that monuments are typically delivered and handled by the monument company, so the logistics may already be standard practice. The group also noted that little or none of the memorial money has been spent, so the project can likely be funded from the existing amount without additional village cost.

14. Recruiting summer help for DPW and water department tasks

The need to hire someone from the water department or an additional helper for ABW/water work over the summer was raised. Billy would benefit from having someone handle lawn and grounds work while he focuses on other tasks, and the village has equipment that can support that work. Potential candidates discussed included Jackson, who may prefer work with the canal, and Brian Tripp's son, who is looking for a summer job and is seen as a strong worker. Leap is still taking applications through the end of the week and expects to have candidates next week, with the agency paying for that recruiting process. Prior pay rates were discussed, with about \$18 per

hour recalled for a similar position, and the group agreed the role should pay more than minimum wage. Other possible candidates mentioned included Joseph Eastman, PJ Solero, Pat Mullins' son, a Gardner family worker, and Brian Phelps, who was to be asked to complete an application.

Replacement staffing and CDL/B-license hiring needs

The group discussed whether a candidate pursuing a CDL could be used for future village needs, including potentially driving a fire truck or helping around the village. The village is likely going to need to hire someone to replace Brett, and the replacement had originally been discussed as a B-licensed worker. It was noted that if the current employee is not contributing, the village may not be sorry to see the position change. The employee had not yet received a formal job offer and was only on the list to attend the academy, so the village could still remove the person from consideration.

Negotiations on pay, benefits, and holiday coverage

Jeff had already told Pete that the prior discussion involved a 3% change across the years and that Jeff would follow up later. Health insurance costs were rising by another 5%, and the village emphasized that it was not trying to add new burden to the proposal. Paid vacation time and other existing benefits were already a significant expense, so the village needed the other side to recognize the financial pressure. Staffing was thin on recent workdays, with only one or two employees present at times, which made it difficult to complete bag pickup and other tasks.

Leaf and brush pickup enforcement

Staff were finding bags filled with dirt, dog waste, and other heavy debris instead of leaves, making them too heavy to handle safely. Residents were using leaf bags for materials they were not intended to hold, including soil and mixed yard waste. The crew was instructed to leave highlighted notices in mailboxes when bags are filled incorrectly so residents understand why the bags were not collected. Oversized brush piles that are too large for normal collection were also discussed as a strain on staff as well and flyers could be used for the brush as well.

Road entrance project and water line bid timeline

The road entrance work was expected to be finished by Friday, including paving, and was described as wide and gradual. Bids for the water line project were scheduled to close on the 24th. The project award was expected on the first of the month. The group also discussed the possibility of a second sewer line being installed on private property, depending on the final layout.

Water line leak, Canal Corp issues, and billing next steps

There had been no recent response on the water line issue, and Aaron from Canal Corp had raised new complications involving the Department of Health and SHIPA. The village still needed to calculate the amount of water lost since the leak began, using the leak start date and an estimated flow of 10 to 15 gallons per minute. The group agreed the village should send a bill rather than wait, because the responsible party was already benefiting from the water service and should be charged for the loss. It was clarified that the bill would go to Ken, with the possibility of dividing the cost among the appropriate parties later. Permitting delays could prevent a quick fix, and temporary workarounds such as running a line across the bridge were discussed to help identify whether the leak is in the canal area.

External agency coordination on water and property access

Keith was dealing with SHPO and did not fully understand the process, which created additional questions. The village referenced its prior experience with SHPO during the kayak launch project as a reason the issue felt familiar. Aaron's communication was described as blunt, but the village still needed a clear billing and reporting process every quarter or on a similar schedule. The group discussed how canal-related permitting and agency involvement could force the outside party to act sooner rather than later.

East Street work, sewer line, and WCC property discussions

A rumor from a resident suggested East Street might be closed during the work, but no such closure had been confirmed. The project was expected to be done by Tuesday, and some of the planned entrance work had already been coordinated. The team discussed adding a second sewer line, though the line would likely remain on the

property itself. WCC was working on purchasing the land where the water line enters, and three parcels were involved, with two already assigned values and the third possibly being donated for tax reasons.

Deputy clerk job posting and candidate screening

The deputy clerk position was suggested to be posted on Indeed for only a couple of days so the office would not be overwhelmed with applicants. Possible candidates included Tyler and Paige Harris. No specific accounting background was required because the main need was someone who could learn the system. Applicants from Indeed would need to be screened carefully, and the clerk said she usually filters candidates before printing applications for review. Village residency was considered desirable but not essential, since the priority was finding a reliable person quickly.

Deputy clerk coverage and recruitment plan

Peter would be out in another week and might be away for three to four months, creating a staffing gap. A substitute had been helping but did not want to become full-time, while still offering temporary assistance. School crossing coverage would continue through Mike and the school for Broadway and K Street until the current arrangement stabilized. The group agreed that active recruitment for a deputy clerk was needed because a part-time arrangement did not seem workable long term.

Respectfully submitted,

Janelle Rose
Village Clerk-Treasurer