As you begin to wind down for the holidays and new year, I hope this letter finds you happy and well. My intent is to keep this message optimistic and uplifting, as we can all use positive inspiration and cheer.

Going into this season I want to recommend these Christmas gift suggestions from a journalist, Oren Arnold:

"Give to your enemy, forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart. To a customer, service. To all men and women, charity. To every child, a good example. To yourself, respect."

This Town of Verona Newsletter is being mailed to every household in Verona. My goal is to get as much information out and in the hands of the residents as possible. With knowledge comes power. This is our community, what we don't know, we don't know, but we can ask and learn.

Town of Verona 6600 Germany Road Durhamville, NY 13054

THANK YOU.

Thank you to all of you, the Verona Town residents, my co-workers, family and friends, you have made my first term as your Town Clerk fun. I sincerely enjoy what I do, I look forward to finding new ways to serve our residents. We all know what is going on in this world, now more than ever we need our neighbors, family, and friends. And a little something to make us SMILE.

I certainly hope those that have followed the @TownofVerona-TownClerk Facebook page (FB) are getting something from it. I try to keep it up to date with reminders, work going on in the Town, and something to make you smile. Some posts don't allow for comments, that is generally due to the nature of the post - getting the information out there is paramount.

For those of you that don't know - the Town Clerk's office brought back the sale of - Hunting Licenses. During normal business hours we can help you get your Fishing, Trapping and or Hunting Licenses.

2023 was also the first year for our new Town and County Tax online payment/review software. There you can pay and/or view your tax bill, helping our residents that "fly" away during the snowy NY days. Moving forward you can access your paid receipt from there as well, no matter how it was paid.

Along with this Newsletter to all residents, I'm working on planning a Verona Community Day on July 13th in conjunction with the Verona Historical Associations' Car Show and Verona Food Pantry. We are looking for business owners from all of Verona, from New London to Durhamville that would be interested in setting up a tent and selling or just advertising what you do, to encourage residents to use their neighbor's business. From metal work, wood work, vinyl lettering, haircuts, dog grooming, towing services, crafters, furniture refinishing, web designers, house cleaners, riding lessons to name just a few, we are calling on you. More information will be coming out about this event, but if you are interested in setting up or helping, please reach out to me. Amy Kotwica; townclerk@townverona.org or call 315.363.6799

From Agriculture and Markets on Man's Best Friend...

Reminder, all Dogs in the Town MUST be licensed. This is a safety issue for not only visitors but also the dogs, in addition to being a State law.

We have seen an increase in stray dogs the second half of this year. All the local shelters are full, meaning our Dog Control Officer (DCO) must board the dogs. She contacts our shelter (Rome Humane Society) every Tuesday to inquire on space. This is not an issue only in Verona, many of the local DCO's are also having to board stray dogs. Dogs that stay at the DCO shelter are charged to the Town at \$15 a day for food and care. After five (5) days at a DCO shelter, we can legally adopt them out. And for those that follow our FB page, you see the Adoption Alerts and a few success stories.

Licensing your dog is very simple. Proof of vaccination, proof of spay or neuter (if applies) and the licensing fee. You can drop off the information at the Town office, or come in during normal business hours. We will then send you a reminder annually that their license is due to renew.

Spayed and Neutered Dogs = \$10 Intact Dogs = \$18



Movement on the Water Project

CSX Crossing on Rock Road:

This crossing will connect the main transmission water line through New London to existing water infrastructure in Verona. Nine test pits were completed to understand the subsurface conditions adjacent to the tracks. Barton & Loguidice (B&L) and the Town of Verona worked with CSX to determine the safest most cost-effective way to move forward. This was completed early in November and final steps are being taken to complete the connection to the existing infrastructure!!



Barge Canal Crossing:

The photos shared a few months ago, on Facebook and the website, showed the drilling operation under the Barge Canal. Unfortunately, the large boulders (small SUV sized rocks) along the edge of the Canal halted the drilling operation. After many attempts, the drill was unable to get through. The Board is now awaiting information on the 2nd option, a Pipe Bridge over the canal. B&L has started the design process of the pipe bridge crossing. This will be a separate structure from the existing bridge on Rt. 46, for many reasons, one of them being the State is replacing that bridge within a few years.

New London Water Tank:

The water storage tank construction is complete; next step is leak testing. Preload LLC (Tank Contractor) will be able to conduct testing once the Rock Rd CSX crossing is complete.

New London Pump Station:

Sample Pipe Bridge over the Canal

This project will be the smallest of the four total projects to bring water to Verona. This structure will be built next to the water storage tank in New London and will be fundamental in supplying water from Rome to Town residents within the new and existing water districts. The bid process for this build will be out in early 2024, as we believe the build should only take a couple of months.

Water Service hook-up for residents, the GOOD STUFF:

This is one of the last steps in this process. Each resident receiving a new water hook up will be contacted by either B&L (Town Engineer) or MCI (contractor) to determine where the line should be placed on the property. Each resident will receive a blue stake from B&L and it should be placed at the property line where the water service connection is desired to be located. Construction crews will then install a "meter pit", at the blue stake location, in front of each house. This meter pit will contain a water meter that will be used to track water usage. From the meter pit the water service piping will be installed to come within 10' of the home foundation and connect to the existing well piping.

Remember, those that are within the district that choose to hook up now, during the initial installation, will be charged nothing (up to within 10 feet of your foundation), while anyone that waives hook up at this time and years down the road choose to hook up, will be responsible for the cost of installation from road to house.

Movement on the Water Project

Water Billing:

Those new to city water, you will be billed quarterly for usage. So, what you use, you will pay for. Annually, the debt service will be placed on your property tax bill. New residents receiving water will be one set fee; existing residents with water, will be a smaller set fee. Total expense per residence receiving water, which will be the debt service fee and quarterly usage fees have a maximum amount set by the NYS Comptroller at \$1,040.00 annually. Usage billing will not start until water is hooked up and being used at your residence. The debt service fee will be part of the 2025 Property Tax bill, which is sent out in January of 2025.



Restoration:

All property will be restored to its pre-disturbed state. Most property that has been disturbed for the initial install of the permanent water main, has been completed. If you have any additional restoration that is needed, please contact the Town office and we will get you in touch with our engineer and schedule the fix. Once individual resident water lines are installed, a restoration team will follow along within a few weeks. Again, if you have any problems or need to speak with the engineer, please reach out to the Town Clerk; she will pass along the needed information, including how to get in touch with the homeowner.

Reminder:

- You CAN keep your well water for watering the garden/lawn, or animals.
- YOU CAN NOT have both well water and city water within the same plumbing fixtures. There must be complete separation of well water and city water by mandate of NYS Health Department.

We are incredibly thankful to our residents for their patience and understanding during this project. We understand that there have been some inconvenient moments, but glad everyone understands that every project can cause growing pains, but in the end those that have been inconvenienced will have potable, healthy water (and great water pressure)!!

Willow Place Connector Rd.

The Willow Place Connector Road Project, started back in 1995 as the Route 365 Corridor Study/Entertainment & Tourism Zone Development Plan. The basics of the plan are still the same; to enhance the quality of anticipated future commercial development within a proposed "zone" by protecting residential and agricultural areas located outside of the "zone".

The Town has engaged with outside developers that are very interested in building along Willow Place, however, without a connector road from RT 365 (across from the Thruway) the traffic pattern is currently too dangerous to add additional traffic. Development of the Willow Place Connector Road will increase

business in this area, by giving residents additional options for possible restaurants, family activities, and or shopping destinations. The increase of non-Oneida Indian Nation owned businesses will only increase the Town of Verona business district creating additional revenue through building permits, sales tax, and foot traffic.



An Assessors' Note

As Assessor, I estimate the value of real property within the Town boundaries. The value is converted into an assessment. My role is to produce a fair assessment roll, I do not set tax rates or collect taxes. I perform many other administrative functions, such as inspecting new construction and looking for improvements that have been made. This ensures that the record of each property's physical inventory is current and that appropriate improvements are assessed. You may see us out and about taking photographs of new construction and/or sales.

In my office, my clerk and I approve and keep track of property tax exemptions. Among the most

common are: the senior citizens, School Tax Relief (STAR), Veterans, agricultural and business exemptions. If you have any questions on exemptions, please feel free to give us a call and we can assist you. The deadline to apply each year for exemptions is March 1. New this year, is the sliding scale used for the senior citizen and limited income disability exemptions. Many residents who were previously ineligible may now be eligible. If you are 65 or older, or are disabled, we can review your income for eligibility.

My office reviews every transfer of real property. Assessment records are updated and any unusual conditions affecting the transfer are also verified. Please keep me informed of any address changes. Upon transfer to new owners, my office sends out a Welcome Pack with local information.

If you feel that your assessment is incorrect, please let me know. I can explain how your assessment was determined and what our records show for improvements on your property. If you still feel that your assessment is incorrect, grievance day is the fourth Tuesday in May. Only your assessment may be grieved, not the amount of your taxes. The Board of Assessment Review meets from 9:00 am-12:00 noon and from 6:00 pm-8:00 pm.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us. Susan Strain 315.363.6799 ext 30 or assessor@townverona.org

Verona Summer Park Program

Summer Time Fun!

Are your kids sitting around during the summer bored with nothing to do?

Are you struggling trying to find time to plan activities for them to do?

Well we have the solution for you! Sign them up for the Town of Verona Summer Park Program. Located right at the Town Park on Germany Road, we offer a fun, rain or shine, daily place to come and spend time playing with friends and participating in activities.

The Summer Program, usually, begins the week after the 4th of July and runs for the next six (6) weeks. Monday-Friday from 9am-1pm you can find us playing ball, swinging, or doing a daily craft. The program also offers a little extra bonus to the week with an added exhilarating activity such as spending the day at Verona Beach, A Fun Foam Party, a visit from Upscale Exotic Pets, and a huge end the summer picnic with bounce houses, food, snow cones, and popcorn.



On the Road Again....

The Highway crew stayed busy this year. Two crew members had the privilege to retire this past Spring, their knowledge and support will be missed. We were lucky enough to find two great, local candidates, and look forward to working with them.

This year, the Town paved 5.22 miles of road and oil and stoned 7.43 miles. The year after a road is paved it is also oil and stoned, this, in a way, preserves the pavement and helps protect against weather, and wear and tear. 6.14 miles of road shoulder was completed, along all the newly paved roads and a few that were not completed a few years back. Road culverts on Carpenter Rd., Oatman Rd., Zingerline Rd. and Heelpath Rd. were replaced prior to paving along with pot holes that were addressed and filled, across the town. Town trucks moved 10,000 tons of stone for various projects including culverts, road maintenance and ditching, along with all of the sand for the winter months.

Updated drainage was installed on Canal Street in New London and a long-time drainage issue near Spring Street and Main Street in Verona was re-engineered and completed by our Highway guys and Oneida County. Twenty-five (25) trees were removed from right-of-ways that were dead, dying, or too close to homes and could be dangerous during wind or snow storms.

All of this was done, while still maintaining, mowing, and trimming the town parks, ball fields, cemetery's (that are Town maintained), and water and sewer facilities. Along with working on ditch cleaning, our guys run Spring Clean up when the snow melts, this includes leveling the lawn at corners and resident lawns that were damaged during the winter but also picking up road side trash that is uncovered by the snow melt. This is by far one of the worst jobs, the things that people discard on the roadside are not generally clean, and most definitely need to be done in a safe and cautious manner.

With Spring, comes all the green waste that is dumped at the town site, this is then hauled to the green waste dump off of Yager Rd. weekly. This time of year also lends itself to washing the plow trucks and properly storing the plows until next year.

On top of that, we have a handful of employees that are double trained to help in the instance of a water or sewer break. There were a few instances in the Verona Beach area this year and one in Durhamville that our Highway guys worked, along side the Water Department, to correct as soon as possible.

As we roll into the colder months, the Highway employees will move to a split shift schedule. This ensures coverage around the clock for when those snow storms move in. The split schedule also allows for a comfortable work-life balance for our truck drivers, giving each shift a weekend to cover in case of snow fall and a weekend to plan with family and friends, while still maintaining road safety coverage for the Verona Town residents.

As we roll into a new term for the Highway Superintendent, I'd like to say thank you to all of the residents in the Town of Verona. I enjoy working with you to make our town run as smoothly as possible. I encourage you to call or email me with questions or comments and always reach out if there is an issue or problem. Thank you!

Billy Lohr blohr@townverona.org 315.363.3829







The Drip

Hello from the Water Department. Looking back on 2023, we spent a majority of the year upgrading the water meters for over 800 current water customers. Water meters in some cases are located inside a basement or back room. As you can imagine, that took a bit to coordinate with home owners, and we'd like to thank everyone involved in getting this project done. We have also been working with the Town engineer, Barton & Loguidice, and the contractor, MCI, on the water upgrade and extension project, in addition to the day to day Operation and Maintenance (O&M) for the Town's water and sewer infrastructure.

A few water and sewer breaks happened this past summer that we were able to fix with minimal interruption to residents, thanks to help received from a few of the Highway staff.

Next year, we will be working on upgrades to our sewer pump stations and will continue to work closely with our engineers and contractors to complete the water project.

Good News for Water & Sewer Customers!

In 2024, we will be offering an online view and payment option for water payments. This will allow all residents having water and/or sewer to track their usage from billing cycle to billing cycle, make payments online, and optional email billing. More information will be out on these options just after the first of the year.

Reach out with questions or concerns to: Kathy Russell, 315-363-6799 ext 22; waterbill@townverona.org or watersuper@townverona.org

Durhamville Sewer Project

Barton & Loguidice, D.P.C. has been assisting the Town with developing a project to bring public sewer service to the Hamlet of Durhamville. To date, the following has been completed:

- an income survey was completed, and found to be within the limits for 0% interest hardship loans,
- various NYS infrastructure grants have been submitted and there are additional grants with upcoming deadlines that will also be submitted to help cover a portion of this large project.

Start dates and complete dates have not been set as of today. For more detailed information please contact the Town Clerk or Town Supervisor.



Happenings at the Historical Building

2023 has been a busy year at the Historical Building as we continue to promote Verona's history and offer many programs and events to the public. 2023 started out with the opening of a new exhibit entitled, "Blowers, Flatteners & Cutters: Glass Manufacturing in the Town of Verona." The exhibit features both the Durhamville and Dunbarton Glass Works. Interpretive panels with photos and text allows the public to learn about this important 19th century industry. Although these factories primarily produced window pane glass, the exhibit also features a display case showing off many glass items made by workers from the leftover molten glass at the end of the day.

In March, the Verona Historical Association hosted the inaugural Family Day Train Show. For the event, train exhibitors set up and operated their personal train collections to the delight of train enthusiasts young and old. The 2nd Annual Antique Car Show was held in July along with hosting the Model A Car Club. Other organizations we hosted this year and provided programs for include the Daughters of the American Revolution; Our Lady of Good Council Alter Rosary Society; and Cub Scouts Pack 25. Lectures throughout the year included Verona Glass Factories in conjunction with the exhibit opening; Oak Orchard Cemetery in conjunction with the installation of a new sign on Wood Creek Road; History of Verona Springs; Abolitionism and the Underground Railroad in Central New York; and My Darling Jane: Letters Home from World War II.

Now that people realize the Historical Building is open on Wednesday from 9 am – 4 pm and thanks to a new sign we put out by the road announcing we're open, many people have stopped in to view the museum and use our extensive research facilities. In the museum we completed upgrading our general store exhibit and are currently working on upgrading our one room school house exhibit. We also built a collections storage area with shelves to store objects while we upgrade areas of the museum. Our final activity for 2023 will be held on December 9th with our annual Christmas party and pot luck luncheon where we all gather to celebrate the Christmas season, enjoy good food, and reflect on the past year and plan for the upcoming year.

2024 Dates already set:



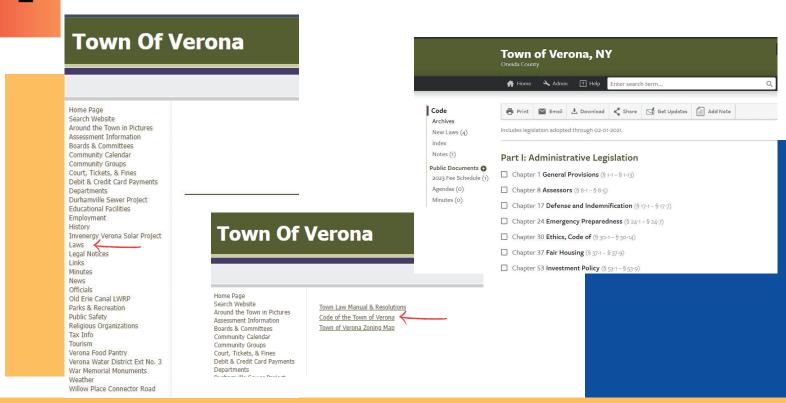
Updated Codes and Local Laws

2023 was the first full year for our new Codes Enforcement Officer, Dan Maciag. Dan successfully completed the New York State required training to become a certified Codes Officer in September. That process is not easy, it is all online based, six (6) separate courses over 5 months. Each course is 4 days, 8 hours per day online with an instructor followed by a test the following Wednesday. Five (5) of the courses contained content from over 400 pages of building code, fire code, structure code, capacity code and more. A big congratulations goes out to Dan for his success, we wish him a successful future with our Codes department.

A reminder to all residents, the Town of Verona has a refuse code, meaning you are not allowed to keep junk cars, garbage, and multiple appliances, among other items in your yard. You risk being in violation and receiving a citation.

Resolutions passed in 2023 varied from Lead Agent for the Durhamville Sewer Project to creating the official Durhamville Sewer District, various resolutions regarding the ATV Trail system in Verona - culminating in the passing of Local Law 1 of 2023 "A Local Law permitting and regulating all-terrain vehicle operations on certain public roads in the Town of Verona, New York. The various resolutions and local laws can all be found at https://ecode360.com/VE1663.

All codes for the Town of Verona can be found at ecode using the link above, or from the Town website, use the "Laws" link on the left hand menu and choose "Code of the Town of Verona" to get there. All codes are searchable with key words to make finding what you need super easy. From Fencing regulations, Dog Licensing, and Zoning - most of everything can be found here and copied or downloaded easily.



It's sad to see you go....but enjoy every minute

We at the Town of Verona would like to officially announce the retirement of our Verona Town Court Justices, Nelson T. Dodge and Randall D. Smith. Both gentlemen have been an integral part of the Town for quite some time.

Nelson T. Dodge having served 35 years and **Randall D. Smith** having served 25 years have both truly shown their commitment, dedication, and passion to not only the position that they held but to the community that they have served. Nelson and Randy will be deeply missed but their accomplishments and contributions to the Town of Verona will never be forgotten. With that said, we would like to officially welcome the newly elected Verona Town Court Justices, Gregory lannello Jr and Samuel Getman.

In addition, a very special Congratulations goes out to **Barb Zimmerman**, Verona Town Bookkeeper for over 15 years of dedicated support and service. Barb started with the Town of Verona during the years of Owen Waller, and has been with us through all of the town wide projects since. Her patience and work on the annual budget, along with all of the State required reporting, was greatly appreciated. Barb retired earlier in 2023, while her knowledge of finances and government accounting is indispensable, we wish her the best during retirement.

Also, as you may know, **Ken Regner** will be moving on after his term expires in December of this year. We want to take this time to wish Ken congratulations and my sincere appreciation for his many years of service to the Town of Verona as Councilman and Deputy Supervisor. Ken's political science expertise and dedication to the many projects we have ongoing & accomplished over the years has helped us navigate our ever changing governmental landscape.

Did you know, information from the Town of Verona. ..

Did you know you can get **alerts** each time a new news article is released on the Town of Verona webpage? Simply go to Townverona.org > "News" on the left hand menu and at the bottom of that page enter your email address. Everytime Minutes for the Board, Planning or Zoning meetings are up loaded, you'll get an alert. Everytime a new public hearing is sent out, you'll get an alert. If there is an update for waterline flushing, you got it - you'll get an alert. This is a great way to stay in the know for the Town of Verona.

Did you know the Town of Verona has an **official Facebook Page**? "Town of Verona - Town Clerk" is where you can stay connected with what is going on around town. Photos from culvert replacements, Water Project updates and photos, Holiday messages and Dog adoptions. The Town Clerk works to keep the page up to date and with interesting, important information for the Town of Verona residents. Join us today on Facebook!!

New Elected Officials

Town Justice

Samuel Getman is a lifelong resident of Verona, where he along with his wife are raising their two children. He graduated from Utica College in 2014 with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. In 2017, he earned his Juris Doctorate from Albany Law School of Union University, where he was a member of the Government Law Review. Sam was admitted to the New York State Bar in 2018 and is an owner and partner at Vindigni, Betro & Getman PLLC in Oneida. Sam has served on various community boards including the Madison Cortland ARC, the VVS FFA Agricultural Advisory Board, VVS Community Rotary, and the Leatherstocking Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

Greg Iannello, Jr. is a lifelong resident of Verona, as well as a proud 2008 graduate of Vernon Verona Sherrill High School.

Not only was Greg born and raised in Verona, he continues to establish his roots here by growing his young family on their prominent beef farm. While farming is not his only venture, he has also successfully developed his company, GRI Construction LLC.

Greg is looking forward to serving the Town of Verona, as well as, taking the important role of Town Justice and giving back to the community that he has known his whole life.

Town Councilman

My name is **Dan Breckenridge.** I have been a resident in the Town of Verona my entire life. I have resided in the village of New London for 51 years. I graduated from VVS in 1980 and married my high school sweetheart, Nancy, and we have been married for almost 43 years. We have 3 married children and 9 grandchildren.

I am a retired Air Force Reserve Veteran and a Lifetime VFW Member. I have worked for Haun Welding Supply Company for 35 years.

I have served the last 15 years as a Commissioner for the New London Fire Dept. I also serve on my church board as a Trustee.

I am excited and looking forward to serving on the Town of Verona Council as your newly elected Councilman.

Did you know, information from the Town of Verona...

Did you know, **Town and County Taxes** will go out January 1, 2024? Every land owner in the Town of Verona will receive their tax bill just after the 1st of the year. This bill reflects the County Tax, Verona Highway Tax, and any special district taxes, i.e. Fire Departments, sewer, water.

You can pay and view your bill online at the Town of Verona website, using the blue box (link) in the middle of the page marked "Property Tax". All major credit cards and e-checks are accepted. Parcel Tax information remains there, year round. If you choose to pay in-person (with exact change), the online platform will update with your payment within 24 hours, meaning you could print out a paid receipt from home the next day if you lose your original.

Did you know the **Verona Food Pantry** serves about 100 Town of Verona families a month. They are open on Tuesdays from 1pm - 2:30pm and Thursdays 5:30pm - 7pm. Food Pantry elves are all volunteers! A HUGE shout out to our Food Pantry Volunteers, without you our Town would be much hungrier!! Thank you.

Did you know?

50 Forward Mohawk Valley has been serving 50+ adults throughout Oneida and Herkimer County for over 65 years. With the opportunity of expansion into the Western part of Oneida and an increased ability to serve more adults in that area we were thrilled to open our second location in **Verona Beach**. The new center has seen rapid growth since we opened and we have loved becoming part of the community. We offer a variety of programs for all individuals and need levels.

These programs range from fitness (Pickle ball, Zumba, Aerobics,) to socialization (card games, book club, coffee club,) to health information (Matter of Balance, Aging Mastery, Rock Steady Boxing,) and of course so much more. Many of our programs cross into all three areas above providing fitness, socialization, and information on health and wellness. We also have a wonderful fitness center that is open to community members 18+.

If you would like more information please call us at (315) 235-2029, visit <u>50forwardmv.org</u>, or stop by and visit for a tour to see the center and meet some wonderful people.

Did you know that the Town rents out the Park Pavilion and the Historical Building? Under "Parks and Recreation" on the Town website, you can reserve either the beautiful outdoor pavilion or the large meeting space in the front of the Historical Building. We require a refundable \$100 deposit for the pavilion; once the space has been cleared by staff as "clean" you will be contacted to pick up your check or cash. For the Historical Building, a \$100 deposit (\$50 rental fee is requested and a \$50 refundable deposit), due to the facility having a kitchen. Again, once the space is deemed "clean" the refundable portion will be returned to the renter.

Did you know the **Town Board** holds regular meetings on the first Monday of each month. Holidays and Elections are the only adjustments. The tentative dates for the 2024 Town Board Meetings are as follows:

January 3 WednesdayApril 1 MondayJuly 1 MondayOctober 7 MondayFebruary 5 MondayMay 6 MondayAugust 5 MondayNovember 6 WednesdayMarch 4 MondayJune 3 MondaySeptember 4 WednesdayDecember 2 Monday

Did you know you can reach **your elected town officials** at the numbers listed below or via email anytime. In addition to the monthly Board meetings, where the floor is open for public concerns, our Board Members, Highway Superintendent and Town Clerk are here to listen to resident concerns and suggestions. While we may not have the answer for you right then, we will be sure to get back to you with what we can find out.

Scott Musacchio Town Supervisor (315)363.7953 supervisor@townverona.org
Billy Lohr; Highway Superintendent (315)363.3829 blohr@townverona.org
Amy Kotwica; Town Clerk (315)363.6799 townclerk@townverona.org
Ken Brewer; Councilman (315) 935-7750 kbrewer@townverona.org
Jeff Kahler; Councilman (315) 525-0425 jkahler@townverona.org
Fred Scherz, Jr Councilman (315) 363-3509 fscherz@townverona.org
Dan Breckenridge; Councilman dbreckenridge@townverona.org (after January 1, 2023)