

Caroga News Flash

Town Board Meeting Highlights

<https://TownOfCaroga.com> contains all issues of the *Caroga News Flash*.

October 7, 14, & 22 2025

2026 Town Budget & Public Hearing Resolutions:

1. On October 7, 14, & 22, the Town Board held budget meetings and adopted the 2026 Town Budget: see https://townofcaroga.com/finances/2025-10-22_2026-adopted-budget.pdf.
2. The Board scheduled a **Public Hearing on Wednesday November 12, at 2025 at 7:00 PM.**
 - The Hearing is for the 2026 Contract for Fire Protection, as specified in the above 2026 Budget.
 - Earlier this year, the Board deferred decisions about creating a Fire Protection District designed to address long-term fiscal sustainability as requested by the Caroga Lake Volunteer Fire Company.
 - Therefore, 2026 fire protection services will be funded by Town Contract, not by a Fire District.
 - To fund the 2026 Fire Contract, the Board appropriated reserve funds, so property owners' 2026 Tax Rate per Thousand Taxable Assessed Value will increase minimally from \$0.98 to \$1.02.
3. On October 14, 2025, the Board aimed to correct the Board's "illegal" 1/8/2025 salary increase for the **Highway Superintendent** to \$67,500 when the 2025 budget line was only \$51,500. To increase an elected official's salary outside of budget deliberations requires a local law, subject to permissive referendum, and they did not do that. Instead, "for corrective action to keep him within budgetary constraints and correct the error," the Town Board required acting Highway Superintendent Roy Stock to submit a written letter of resignation on October 14, 2025 and through year end to serve in his prior leadership capacity as Deputy Superintendent. In January 2026, Mr. Stock will begin to serve as the Town of Caroga elected Highway Superintendent with a budgeted annual salary of \$70,200.00

October 8, 2025

The October 8, 2025 monthly meeting began at 6:30 PM and lasted 102 minutes. In addition to the Town Board, Town Clerk, and Highway Superintendent, 34 people attended this meeting at Caroga Town Hall. Council Member Barb DeLuca was not present for the meeting. Key topics were as follows.

1. Comprehensive Plan Committee 2025 Community Survey Report

- On October 8, Rachel Simonds and Chris Foss — Comprehensive Plan Committee Vice-Chair and Chair — provided planning updates and presented the *2025 Community Survey Summary Report* (see <https://caroga.comprehensiveplan.wordpress.com/survey/>).
- The report was well received, and the Town Board requested 50 color copies to distribute publicly.
- More opportunities for public input in the comprehensive planning process will come next summer, and comments can be shared anytime by sending an email to ComprehensivePlan@TownOfCaroga.com .

2. Road Reconfiguration Request that Improves Town Center Walkability for All

- On August 5, Caroga Arts hosted a public discussion of a proposal to deliver a project prioritized in the 2011 *Town of Caroga Comprehensive Plan* (i.e., the current official guide for planning decisions). (See <https://caroga.town/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/town-of-caroga-adopted-comprehensive-plan.pdf> , p. 5.)
- The proposal reconfigures a 595' section of East Shore Road West Caroga Lake and Bath Avenue through Sherman's Park to enhance pedestrian-friendly access and community safety, delivered at zero cost to the Town or local taxpayers (see https://townofcaroga.com/news_flash/flash_2025-08-05.pdf).
- On October 8, a presentation reviewed prior points and design updates, based on input from officials. In addition, Rick Ruby and Don Cropsey — local residents and community leaders from Caroga Arts' Board of Directors — discussed the written petition requesting approval of the road discontinuance, as required by New York State Highway Law. Counselor Laura Ayers, Esq., answered legal questions. (See <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/HAY/207> and <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/HAY/171> .)

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- In this well-specified process, no statute permits an advisory referendum, so a voter referendum is prohibited here. By law, officials can neither avoid their duties nor ignore the *Comprehensive Plan*.
“It is clear enough that in the absence of express statutory authority, an advisory referendum...is not authorized (*Mills v. Sweeney*, 219 N.Y. 213, 221, 114 N.E. 65, 67). It is also clear that the...[municipality] possesses no such authority. It is equally clear that a legislative referendum is not authorized unless specifically required by statute (*Matter of McCabe v. Voorhis*, 243 N.Y. 401, 413, 153 N.E. 849, 852, 853...[I]n fact the [unauthorized] attempt is really to avoid governmental responsibility and shift the burden of decision to a public poll (*Matter of Astwood v. Cohen*, 291 N.Y. 484, 490-491, 53 N.E.2d 358, 360-361).” (*Kupferman v Katz*, 243 NYS 2d 773; 19 AD2d 824, <https://www.courtlistener.com/opinion/5891262/kupferman-v-katz/> ; see also <https://www.osc.ny.gov/legal-opinions/opinion-91-58>).
 - Public input has already been given. On October 8, several people freely voiced opinions, and input has been included from officials and from the August 5 meeting. The request also attached over 200 signatures supporting approval, including voters, land owners, neighbors, business sponsors, community donors, grant writers, school partners, music enthusiasts, snowmobilers, and others.
 - Many have pulled together to improve Town Center by refining local master plans agreed to long ago (see also <https://carogaarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Special-Loon-call-print-3.pdf>).
 - For example, the current proposal includes safe access for snowmobilers to enter and exit West Caroga Lake without crossing the existing road that now has a dangerous blind spot. The improved access that Caroga Arts builds will increase safety. The project also shows continued strong commitment to work in partnership with the community. Doing this makes so much sense.
 - Yet, on October 8, Councilman Jack Glenn questioned safety needs for people at Sherman’s Park and argued for the status-quo, thereby ignoring known public hazards and many safety complaints.
 - Whereas, officials’ prompt approval would have clear public benefits, including improving walkability, calming traffic, enhancing year-round recreation, and fulfilling long-standing Town planning goals.
 - The Honorable Richard Aulisi — long-time resident and leader — gave a clear and concise summary:
“There is no downside whatsoever to approving this project.”
 - The road request now awaits approval by Caroga’s Highway Superintendent and Town Board, as specified by the Highway Law process (see also the NYS Highway Superintendent *Red Book*).
- 3. 1795 State Highway 10 Golf Maintenance and Storage Building Renovation Contract**
- On September 24, the Board presented new renovation plans of the Town pole barn for golf storage (see https://townofcaroga.com/notes/2025_caroga_pole_barn.pdf).
 - Design plans were simplified in 2025, after Caroga voters disapproved the 2023 voter referendum to borrow \$450,000.00 to fund a high-priced redesign that relocated this Highway Department pole barn.
 - On October 8, the Town Clerk opened two sealed bids received for the pole barn renovation contract.
 - One was from Mr. James Hale of Adirondack Landscaping for full delivery price of \$73,800.00.
 - The second was from Mr. Keith Daniel Miller of CM Adirondack Building, LLC for \$189,818.64.
 - Given the large discrepancy, the Board proposed awarding the low bid and then holding a private discussion to confirm that the bid has “everything needed” before signing the construction contract.
 - In addition, after confirming the award, Supervisor Palcovic later added special costs “up to \$5,000.00 for each individual contractor recommendation or change order” (to be reviewed by Anthony Fancher).
 - Unlike standard pre-contractual blanket change orders, this post-bid contract amendment defined no maximum cost limit. The 2026 Town Budget also left the Golf Storage project’s total budget unclear.

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October 8, 2025 Monthly Meeting Resolutions:

1. **Nick Stoner Golf Course Capital Building Project** — (4-0 votes)

- The Board awarded the building contract to renovate the Town's pole barn into a Golf Storage and Maintenance Building. The low bidder was James Hale of Adirondack Landscaping for \$73,800.00.
- In addition to the \$73,800.00, the Board added open-ended discretionary expenses, to be approved by Mr. Fancher. Specifically, Supervisor Palcovic stated,
"At my request with regard to the bid award tonight, I drafted a resolution to expeditiously keep the project going once it commences. Again, we have not yet signed the contract. This resolution will enable our Code Enforcement Officer to follow the construction project...as needed, along with Town Councilmen Rick [Sturgess] and Matt [Cooper]."

The Board passed the following resolution for the blanket change orders with no maximum specified.

*"Whereas, Town of Caroga Town Board has approved construction and reconstruction of the Highway Department Pole Barn for conversion to the Golf Course Maintenance and Storage Building.
Whereas, Town of Caroga Town Board is following steps and guidelines for the bidding process to award the construction project to a qualified contractor.
Whereas, the Town of Caroga engaged services of a professional engineer to design drawings and specifications for the building renovation, and the Town Code Enforcement Officer Anthony Fancher will be following this construction project, representing the Town of Caroga.
Whereas, time is of the essence regarding construction season.
Whereas, the project must take into consideration dynamic reconstruction of an old pole barn with unforeseeable consideration that may require additional construction aspects.
Therefore, be it resolved, that any contractor recommendation or change orders appropriately presented to the Town of Caroga oversight coordinator Anthony Fancher — and forwarded to Town Board members Rick Sturgess and Matt Cooper for authorization — proceed at each individual request not to exceed \$5,000.00 to maintain the integrity of the project until completion."*

2. **Parcel Rezoning (Including the Old Firehouse Parcel at 1785 State Highway 10)** — (3-0 vote)

- Following October 1 Planning Board input, Supervisor Palcovic asked that the record show, "The Town Board voted unanimously among Board Members present" (i.e., 3-0 with Councilmember Deluca absent and Rick Sturgess abstaining) to approve rezoning to change the current district from "Conservation" to Caroga "Hamlet" for four specified parcels:
 - SBL 68.5-4-6 (i.e., Old Firehouse at 1785 State Highway 10)
 - SBL 68.6-1-2 (i.e., current Town Highway Garage at 1795 State Highway 10)
 - SBL 68.6-1-1 (i.e., prior Town Golf Clubhouse at 1801 State Highway 10)
 - SBL 68.5-2-15 (i.e., Town parcel purchased from Foster at 1796 State Highway 10)
- Given Caroga's APA-Approved Local Land Use Plan (ALLUP) Zoning, amendments are subject to approval by the County Planning Board and Adirondack Park Agency. Thus, the resolution *"resolved, that the clerk is hereby directed to forward this resolution along with the short Environmental Assessment Form part one to the Fulton County Planning Department and the Adirondack Park Agency and upon receiving their responses the next step will be to hold a public hearing."*

3. **Highway Department** — (4-0 votes)

- Approved C.T. Male contract amendment — not to exceed an additional \$2,600.00 — to oversee Highway Department permits for fuel, oil, and storage tanks and Spill Control Plan Prevention (SCPP)
- Approved \$10,035.62 for front-end repair parts for Truck #13 that is now inoperable
- Authorized repairs at Tracey Road, pending locating of financing in the Town Budget

4. **Budget Transfers** — (4-0 votes)

- Approved the following transfers:

From: A7180.40 Golf Course C/E	\$ 3,500.00	To: A7180.21 Golf Carts	\$ 3,500.00
From: A7180.11 Golf Manager	\$ 4,000.00	To: A7180.2 Golf Course Equipment	\$ 4,000.00
From: A201.7 ? Golf Eq Reserves	\$50,000.00	To: A7180.2 Golf Equipment	\$50,000.00

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- Recognized receipt of additional NYS funding for CHIPS to cover additional local paving costs by
 - Increasing revenue in DA3501 Consolidated Highway Aid by \$24,000.00 and
 - Increasing expenditure in DA5112.20 CHIPS by \$24,000.00
- 5. **Other Business** — (4-0 votes)
 - Approved minutes of 9/5/2025 and 9/10/2025 Town Board Meetings and approved bills as presented.
 - The Board heard reports of misconduct by Caroga’s Lead Diver Luke Horst by another member of the Diver-Assisted-Suction-Harvesting (DASH) team, and requested review in Executive Session (see <https://www.townofcaroga.com/notes/wb2025a.pdf> and <https://www.townofcaroga.com/notes/wb2025b.pdf>).

October 21, 2025 Lakes Management Meeting

Co-Chairs Jack Glenn and Marcus Harazin led a Lakes Management Committee meeting at Town Hall, with 17 people attending (see https://townofcaroga.com/lakes/lakes-management_2025-10-25.pdf).

November 4, 2025 Caroga Election Results

Caroga voters disapproved the Highway Superintendent referendum. Therefore, the Highway Superintendent will remain an elected official, accountable to the voters according to State Laws.

“Shall the elected position of Town of Caroga Superintendent of Highways be changed to an appointed position, to be appointed by the Town Board at the conclusion of the present Highway Superintendent’s current elected term and thereafter?”

Total Voters 427	No 359 (84%)	Yes 68 (16%)
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Office	Candidate	Candidate
Highway Superintendent	Roy R. Stock 284+20 (71%)	Write-In 114 (27%)
Town Supervisor	John L. Glenn 288+10 (69%)	Write In 10 (2%)
Council Members	Kimberly M. Walker 310 (72%)	Greta M. Frasier 251 (58%)
Town Clerk	Linda Gilbert 346+3 (82%)	Write-In 3 (<1%)

Announcements:

- ❖ The next monthly Town Board meeting is Wednesday, November 12, 2025 at 6:30 PM.
- ❖ Celebrate Caroga’s Holiday Tree Lighting at Sherman’s on Saturday November 29 2:00-5:00 PM.
- ❖ Join in Caroga Arts’ WinterFest from December 1 to 7, 2025 (see <https://carogaarts.org/events/>).
- ❖ Save the date to share the spirit. December 2 is Giving Tuesday (see <https://www.givingtuesday.org>).
- ❖ Checkout the New York Snowmobile Safety Course on December 8 & 9 (5:00-9:00 PM) at the Fulton County Emergency Management Center (see <https://www.register-ed.com/events/view/235454>).

