

Executive Committee

Robert Sauer, *Chair*
Thomas McDonald, *Vice-Chair*
Betsy Mack, *Fiscal Officer*
Lawrence Mierek, *Director*
Pamela Dibble, *Director*

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noccog.org



Announcements

Northern Oneida County Council of Governments Annual Meeting



The Northern Oneida County Council of Governments (NOCCOG) held their Annual Meeting Thursday night, October 23, at the Woods Valley Ski Area in Westernville. Over 70 local government officials attended the event, including Cheryl Lavalley, representing Assemblymember Marianne Buttenchon (Dist. 119) and Tammie Nabywaniec, who is the Chief of Staff for Assemblyman, Ken Blankenbush (Dist.117.) Present from the NYS Tug Hill Commissioner were Chair, Gerry Ritter, Commissioner, Bob Keller, Associate Director of Community and Regional Projects, Jennifer Harvill, and Project Specialist

Taylor McKinney. Oneida County Legislators Steve DiMaggio (Dist. 17) and David Buck (Dist. 9) attended, as well as Lt. Carey Phair, from the Oneida County Sheriff's Department.

Also recognized was long time Town of Lee Supervisor, John Urtz, who has served as supervisor for a remarkable 51 years.

The keynote speaker was Sarah Foster Calero, President of Oneida County Tourism, which is the official Destination Marketing Organization for Oneida County. Sarah highlighted the economic impact of local tourism, that it is a growing industry, and how tourism touches every corner of Oneida County. Sarah also presented on a county wide rebrand and plans to host the New York State Tourism Conference in 2026. For more information on Oneida County Tourism, please visit their website, www.oneidacountytourism.com.



Former NOCCOG Municipal Advisors, from left to right, Sue Martin, Harlan Moonan and Gerry Ritter

Towns: *Annsville ~ Ava ~ Boonville ~ Camden ~ Floyd ~ Forestport ~ Lee ~ Remsen ~ Steuben ~ Trenton ~ Vienna ~ Western*

Villages: *Boonville ~ Camden ~ Holland Patent ~ Remsen ~ Sylvan Beach*

What is a Wastewater System Inspection and What to Expect Webinar, Nov. 6



Join the Environmental Finance Center Network and Dr. Jason R. Barrett on Tuesday November 6th at 1 pm, as they present a no cost webinar that covers inspection procedures, including preparation, site visits, records review, and reporting, to stay inspection-ready and avoid common violations. The hour-long session will offer real-world guidance and highlight the importance of maintaining accurate records, monitoring system conditions, and implementing preventative maintenance practices to support compliance, environmental protection, and community well-being.

This webinar will also provide a practical overview of the essential wastewater permit parameters outlined in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Discussed will be how parameters such as flow, pH, dissolved oxygen, biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), total suspended solids (TSS), nitrogen, phosphorus, fecal coliform, and chlorine residual impact wastewater system performance, stream health, and regulatory compliance.

The session will also cover the roles of state and federal agencies in compliance monitoring and inspections, applying best practices to prepare for inspections and maintain organized records, and how to strengthen system operations to protect public health and the environment. As well as how to identify and define the most common parameters included in wastewater discharge permits, and understanding how each parameter affects treatment system operations and receiving waters.

Click [here](#) for more information or to register.

NYCOM Village Election Webinar Series, Nov. 18 & 25

NYCOM's annual village elections training webinars are scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 18th and Tuesday November 25th, from 11:00 am - 12:30 pm each day.



This two-part webinar series breaks down everything clerks and village officials need to know to confidently navigate the village election process. From ballot access to canvassing the vote, these sessions will walk through every phase of the village election process to help ensure a smooth and compliant Election Day.

Part I on November 18th will address ballot access, voter registration, absentee and early mail-in ballot applications, and ballot preparation.

Part II on November 25th will address election inspector appointment and training, poll watchers, election day procedures, dealing with voters not on the registration list, canvassing the vote, the clerk's post-election responsibilities, and the availability of election records.

This webinar is free of charge to NYCOM members, although registration is required. A recording of the webinar will be provided to registrants following completion of the webinar.

For more information, or to register for either session, click [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact NYCOM Counsel Rebecca Ruscito at 518-463-1185 or rebecca@nycom.org.

NOCCOG Executive Committee for 2026



The NOCCOG Executive Committee is returning for another year of service in 2026, as the current directors were all re-elected at the annual dinner meeting on October 23rd. Returning are Robert Sauer, from Camden, as Chair, Thomas McDonald, from Remsen, as Vice Chair, Betsy Mack, from Trenton, as Fiscal Officer, Lawrence Meirek, from Western as Director, and Pamala Dibble, from Annsville, as Director.

The Evolving Scope of the First Amendment in Municipal Law - CLE Webinar, Nov. 19

Local governments are facing First Amendment challenges daily, be it from contentious public comment periods, social media controversies or "First Amendment audits" at municipal offices.



Join New York Association of Towns Association Counsel, Katie Hodgdon, on Wednesday, Nov. 19, from 12:00 pm - 1:15 pm, in a virtual Continuing Legal Education session that will examine the constitutional framework municipal attorneys need to navigate these issues, including forum analysis, governmental speech doctrine, and recent Supreme Court guidance. Attendees will learn practical strategies for crafting policies that protect constitutional rights while maintaining effective government operations in an era of rapid technological change and evolving case law.

This course is eligible for 1.5 credit hours in areas of professional practice and is \$25 for NYAOT members, \$50 for non-members, and free for 2025 NYAOT Annual Meeting CLE registered attendees.

NYCOM'S 2025 Planning and Zoning Webinar Series



In November and December join the New York Conference of Mayors and NYCOM General Counsel, Wade Beltramo, as they present the NYCOM 2025 Planning and Zoning Webinar Series. Starting at 11:00 am on Thursday, November 20th and continuing Thursdays throughout December, these one-hour webinars will provide the most up-to-date information in planning and zoning law on understanding the laws regarding accessing private property, defining what local zoning terms mean, special land use laws governing religious and educational properties, and sign regulations.

These webinars are open to NYCOM members and non-members, including non-planning board and non-ZBA members. The cost of participating in each webinar is \$20 for members and \$50 for non-members. The cost for members to register for all four webinars is \$65 total. Participation in each of the four webinars may satisfy the State's four-hour annual training requirement for planning board and ZBA members. Additionally, each webinar is eligible for one hour of CLE credit in the Area of Professional Practice.

Click [here](#) for full session descriptions or [here](#) to register. For questions, please contact Wade Beltramo at 518- 463-1185 or wade@nycom.org.

Solar & Battery Storage and the Local Review Process Webinar, November 20

New York State's regulations, and specifically those that allocate local authority are constantly evolving. How can planning boards, zoning boards, and local development staff address the growing popularity of solar energy solutions, while protecting the quality of life of your community? This session focuses on best practices for local regulations regarding solar and battery storage projects, and how to navigate the state's regulations on large scale alternative energy developments.



On Thursday, November 20, from 6 -7 pm, the MRB Group and Hancock Estabrook will present "*Soaking Up the Sun: Solar and Battery Storage and the Local Review Process*" their 10th session of their no cost annual training program, geared to assist local governments, town officials, and planning and zoning boards.

To register for this webinar, click [here](#). For more information, or to view the 2025 Municipal Bootcamp Program, visit the MRB Group Bootcamp [webpage](#).

Towns: [Annsville](#) ~ [Ava](#) ~ [Boonville](#) ~ [Camden](#) ~ [Floyd](#) ~ [Forestport](#) ~ [Lee](#) ~ [Remsen](#) ~ [Steuben](#) ~ [Trenton](#) ~ [Vienna](#) ~ [Western](#)

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ATV Recreation: Considerations for Municipalities, Thursday Dec. 11

NOCCOG and the NYS Tug Hill Commission will host an informational session regarding recreational ATV/OHV traffic, on Thursday, December 11th, at 7:00 pm at the Boonville municipal offices.



Join Tug Hill Commission Project Specialist, Taylor McKinney, as she presents on the factors municipalities should take into consideration when enacting or updating local road laws for ATV use. The session will derive from the commission's recently updated issue paper, [ATV Recreation: Considerations for Municipalities](#), originally written in 2004. Now, with over two decades of experience with ATV trails, as well as numerous court cases that shed light on best practices, municipalities are much better positioned to make informed decisions. Taylor will also discuss the detailed approach taken to create a map of the region's ATV trail system, based on trail data, local laws, and pertinent court cases.



There is no cost to attend, and refreshments will be provided. For more information, please contact John Healt at jhealt@tughill.org, or 315-941-2818.

Oneida County Establishes Emergency Response and Recovery Fund



In preparation for future emergency situations, Oneida County and the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties have established a fund that will provide financial assistance to residents impacted by such disasters. The fund is intended to provide direct financial assistance to residents in response to severe weather events.

The approved agreement renames and expands the scope of the 2024 Tornado Relief Fund, which was originally created in response to the Rome tornado, thereby establishing the Oneida County Emergency Response and Recovery Fund. The amendment also modifies the fund's purpose to respond to other unforeseen or emergent circumstances, including the two EF1 tornadoes that hit Oneida County in June of 2025, and allocates an additional \$1,000,000 of County funds toward these efforts. The funding is to come from Oneida County Planning contingency accounts.

Since 2024, there have been five tornadoes in Oneida County, two of which have been in NOCCOG municipalities.

Court of Appeals Upholds Even Year Election Law

The New York Court of Appeals (the state's highest court) recently upheld the 2023 law that requires counties and towns to hold elections for certain offices in even-numbered years instead of odd years.

In 2023, legislation, referred to as the Even Year Election Law, or EYEL, was adopted changing most town elections, excluding town justices, from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years beginning with the November 2025 election cycle.

The stated goal is to increase voter participation by aligning local elections with higher-turnout state and federal races. This legislation was challenged in court, and a trial level court determined that the law was unconstitutional, among other things, which resulted in the legislation being stayed or paused.

The state appealed to the Fourth Department, Appellate Division, one of the intermediate level appeals courts in the state, which overturned the trial court's decision by finding that the even-year election law was constitutional and should be implemented for the 2025 election cycle.

On October 16, 2025, the case went before the Court of Appeals, and the court issued a decision upholding the validity of EYEL. A summary of the decision can be found on NYAOT's [Legislative Resource Hub](#) on nytowns.org.

Even-Year Elections: Frequently Asked Questions

I'm running for election in 2025, what does the Court of Appeals decision mean for me?

All town offices, except for town justices, on the ballot for November 2025 will have their term of office reduced by 1 year. In other words, if the position usually has a 2 year term of office it will be reduced to 1 year, and in 2026 the position will be on the ballot again for the standard 2 year term. If the position usually has a 4 year term of office it will be reduced to a 3 year term, and the position will be on the ballot again in 2028 and go back to the standard 4 year term.

What about if I was elected to a four-year position in 2023?

Those elected to a position with a four-year term of office in 2023 will serve that full term. Once that position is on the ballot again in 2027, it will be for a three-year term. Then, when the position is on the ballot again in 2030, it will return to a four-year term of office.

What offices are impacted by this legislation?

In addition to elected town officials (excluding town justices), the legislation also shifts various county-level positions, such as county legislators, to even-year election cycles.

Year Elected	Standard Term of Office	Temporary term of office	Next year office up for election
2023	4 years	N/A	2027
2023	2 years	N/A	2025
2025	4 years	3 years	2028
2025	2 years	1 year	2026
2026	2 years	N/A	2028
2027	4 years	3 years	2030
2028	4 years	N/A	2032
2028	2 years	N/A	2030

What if I'm running to fill a vacancy?

The law does not specifically address vacancies. It says “if the completion of such full term results in the need for an election in an odd-numbered year after January 1, 2025, the county or town official elected at such election shall have their term expire as if such official were elected at the previous general election held in an even-numbered year.”

It seems like the language would apply as follows to the hypothetical situation of someone running in 2025 to complete the remainder of a term that was originally set to expire December 31, 2027.

The full term would have ended December 31, 2027, meaning the next election for that seat would normally happen in November 2027, an odd-numbered year after 2025. That triggers the law quoted above. So, according to the statute, the person elected in that 2025 election will have their term expire as if they were elected in the previous even-numbered year (2024).

The individual elected in 2025 to fill the vacancy would take office January 1, 2026, just like normal. But, instead of serving until 12/31/2027, your term will end 12/31/2026 — because that’s when the term would have ended if you had been elected in 2024 (the “previous general election held in an even-numbered year”). Therefore, the individual would need to run again in 2026 to stay in office.

Why aren't all local elections / all positions included?

Town justices and county judges are excluded due to constitutional provisions, which require a constitutional amendment to change their election years. City elections are also excluded for the same reason. Village elections are not included because villages operate on separate statutory election cycles and conduct their own elections.

However, there is legislation, A7369/S5851, that calls for a constitutional amendment to change city elections, town justices, and the various county positions currently excluded to even-year elections. Because it calls for a constitutional amendment the legislation must pass the Legislature two consecutive years and then be placed on the ballot at a general election for residents in the state to vote on. If a majority votes in favor, then the change becomes part of the New York Constitution (see New York State Constitution Article XIX § 1).