

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON THURSDAY, November 6, 2025 AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE FORT ANN TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Supervisor Samuel J. Hall
Councilwoman Deborah Witherell
Councilman George F. Smith
Councilman Michael Sexton

ABSENT: Councilwoman Stark

OTHERS PRESENT: Miranda Herringshaw-Town Clerk, Jennifer Jackson-Clerk to the Supervisor, Eric Eisenschmidt, Nicole Eisenschmidt, Pam White, Lyle Washburn, Dan Brummer, Matt Gould, Christine Milligan, Paul Milligan, Mariha Bailey, Dillon Bailey, Barb Byrch, Curt Rhem, Judy Rhem, Matt Baker.

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

This meeting was published in the Post Star November 1st, 2025.

I. I Open Override Tax Cap Public Hearing for the 2026 Budget:

Supervisor Hall asked if anyone had any comments at **6:00 p.m.**

Budget Officer Miranda Herringshaw explains how the budget process works at the Town level.

By law, when department heads submit their “wish” budgets, those requests must be entered as requested, even if they are unrealistic.

When we first put the “wish” budgets together, we were about \$557,000 over. The state tax cap formula would only allow an increase of about \$68,000, leaving us nearly \$489,000 over even after that allowance.

Since then, every department has gone back and cut multiple times, we have dipped into and used more unexpended balance than we normally do, and many town employees have foregone raises. After all of that, the increase is now about \$176,000, which is a big improvement, but it’s still above the cap.

We’re facing costs we can’t avoid things like salt, fuel, and equipment are all up significantly, and Fire Districts and EMS alone total about \$761,000 of our budget, with many of those costs driven by state requirements.

Due to state law requiring us to adopt the budget by a set date, we need to act on the tax cap before finalizing the budget. Overriding the cap doesn’t mean we stop looking for savings, it means we can legally adopt a budget that keeps the town operating.

The state tax cap formula does not keep up with realworld inflation and statemandated requirements we must meet.

Bottom line, the tax cap law would only allow a small increase, but basic operations (equipment, roads, emergency services) cannot be funded at that level. Therefore, the need to override the tax cap to keep the town functional, even with all the cuts.

Closed the public hearing with at **6:45 p.m.**

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Witherell to adjourn public hearing.

1.2 Open Public Hearing for 2026 budget:

Supervisor Hall asked if anyone had any comments at **6:54 p.m.**

Lyle Washburn stated that he would like to see some discussion on seeing Fort Ann and West Fort Ann Volunteer Fire companies combine services in some capacity to cut down on the expense that the fire districts are to the Town.

Supervisor Hall stated that this is something that has been discussed and will be looked into further in the coming year, to see what can be done and legally what we would need to do, to combine these services but also not put residents in jeopardy of their homeowners insurance increasing due to longer response times etc.

If anything is to happen as far as combining districts there would be notice given to the public and there would be public hearing etc. that would need to be conducted in order to make this happen, this is not something that can just be done, there will be plenty of notice given to residents if and when that time comes.

Closed the public hearing with at **7:01 p.m.**

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Sexton to adjourn public hearing. Motion was carried unanimously.

1.3 Open Public Hearing for the 2026 Pilot Knob Volunteer Firefighters Assoc., Inc. (\$105,850):

Supervisor Hall asked if anyone had any comments at **7:01 p.m.** Closed the public hearing for the Pilot Knob Volunteer Firefighters Assoc., Inc. with no comment at **7:03 p.m.**

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Witherell to adjourn public hearing.

Motion was carried unanimously.

1.4 Open Public Hearing for the 2026 Fort Ann Volunteer Fire Company (\$284,676.00):

Supervisor Hall asked if anyone had any comments at **7:04 p.m.** Closed the public hearing for the Fort Ann Volunteer Fire Company public hearing closed at **7:05 p.m.** without comment.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Witherell, seconded by Councilman Smith to adjourn public hearing.

Motion was carried unanimously.

1.5 Open Public Hearing for the 2026 West Fort Ann Volunteer Fire Company (\$226,190.00):

Supervisor Hall asked if anyone had any comments at **7:05 p.m.** Closed the public hearing for the West Fort Ann Volunteer Fire Company public hearing closed at **7:06 p.m.** without comment.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Witherell, seconded by Councilman Smith to adjourn public hearing.

Motion was carried unanimously.

I.6 Open Public Hearing for the 2026 Fort Ann Rescue Squad, Inc. (\$145,000.00):

Supervisor Hall asked if anyone had any comments at **7:07 p.m.** Closed the public hearing for The Fort Ann Rescue Squad, Inc. public hearing closed at **7:08 p.m.** without comment.

Motion was made by Councilman Sexton, seconded by Councilman Smith to adjourn public hearing. Motion was carried unanimously.

Supervisor Hall stated that he would like to thank the EMS and all fire departments for all they do for the Residents of Fort Ann, and for working hard on their 2026 budgets, he also Thanked Helen Denno and Miranda Herringshaw for all of their time and hard work that is put into the budget and the budget process.

The Town of Fort Ann is over the allowable tax cap by \$176,602 .00.

Motion was made by Councilman Sexton, seconded by Councilman Smith to adjourn meeting at 7:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Miranda Herringshaw, Town Clerk
Town of Fort Ann, New York

Dated: November 12, 2025